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ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL RURAL PARTNERSHIPS

FUNDING REPORT FOR 2011-2012

Submission: 23rd February 2012



Formartine Wind-Turbine Project: Cairnadailly.

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FORMARTINE LOCAL RURAL PARTNERSHIP FUNDING REPORT FOR 2011-2012

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Formartine Partnership was formed in 1997. Since 25th April 2006 the Formartine Partnership has been a Company limited by Guarantee, (SC 301273). It is not a registered charity. Currently there are eleven directors on its Board including a Chairman, a Vice-chairman and a Company Secretary. The Board meets approximately every six weeks.

The Formartine Partnership employs one full-time employee, a Development Officer, who submits a regular Report and plan of work to the Board at each Board meeting.

The Partnership members include:-

All twelve Community Councils in Formartine:-

Auchterless, Inverkeithny and Fisherford; Belhelvie; Collieston and Slains; Ellon; Foveran; Fyvie, Rothern Norman and Monquhitter; Meldrum, Bourtie and Daviot; Methlick; Tarves; Turriff and District; Udney; and Ythan.

The following (mainly) voluntary groups:-

1st Monquhitter Brownies, Cuminstown; Aberdeenshire Care and Repair Project; Aberdeenshire Council; Aberdeenshire Environmental Forum; Balmedie Beaver Scout Group; Balmedie Christmas Lights Group; Busy Bees Playgroup, Turriff; Collieston Amenities Committee; Daviot Playgroup; Ellon Biodiversity Action Group; Ellon Can-do Community recycling; Ellon Civic Pride; Ellon Duke of Edinburgh Open Award Group; Formartine Oral History Project Group; Foveran Partnership; Friends of Haddo Country Park; Fyvie Playgroup; Fyvie Scout Group; Gordon Park Development Group; Gordon Park Playgroup; Gordon Rural Action; Methlick Community Garden Project; Methlick Under-fives; National Farmers Union of Scotland; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; Scottish Agricultural College; Scottish National Heritage; Scottish Rural Property and Business Association; Tarts and Crafts Limited; Turriff and District Ltd; Turriff and District Heritage Society; Turriff Brownies; Turriff Town Pride; Woodhead and Windyhills Community Trust; Ythan District Fishery Board; Ythan Project Volunteers Group and Ythanbank Community Association.

And

Any resident of Formartine may also become a member.

The latest AGM was held on 8th November 2011. All current Directors and Office bearers were re-elected and the audited accounts for 2010-2011 were approved.

ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: the Partnership will need to help groups in their area with information, implementation, and community engagement, to build inclusive and sustainable projects.

Formartine Beginning to Blossom/ Formartine in Bloom 2011

Formartine Beginning to Blossom 2011

The number of schools entering this competition, in its second year, was very disappointing- down from twelve last year to seven. However, the improvement in standards was amazing throughout all the entrants. All had improved so that the winners in effect changed the goalposts for those striving to catch up.

Amongst the highlights this year was the memorial garden at Daviot School with its mural artwork, mosaic, outdoor musical instruments, exercise equipment and tables and benches to make an outdoor classroom and encourage extremely wide links with the curriculum. Tipperty School had added a herb garden and encouraged the local community to help themselves when they wanted extra flavour in their cooking. Needless to say this too links to practical aspects of the curriculum- healthy eating.

An idea which has wider application for schools with tarmac playgrounds was ably demonstrated at Daviot. Its fruit and vegetable “garden” consisted of plastic tubs in a wooden frame in which 32 different varieties of fruit and vegetables were produced. The wider success of this construction was ably demonstrated as the children harvested tatties from one of the tubs. There was a competition as to who could correctly guess the number of tatties produced- eighteen were harvested from one seed potato, which was also found. The amazement, wonderment, sense of achievement and pride displayed on the children’s faces was a sight to behold. Perhaps tatties come into their houses in bags, ready washed or as frozen or oven chips?



Daviot School: fruit and vegetable garden.



Tipperty School: self-service herb garden.

