

Linlithgow Community Development Trust Chair's Annual Report for the period ending 31st March 2021



Welcome to the Chair's Annual Report. The Trust has had another very busy year, with development of existing work and the take up of new projects. The increased workload has been greatly led by the volunteer Board who have dedicated many hundreds of hours to the work of the Trust. We have also been ably supported by our staff, who also in turn do so much more than is asked of them.

This year we have benefitted from funds from the Scottish Government. This helped pay for our two part time Development Workers, Pamela Barnes, and Susan Miller, plus tech support from Ange Wilkinson and social media support from Helen Hassall.

The beginning of the period of this Annual Report coincided with the start of the pandemic which brought great challenges to our community and the activities that could take place. With our developing role as an anchor organisation within the town, many organisations collaborated under our convenorship to discuss, plan, and deliver services to many people. We are grateful to have quickly received funding from the Scottish Government various Covid Funds that enabled us to fund work supporting the most vulnerable and isolated during the extraordinary first months of the pandemic. We would like to thank the following organisations with whom we were able to cooperate and collaborate: Linlithgow Churches Together, Linlithgow Link, Linlithgow Day Care Centre, 1st Step Development Ventures and the Black Bitch Magazine. A legacy from this inter organisational work is that a comprehensive consultation of community needs will be taking place in 2021 /22.

In October of 2020, following many discussions, the members of Transition Linlithgow, a local charity dedicated to taking action on issues of sustainability and climate change voted to wind themselves as a separate organisation and become a part of the Trust. This has been carried out with great cooperation and harmony, and we welcomed the three Transition Linlithgow Trustees onto our Board. While the pandemic greatly inhibited much of Transition Linlithgow's initiatives, it is hoped that as the covid restrictions ease activities will recommence and be developed further, such as the Tool Library and ebike hire.

In the early months of 2021, discussions took place with West Lothian Council about community use of the former Library Building at the Vennel in Linlithgow. These were conducted with great support from Councillors and officials. It is intended, restrictions apart, to have the building open for community use in the Autumn of 2021.

The [Cycle Circuit](#) continues to occupy a great deal of our time. However, the Covid pandemic was a terrible break on the plans for the new Cycle Facilities Fund that was to be announced for the development of major facilities in Scotland in anticipation of the World Cycling Championships being held in Scotland in 2023. To date, detailed work continues on our Business Plan in relation to the lease, procurement, contingencies and design. We also appreciate the ongoing committed support from staff at West Lothian Council and the invaluable support of West Lothian Leisure, Scottish Cycling, and the cycling community across Scotland. An announcement on the Cycle Circuit's plans is expected in Autumn 2021.

Our community website, mylinlithgow.com, continues to be welcomed and successful. Over 45,000 people made use of this online resource during the year. During the Covid crisis the site became a valuable resource highlighting Covid guidance, promoting the local Coronavirus Support Helpline number, and providing a place for local people to volunteer to help those shielding. The webcam was particularly popular during lockdowns, with friends of Linlithgow dropping in from afar to see how the town was doing. A calendar of online events and activities provided inspiration for people stuck at home, plus the directory of local businesses and community groups provided up to date information on available local support and delivery services.

Our renewable energy project, [Linlith-Go-Solar](#), in collaboration with Linlithgow Rugby Club, Linlithgow Sports Club and Linlithgow Golf Club to install solar panels on their roofs, with energy generated to be sold to the club and surplus funds being put back into the community continues to thrive. This year good discussions took place about developing other sites, however progress towards this aspiration was greatly inhibited by the pandemic. This work, headed up by Neil Barnes, continues to attract interest from several organisations across the UK and gives us confidence in developing renewables for community benefit. Additionally, Neil continues to encourage learning and involvement of young people via the Young Energy Enterprise Group.

I will end by saying many thanks to my fellow Directors who have put much time and effort into making all the above a reality. I know they, like me, are excited for the year ahead. On behalf of them, I'd also like to recognise the enthusiasm and enterprise of our staff and advisors, (Pamela Barnes, Susan Miller, Ange Wilkinson and Helen Hassall) who have been of tremendous support to the Trust. And a final thanks then goes to you to the individuals and organisations in the town that continue to support our work.



Fraser Falconer
Chairperson
Linlithgow Community Development Trust