

Report

Report to:	Community and Enterprise Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 February 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise)

Subject:	Community Benefit Funds – Renewable Energy Fund Grant Applications
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ Consider a grant application to the Renewable Energy Fund from East Renfrewshire Council (Whitelee Access Project)
- ◆ Consider a grant application to the Renewable Energy Fund from The Little Sparta Trust
- ◆ Consider a grant application to the Renewable Energy Fund from Friends of Stonehouse Park

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that a grant be awarded to East Renfrewshire Council (Whitelee Access Project) of up to £89,820.00 from the Renewable Energy Fund towards the management and maintenance of the network of routes throughout the windfarm area which extends into South Lanarkshire;
- (2) that a grant be awarded to The Little Sparta Trust of up to £41,469.78 from the Renewable Energy Fund to enhance the visitor experience and develop the infrastructure; and
- (3) that a grant be awarded to Friends of Stonehouse Park of up to £107,896.80 from the Renewable Energy Fund to construct and develop a community hub as a community asset.

3. Background

3.1. Since 2004, the Council has collected and administered Community Benefit funding through Planning and Economic Development Services. The service is responsible for securing the contributions from developers, advising potential applicants, assessing applications and monitoring projects to ensure that the community benefits associated with each project are delivered. Processes are continuously reviewed to ensure the best practices in grant provision and monitoring are undertaken to ensure the necessary support is delivered to eligible communities.

3.2. Grant awards above £20,000 require approval from Committee, awards below this level are approved by the Head of Planning and Economic Development under delegated authority.

4. Grant recommendations

4.1. Application Number 589

East Renfrewshire Council (Whitelee Access Project) – project value £249,500.00
Proposed Grant award £89,820.00 Intervention rate of 36%. The proposed REF grant of £89,820 will be funded from Whitelee windfarm that contributes to the REF.

4.2. East Renfrewshire Council (Whitelee Access Project) – Management and Maintenance is a recurring application within Whitelee windfarm, seeking funding for 2 years activity based on the following matters:-

- ◆ The Enterprise Resources Committee on 27 June 2007 approved a Section 75 Agreement which placed an obligation on the Council to jointly prepare and implement an access strategy for Whitelee windfarm.
- ◆ The maintenance of these access works can utilise up to 40% of the community benefit monies received each year.

4.3. A ranger service (two staff) employed by East Renfrewshire Council, is responsible to manage the maintenance of the footpath network and assisting in implementing community projects. They provide a proactive management service and are also able to promote responsible access to a wide range of users.

4.4. The project will be managed by the Whitelee Access Officer employed by East Renfrewshire Council, who reports on a regular basis to the 3 local authorities East Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire and East Ayrshire Councils within whose boundaries the windfarm is located.

4.5. The application scored 36 and 34 out of 53 by the two appraisers during the assessment process which averages as 35 and which permits an intervention rate of up to 66% of eligible costs.

4.6. All Renewable Energy Fund awards are subject to suitable match funding being secured. The REF grant sought is 36% of the project value with the match funding as set out below.

Funder	Stage	Value
East Renfrewshire Council	Confirmed	£159,680
SLC Renewable Energy Fund Grant (36%)		£ 89,820
Total project value		£249,500

4.7. The project is scheduled to commence in April 2021 and be complete by March 2023. Officers will work with the applicant to monitor progress and any impact on the timescales.

4.8. Application Number 358

The Little Sparta Trust – project value £83,469.78

Proposed Grant award £41,469.78 Intervention rate of 49.68%

The proposed grant of £41,469.78 will be funded from Muirhall windfarm which contributes to the REF.

4.9. The Little Sparta Trust, is an independent charity with the Trustees responsible for the whole estate and effects. The garden is of national importance and, in December 2004, a poll of fifty Scottish artists, gallery directors and arts professionals, conducted by Scotland on Sunday voted Little Sparta "the most important work of Scottish art".

- 4.10. The Little Sparta Trust was established in 2006 following Ian Finlay's death with the aim of preserving and maintaining and enriching access to the garden. Finlay generously gave ownership of the garden, his home and its contents to the Trust and, therefore, its core and continuing responsibility is to preserve the garden to his exacting standards.
- 4.11. The Little Sparta Trust is an independent charity which relies on grants, donations, and legacies to continue to preserve over 270 artworks, maintain the garden and buildings, offer access to the public, students, artists, and academics, create new events and initiatives for the public.
- 4.12. By way of background for Members, Ian Hamilton Finlay (1925 – 2006) was a poet, writer, visual artist and gardener and is now internationally recognised for his work in each of these art forms. Finlay was awarded honorary degrees or professorships from Aberdeen, Heriot-Watt, Glasgow and Dundee Universities, the SAC's Creative Scotland Award, and a CBE in 2002. His work had received a steady stream of critical attention since the mid-1960s and by the time of his death was recognised as a major contribution to modern art, in part because of its persistent affirmation of the fundamental values of Western civilisation, in particular those inherited from ancient Greece and Rome.
- 4.13. The Little Sparta Trust has 9 Trustees, 1 full time-staff member and 3 part-time staff members.
- 4.14. The grant will allow The Little Sparta Trust to develop the Little Sparta 'Welcome' project which targets the upgrading of three vital elements of visitor infrastructure. The purpose of these developments is two-fold. Firstly, to improve the visitor experience for current visitors. Secondly, to develop the infrastructure to enable Little Sparta to increase visitor numbers in the build-up to the 2025 centenary of Finlay's birth.
- 4.15. The three-linked infrastructure upgrades will help visitors find, access and learn about Little Sparta and Ian Hamilton Finlay's work. They include:
- ◆ The installation of heritage site road signs as Little Sparta is in relative isolation in the Pentland hills, but it is well positioned for day trippers, being situated between both Glasgow and Edinburgh. Working with the Council, Little Sparta has identified three sites located at junctions near the garden at which 'brown' tourist road signs could be erected to help direct traffic to Little Sparta.
 - ◆ Repair and upgrade of the half-mile track leading from the road to Little Sparta. The track is already in need of repairs, which are expected to be urgent following the completion of building works outlined in the next item.
 - ◆ Creating a purpose designed 'welcome centre'. For many years, the front porch of Finlay's cottage has served as an ad-hoc 'ticket office'. However, it is poorly designed for the function and in a state of disrepair. The design for a new 'welcome centre' developed by Helen Lucas Architects improves the use of space and creates other benefits for Little Sparta. It will provide a warm, dry, comfortable space for visitors to consult digital and print materials.
- 4.16. The application scored 35 and 32 out of 53 by the two appraisers during the assessment process which averages as 33.5 and which permits an intervention rate of up to 63% of eligible costs.