This clearly demonstrates that the competition is practical as well as theoretical, linking the educational curriculum- ecology, sustainability, horticulture, biology, with wider issues, such as cooking, food quality, health and community involvement. It also shows that schools with only tarmac or concrete playgrounds need not be at a disadvantage and have no excuse not to participate!

Formartine Beginning to Blossom 2011: Awards

Winner ~ Tipperty School;

Runner Up ~ Udney Green School;

Highly Commended ~ Daviot School, Arnage School, Fintry School, Balmedie School, Ellon Primary School.

Formartine in Bloom 2011

Fifteen communities entered this year, down from the record seventeen of last year. Last year’s new entries, Balmedie and Foveran, withdrew this year to build up their entries but Methlick entered, thus reducing the number of sizeable communities which have still to participate to three- Newburgh, Potterton and Belhelvie. Judging was in August for the second year running and, again, followed some poor weather which battered the displays. Nevertheless, they were still extremely impressive

and up to previous high standards. However, there are still some entrants who do not systematically record all aspects of the grading criteria which are wider than the quality of the displays, criteria such as recycling, sustainability and community involvement. One aspect which would be mutually beneficial is for communities to work with the local school.



Methlick: War Memorial garden.



Rothienorman: Greenview Centre.

Formartine in Bloom 2011: Awards

Small Community

Winner ~ Udney Station;

Runner Up ~ Woodhead of Fyvie;

Highly Commended ~ Auchterless, Collieston, Ythanbank, Udney Green.

Medium Community

Winner ~ Pitmedden;

Runner Up ~ Tarves;

Highly Commended ~ Rothienorman, Methlick, Fyvie, Cuminestown.

Large Community

Winner ~ Ellon;

Runner Up ~ Oldmeldrum;

Highly Commended ~ Turriff.



Formartine Beginning to Blossom: winners.



Tattie Harvest at Daviot School.

The Awards Ceremony was held in the very comfortable staff room at Meldrum Academy and was again attended by representatives from all of the schools as well as the communities. FP would like to thank the judges Bill Elliott from Aberdeenshire Council and Bob Davis. We would also like to thank the sponsors:- Oceangrove Geoscience Ltd., JRD Equipment, Taylor Design Services, Udney Station Hotel, Kairdson Business Centre, Rambos Tyre Services, Sinclair Contractors- who provide all the prizes and thus produce the competitive element to the competition, and Aberdeenshire Council who cover the cost of administration. FP produced an illustrated Report of the 2010 competitions, to demonstrate the value achieved by the Sponsors' contributions.

Updating and upgrading the New Formartine Partnership web site.

New E-mail address, new PC and telephone number.

These have been up and running since the beginning of the year, working in tandem with the previous systems while the DO familiarised himself with the new system.

Formartine Partnership E-Newsletter.

A Special Edition has been published and circulated on 19th December 2011 to announce the Turbine Project and inform members and friends of the proposed Trust Fund.

Formartine Partnership AGM.

This took place on November 8th 2011 in the newly refurbished Meldrum Town Hall and was attended by 30 members. All Directors were re-elected. Thanks to Maitland Mackie gave a very informative talk entitled: *"The Real Rationale for Renewable Energy and the Opportunities for Local Communities"*.

Grants Administration: Village and Town Enhancement Grant and Rural Youth Transport Grant.

The Partnership continued to administer the above grant schemes on behalf of the Formartine Area Committee. This fosters community engagement and helps the Partnership to develop positive relationships with the applicants. FP can also find additional match funding or alternative grants if the project doesn't fit with the criteria.

'Fits Gan on in Turra', 26th March 2011.

A successful meeting organised by Turriff CLD to showcase community groups in the Turriff area and the Support agencies which could help them. FP was involved both in organising the event and as a Support agency.

Turbine Project: Public Engagement.

