



VENTIENT  
ENERGY



**Foundation  
Scotland**

# **Ventient Glenkerie Wind Farm Community Fund**

**Fund Report  
Year 10 and 11  
April 2023 - March 2024**



# Headlines.....



**Cumulative total of £678k  
(113 grants) awarded  
since Fund launch.**



**£3.3 million additional  
funding leveraged by  
funded projects.**



**Grants contribute  
primarily  
to SDG11 (Sustainable  
cities & communities)  
and SDG3 (Good health & well-  
being)**



**Community Investment  
Fund, currently worth £185k.**



**8 grants (£33k)  
awarded in reporting  
period.**



## Executive Summary

In November 2023, the Fund celebrated its 10-year Anniversary, having distributed 113 awards to 43 different community groups and charities in its first decade. It continues to be supported by a highly passionate and engaged Panel of residents who have a wealth of knowledge and experience with the local issues and scenery, helping to ensure the awards offered maximise impact locally. A range of publicity activities have taken place and will continue to celebrate Fund impact over the decade.

Two high value grants were awarded to support flagship projects in the reporting period. These included contributing to the; Biggar Youth Project to refurbish its centre and Symington Tinto AFC to purchase new gymnasium equipment and train more volunteers to deliver exercise classes for the club and its members.

The Fund has demonstrated an unusually high level of leverage compared to many other community benefit funds, with every £1 of Fund investment having attracted more than £4.91 worth of further investment from other sources. This figure is driven by a large number of ambitious capital development projects supported in part by the Fund, particularly over the last three years. To better demonstrate the impact of community benefit monies, Foundation Scotland has evolved its reporting to align awards from the Fund to the internationally recognised Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Grants have supported activities contributing primarily to six different SDGs, especially SDG11 (Sustainable cities & communities, 52%) and SDG3 (Good health & well-being, 29%).**



The Fund has provided a wide spread of funding over the year with activity and projects spanning across the 15km radius from the wind farm which makes up the Fund's area of benefit.

2024-25 will also see Fund Review activity to help ensure the Fund remains as impactful as possible in response to community needs.

## Introduction – Fund Overview

The Ventient Glenkerie Wind Farm Community Fund is provided by Ventient Energy Ltd, the owner of the Glenkerie Wind Farm. The Fund benefits charities and community groups within 15km of the wind farm, including those in the Upper Tweed and Tweedsmuir Community Council areas and parts of Biggar, Symington, Stobo, Skirling, Coulter, Roberton, Wiston and Lamington.

It was opened in 2014. An annual amount of at least £57,200 per year, rising in line with inflation, will be paid into the Fund for its operating life which is expected to be 25 years.

Decisions on grant awards are made by the Ventient Glenkerie Wind Farm Community Fund Panel, whose membership is drawn from Upper Tweed and Tweedsmuir Community Councils and the wider community.

The Fund aims are to support activity which will sustain and develop the life of the communities and ensure that the area is an attractive and vibrant place to live, work and visit. To achieve this the Fund supports activity leading to the following outcomes:

- adequate access to services for all community members;
- improved local transport;
- opportunities to grow the local economy; and
- the provision of developed or maintained community assets.

The Fund offers grants for a range of activities that benefit the local community. The amount and type of information required from applicants differs depending on the size of application being made. There are three categories of grant available:

- small grants between £250 and £2,000;
- medium grants between £2,001 and £10,000; and
- large grants of over £10,000.

Grants can be multi-year in nature, usually for no more than three years.

The Upper Tweed, Tweedsmuir, Skirling, Symington, Biggar, Duneaton, and Manor, Stobo & Lyne Community Councils are also eligible to draw down annual allocations of up to £1,000 from the Fund to distribute as micro-grants of up to £500 to constituted and non-constituted organisations, and to individuals.

This report includes a financial summary; details of grants awarded, completion reports received, and analysis of the impact and outcomes achieved by the funding.

## Financial Overview

The following table summarises Fund finances from April 2021 to March 2023.

