

CASE STUDY

ROSEMARKIE AMENITIES ASSOCIATION

Funding Amount: £5340.86

Community Led local Development - Rural Communities into Action fund (2021/22)

BACKGROUND

Based on The Black isle, the Rosemarkie Amenities Association (RAA) obtained funding from the Scottish Government's Rural Communities into Action fund as part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) commitment to Community Led Local Development (CLLD).

The funding was used to purchase equipment to assist with ground maintenance of community shared spaces and was delivered through Inspiring Scotland, who supported the applicant through the process.

Below, Gareth Phillips of RAA shares details of the project development and lessons learned.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The intention of the project was to use a self-propelled tractor unit to maintain local green spaces and path networks in order to encourage an increase in their use.

The funding allowed the purchase of a Tracmaster BCS740, a small self-propelled 'tractor' unit (walk-behind rather than sit-in) that can host a diverse range of attachments.

Our community green spaces had seen diminishing use due to becoming overgrown. This was particularly relevant for the popular coastal path (a core path), which was becoming so overgrown in summer months, that it was impassable. By taking the maintenance into our own hands we've seen a significant increase use of the green spaces, particularly by young people.



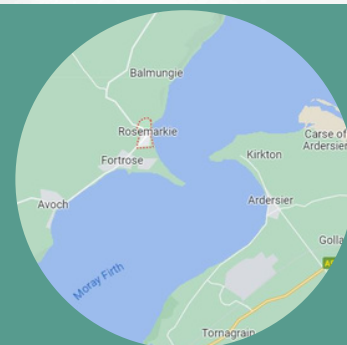
AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGES

- Underused community assets
- Lack of equipment
- Visual impact

BENEFITS

- Improved access
- Skills training
- Increased community use of outdoor space



GARETH PHILLIPS

Rosemarkie Amenities Association

"Whatever you're thinking, think bigger - even if it's just a wee bit bigger!"

We see this as a great contributor to wellbeing and mental health as there are many benefits to spending time outdoors in pleasant spaces. This has also enabled us to take this action into our own hands and therefore increased our community resilience, not having to rely on other parties to do this work, which inevitably meant it wouldn't get done at all.

WHAT STAGE IS THE PROJECT AT NOW?

The project will never be 'finished' per se, as the machine will continue to be used annually for this work and, we hope, other kinds of work once we can purchase additional attachments for it.

We are currently looking at a wood-chipper attachment that could help the village with processing green waste as well as Christmas trees, which could then be used by the community as mulch for gardening and reducing instances of fly-tipping of garden waste.

We hope we can continue building on the foundation that this grant has provided us to become a greener, prettier, and more self-sufficient community

WHO WILL THE PROJECT BENEFIT AND HOW?

Local young people have benefitted and we've seen an increase in use of greenspaces, particularly by young people during the summer as well as for winter activities such as sledging that weren't possible before due to the state of the areas.

The local population in general are benefitting as the village is much better maintained and aesthetically pleasing.

We've had a lot of grateful feedback for the work we do in keeping the village looking nice. We have also had lots of positive feedback from local walkers, particularly the elderly, who can now use the coastal path in summer, which is an easier surface for walking on compared to walking on soft sand.

Tourists have also benefited for the same reasons.



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

Volunteer time is really the only issue. We have successfully increased our volunteer numbers but general availability of volunteers is difficult, as many have family and other commitments.

Through the summer months the maintenance can be full-on and require a lot of weekends to be sacrificed, but ultimately we have managed to maintain a consistent level of work.

WHAT BENEFITS HAVE YOU SEEN AS A RESULT OF THE PROJECT?

We have increased the capacity and resilience of the community by being more self-sufficient, which is great.

We have also encouraged an increase in use of outdoor spaces which will no doubt have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Another benefit is that this has raised the possibility of creating opportunities to train young people. We are currently scoping the possibility of providing consistent work opportunities to young people, in partnership with Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) where they can come and learn how to use tools and machines used in maintaining paths and green spaces. We hope this might be able to feed into qualifications such as the VQ in Estate Management.

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

Whatever you're thinking, think bigger - even if it's just a wee bit bigger!

Once you get rolling with something like this you soon realise there is so much more to be done, so take the time to really think where you can make big impacts with small efforts and think about what you might be able to get to help you achieve it.

FINALLY, ON REFLECTION, IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

I would have been more bold and asked for more money for equipment!

We are almost victims of our own success insofar that people value what we do so much. We keep doing more and more, but we're beginning to stretch ourselves thin, much in the same way we were before we got this machine.

There is so much more we can do to better use our green spaces but we need more motorised or motor-manual equipment to do that in an efficient manner, particularly when constrained by volunteer time.

We also should've looked at getting funding for a proper facility to house/store our equipment.

Currently we're muddling on with a shipping container as a store, but ideally we could do with a proper workshop to store our ever growing inventory of tools and machines, particularly if we want to host young people through the DYW as we would need a more suitable space.

The [Rural Communities Ideas into Action](#) (RCIA, 2021-22) funding builds on the positive legacy of the LEADER Programme funding and was part of two test of change pilots which were delivered in 2021-22 (RCIA and the 'Rural Communities Testing Change (RCTC)').

These funds jointly made £3.3 million of funding available to test future approaches to CLLD in rural and island communities in Scotland.

You can find further information about current funding availability at the Scottish Rural Network Website including a free local, 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.

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