FP has carried out a wide-ranging series of events to inform the public and our members about the project, establish their views and keep them updated:-

- Regular reports to Formartine Community Council Forum and Formartine Community Planning Group;
- Press and Journal article, 10th August 2011, and adverts in local papers;
- Presentation to Ythan CC- the Community Council in whose area the sites are located;
- Teaching project with pupils at Arnage School and associated visit to Skelmonae Turbines;
- Special Edition of Formartine Partnership E-Newsletter about the Project;
- Public Exhibition at Arnage to inform local residents;
- Meeting with all Community Councils to establish the Trust Fund.



Arnage School: teaching project.



Arnage School: visit to Skelmonae Turbines.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: PLANNING FOR REAL® AND COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS.

This widely used method of community consultation uses a public exhibition format where a model of the local community is displayed on which policy cards are placed. These suggestions are collated, analysed and the results taken back to a public meeting for endorsement and prioritisation into actions. The community then take ownership, producing a Report and championing the Action Plan.

1. Planning for Real® (PfR®).

1.1. Udney PfR®.

Udney CC held PfRs, in 2008 and 2011. The first suggested a series of projects for the area but, significantly, it endorsed a proposal to develop a community-owned wind turbine to generate income to pay for some of these proposals. The turbine was completed in June 2011, the first wholly community-owned turbine in mainland UK. The second PfR was held to endorse the original proposals and inform a Community Trust which has been formed to disburse the income. The results have been analysed and the priorities confirmed.

1.2. Potterton PfR®,

1.3. Belhelvie and White Cairns PfR®.

1.4. Black Dog PfR®.

Separate prioritising meetings have been held for these communities, completing the public consultation. Belhelvie Community Council have the prioritised results.

1.5. Ellon Town Centre PfR®.

Ellon Strategy Group and Ellon CC have received the raw results of the initial public meeting. A prioritising meeting still needs to be held before the community engagement part can be completed and the process progressed.

1.6. Cuminestown PfR®.

Monquhitter School is completing the model ready for the initial public meeting scheduled for 24th March 2012.

1.7. Foveran PfR® and

1.8. Fyvie PfR®.

Both communities are considering organising a PfR® consultation and have made initial approaches to FP.



Potterton PfR®: Prioritisation meeting.



Newburgh CAS: Prioritising at a World Café.

2. Community Action Surveys (CAS).

This follows the procedure pioneered locally in Balmedie and recorded in the document: Balmedie Views. The major difference is that researchers are employed to distribute and analyse questionnaires and to write up the report and the action plan. Thus they go to the members of the community rather than the latter come to the exhibition. The suggestions are still put before the community for endorsement.

2.1. Newburgh CAS.

The action plan is at the final draft stage. Questionnaires have been constructed, circulated and analysed, and the results from the prioritising meeting incorporated.

2.2. Rothienorman CAS.

This is progressing well. The Community Profile, a directory of groups, activities and services and the analysis of the questionnaire are all complete. A prioritising meeting needs to be organised and that result incorporated into an Action plan.

3. Making it Real (MiR) Community Action Plans.

Community Action Plans were becoming rather delayed because of the workload of Community Councils. Accordingly, Formartine Partnership and the Formartine Community Planning Officer have decided to jointly produce the Action plans on the Community Councils' behalf, before the information becomes out-dated. The drafts will then be sent to the CCs for approval. The following have initially been chosen, as their information is at an appropriate stage. They will be published as part of the *Making it Real* series which are produced by the Aberdeenshire Rural Partnerships and funded by Shell and CPP.

3.1. Udney MiR.

Udney CC had produced an in-house Action plan for the first PFR® consultation and thus the endorsement of the 2011 PFR® exhibition can be straightforwardly incorporated into MiR format. A draft copy has been sent to Udney CC for their consideration.

3.2. Potterton MiR.

3.3. Belhelvie and Whitecairns MiR.

3.4. Black Dog MiR.

Because these have had prioritising meetings, these were considered appropriate choices and these will be next to be produced in MiR format.

4. Community Profiles.

Working closely with CLD, Community Profiles have been completed recently for Balmedie, Pitmedden and Rothienorman.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES: Provide a local advice service to groups seeking to develop Community assets and facilities.