<b>Financial Overview</b>			
<b>Opening Balance available</b>	<b>£55,220.25</b>		
<b><u>Income</u></b>		<b><u>Expenditure &amp; Transfers</u></b>	
Ventient Energy	£100,125.85	Grants awarded	£41,837.45
Interest Receipt	£3,399.50	Grants returned/cancelled	-£10,501.00
		<b><i>Net expenditure – grants</i></b>	<b><i>£31,336.45</i></b>
		Transfers to Community Invested Fund	£0.00
		<b><i>Net transfers</i></b>	<b><i>£0.00</i></b>
		Fund expenses	£96.20
		Contribution to FS Fund management costs	£9,101.44
		<b><i>Total expenditure - other</i></b>	<b><i>£9,197.64</i></b>
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£103,525.35</b>	<b>Total net expenditure incl transfers</b>	<b>£40,534.09</b>
<b>Closing balance available</b>			<b>£118,211.51</b>

## Grant-making Overview

The Glenkerie Fund has awarded 113 grants totalling £678k since inception, comprising:

- 61% of funds through small-medium grants; 69 grants to 41 different groups/organisations.
- 6% of funds through large grants; 7 grants to 6 different groups/organisations.
- 33% for microgrants through disbursements to the six Community Councils operating microgrants schemes.

In the one-year period covered by this report, 8 grants (£33k) were awarded. The **three largest grants awarded** this year were respectively to:

- Biggar Youth Project to contribute to the costs of a comprehensive refurbishment of Biggar Youth Project's premises, improving the energy efficiency of the building to cut heating costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve internal layout and facilities to make the space feel more welcoming and user friendly. (please see 'spotlight' on page 11 for further details).
- Symington Tinto AFC to support the purchase of gym equipment including spin bikes, rowing machines and treadmills which allow the users to train all year round, improving their mental health and physical wellbeing. A proportion of the funding also contributed towards training courses for volunteers in order to allow the club to expand and offer more fitness classes.
- Symington Community Council to purchase and install two defibrillators in locked cabinets at the village hall and local shop within the village of Symington.

The full list of awards made in the 2023/2024 are shown below.



<b>Grantee</b>	<b>Grant purpose</b>	<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>Amount Awarded</b>
<a href="#"><u>Tweedsmuir Community Council</u></a>	To provide a fund for distribution to groups and individuals for general charitable purposes in the form of micro-grants up to a maximum of £250 for individuals and £500 for groups.	£2,000	£2,000
<a href="#"><u>Upper Tweed Community Council</u></a>	To provide a fund for distribution to groups and individuals for general charitable purposes in the form of micro-grants up to a maximum of £250 for individuals and £500 for groups.	£2,000	£2,000
<a href="#"><u>Biggar Community Council</u></a>	To provide a fund for distribution to groups and individuals for general charitable purposes in the form of micro-grants up to a maximum of £250 for individuals and £500 for community groups.	£2,000	£2,000
<a href="#"><u>Duneaton Community Council</u></a>	To provide a fund for distribution to groups and individuals for general charitable purposes in the form of micro-grants up to a maximum of £250 for individuals and £500 for groups.	£2,000	£2,000
<a href="#"><u>Symington Community Council</u></a>	To contribute towards the cost of installing 2 defibrillators in 2 locked cabinets to be installed at the village hall and shop within the village of Symington.	£4,176	£4,176
<a href="#"><u>Biggar &amp; District Men's Shed</u></a>	To purchase hardwood ply boards, nails and paint to replace and strengthen the existing workshop floor in the Biggar Men's Shed building.	£1,500	£1,500

Grantee	Grant purpose	Total Project Cost	Amount Awarded
Biggar Youth Project	To contribute to the costs of a comprehensive refurbishment of Biggar Youth Project's premises, improving the energy efficiency of the building to cut heating costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve internal layout and facilities.	£846,000	£10,000
Symington Tinto AFC	To support the purchase of gym equipment and training courses for volunteers.	£9,660.45	£9,660.45
<b>Totals</b>		<b>£867,336.45</b>	<b>£33,336.45</b>

Whilst the amount awarded this year appears lower than previous years, this is partly due to the last Round of 2022/23 taking place at the end of March 2023 (and hence included in last year's report) whereas the last Round of 2023/24 was processed in the beginning of April 2024 and will be included in next year's Report.

As last year's report mentioned, the final Round of 2022/23 included three significant awards awarded in March 2023, but which were also processed in the current reporting period. This is due to an award round and decision-making meeting falling into the end of the financial year (March 2023) and awards being processed in the new financial year (April 2023). As a reminder, these significant grants were:

- Upper Tweed Community Enterprise Company Ltd, £50,000 to contribute towards the capital costs of the extension of the Broughton Village Store to support its future sustainability.
- Biggar Little Festival, £14,782 to support the cost of Venue Hire, Sound system & technicians and Festival design services over a three-year period to ensure the success of the Biggar Little Festival, showcasing Biggar as a vibrant place to live, work & visit.
- Biggar Kirk (Gillespie Centre), £37,500 to fund the Gillespie Centre Manager for two years to enable efficient running of the services.

