

Camster Community Fund

Year 6 (1 September 2018 to 31 August 2019)

Newsletter



E.On, the owner of the Camster Wind Farm, makes an annual donation to this community fund. The Fund is split between the Community Council areas of Latheron, Lybster and Clyth (LLC), Tannach & District (T&D) and Watten (W). This year, each area received £56,368.

The Fund is administered by Foundation Scotland, an independent grant-making charity. A Community Panel, made up of local residents decides how grants are awarded from the Fund.

Since the Fund launched in 2013 the Fund has awarded 122 grants, distributing over £650,000 to community groups in the area. This year saw 21 awards distributing £93,897 from the Fund, including the three microgrant allocations.



How to apply to the Fund

There are two rounds per year with deadlines of 31st March and 30th September. Guidelines for applicants and application forms are online at www.foundationscotland.org.uk/camster/. The application form can be completed online using a web link that can be partially completed and saved for later if necessary, or forwarded for other committee members to read or comment on. Or the application form can be downloaded as a word document. Paper copies of forms are available on request. If your project costs are over £25,000 please contact Eilidh Coll using the details below before submitting a form.

Microgrants

Each community council area has a budget of £2,500 per year to be distributed through the CC as microgrants. Each area operates the microgrant in a slightly different way and your CC can offer further guidance. The ethos of the microgrant is that it can fund smaller projects, non constituted groups or individuals and test new ideas.

Foundation Scotland

Eilidh Gunn, based in Caithness is happy to help with any queries.

Foundation Scotland, 15 Calton Road, Edinburgh EH8 8DL

07801 530218 | eilidh@foundationscotland.org.uk | www.foundationscotland.org.uk

Year 6 Fund Distribution: 21 Awards

Seven awards to groups based in Latheron, Lybster & Clyth

1. **Lybster Community Association** £4,102 to fund a building survey and the transfer of ownership. *Beneficiaries: the 9 Committee Members involved in this stage of the project*
2. **Lybster Golf Club** £14,500 towards replacing the Club's greens mower with a hybrid mower. *Beneficiaries: 80 members, 40 through the Caithness Junior Tournament and 300 annual visitors.*
3. **Latheron Lybster and Clyth Community Development Company** £4,457 for community consultation events to gauge local opinion on a number of community issues. *Beneficiaries: 200; at least 4 events with 50 participants each*
4. **Lybster Community Group** £3,283 to improve and extend the Lybster Christmas Light display. *Beneficiaries: 700 residents in Lybster village*
5. **North Lands Creative Glass** £15,000 to contribute to the Community Design House project. *Participation of around 700 people*
6. **Clyth Community Association** £6,200 to repair the harling on the village hall; for the Christmas party and bonfire night; and to purchase signage. *Beneficiaries: around 90 people who attend the Christmas Party and 60 who attend the Bonfire*
7. **Latheron Lybster and Clyth Community Council** £2,500 microgrant allocation.

Three awards to groups based in Tannach & District

8. **Yarrows Heritage Trust** £3,900 to undertake a feasibility study for an environmental research station to be located at Raggra. *Beneficiaries: around 100 people who regularly attend annual events*
9. **Thrumster Game Fair** £3,282 to contribute to the cost of the 2019 fair. *Beneficiaries: an anticipated 900 visitors*
10. **Tannach and District Community Council** £2,500 microgrant allocation.

Three awards to groups based in Watten

11. **Watten School Parent Council** £1,190 to fund a day trip to Orkney for P5-7 students to visit archaeological sites. *Beneficiaries: 25 children*
12. **Watten School Parent Council** £659 to purchase waterproof suits for all the pupils to use during outdoor activities at the school. *Beneficiaries: 50 children plus staff and families*
13. **Watten Community Council** £2,500 microgrant allocation.

