

Climate Champions Network Establishment - Initial Actions – Future Objectives

The Community of Barrhill has recently and successfully carried out an extensive Community Futures Programme of work, when residents were employed to engage with our community, identify strategic themes and create a community action plan for the regeneration of our area. The need to save energy, work towards having locally owned renewable energy generation and to enable easier use of public transport, were all identified within the action plan.

By implementing the Community Futures Programme model, as highlighted in the Scottish Government Planning Advice Note (PAN) 81 para 63 “Community Engagement- Planning with People”, we now wish to create a network of climate champions from residents within our own and neighbouring villages. The network will become established while working with the Energy Agency to achieve the major practical outcome from this project, which is to install insulation and draft proofing in our homes and community buildings. The climate champions will form a steering committee, will co-ordinate at a community level and organise community awareness and technical seminar events, appropriate to local needs.

Feasibility studies will prepare the ground for future options to reduce carbon emissions, and the capacity building experience gained, will equip the champions to carry those options forward.

Neighbouring communities in South Ayrshire who would benefit include: Colmonell, Ballantrae, and Barrhill plus many smaller hamlets and isolated homes in between. There will be an interchange of climate champions, with members of the Machars Action Company of Wigtown and their “Carbon Concious Community” programme, to further share experience. By working with this company, it is intended that Bargrennan, Newluce, Glenluce should also benefit. By bringing these small communities together, economies of scale are obtained to reduce costs, and we can all benefit from the experiences of others.

Initial Actions - Energy Saving Measures

Using the approach of the Energy Agency at Hadyard Hill, we shall specify and install, free of charge, loft and cavity wall insulation and draft proofing, in homes and community buildings where it is found to be worthwhile. Utility company Carbon Emission Reduction Target (CERT) funds will be obtained to part fund insulation measures.

Occupants will be surveyed by an appropriate agency, to determine if social benefit should be made available which could also contribute to the cost of insulation.

A high proportion of old housing stock in rural areas does not lend itself easily to conventional, lower cost insulation techniques. A representative selection of these properties will be surveyed to specify energy saving measures which could be funded in part by low interest loans.

Future Objectives, following from Feasibility Studies

The financial and technical feasibility for small scale or pilot renewable energy generation schemes, with local community ownership will be investigated. Consideration will be given to: pico-hydroelectric, wind powered, biomass and anaerobic digestion and include schemes with an educational value or interest to increase community awareness.

A process to achieve part ownership by our communities, of large commercial ventures, will be considered.

Our remote communities, are in the worst decile for deprivation of access to services (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) which gives rise to high use of private cars. The feasibility of a community owned car-park at Barrhill station, to ease the use of public transport will be determined.