Once again, there was an award round on the cusp of the end of the financial year in March 2023 where three further significant awards were awarded into April 2024, these included:

- Tweed Valley Mountain Rescue Team to contribute towards the purchase of a new Mountain Rescue Vehicle to replace an existing vehicle in its fleet which will be more responsive and in line with the Edinburgh Low Emission Zone. The vehicle will support incidents taking place across the Tweed Valley and surrounding catchment areas.
- Biggar Rugby football Club to contribute towards installing a new playpark which is more inclusive to the community and offer more opportunities for developmental play, thereby, improving the children and young people's health and wellbeing.

Sixteen applications requesting a total of £103k were received in the reporting period. Six will receive award decisions in 2024/25 (and will be described in next year's report). The application success rate for the remaining ten was 70%, which is similar to past trends.

Of the three applications rejected in-year, one was rejected as the group did not meet Foundation Scotland's basic eligibility criteria; the planned activity was not in or benefiting the area of benefit. Two were rejected by the Panel. The first was a group which provided support for young people with Dyslexia. The Panel decided not to award a grant for a service supporting young people with dyslexia, as it was delivered outwith the Fund area with only minimal residents benefiting. The Panel did signpost the group to local organisations that had engaged in similar work, in the hopes of supporting the group to develop.

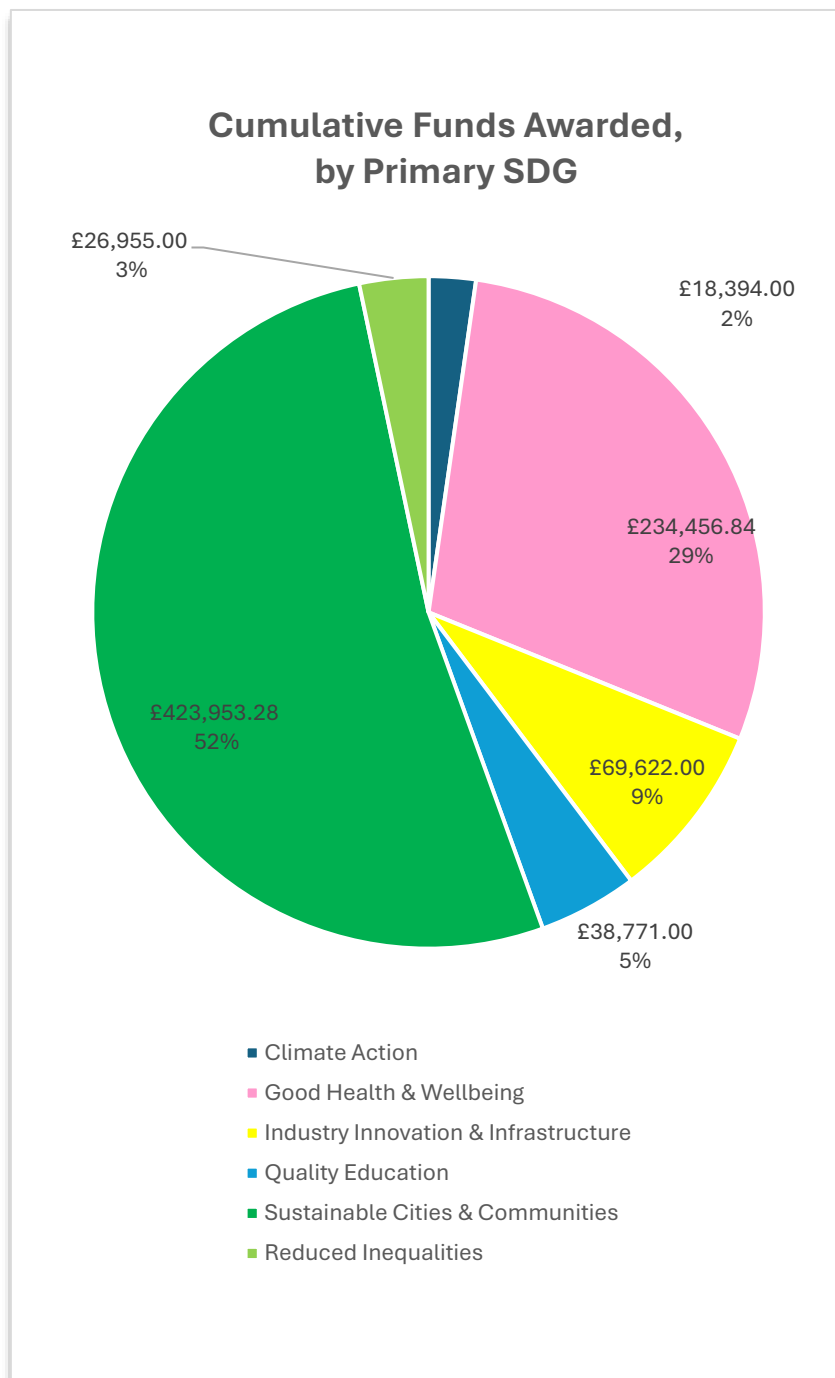
The second project rejected was a community food growing group which was applying for funding to support with growing sundries such as compost and weed suppressant layers. The purpose was to support the growing efforts of a new, organic market garden located in the outskirts of a large town centre. However, the project failed to demonstrate realistic plans or scale of likely impact.

