

Auchenblae Community Fund

Application and Process Guidelines

On behalf of Fred Olsen Renewables, Mid Hill Wind Limited (MHWL), the operator of the Mid Hill Wind Farm, has provided a community benefit fund to be shared between the communities neighbouring the wind farm. These communities are represented by:

- Auchenblae & District Community Association
- Crathes, Drumoak and Durris Community Council
- Feughdee West Community Council – shared between:
 - Feughside Community Council (FCC)
 - Brathens, Glassel, Inchmarlo Community Council (BGICC)
- Glenbervie & District Community Association (SCIO)

The fund provides £1000 per installed megawatt (MW) per annum with a total generating capacity of 75.9MW. The allocation to Auchenblae Community Fund is 30% of the total fund, available annually to benefit the residents of the Auchenblae area. The other organisations manage their own funds. The total amount available increases annually in line with inflation as it is index linked.

About the Auchenblae Community Fund

The fund has been established by Auchenblae & District Community Association (ADCA) and is administered by an ADCA sub-committee with funding decisions made by an independent panel. This arms-length 'Judge & Jury' style administration allows funding decisions to be made independently of the full ADCA committee so it too can apply for funding for projects which benefit our community whilst ensuring that ADCA fulfils its legal obligations as Mid Hill contract signatory.

The panel present their recommendations and rationale to the ADCA sub-committee who will present these to MHWL for approval. MHWL will then disburse funds to ADCA who distribute funds to successful applicants.

ADCA invites funding applications annually from local organisations operating for the benefit of residents of the Auchenblae area. The process from application to successful applicants receiving funds takes approximately 6 months.

Funding Guidelines

The purpose of the fund is to benefit the residents of the area of Auchenblae.

These guidelines have been produced to assist those who are applying for such funding.

Geographical boundary

The fund is open to applications from groups, and for projects, which benefit residents within the current Auchenblae electoral ward.

What projects are eligible to apply to the fund?

To apply for funding, community groups or organisations must be properly constituted or have some form of governing document. You do not need to be a registered charity to apply for a grant but you must be able to demonstrate community benefit. If you would like to make an application but are not part of a properly constituted group or organisation, please contact Auchenblae & District Community Association.

The fund welcomes applications from eligible organisations across a range of areas including for example:

Children and young people – projects focused on improving access to facilities, activities and services for younger members of the community.

Community buildings and amenity sites – projects which maintain and develop buildings and amenity sites being used and run by the community, especially projects which help ensure their sustainability for the future.

Community transport and communication initiatives – schemes that promote mobility of people and information in the community.

Conservation, wildlife and animal sanctuary projects – in particular those which improve the use of and access to communal land for the above purposes.

Culture and heritage – projects that celebrate, protect and promote culture, history and heritage.

Education and skills development – group and community based programmes, particularly for those who have had no previous access to training opportunities.

The elderly – projects focused on improving access to facilities, activities and services for more senior citizens in the community.

Energy efficiency and environmental sustainability – projects to minimise energy loss, promote the use of green energy or sustain the natural and built environment.

Health – projects focused on improving access to facilities, activities and services that aim to improve the health and well-being of the local community, including through sports.

Recreation – projects promoting access to leisure time activities engaged in for relaxation and amusement

Regeneration – community projects that help to reduce crime levels, increase employment, housing or improve the physical environment.

Self-help groups – community groups that deliver services to specific sectors of the community that are in need.

Tourism – projects promoting and supporting tourism in the local area.

Vulnerable people – projects focused on improving access to facilities, activities and services for people with disabilities, the homeless and those who are disadvantaged.

Any other project your group considers beneficial to residents of the area of Auchenblae.

What will not be funded?

- **Projects outside the area of benefit, specifically defined as the Auchenblae electoral ward.**
- **Any purpose that adversely affects or works against the interests of the wind farm or the owner of the land on which the wind farm is to be constructed or the Company or any of its subsidiary or related companies**
- **Any purpose that adversely affects or works, whether directly or indirectly, against any form of renewable energy development**

- Any sectarian project or political project or any other project which could create divisiveness within the community
- Any project the financing of which is the legal responsibility of any third party unless the applicants obtain prior written agreement from both ADCA & MHWL.
- Sponsorship.
- Improvements to land that is not open to the general public.
- Deficit or retrospective funding (i.e. activities that have already taken place). However, such projects may be considered in exceptional circumstances but only if ADCA and the panel is notified prior to commencement that a project will be taking place and an application is submitted before the project starts. As with any application, there is no guarantee such a project will be funded.
- Projects or activities which support an individual or individuals who are not acting on behalf of a group or organisation with the capacity to benefit the wider community.
- Fundraising for national or regional charities unless the funds are going directly to a group or project operating in the area of benefit.
- Applications for projects made by individuals or agencies where commission or other payment is made to that individual or agency.
- Applications for projects made by individuals or agencies for re-distribution to other separate individuals or agencies.
- Applications to support “commercial gain”

How long is funding for?

