

CARSPHAIRN COMMUNITY GARDEN

FINAL REPORT FOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY LEADER PROGRAMME

PROJECT REFERENCE: DG 124

This is the Final Report for the completion of Carsphairn Community Garden – Dumfries and Galloway LEADER Programme Project Reference DG124.

The format of this Report is as requested when the Grant was awarded in June 2010.

The project was originally approved for completion by the end of June 2011, but inclement weather in December 2010 and January 2011 meant it was requested in April 2011 that the Project be extended for three further months. This was approved, and the Project was completed by the end of September 2011, there being an official opening by Rt Hon Alex Fergusson MSP on 24 September.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

a. How was the idea for the project developed?

The project was originally conceived as a Millennium Project to turn a piece of derelict ground at the southern approach to the village in to an outdoor public amenity for Carsphairn residents and visitors.

b. Who was involved in the project? Individuals and Organisations.

Carsphairn Community Council owns the land and is responsible for the Project. A Community Garden Steering Group (CGSG) was established, and this was led from 2008 by David Richmond. The other members during the period of this Project were

- i. Anne Rutherford
- ii. Hugh Clark Kennedy
- iii. Sylvia Sinclair
- iv. David Whyte

There was also a group of around 20 volunteers.

The project has also received gifts and donations in kind from:

1. Forestry Commission
2. UPM Tilhill
3. Natural Power
4. Forrest Estate
5. Eon Climate and Renewables
6. RWE npower and renewables
7. Knockengoroch Community Interest Company
8. Scottish Power

c. What were the aims and objectives of the project?

The Garden was conceived as a focal point of the village, close to the Church and the School, and was intended to

- i. improve the visual impact of the village by transforming a derelict site in to an attractive amenity
- ii. improve the quality of life within the community
- iii. lift community spirit and provide space for community interaction
- iv. provide opportunities in its creation and maintenance for voluntary contribution to the community from a wide range of community members, and volunteers outwith the Community, where appropriate
- v. provide communal outside space for all age groups in the community
- vi. provide an accessible environment for the less able members of the community.
- vii. provide a safe and scenic picnic area
- viii. provide a space for potential exhibition of public art
- ix. establish a location for a Village Christmas Tree and a focal point for carol singing etc – power to be supplied by environmental means – a mini windmill / solar panel based system
- x. provide a viewpoint and attraction for tourists and visitors alike
- xi. provide through the ongoing maintenance contract some employment opportunities, hopefully for underemployed individuals in the community

d. How was the funding package assembled?

The funding package was assembled as follows:

- i. Dumfries & Galloway LEADER Programme - £13,002.50
- ii. Stewartry Area Committee - £4,000.00
- iii. Carsphairn Windfarm Community Fund - £2,502.50
- iv. Volunteer labour - £6,500.00

e. How much money did LEADER provide?

LEADER agreed to provide £13,002.50

2. THE PROJECT EXPERIENCE

a. When did the project take place?

The Project started in July 2010 and was completed in September 2011.

b. What actually happened?

The Key Activities in the Project were as follows

- i. Creation of paths and paved areas
- ii. Completion of boundary fencing and hedging
- iii. Autumn and Spring planting
- iv. Turfing or seeding of grass areas
- v. Installation of a renewable energy based power supply – mini windmill and solar panel
- vi. Installation of a Christmas Tree fixing and path and step lighting
- vii. Construction of stone plinths to act as a notice board and a viewing point
- viii. Procurement and installation of garden furniture and litterbins
- ix. Procurement and installation of a pavement safety barrier at the entrance to the Garden
- x. Organisation of a Community Survey undertaken by Dumfries & Galloway Community Learning and Development to
 1. assess the Community benefits provided by the Garden and quantify Project Outcomes and Outputs
 2. determine possible future projects that the Community Council might initiate
- xi. Promotion and organisation of the opening event on 24 September 2011

c. How was the project delivered?

The project was managed through the CGSG by David Richmond (Project Leader and gardening activity), Anne Rutherford (financial control) and David Whyte (administration and procurement).

A Garden Report was prepared for each Community Council meeting, and any discussion and decisions were recorded in the Community Council minutes. The Garden Report and minutes in turn were circulated to Community Councilors and members of the public who

have asked to receive minutes by email. The Garden Report and the minutes were also routinely displayed on the Community Council notice board.

Where possible the majority of manual work was completed by volunteers organised by David Richmond.

