

Press Release

Using Windfarm Funding to Benefit Everyone

Dumfriesshire East Community Benefit Group (DECGB) was set up in July 2017 to help communities manage windfarm money from the Ewe Hill 6 and Ewe Hill 16 windfarms. It is possible in the future that other funds will be directed through this organisation also, providing a significant pot of money for investment in the area.

In 2019 the group engaged Creetown Initiative Ltd to carry out a study on how best to use these windfarm funds. The idea being that as well as supporting small local projects as already happens, some funds could be committed to longer-term projects that have a lasting benefit, beyond the life of the windfarm funding. Legacy projects that provide benefits to a wider audience, projects that provide benefits that stretch across the DECGB area, helping the wider community.

The first stage was to carry out one to one interview's with interested parties to get a feel for what is needed in the area. Over 160 interviews have now taken place and as a result several issues and topics emerged. Issues that people want to see dealt with or projects that people felt could benefit the wider area of East Dumfriesshire.

Based on these findings 5,800 questionnaires are about to be delivered across the East Dumfriesshire region between Lockerbie and Langholm, to give everyone the chance to have their say. One questionnaire per household will be delivered between 17th to 20th of February. We hope that people and families will sit down and take a few minutes to fill in the form. Not all questions will be relevant, so we are asking that people only fill in what is important to them.

As well as the topics raised by people in the one to one discussion there is space for people to put forward their ideas. Of course, these ideas may not always be within the terms of the windfarm funds as they stand at present. However future funds may have greater flexibility, so ideas should be aspirational while also having a wider community benefit rather than just a personal benefit.

The result of this work will hopefully lead to projects being delivered. Not everything that people want may be possible, but the survey will help guide the future direction of how the funds are used. The questionnaire will help DECGB determine what is both needed and wanted by the people in the region.

The questionnaires must be returned by 29th February to a FREEPOST address on the back of the form. Every form returned will be entered into a free draw for a prize of £200, providing name and address is provided. For those who would rather fill in a form online the survey is available on <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/DECGB>

This is your chance to have your say. Don't miss it.