No applications were withdrawn or cancelled during the period.

## Impact - what difference is the Fund making?

In order to better capture and describe the Fund impact, Foundation Scotland has evolved its reporting systems to align grants with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It is the case that most projects contribute to more than one SDGs; however, Foundation Scotland seeks to identify the ‘best fit’ primary SDG for illustrative purposes.





Since launch, the Fund has made awards contributing primarily towards six different SDGs, especially SDG11 (Sustainable cities & communities, 52%) and SDG3 (Good health & well-being, 29%).


The proportion of grants contributing primarily towards SDG9 (Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure) is uncommon for community benefit funds and is reflective of the large scale, ambitious capital projects active in the area.


Qualitative evidence of impact is also gathered via End of Grant reports, which are required from all awardees.

Generally, awards are for projects that are planned to complete within 12 months of receiving an award.

The table below provides a snapshot of the difference grants have made to the progress of some projects which have reported recently, followed by a project spotlight on the '**Biggar Youth Project**'.

Summary of achievements from completion reports received		
Grantee	Amount Awarded	Project Description - Summary
<p>Symington Community council</p> 	£4,176.00	To contribute towards the cost of installing two defibrillators in two locked cabinets and electrician costs for installation.
<p><b>Primary Sustainable Development Goal: Sustainable Cities &amp; Communities</b></p> <p>Two prime locations were identified, and the equipment was installed in December 2023. To support with the installation of the equipment, the whole village will have opportunities to attend free training sessions to learn how to use the equipment. The community has a population of circa. 1.1k which may potentially benefit from these life saving devices.</p>		
<p>Biggar &amp; District Men’s Shed</p> 	£1,500.00	To purchase hardwood ply boards, nails and paint to replace and strengthen the existing hardwood floor in the Biggar Men’s shed building.
<p><b>Primary Sustainable Development Goal: Sustainable Cities &amp; Communities</b></p> <p>The Men’s Shed is located within an old primary school building, a portion of which has been repurposed to accommodate the Men’s Shed Group. A building survey was conducted and as part this, it was identified that the floor surface required reinforcement. The award supported with purchasing supplies to complete the work and the volunteers from the Men’s Shed set about refurbishing the hard floors and was completed in March 2024. The Men’s Shed offers a safe and welcoming space for members to meet with the freedom to establish social connections, and to improve their health and wellbeing through taking part in meaningful projects. Approximately 30 people directly benefited from this project.</p>		

Summary of achievements from completion reports received		
Grantee	Amount Awarded	Project Description - Summary
Tweedsmuir Village Hall  	£8,839.00	To contribute to the costs of installing an energy efficient heating system as part of a programme of improvements aimed at improving environmental performance, reducing energy costs, and making the hall more comfortable for users. which will reduce the impact on the environment and reduce the energy costs for the group.
<p><b>Primary Sustainable Development Goal: Climate Action</b></p> <p>The original Tweedsmuir Village Hall heating system was a mix of aged and inefficient convection wall radiators, ceramic wall and ceiling mounted radiant heaters.</p> <p>The group identified energy efficient measures including PV panels, battery storage and efficient infrared heaters operated remotely using Wi-Fi. The Wi-Fi operation also provides an additional benefit which saves a number of short journeys by management committee in advance of hall lets. The new heating system allows the hall to maintain a steady ambient temperature depending on the weather which will also maintain the fabric of the building and the resources located within.</p> <p>Following the installation of the measures, the hall has seen an increase of use, with new groups using the space as well as more frequent use by regular groups. This has been especially apparent over the 2023/2024 winter, as the hall is a much more comfortable space to use.</p>		