Where possible, and subject to adequate pricing, third party suppliers were sourced first within the Carsphairn Community Council area, then the Glenkens, and then the Stewartry.

Donations of construction and garden materials – which were allowed for in the original budget – were received from a number of local businesses, and these benefactors are acknowledged on the notice board plinth at the entrance to the Garden. (Mentioned in Section 1d above).

d. What marketing was undertaken?

The major marketing activity related to

- i. Press Releases and articles in the Galloway News to announce winning the LEADER funding and covering the opening on 24 September.
- ii. Press Releases and articles in the Glenkens Gazette were included in each issue from June/July 2010 to November/December 2011. These charted the development of the project over the period and included
 1. award of the LEADER funding
 2. collecting the “cheque”
 3. sponsoring the fireworks/bonfire party
 4. christmas tree lighting
 5. egg rolling at Easter
 6. final planting and turf laying
 7. the opening
- iii. Posters announcing the award of the LEADER grant and also inviting community residents to the opening were displayed in Carricks – the village shop.
- iv. Invitations to the opening were mailed personally to guests and to every family in the Community Council area.
- v. The Project was asked to enter the Stewartry Celebration of Achievement Awards and came third in the “Environmental Award” category

e. Who benefited from the project?

From a general point of view since the opening in September the Garden has been regularly used by local residents as the only available outside public space in the village.

On a more formal basis a carol service was held around the Christmas Tree in mid December, and the school are discussing taking pupils there in the Spring for nature and wildlife education.

The LEADER target groups expected to benefit from the project were quantified by means of a Community Survey completed in June 2011 with the assistance of Dumfries and Galloway Community Learning and Development (CLD). CLD analysed the questionnaires and wrote the Report. This was done to ensure objectivity and confidentiality within the community.

CLD completed 24 interviews and left a further 17 forms at houses in the village. The Steering Group mailed or hand delivered a further 160 + (in the rush we forgot to do an exact count) to households on the outskirts of the village and in the outlying settlements. The Survey Report and copies of all 61 completed questionnaires are included with the hard copy of the claim.

As backup a Participation Questionnaire was made available at the Garden Opening, but despite it being made available at the refreshment stand, and it being brought to people's attention, we received no completed forms.

The targets and totals achieved based on the Community Survey were as follows:

- Male age under 25 – target 25 – achieved – 8
- Female age under 25 – target 25 – achieved – 11
- Male age 25 and over – target 35 – achieved – 18
- Female age 25 and over – target 35 – achieved – 19
- Over age 60 – target 30 – achieved – 22
- Farming Community – target 40 – achieved 19

We did not achieve the Approved Targets, but then suspected we would struggle to do so because when these were proposed we did not realise the degree of proof required. The total population of the Carsphairn Community Council area is just over 200.

In terms of Project Outputs we were more successful, with 133 guests and residents attending the Garden Opening, and a further 12 potential

volunteers (as indicated by the Community Survey) not able to be present.

f. How did the final budget turn out?

The total budget of £26,005 included £6,500 of volunteer labour input, the balance being cash expenditure of £19,505.

The project had to be extended by one quarter to five quarters because of adverse weather conditions in late 2010 and early 2011. Having started in July 2010, it was completed at the end of September 2011.

The £6,500 volunteer element of the budget was used by the end of the fourth quarter

The total approved cash expenditure was £19,502.98, and the actual amount spent was £19,505.78. – an overall negative variance of £2.80

There were some small variances of Actual Spend v Approved Spend.

- i. The most significant negative variances were
 1. Power Supply and Lighting (£127.73) – we had difficulties obtaining consistent electrical quotes from our original supplier. This was mitigated by
 - a. Going elsewhere to source equipment
 - b. Reducing the amount of path lighting originally envisaged – step lighting was maintained for health and safety reasons
 - c. Using suitably experienced volunteer labour to complete the installation. As the project uses 12 volt rather than a mains supply, the work did not need a completion certificate from a qualified electrician
 2. Grass seed/turf (£112.76) – the turfing contractors took half a day longer than planned on the job – as well as trying to increase their hourly rate, which we refused to pay.
- ii. The most significant positive variances were
 1. Tools (£53.14) – less was required than originally anticipated

2. Signs (£302.52) – the amount required was reduced by using printed style signs rather than metal engraved ones

g. What lessons have been learnt?