Our grants are for one year and should be spent within 12 months of receipt. Any delay to project completion should be referred to the ADCA sub-committee. Applicants can apply for funding in consecutive years but should not assume that these will be successful as applications from groups that have not previously received funding may be given higher priority.

What level of funding is available?

Typically, projects will be funded from the annual allocation. Funding decisions may result in recommendations totalling less than the available fund, for example, if the fund is undersubscribed or due to applications being assessed as offering low benefit relative to the sum requested. In this situation, funds will be carried over to the following years fund.

There is an option to put forward a proposal requiring more than one year's funds but up to a maximum of 3 limit of three years' funds. Exceptional circumstances considered in this scenario would include a specific large legacy project that clearly benefits the majority of the community. This option would impact on the ability of the other eligible groups to access funding and ADCA would consult with those groups before presenting such a proposal to the panel for consideration.

Applications for more significant sums of money would be expected to benefit wider sections of the community. There is no guarantee that the full amount requested in any application will be granted.

No match funding is currently required for applications, although it will help your application if you are able to demonstrate that additional funding has been secured or will be provided. Grants from the fund may be used as match funding as long as the other requirements of Auchenblae Community Fund can still be met.

Application Process

Applications will be considered annually. Application forms will be made available either in hard copy or online via theblae.org. Two types of application are possible:

- [A Short Form Application, with a funding limit of £1000](#)
- [A Long Form Application, funding applications over £1000](#)

Applications can be made at any time with a closing date for applications is August 31st.

Note – Data protection: All information included in your application will be made available to the panel and will be passed to MHWL. In the event of an appeal, all information included in your application will be made available to representatives of one of the other community bodies sharing the total fund.

What information do you need to provide?

It will help your cause if you can demonstrate any or all of the following:

Need: Demonstrate a need for the project and what support you have from the local community. Have you surveyed those who will benefit? It will help if you can provide evidence of research or consultation with those who will directly benefit – tell us about it!

Community Use: Show the extent of the proposed project or funding in terms of duration and numbers of beneficiaries. What percentage of beneficiaries reside in the area of benefit?

Community Involvement: The fund would like to support projects where the community is already helping itself and where there is enthusiastic input from committed and resourceful people.

Value: You need to demonstrate value for money as well as realistic budgeting, show costings and provide quotes from more than one source. It will help if projects already include revenue from other sources (i.e. they are already part-funded or match funded). Will you be able to complete the project if you only receive part funding? Tell us how you will do this.

Legacy: Does your project have a legacy or will it require ongoing maintenance. If that is the case, tell us about how you plan to sustain this.

What else do I need to include with my application form?

Please provide copies of your:

- **Constitution** – A signed copy of your organisation's governing document, constitution or memorandum and articles of association. In the case of a Short Form application this could be a simple set of rules and the project description. Your organisation should operate with regard to equal opportunities best practice and this should be reflected in your constitution.
- **Accounts** – A copy of your organisation's most recent accounts. If you have been running for over one year, we would expect to see a full set of accounts showing a breakdown of your annual income, expenditure and carry-forward balance. If you are a new group (less than twelve months old), a recent bank

statement plus an annual budget/cash flow forecast showing estimated income and expenditure is acceptable. These documents should be signed by your treasurer. If your organisation doesn't have a bank account, please provide a description of your banking arrangements

- **Policies and Procedures** - A copy of any policies and procedures relevant to your organisation. E.g. If your organisation works with children or young people (under 19 years), or the activity you are applying for will involve working with children or young people, you will need to provide a copy of your child protection policy. If you do not have such a policy, your local Council for Voluntary Service may be able to assist.
- **Permissions** – if your project requires a land owner's or landlord's permission, you should produce a letter from them to that effect. You should also provide documentation to show that planning permission has been obtained and is still valid, if required.
- **Plans and photographs** – if your project involves an element of development, you should provide a location plan, photographs of the site as it is and plans/sketches showing what is proposed.
- **Costs, Quotes and Value for money** – you should provide evidence to support the amount of money you've requested. This should demonstrate that the project provides value for money. You should supply multiple quotes where possible and the reasoning behind the selected quote, it doesn't have to be the cheapest but you must explain the decision.

