

CARES CASE STUDY



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JOHNSTONE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

BACKGROUND

Johnstone Community Council applied for CARES funding to support the creation of a Community Action Plan. The result is a plan that will guide not only investment but also any decision making that will affect the area in the future.

Project: Johnstone Community Council

Technology: Onshore wind

Related community benefit funds: Minnygap Community Fund; Clyde (Dumfries and Galloway) Community Fund; Annandale and Nithsdale Community Benefit Company; Minsca Community Benefit Fund.

CARES funding: Enablement grant £10,000



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Johnstonebridge and the Johnstone Community Council area are in mid Annandale, a rural part of Dumfries and Galloway adjacent to the M74 motorway. Approximately 400 people live in 150 households and facilities are limited to a small primary school, a community centre, a post office and a playpark. The nearest towns are Lockerbie and Moffat where there are more amenities including secondary schools, health centres and sports facilities.

PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Johnstone Community Council applied for CARES funding to support the creation of a Community Action Plan following a period of community consultation and engagement.

The motivation to create a plan was triggered by the rise in potential income from several community benefit funds linked to existing and proposed wind farms in the Johnstonebridge area.

The Johnstonebridge area currently benefits from four community benefit funds:

- Minnygap Community Fund, administered by Foundation Scotland
- Clyde (Dumfries and Galloway) Community Fund, administered by Foundation Scotland
- Annandale and Nithsdale Community Benefit Company, administered by Foundation Scotland
- Minsca Community Benefit Fund, administered by Dumfries and Galloway Council



The community council wanted a plan based on engagement with the local community and seen as belonging to that community. It also wanted a plan that was designed to guide not only investment but any decision making that would affect the area in the future.

OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Nick Wright Planning and Willie Miller Urban Design were commissioned to prepare the plan, assisted by a steering group of residents from the community council area.

A programme of community engagement included sending a community survey to local households, hosting workshops and holding discussions with local organisations. Special efforts were also made to engage with young people in the community by holding workshops at three local schools.

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The Johnstonebridge Community Action Plan was published in January 2019 and contains the local community's vision for what their community should be like in five years' time. It identified key priority areas for action: road safety; community facilities; the great outdoors; jobs and businesses; and community action.

The plan identifies the community's strengths and assets, what it can achieve independently, and what will require the assistance of external agencies or funding streams to realise. The plan also identifies key stakeholders to engage with in order to take forward proposals in the plan.

LESSONS LEARNED

David Johnstone, chairperson of Johnstonebridge Community Trust, said: "We found that there were lots of ideas and opinions in the community, based on anecdotal evidence, about what people would think or wish to do – or more importantly, what the community council believed members of the community would think are important to them. What was lacking, however, was evidence or justification for backing up these beliefs and thoughts.

"What the community action plan process was able to do was to demonstrably put down on paper the views of the community, to take forward any proposals for the community and to justify and access further funding. This evidence is invaluable."

In addition, the community council noted that the importance of partnership working – identifying and communicating with potential project partners – was highlighted throughout the action plan process.

Website: johnstonebridgecentretrust.co.uk

To find out more about funding from the Community and Renewable Energy Scheme, visit localenergy.scot/funding

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