

Duneaton Community Council Chairman's Annual Report 2022-23

Chairman Malcolm Muir

General

Duneaton Community Council provides impartial and non-political support for six village communities, each with its own character and priorities and each with its own hinterland of farms and other more remote properties and businesses. All six villages continue to be actively represented on the Community Council and all the villages have now their own working groups and project programmes, supported by our community Development Officer, Liz Steele.

We are an open and accountable group and would urge anybody with a question or issue, or even just interested, to attend our meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 in Robertson Hall; you will be made very welcome. With the increasing amount of money coming into the area via the windfarm operators, it is vital that everybody should have a say in how these significant resources can best be used to enhance this beautiful area, its rich heritage and the quality of life of its residents

Micro Grants

We continue to manage monies from the Clyde Wind Farm Fund, the Clyde Extension Fund and Vention Energy's fund from their Glenkerie operation. The Micro grant application scheme continues to be popular for funding local community-based projects and we hope that communities will continue to access this excellent method of funding. It is great to see such a wide range of project ideas coming from all six villages.

The Clyde Windfarm Extension Fund

Duneaton CC participates in the administration of this fund in partnership with Biggar, Thankerton & Quothquan and Symington Community Councils. The past year has seen awards made to a total value of £472,061 against a total project value of £599,844.

Community Development

Support from the SSE Clyde Extension Fund has continued to allow Duneaton Community Council (DCC) to engage Liz Steele as Community Development Worker (CDW) to work within the 6 Duneaton communities of Abington, Coulter, Crawfordjohn, Lamington, Robertson and Wiston.

With the additional funding, ongoing microgrant and other windfarm funding enquiries and networking with relevant 3rd sector organisations, as Community Development Worker for Duneaton it has been a busy year with many positive outcomes.

The role of the CDW to work with individuals on behalf of their groups, or with unique projects, has given an opportunity to highlight the work of DCC, as well as helping to build confidence for people to create and deliver community initiatives.

Planning and other consultations

At the time of writing, we have six operational windfarms in the DCC area, with a one (Priestgill) due to start construction and a further five in the application stage. The workload generated by

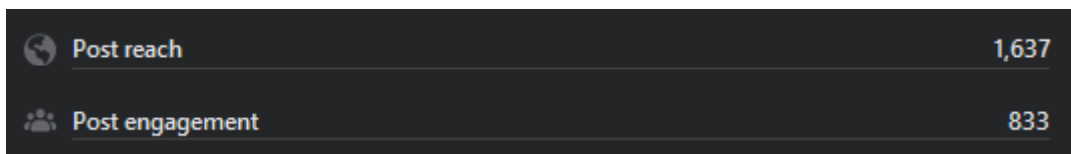
windfarm consultations and negotiating community benefits is considerable and CC members have needed to develop a detailed understanding of the processes involved. Increasingly, developers are putting forward windfarms of over 50 MW generating capacity, meaning that applications go directly to Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit. The loss of direct local planning control over these major and long-term impacts remains a concern. DCC has always been very willing to engage with windfarm developers and operators to ensure the best outcomes and benefits for our community. The large Bodinglee windfarm proposed for the Doulas and Robertson Moors area was submitted for Planning consent to the Energy Consents Unit on 22nd June 2022. DCC issued a questionnaire to assess local views and 37 residents said that they did not support the development. The Community Council did not feel that this relatively low response represented overall community support for a formal objection.

DCC members

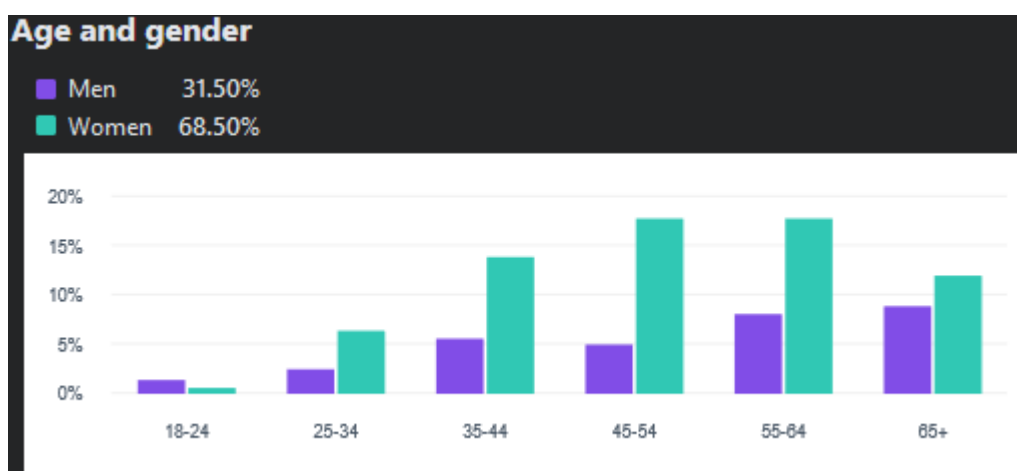
2023 sees the resignation of three members of Duneaton CC; Alison Mitchell, Clare Symonds and Nichola Hill. I would like to thank them all for their contribution.

Communications

Our FB page's posts <https://www.facebook.com/DuneatonCommunityCouncil/> are reaching more than the population of our villages (approx. 1000 people), with high engagement (likes/comments) showing that content we issue is valued by our audience.



We now have 374 FB followers, up 15% from the 327 this time last year.



While our website <https://duneatoncc.weebly.com/> is less popular, it provides access to DCC information for non-Facebook users and allows the DCC to share more complex information and files. Two newsletters have been produced and distributed over 2023 and we are very grateful to the local volunteers who deliver these around the villages and surrounding farms.

Conclusion

Duneaton Community Council remains active and in good health and both succession and communication is being improved by the active network of village committees. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all DCC Members and Associate Members who have worked so hard over the past year and, of course Liz Steele, our Community Development Officer.

Malcolm Muir

Chair, Duneaton Community Council

5th December 2023