Eight awards to a Caithness wide organisation

14. **Caithness Model and Collectors Club** £3,000 to purchase a storage container. *Beneficiaries: 8 local members, over 1,000 show visitors annually*
15. **MS Therapy Centre (Wick) Ltd** £10,000 towards the refurbishment of the Centre. *Beneficiaries: approximately 40 users, which should significantly increase after the refurb*
16. **Befrienders Highland Ltd** £6,000 to train volunteers within the Fund area. *Beneficiaries: around 7 new friendships*
17. **Science 03** £2,200 towards the Caithness International Science Festival 2019. *Beneficiaries: 80 primary school children within the Fund area*
18. **Caithness Book Club** £600 to erect signposts at local sites associated with various Celtic saints, specifically 'Route 6'. *Beneficiaries: an estimated 250 people who might explore the Routes*
19. **Caithness Family History Society** £500 towards the 2019 Scottish Association of Family History Societies Conference. *Beneficiaries: 60 lecture delegates and 200 conference attendees*
20. **Mey Highland Games** £4,523.50 to purchase marquee inserts, tables and barriers. *Beneficiaries: an estimated 5,000 attendees to the 2019 Games*
21. **Lyth Arts Centre** £3,000 to fund eight performances over 2019 in the Fund area. *Beneficiaries: an audience of 120 in Latheron, 120 in Watten and 180 school children*

Feedback on Previous Projects

The **Thrumster Parent Council** was awarded £17,990 from the E.On Camster Community Fund and £18,000 from another local community benefit fund towards their minibus project in 2015. The Parent Council spent a considerable amount of time researching the best transport solution for their needs and concluded that a mini bus hire scheme over a five year period would offer the best value whilst still being manageable by volunteers.



Through having their own 14-seater mini bus the children of Thrumster Primary School were able to attend the Science Festival, Music Festival and regular swimming lessons much more easily. They were also able to take advantage of invitations to activities such as arts workshops at Lyth Arts Centre which might have otherwise not happened.



However the project did not always run as smoothly as hoped. It had been hoped that other community groups would be able to use the bus, and this did occur to a certain extent but the wider community benefit did not seem to surface. A complexity around driver certification led to a shortage of volunteer drivers. In addition the bus had to be transported to Inverness for maintenance which took it out of service for a days or weeks at a time and left no back up for the regularl excursions. In early 2019, after the project had been running for around two and a half years, it was decided to call it to a halt and look into other options.

Rhona Gill, a Parent Council member who had been involved in the project outset said: *“The initial difference that the grant made was that it allowed the organisation to deliver on a project that was well supported and highlighted as a solution to a much needed service for the school and wider community. Not all projects are a success and it serves as a reminder that we must constantly reassess the project and know when to call it to a halt even before completion.”*

The Panel wished to note that this project was worth pursuing at the time and that this should not in any way be considered a failure. There were no financial penalties for returning the mini bus as an Inverness school was able to take over the lease.

The **Lybster School Parent Council's** outdoor classroom which was installed in early 2018 as part of a wider project to enhance the land surrounding the school football pitch. The project involves planting trees and wildflowers and providing additional recreational space. The Parent Council received an award of £15,834 in 2017 to contribute towards this project.



Yarrows Heritage Trust was awarded £6,000 to contribute towards the 2018 investigation of the Iron Age Swartigill site. In 2015, a few stonework blocks were discovered on the floodplain of Swartigill. It was first thought that the blocks were the remains of an old mill, however on further inspection it was discovered that it was evidence of buildings dating back to the Iron Age. Yarrows Heritage Trust approached the University of Highlands and Islands and with their help further evidence was discovered which suggested a small village had once been there. The site has been well preserved and some highly important artefacts have already been recovered including pottery, a bronze ornament, stone tools and quern stones. The site has no formal protection and it is anticipated that that the excavation will form the basis of any future protection.

The dig had a strong community element, with school children from Thumster Primary school participating as "trainee archaeologists". Under strict guidance they had their own meter square test pit to dig and record what they had found. The excavation serves to give a greater understanding of the transitional period from the late Bronze Age into the era of brochs of which relatively little is known. The site has awakened interest in a subject which might previously been seen as only of interest to academics.

Islay MacLeod, who serves on the Board of Yarrows said: *"The grant enabled us to further explore one of the most important discoveries in the area, and to gain in confidence in running such projects. It will add to our already extensive archive, and lead to more people being involved and understanding their rich cultural heritage on a pristine site which has the potential to understand early Iron Age society, beliefs, land use and domestic/manufacturing life. It enables us to consider the role the site had in relation to the very many contemporaneous broch structures in the area around the site, and its place in the landscape."*

The project was able to make unexpected savings along the way and the Heritage Trust has since returned part of the grant to the Fund.