Summary of achievements from completion reports received		
Grantee	Amount Awarded	Project Description - Summary
Lanarkshire Cancer Care Trust (LCCT)  	£5,000.00	To contribute to the fuel costs of volunteers transporting cancer patients to their hospital appointments for treatment.
<p><b>Primary Sustainable Development Goal: Good Health and Wellbeing</b></p> <p>LCCT provides free transport services for cancer patients and their carers to access hospital appointments, day care, and respite facilities across Lanarkshire. The awarded funds contributed to supporting 66 people from the Fund area, transporting them on various occasions, to and from their treatments and appointments during their cancer journey. Transport is carried out by volunteer drivers who give their time and transport for the patients, driver volunteers are also located within the Fund area. The rural location is inhibited by lack of public transport options and the volunteer services which LCCT has provided positively impacted residents within the area of benefit.</p>		



## Spotlight on the Biggar Youth Project's Centre Refurb



Biggar Youth Project (BYP) is a SCIO which was established in 1996 in Biggar, South Lanarkshire and originally operated from the Old High School Building. BYP is a service that supports the mental health and well-being of the young people of Biggar and Clydesdale, through an updated approach to youth work provision.

In 2002 BYP acquired the Old Auction Ring (cattle auction house) building, located in the Biggar conservation area. Since its move, it has operated as a youth project centre, offering young people aged between 10 to 18 years (particularly those within the catchment area of Biggar High School) shelter, warmth, affordable food, a place to hang out, play games, access computers and a quiet space.

The young people it supports typically face challenges related to loneliness, isolation, poverty, trauma, and difficulties with their peers around their gender or sexuality.

In addition, BYP offers support for young people at particular stages of their lives, for example the transition to high school and during exams. The organisation also offers the opportunity for informal accredited learning for young people through schemes such as the Saltire Award and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and is developing volunteering opportunities for young people who encounter barriers to employment.

The centre is regularly used by around 160 local residents, including children, young people and adults. Drop-in services are provided Monday to Friday. The space hosts a Community Fridge accessible 11am-3pm, and provides space to other local groups, including a local photography group and a textile group.

Since 2015, the Glenkerie Fund has awarded 4 grants between £2K to £6.7K to support with salary and core running costs for the BYP. Most recently it awarded its 5th award of £10K to contribute towards a capital project to upgrade and refurbish the Youth Centre premises.

## Centre refurb needed



In the early 2020s, it became apparent that the age of building meant that the gas heating system was not efficient, and the insulation was minimal. The building had minimal natural lighting; there were no external windows to the office, meeting rooms or small kitchen. In 2022/2023, following consultation with both the BYP Board and the buildings user groups, it was agreed there was a need to undertake a refurbishment of the building.

In parallel, a new Biggar Community Action Plan (published in 2022) highlighted the need for better facilities for young people in the town, and there have been frequent comments about this on local social media.

## Developing refurb plans

A key part of the project design process included a consultation process with young people, BYP staff, users and volunteers. Along with its architects, Biggar Youth Project ran two sessions during school time to consult with young people from the area.

Session one focussed on the current building and findings highlighted concerns surrounding the building being dark and unwelcoming, cold and draughty especially on windy days, whilst having poor ventilation when it wasn't windy! It was also felt that the décor was outdated.



The second session previewed plans for the refurbishment, which were enthusiastically received by the users of the building. There was a strong preference for neutral colours schemes and natural finishes augmented with occasional pops of colour and calming features such as plants.

The refurbishment project aimed to take on board all feedback received during the consultations and incorporate key points into the design process. These included improving the energy efficiency of the building to cut heating costs; reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving the internal design, layout and facilities of the building so that it was warm, open and more welcoming.

BYP's Project Co-ordinator, staff and volunteers were heavily involved in the design of workspace areas such as the kitchen, office and storage space. A member of the BYP Board also gave a presentation on the refurbishment to Biggar and District Civic Society.

BYP appointed an architect to design the plans of the building after which planning consent and a building warrant were obtained. As well as design plans, surveys for bats and asbestos were completed and a CCTV survey of the drainage system was undertaken.

Upon completion of the final plans, BYP displayed the plans for the refurbishment of the building and encouraged young people and others using the building to comment.

Following the plans, BYP engaged the next part of the process which was to secure funding for the project costs which were approximately £850k.

In 2023, BYP applied to the Glenkerie Fund and secured £10k to contribute towards the general overall building project costs including areas such as roof repairs, refurbishment of the bell tower, floor and wall insulation, installing new windows and skylights.