The major lessons learnt are the following

- i. The Community Council is capable of organising and managing projects of this size and complexity. This was done entirely on a volunteer basis. It would not wish to take on anything much more ambitious without the input from paid project management
- ii. The community and local organisations and businesses will actively support projects that meet a demonstrated need.
- iii. The physical and construction aspects of the project were relatively straightforward to quantify and manage
- iv. The amount of administrative input was significantly under estimated – the process of applying for grant funds and submitting claims and reports was more onerous than anticipated.

h. Will the project be mainstreamed or transferred?

Now that the project is complete it is planned to transfer the ownership of the Community Garden from the Community Council to a separate entity based in the village. This is to cover any possible future eventuality or local government reorganisation that might mean the Community Council would no longer exist. The community has experience of this given it has owned the shop and post office for a number of years.

i. Detail the sustainability of the project and/or exit strategy

The sustainability/exit strategy for the project is as follows

- i. The proposed transfer of ownership mentioned in h. above
- ii. The Garden Steering Group continues to exist for the time being, and will be involved in managing volunteer activities, managing third party maintenance and other costs such as insurance, and local fund raising. Papers are attached to the hard copy submission showing
 1. an event arranged on 3 March by the Steering Group

2. a poster seeking quotes for the 2012 – 2013 maintenance contract. Carsphairn Renewable Energy Ltd (CREFL) – the successor to the Windfarm Fund - has already agreed in principle to fund this subject to a suitable application being submitted.

j. Detail how the project has addressed the LEADER issue selected in the application.

The LEADER issue selected was “**Strengthen community spirit and civic pride**”.

- i. The project has essentially achieved the 11 objectives indicated in the application, and listed in Section 1c above, associated with creating a focal point for the village
 1. improve the visual impact of the village by transforming a derelict site in to an attractive amenity – **achieved – survey comments**
 2. improve the quality of life within the community - **achieved**
 3. lift community spirit and provide space for community interaction – **achieved – opening event**
 4. provide opportunities in its creation and maintenance for voluntary contribution to the community from a wide range of community members, and volunteers outwith the Community, where appropriate - **achieved**
 5. provide communal outside space for all age groups in the community - **achieved**
 6. provide an accessible environment for the less able members of the community.- **achieved – all ability access to seats and picnic tables**
 7. provide a safe and scenic picnic area - **achieved**
 8. provide a space for potential exhibition of public art – **yet to be achieved**
 9. establish a location for a Village Christmas Tree and a focal point for carol singing etc – power to be supplied by environmental means – a mini windmill / solar panel based system – **achieved – used at Christmas**
 10. provide a viewpoint and attraction for tourists and visitors alike – **achieved – survey comments**
 11. provide through the ongoing maintenance contract some employment opportunities, hopefully for underemployed individuals in the community – **achieved once maintenance contract is awarded**

- ii. The Community Survey indicated general support for the project in the community
 - 1. "Have you seen the new community garden?"
 - a. YES : 62 – NO: 2
 - 2. "Have you been in the garden ?"
 - a. YES: 41 - NO: 23
 - 3. "What took you to the garden ?"
 - a. Look around: 26 – Plants and flowers 17 – Chat to people: 13 – Sit for a while: 11
 - 4. "Involvement in getting the garden ready ?"
 - a. YES: 28 – NO: 29
 - 5. "Interest in future involvement ?"
 - a. YES 12 – NO 39 – Maybe 11

- iii. Positive comments about the garden include
 - 1. "Lovely, makes a big difference, just rough ground before"
 - 2. "Attractive focal point"
 - 3. " It makes our village look nice and tidy"
 - 4. "It's somewhere for people (and kids) to go"
 - 5. "Nice outside space, peace and quiet, somewhere to (sit and) chat away from the traffic"
 - 6. "A lovely entrance to the village. Might make others tidy their area up".

- iv. Negative comments include
 - 1. "Village doesn't need more visitors. Money should have been spent for benefit of those living in the village"
 - 2. "A wall with no gate means sheep are tempted to go in"

- v. There has been increased attendance at Community Council meetings since the project began, particularly in the 3 months before the Opening. There have been enquiries about being elected and/or being co-opted to support future projects.

- vi. The Community Council is investigating whether and how to proceed with future projects. Those indicated by the Community Survey as having most support in the village are:
 - 1. Create a playing field/ play area for kids
 - 2. Look at the potential for acquiring and re-opening the pub

3. Create a footpath to Bridgend (a small settlement about a mile to the north of the village on the A713 – useful for residents and tourists/walkers wanting to visit the lead mines).

David Whyte

February 15 2012