- 4.17. All Renewable Energy Fund awards are subject to suitable match funding being secured. The projects funding is set out below:

Funder	Stage	Value
Turtleton Trust	Confirmed	£20,000
The Foyle Foundation	Confirmed	£15,000
The Hugh Fraser Foundation	Confirmed	£7,000
SLC Renewable Energy Fund Grant (50%)		£41,469.78
Total project value		£83,469.78

- 4.18. The project is scheduled to commence in March 2021 and be complete by February 2022. Officers will work with the applicant to monitor progress and any impact on the timescales.
- 4.19. Application Number 299
Friends of Stonehouse Park– project value £215,793.60
Proposed Grant award £107,896.80 Intervention rate of 50%
The proposed REF grant of £107.896.80 will be funded from Auchrobert windfarms that contribute into the REF.
- 4.20. Friends of Stonehouse Park is an established Community Group with its purpose being:
- ◆ To conserve, enhance and improve the landscape, biodiversity and sustainable use of the area for the benefit of people and wildlife.
 - ◆ To promote and encourage the conservation of the site known as Alexander Hamilton Memorial Park.
- 4.21. The Friends of Stonehouse Park has a membership of 20 regular volunteers. Friends of Stonehouse Park has consulted widely on the project to ascertain, co-ordinate and reflect the views of the community.
- 4.22. The grant will allow Friends of Stonehouse Park to restore the local bandstand to encourage greater use of the public park to complement the activities and promote its use for musical, theatrical and social opportunities increasing the park's footfall and preserve the structure's historical importance. Friends of Stonehouse Park consider that the restoration of the bandstand can revitalise the park encouraging community participation and cultural awareness. Restoration will also support healthy activity, building social cohesion and provide a location for family friendly events throughout the year. In partnership with Heritage Environment Scotland and the Council, this grant will see the replacement of the roof and drainage as well as restoration of the main structure and the surrounding access and stairs encompassing the site. These improvements will be in keeping with the architectural character of the structure and meeting the legal requirements and guidance regards its listed status nationally.
- 4.23. The Council, working with the group, issued tenders as part of the partnership and will manage the construction work.

- 4.24. The application scored 37 and 33 out of 53 by the two appraisers during the assessment process which averages as 35 and which permits an intervention rate of up to 66% of eligible costs.
- 4.25. All Renewable Energy Fund awards are subject to suitable match funding being secured within 12 months of grant award. The REF grant sought is 50% of the project value with the match funding as set out below.

Funder	Stage	Value
Kype Muir Wind Farm Community Fund (Banks Renewables Community Fund)	To be confirmed	£20,000
Suez Communities Trust	To be confirmed	£50,000
EB Scotland	To be confirmed	£25,000
Levenseat Trust	To be confirmed	£12,896.80
SLC Renewable Energy Fund Grant (50%)		£107,896.80
Total project value		£215,793.60

- 4.26. The project is scheduled to commence in April 2021 and be complete by April 2022. Officers will work with the applicant to monitor progress and any impact on the timescales.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. There are no employee implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The awards are being split between three windfarm funds which come within the Renewable Energy Fund to ensure sufficient reserves remain for future applications in 2021/2022. The funds have sufficient resources to meet the proposed grant award commitment detailed in this report.

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 7.1. The project from East Renfrewshire Council (Whitelee Access Project) will improve access and promote environmental sustainability to visitors.
- 7.2. The project from The Little Sparta Trust will improve access while maintaining the environmental surrounding.
- 7.3. The project from Friends of Stonehouse Park will improve access and will restore and maintain a significant heritage feature within the park and community.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. The risks associated with the project are focused on the potential for cost overruns, delays to the projects or match funding not being secured and the long-term use of the asset. Work will continue with the applicant to help ensure match funding is secured and that projects are delivered broadly on time and within budget.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.
- 9.2. All necessary consultation arrangements have taken place.

Michael McGlynn
Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

25 January 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- ◆ Focuses on people and their needs
- ◆ Encouraging participation in physical and cultural activities
- ◆ Working with communities to promote high quality thriving sustainable communities
- ◆ Improve the road network, influence improvements in public transport and encourage active travel

Previous References

- ◆ Enterprise Resources Committee 8 August 2007
- ◆ Enterprise Resources Committee 23 November 2011

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Completed REF Grant Application Form for application number 589
- ◆ Completed REF Appraisal Scoring Sheet for application number 589

- ◆ Completed REF Grant Application Form for application number 358
- ◆ Completed REF Appraisal Scoring Sheet for application number 358

- ◆ Completed REF Grant Application Form for application number 299
- ◆ Completed REF Appraisal Scoring Sheet for application number 299

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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