Beaton Hall, Methlick.

As a result of a Feasibility Report paid for by a grant from Awards for All, the group decided not to proceed with a major extension and upgrade but to proceed with making the existing hall more comfortable by improving the toilets and kitchen and redecorating.

Cuminestown: James Tennant Playing Field, All-weather Sports Court.

This project to redevelop the tennis court site into a £91,285 multi-purpose, all-weather sports court is complete, was formally opened in August 2011, and is well used.

Cuminestown: James Tennant Playing Field, Play Park.

This is a £27,000 project, similar to though smaller than that at Oldmeldrum to give the infant play equipment a makeover. Like Meldrum Play, the group have been working with Hazel Simpson from Landscape services to choose and cost equipment and produce a layout plan. They also have had to wait until agreement on a lease was reached with Aberdeenshire Council, and, to avoid competition, for the all-weather court to complete its fundraising. They are now moving very quickly, have obtained £15,000 from the winding up of a local football team, £5,000 from fundraising and are awaiting an imminent decision on a £9,700 application to Awards for All which will complete the fund raising if successful.

Daviot Community Hall.

In 2010 Daviot Community Hall Group were rejected by SRDP despite having the highest grading possible for community facilities. However, the group has not been fazed by this setback. Instead, it has taken stock, built on experience and revised its plans to construct a new-build, timber-framed hall costing £450,000. The group has successfully applied to LEADER for £97,700 and have developed a series of successful fundraising schemes such as a Brick and Keystone campaign, which has raised over £22,000 and a "100 club" The group are also exploring using renewable heating. Currently, a total £357,000 has been raised and a Facebook page has been established to keep members and residents informed.

Ellon Heritage.

This group hope to publish an album of old photographs of Ellon and have had a preliminary meeting to discuss possible sources of grants.

Greeness Community Hall Association.

FP and CLD have been working with this Association to develop a new community building to replace the portacabin which they use currently. This is likely to be based on a modified new-build house, possibly a kit house. Previously community facilities were destroyed when the school burnt down twelve years ago. It is hoped that a resulting insurance pay-out, totalling £62,000, will form the core funding for this. The group have presented a Business plan to the Council to release this insurance money but have been asked to consult further with Council services to confirm the figures and progress the project further.

Meldrum Play: Oldmeldrum Play Park.

Phase I was completed in March 2011 and formally opened with a “Play-in” on July 2nd 2011. Meldrum Play has moved on to Phase II, working with other park user groups to improve the wider facilities. A Park Users Committee has been formed, which is initially exploring the provision of a public toilet as part of upgrading the Pavilion.

Phase 1 remains an excellent example of close cooperation between Meldrum Play, Landscape Services and Formartine Partnership which produced a win-win situation for all concerned. LS agreed to commit their £25 k budget but hold back on putting in the equipment. Meldrum Play was able to use this as core funding up front and trebled it to £74k in just 7 months. Thus cooperation achieved treble the funding, more equipment and, hopefully, because of community involvement, better appreciation.



Meldrum Play: new play equipment.



Cuminstown: All-weather Court.

Methlick Playing Field.

A new group has been formed to upgrade the playing field. There are three phases: to level the football field, to upgrade the play park equipment and to build an all-weather facility. Funding towards this has already been promised from local wind turbine developments and phase I is almost ready to start.

Gallows Hill Community Pavilion, Newburgh.

This aims to make better use of the existing football pitch and tennis court, Foveran Partnership are developing a £255,000 project for the construction of a changing pavilion with a room for community use, the installation of floodlights and an all-weather surface on the courts and the erection of a small wind turbine to reduce running costs. Fundraising is progressing well, having raised approx £180,000. LEADER has awarded the project £80,000, the group has raised nearly £20,000 themselves, have funds from Planning gain, and Top-up money. They are awaiting a decision from Sportscotland to complete the funding.

Pitmedden Play Park.

