

# CASE STUDY

## NEWMILNS REGENERATION ASSOCIATION: VESUVIUS ENERGY PARK - PHASE 1 FEASIBILITY STUDY

Funding Amount: £21,487

Community Led local Development - Ayrshire Rural and Islands Ambition (ARIA) – Small Capital Fund (2022/23)



## WE LOVE NEWMILNS

Newmilns Regeneration Association is a voluntary organisation concerned with preserving the heritage of Newmilns and promoting regeneration within the town.

### BACKGROUND

Newmilns Regeneration Association (NRA) is run by a group of volunteers who all have one goal at the heart of everything they do - regenerate the community.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The NRA had an exciting vision that promotes renewable energy, a move towards a net zero town and funding of regeneration. The NRA sought funding for a feasibility study into the Newmilns Vesuvius Energy Park Project.

The purpose of the study was to explore whether the development of a Photo Voltaic (PV) farm at the former Vesuvius Crucible Manufacturing site at Browns Street, Newmilns, was financially feasible.

### WHAT DID THE PROJECT SET OUT TO ACHIEVE?

Construction of the PV Farm would be the first phase of a multi-phase community project that aims to help regenerate Newmilns and the local economy.

Further phases could involve the installation of additional energy generating plant within the site, conversion of the sheds to provide a range of business units and the development of a business innovation and start up hub.

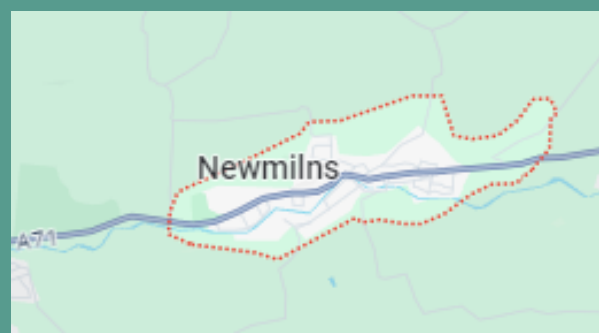
### AT A GLANCE

#### CHALLENGES

- Supply chain issues
- Cost of living crisis
- Seeking further funding

#### BENEFITS

- NetZero / Climate action & reducing carbon emissions
- Community capacity building
- Engaging with or providing employment for young people



'The requirements for the application were quite clear and the application guidance and form steered you through the process..'

*Newmilns Regeneration Association*

## HOW DID YOU FIND THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

The requirements for the application were quite clear and the application guidance and form steered you through the process. Angela at ARIA was most helpful in answering any questions and providing steer through to completion. Our project was quite complex and required us to bring together a number of professionals with unique skills and experience.

The most challenging aspect was getting three quotes for some of the work, which we did where possible but the knockbacks when asking for quotes were also accepted as evidence that we had tried to fulfil that requirement. Timelines were tight but we knew what we were signing up for so our whole group pulled together in getting all the required information and documents together for the application deadline.

For the completion timeline, we would recommend taking account of holidays - our project straddled Christmas / New Year, so you can lose a good fortnight when people are on leave.

## WHO WILL THE PROJECT BENEFIT AND HOW?

Unfortunately the outcome of the feasibility study was not what we had hoped for. It showed that the biggest stumbling block was that the Energy Network could not take in the 1.2Mb of energy that the project could create, in fact it would be capped at just 200kb.

This would mean that if the intention of supplying the local businesses was to be realised then we would have had to build our own energy supply network. While possible, the costs were prohibitive and would not be of financial benefit to the businesses. It would also limit who we could supply, there was not an option for supplying to households.

However, the activity of investigating the feasibility has invoked interest in part of the site from a new business, with members of the team assisting them where possible. It also isn't the end of our ambition - the highlighted the repurposing of some of the buildings into business units.

## WHAT STAGE IS THE PROJECT AT NOW?

The feasibility project produced a five part report, with detailed reports from each of the three teams (ESRU, OCCAM and Johnston Carmichael) and brought together with an introduction and conclusion by our project manager (KD Associates) in early March 2023. This was presented to the NRA Trustees, with copies also distributed to ARIA and other key stakeholders.

The feasibility showed that the overall project was not viable within the limitations of the current energy network. But, rather than walk away from the site, the NRA choose to explore further opportunities.

## WHAT BENEFITS HAVE YOU SEEN ASA RESULT OF THE PROJECT?

The benefit for ourselves, is that we have a raft of information that provides an input into our Feasibility Phase 2, we aren't starting from scratch again!

The first phase has identified a redirection of the plans for the regeneration of the site. We hope that our end plans will ensure that this once derelict area within Newmilns can once again be used for business development and bring new employment opportunities to the town and also provide revenue to the group to allow other regeneration initiatives to be taken forward.

## WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED DURING THIS PROJECT AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

We had to tie down the requirements for the feasibility from the start, the old Vesuvius site is huge and the potentials are vast. So the biggest challenge was focus of the requirement for each of the teams.

Making sure that the PV farm, utilizing the existing structures of the buildings was kept as the main aim of the study for OCCAM architects and the quantity surveyors and engineers they co-ordinated.

## IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY ON REFLECTION?

We are not sure that we would have done anything differently, this was a feasibility study after all. While the outcome was not what we would have hoped, we have not let it defeat our overall regeneration goals and are coming back fighting.

The team were excellent and worked hard within a relatively small budget for what we were asking of them. So other than finding a genie who would have granted us three wishes, the project was successfully executed to produce a feasibility study into whether a PV Farm could be created on the old Vesuvius site in Newmilns.

## FINALLY, WHAT ADVICE COULD YOU OFFER FOR ANYONE LOOKING TO TAKE ON A SIMILAR PROJECT?

The best advice would be to get the right people in place, their knowledge and experience will be your greatest asset.

## FUNDING INFORMATION

'Community Led Local Development' or 'CLLD' gives local communities the power to tackle their own, local challenges.

By building knowledge and skills, supporting new ideas and encouraging cooperation, CLLD helps to create viable and resilient communities.

CLLD activity can support Community Wealth Building initiatives and opportunities to help enable Just Transition priorities.

£8.6 million has been allocated to [Local Action Groups](#) (LAG) to support CLLD within their areas through the Rural Community Led Fund (RCLF) in 2022-23.

Ayrshire LAG used their funding to establish the [Ayrshire Rural and Islands Ambition \(ARIA\) Fund](#)

You can find further information about current funding availability at the Scottish Rural Network Website including a free online [funding search tool](#) for your charity, community group or social enterprise.

From small grants to funding for big capital projects, we can help you track down the funding you need to make a difference in your community. The Scottish Rural Network is a one-stop-shop for news and information about rural development.

**Don't miss a thing! [Sign up for our email newsletter](#) and you'll get the latest news from across rural Scotland**