The award from the Fund acted as seed funding to progress this project forward and gain momentum to attract further funding for the overall project, in total BYP secured the remaining £840k.

## Work gets underway

Having appointed a professional project manager, the building refurb work was phased as follows:

1. Removal of the existing internal structure.
2. Installation of insulation to walls, floor and roof and alterations to the windows.
3. Construction of the revised internal layout and installation of heat pump, plumbing and wiring and installation of solar panels.
4. Internal decoration and installation of custom built-in features such as benches.
5. General furnishing and equipment.

An exciting surprise was revealed when the roof work commenced, with the discovery of the original bell tower and its bell still intact. This bell was used to draw attention to the farmers who were taking a break at the pub located adjacent to the building and summoning them to the cattle auctions. When news of its discovery was revealed, the local community shared fond memories of hearing it in the past and a desire to keep it in-situ. It was agreed to refurbish the bell and make it available by young people to celebrate birthdays and 'awesome people'!

## Nearly finished!

The refurbishment work is still underway with completion expected in late November 2024. Subsequent issues with the roofing woodwork have prolonged implementation slightly, but the team are remaining positive and looking forward to welcoming people back into the building. During the closures of the premises BYP has been conducting external outreach programmes to ensure its services remain available.

**Dr Janet Moxley, Secretary and Board Member of the Biggar Youth Project who has been an integral part of the refurbishment project is excited to see the work nearing completion:**

“We are really grateful for the support from the Glenkerie Fund for the contribution to the project, it fits well with the renewable sustainability agenda for the windfarm. This centre is a very important space and facility for the young people, it will give them pride of space now and for years to come.”

## Extra learning opportunities

BYP has sought to maximise learning opportunities from the refurb programme, by liaising with Biggar High School to invite older pupils to visit the build at suitable/safe stages to meet with the construction and design team and to ask questions and learn about the industry.

The project has also opened up wider learning opportunities for the local community, in terms of sharing experiences with retrofitting energy efficient measures into buildings dated around the 1800s. The group is sharing its learning with groups, businesses and local households and will host an open day in late 2024 which will allow the community to come and view the progress and ask questions about the energy efficient processes it has installed.

The BYP project has also empowered the local young people by listening to their thoughts throughout the consultation process and taking into consideration how they wished to see building shaped and designed. The young people are now seeing their ideas being turned into reality and this is providing a greater sense of ownership of, and pride about, their space.

## The benefits

It is estimated that around 160 children, young people and adults from Biggar will benefit immediately from the enhanced facility. This number will increase over time, as future generations make use of the space.

## Success factors

The Panel's decision to award the initial £10K is a great example of how a small strategic award can support with leveraging an additional £840K which is transformative in term of impact and project success.



The Biggar Youth Project's Centre refurbishment underscores the importance of local and user consultation, and aligning with Community Action Plans (CAPs), to maximise benefits from community benefit fund awards within the wider community. The refurbishment will leave an impactful legacy for generations to come.

The Ventient Energy Glenkerie Wind Farm Community Fund, involving community Panel decision-making and Foundation Scotland's assessment of grant requests, demonstrated the importance of funding flexibilities. Being able to provide grants to support BYP's work in a range of ways over nearly a decade, most significantly towards the refurb project, reflects the value of longer-term funding which community benefit funds can offer.

## Panel updates

A decision was made by the Glenkerie Wind Farm Community Fund Panel as part of the 2019 Fund Review to increase the number of volunteer Panel representatives on the Panel from nine to eleven.

One member is appointed from each of the two Community Councils and up to nine further representatives drawn directly from the wider community.

Panel members serve for a period of between three and five years. Where a member of the Panel has served their term, the opportunity to join the Panel is widely advertised across the community and appointments are made through a fair and transparent process. Those retiring may stand for re-election after one year.

During the last year, three members left the Panel, and three new members are in the process of being recruited.



## Conclusion

The local context within which the Ventient Glenkerie Wind Farm Community Fund operates is lucky to have both a small selection of capable organisations driving forward long-term change for the community, and an engaged Panel which understands the importance of making strategic investments for the future. The Panel continues to strike a balance distributing Funds to tackle immediate local needs whilst also supporting activities and projects generating long-term outcomes.

Demand on the Fund has recovered to pre-covid levels, and the Fund is operating well, with plans for further Fund Review work in the next year, particularly around the number of deadlines and funding levels, to ensure the most effective use of available funds.

## Foundation Scotland

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