This group have established that planning permission is not needed for their proposed site and have recently set up a committee to explore constitutions and funding sources

Tarves Community Garden.

This is broad group of Tarves residents spearheaded by the play group. They are hoping to transform an overgrown area in Tarves next to the church hall, into a community garden which will have

different areas for the infants to learn about the environment and pensioners to enjoy. The church has already given the land and there are lots of offers of in-kind help and support.

Turriff: Baden Powell Centre.

This Scout/ Guide troop have drawn up detailed plans and are continuing to raise funds and apply for grants. They have successfully approached local wind turbine developers for community benefit.

Turriff Pre-school Playgroup.

Turriff Pre-school Playgroup had developed plans for their own hall but are now working constructively with the Baden Powell group above on a joint facility.

Udny Station Community Centre.

Udny Station Community Centre has installed PV panels to reduce running costs and gain an income from FITS. A previous energy audit considered their requirements and suggested alternative generators but the PV panels give the best return for the current use of the hall and create the least disruption while being installed. £14,000 in grants has been obtained.

Ythan Health and Wellbeing.

This group intended to establish a multi-purpose building in Ellon to provide day care services and opportunities for people with long term health problems. However, it has recently disbanded as it was unable to secure support for staff costs.

Ythanvale Home.

DO is working with a volunteer gardener and Landscape Services to develop a sensory garden for the residents.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: provide basic, initial business and administrative advice to community and social enterprises seeking to develop economic opportunities.

Formartine Tourist Map.

This continues to be distributed around the tourist venues in Formartine.

Hill of Fiddes Community Fund

FP worked with local residents and Foveran Community Council to set up a constitution and establish a group to manage this fund. On December 5th 2011, the Fund was presented with its first income, a cheque for £20,000 from Broadview Energy, the operator of the Turbines.



Hill of Fiddes Community Fund: Cheque Award.



Meldrum Play: Formal Opening.

Methlick Community Council Trust.

FP has held two meetings with Methlick CC to set up a group to manage income from a new local turbine. They are exploring establishing a SCIO and holding a Planning for Real to establish the communities views as to how the income should be spent.

Put Community Coop.

Put activities have been suspended this year because of a reduction in funding from Aberdeenshire Council. The opportunity has been taken to review activities and increase volunteers.

Tarts and Crafts Community Café and Craft Gallery.

FP has had several meetings with a view to strengthening the committee and finding funding..

Udny Community Wind Turbine Co. Ltd.

In June 2011, this project was completed, the Turbine erected and started to produce power and income. It is the first wholly community-owned turbine in mainland UK. Well done!



Udny Community Wind Turbine Co. Ltd.: Driving force;



Erecting the Turbine.

Udny Community Trust Co Ltd.

This will disburse funds from the above. It is now formally established, the Directors elected, officers appointed and programme decided.

Walking in Formartine.

This series of pamphlets continues to be sold from Formartine libraries but stocks are nearly exhausted.

Ythan Way- long distance footpath.

FP has applied to Energetica to develop a project to identify a potential route for a long distance footpath along the Ythan Valley from Forvie to Fyvie. This footpath would connect all the major tourist attractions in the area and link the existing long distance footpaths and cycle ways. The survey will also identify suitable access points with car parking, bus interchange and picnic areas; establish land ownership; estimate construction costs; and suggest phasing.

FUTURE CORE FUNDING AND REVENUE GENERATING: Investigate possible sources of future core funding and undertake revenue generating activities, to ensure the long term viability of Formartine Partnership Ltd.

All FP's core funding comes from Aberdeenshire Council. Thus all our eggs are in one basket and, for several years, FP has been investigating alternative sources to become less dependent. Because of the cutbacks, our core funding for 2011-12 was reduced by 19.5%, from £33,500 to £27,000.

Formartine Partnership Turbine Project.

Last year, FP was offered an exciting opportunity to achieve **our own long-term financial security**, and to offer **additional financial support through a Trust Fund to Communities** and Community Organisations throughout Formartine thus partially offsetting the cutbacks.