You can ask for advice and guidance during the application process by contacting ADCA sub-committee via AuchenblaeCF@gmail.com. Please make sure the person nominated on the form is knowledgeable about the project and able to answer any queries presented by the ADCA sub-committee or panel.

How will funding decisions be made?

The independent panel will assess applications against the criteria detailed above, considering the benefit offered by each application in relation to the level of funding required and make recommendations to the ADCA sub-committee for presentation to MHWL for approval.

Who sits on the Auchenblae Community Fund Panel?

The panel consists of 7 volunteers drawn from eligible groups and residents of the area of Auchenblae.

Volunteers wishing to join the panel should apply by 31st July. The application form for panel members is available at the theblae.org, email AuchenblaeCF@gmail.com for a copy or contact ADCA.

Groups may nominate one person from their group onto the panel.

Should more than seven nominations for panel members be received, names will be inputted into a random generator for selection.

Panel members cannot sit on the panel for more than three consecutive years.

The panel will nominate a chairperson (from those who sat on the previous year's Panel) and a minute taker.

The objective is that the decision process will be fair, transparent and without bias. All applications will be considered equally, therefore panel members will not be able to vote on or be involved in discussions about applications in which they have a vested interest.

Panel members will be expected to keep all information contained on applications confidential. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in individuals being disqualified from panel membership. Any communication concerning the panel and the decision making process will be carried out by the ADCA sub-committee following the annual review meeting.

What happens once a decision has been made?

Offer or refusal letters will be sent out as soon as possible after MHWL have approved the panels' recommendations. Offer letters may include details of any conditions imposed. A copy of the letter should be signed and returned to the ADCA before any payment can be made. You should not commit any money before you have received confirmation that your award has been approved by MHWL. Should you need to request a change of use for any award made, you must submit your request in writing before committing or redirecting any funds. Refusal letters will include feedback on your application and the reason your application has been refused.

What are my responsibilities?

An annual report on applications will be sent to MHWL.

Successful applicants must report back to the ADCA sub-committee upon completion of the project or within twelve months, whichever is sooner. Where possible, please provide photos of your project which can be used to promote the Community Fund in future years.

Any press references with regards to the project should refer to the funding source by stating either 'made possible by the Auchenblae Community Fund' or 'part funded by the Auchenblae Community Fund'.

Funds must not be used for any purpose other than as detailed in your application and any monies not used within 12 months of award may be required to be returned to the fund and re-distributed. In this eventuality, please contact ADCA sub-committee to discuss.

Feedback

The panel's decision is final as funds cannot be reallocated without impacting on other groups. However, there is an annual review of the whole process assessing any deficiencies or opportunities for improvement to be addressed prior to the opening of the next round of funding. Feedback is invited from residents of Auchenblae Electoral Ward and will be considered as part of the annual review.

If you feel that an application has been rejected unfairly, you may ask for the decision to be reviewed. You must make this request within 28 days of receiving your refusal letter. If the Association receive an appeal, it will ask representatives of one of the other 3 organisations to review the decision making process and ensure that the process has been followed correctly and fairly. This review process will not result in funds being re-allocated. Any deficiencies in the process or its implementation identified during the review will be addressed prior to opening the next round of applications.

If you have feedback on any aspect of the Auchenblae Community Fund, please get in touch via AuchenblaeCF@gmail.com or use the form at theblae.org/ac-fund-feedback-form/

Who to contact?

For more information or for application forms, please see theblae.org or contact ADCA at:

Auchenblae Village Hall

Monboddo St

Auchenblae

AB30 1XQ

Email: AuchenblaeCF@gmail.com

Frequently asked questions

Why is the Mid Hill community benefit being administered by the Community Association?

Fred Olsen Renewables have chosen to only deal with Community Councils and Community Associations.

Why does the application process take so long?

We have to give organisations reasonable time to prepare their applications. We then need time to consider the applications and make our recommendations to MHWL/Fred Olsen Renewables. MHWL/Fred Olsen Renewables then need time to consider our recommendations and issue funds.

Will the application and selection process be reviewed?

The process will be reviewed annually.

Why do other windfarm funds distribute more money per MW?

The agreement with Natural Power was put in place some time ago, prior to the current £5K per MW guidelines.

What is the cost of applying?

Applying to the fund is free.

Can I apply as an individual?

We will only accept application from community groups (ie two or more people). This is the first step in ensuring there is wider support for a project.

How often can we apply?

You can apply each year.

Can our group submit more than one application each year?

Yes

This is version 2 of the guidelines reviewed and updated January 2023