David Smith, a local farmer from Cloffrickford, offered FP a very generous 20% share in a Wind Turbine development located in the Arnage area. This is a much larger share in income than the usual voluntary Community Benefit of £2,000 per MW. However, this also involves 20% of the construction costs, too, which is anticipated to come from a commercial loan when and if planning permission is granted. Although anticipated income is variable depending upon wind strength, it is estimated that the income for the Partnership will be £60,000 pa and this could rise progressively as

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the construction loan is repaid. We have formed a Joint Venture LLP with David Smith's Company for a five turbines, 4 MW development on two sites- Cairnadailly and Turner Hall. This will be called the '*Formartine Renewable Energy Partnership LLP*' and it will manage turbine development, construction and operation.

The **Trust Fund** will probably be a Company Limited by Guarantee and a registered charity to benefit from tax allowances and so increase funds for disbursement. We believe that this will be a very effective use of Community Benefit because:-

- Every Community in Formartine will be eligible to benefit;
- It is not dependent on the presence (or absence) of turbines in the locality;
- It is not dependent on Developers' whims;
- It will be professional, neutral and transparent, and have clear policies and criteria;
- Income will be approx. £75,000/MW annually, rising over the 20+ years of the turbine's life.

The Trust Fund will also allow FP to be more effective in the support we give to organisations for we will be able to:-

- Provide grant funding for projects which we are already facilitating- thus establish a '*one-stop-shop*' and a '*bigger bang*' for our facilitation;
- Provide '*seed-corn funding*' and '*pump-prime*' access to match funding- the initial grant is often the most difficult to raise.

CARES Loan Fund

This is a new Scottish Government fund to encourage renewable projects to be developed by and to benefit locals by removing much of the risk involved. It is for locally-owned Renewables projects with a minimum of 20% Community Benefit and a maximum size of 5MW. It is written off if Planning permission is refused and added to the construction loan if it is granted. FP has been offered a loan of £124,000 in the first tranche. This will cover:- legal costs, EIA surveys, planning fees, grid connection, land leases etc. for the Turner Hall site.

Grasping the Moment

Many issues- Global, national, local and technological are coalescing to favour this project at the present time:-

- Fossil fuel resources are declining and their prices rising;
- Global warming is threatening;
- Many national Governments are encouraging a move towards Renewables;
- Currently, there is a technological gap which only Onshore wind can supply;
- Our venture fits with UK Government policies (FITs- favourable Feed-in-Tariffs);
- There is a close fit with Scottish Government policies- keep benefits local, CARES loan, revitalised and sustainable rural communities, '*Route map for Renewable Energy in Scotland*';
- Generous offer from David Smith, local farmer.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to make a difference in Formartine for the next 20-25 years. It is a window of opportunity when the economic context, the financial situation, Government policies, energy context, technological know-how and local opportunity come together to promote a direction for FP. It will support Formartine organisations to offset the cutbacks, improve their communities' facilities and quality of life and give FP security.

INFORMATION FLOW: Act as an intermediary between Aberdeenshire Council, Community Planning Partners the Local Community Group and the wider community ensuring a two-way flow of information relating to needs and priorities as one of the voluntary sector partners.

Aberdeenshire Rural Partnership promotional pamphlet.

FP is involved in producing promotional pamphlet for partners in the Council services and Community Planning Partnership.

Formartine Community Council Forum; Formartine Community Planning Group.

FP regularly attends the Formartine Community Council Forum and is a partner on the Formartine Community Planning Group, Balmedie LCPG, and Turriff LCPG. It is a member of the steering group for the various Community Action Surveys. FP also belongs to the Autism sub-group Of Formartine LCPG. The DO provides regular Reports which update FP's activities for these bodies.

LEVERAGE

Leverage 2011-2012

Completed projects 2011-12		
Cuminestown: James Tennant Playing Field- All-weather Sports Court.		£91,285
Udny Station Community Centre.		£14,000
Hill of Fiddes Community Fund.		£20,000
Total		£125,285
Well-advanced On-going projects 2011-12		
	(Est cost)	Achieved
Cuminestown: James Tennant Playing Field- Play Park make-over.	£26,791	£21,000
Daviot Community Hall.	£447,700	£357,000
Newburgh: Gallows Hill Community Pavilion	£255,000	£180,000
Total	£729,491	£558,000
CARES loan to Formartine Partnership for Turbine Project		£124,000
TOTAL		£807,285

NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

FP is an active member of Aberdeenshire Rural Partnership Federation (ARPF) and regularly attends its meetings FP deputises on Aberdeenshire Community Planning Executive. FP has been actively involved in re-establishing an LRP for Garioch.

FP also works closely with Community Learning and Development on Community Profiles and Community Engagement exercises and on the latter with Formartine Community Planning Officer too. FP also works closely with Landscape services on Play Park makeovers and community gardens.

FP belongs to The Development Trusts Association Scotland and the DO attended its Annual meeting in Cumbernauld in September 2011. FP is a new member of Community Energy Scotland and attended its Annual meeting in Inverness in October and a subsequent training day.

FP also is a regular attender of the Aberdeenshire Community Wind and Hydro Group.

EXPLAIN THE MAIN CHANGES AND CHALLENGES TO BOTH THE ORGANISATION AND THE COMMUNITIES

Reduction in Aberdeenshire Council Funding.

Formartine Partnership's core funding was reduced from £32,500 to £27,000 in 2011-12. The initial budget briefing proposed that the Local Rural Partnership fund would be held steady for 2012-13. The Council has agreed its budget for 2012-13 but at the time of writing, the distribution between the individual LRPs has still to be announced. However, the contribution from the Area Committee will be reduced by a further £1,000.

Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER.

Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER is no longer accepting further applications for funding as its current budget has been fully allocated. This will result in substantial problems in obtaining funding for large

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projects for there are few alternative sources. It has been very successful, supporting 116 projects in Aberdeenshire and contributing £4.09 million towards total project costs of £16.14 million. In Formartine it supported 18 projects with £826,123 towards total project costs of £5,395,390.

Scottish Government support for Third Sector- Single Interface, AVA and AVA Network.

The AVA (Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action) was created in 2010 by the two CVSs (Councils for Voluntary Service) in Aberdeenshire and the VCA (Volunteering Centre Aberdeenshire) to receive Scottish Government funding from April 2011 via the newly-created Single Interface. This Single Interface was intended to be the sole link between the Scottish Government and the Third sector but it has totally excluded the Aberdeenshire Rural Partnerships (ARPs) who are very active here but absent in other Local Authority areas.

Negotiations between AVA and ARPs were opened in 2010 to establish an AVA Network to include all organisations providing infrastructure support to the Third sector in Aberdeenshire, A Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Working was agreed in early 2011 for the year until March 2012. Network members also agreed that joint Action plans would be developed to identify the areas of support that each Organisation provides in each of the Areas of Aberdeenshire. Only one joint Action plan has been completed and there has been a distinct reluctance by AVA to progress joint Action plans further in other areas, including Formartine.

Thus the Aberdeenshire Rural Partnerships, despite their very significant contribution, are not recognised by the Scottish Government as being part of the infrastructure support for the Third sector in Aberdeenshire.

The ARPs have three areas of concern arising from this situation:-

1. The invisibility of the ARPs to the Scottish Government- the lack of awareness let alone recognition by Scottish Government that there is a very effective Third sector support mechanism in Aberdeenshire independent of the CVSs;
2. ARPs' exclusion from current and future Scottish Government funding and, indeed, from communications, information and notices of relevant funding opportunities;
3. The ineffectiveness of the AVA in allowing the Memorandum of Understanding to lapse.

INCOME and EXPENDITURE 2010-11.

The audited accounts for 2010-11 are presented as an **Appendix**. Please note that these accounts are for the financial year preceding the 19% cut in core funding.