

**Extract from an external evaluation of the  
RWE Innogy An Suidhe Community Fund**

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for Foundation Scotland

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## 1. Fund Overview

The **RWE Innogy An Suidhe Community Fund** was established in 2011 as a single and joint fund available to communities in four areas in Argyll and Bute (providing they fall within a 10km radius of the An Suidhe wind farm). The four areas are Dalavich, Eredine (within Glenorchy & Innishail), Inveraray and Furnace.

At the point at which the fund was established, in 2008, RWE Npower Renewables (now RWE Innogy UK Ltd) undertook to make payments to the Fund equivalent to £28,500 per annum for 25 years, rising in line with the Retail Price Index.

The fund provides grants of up to £7,000 to constituted voluntary and community groups for charitable activities that fall within three broad priorities:

- Enhancing the quality of life for local residents;
- Contributing to vibrant, healthy, successful and sustainable communities;
- Promoting community spirit and encouraging community activity.

A wide range of costs and activities are eligible for funding, for example: equipment costs; running costs for local groups; staff or sessional worker costs and consultations, maintenance or refurbishment of community facilities.

The Fund is managed by Foundation Scotland, which carries out discrete tasks such as promoting the opportunity to apply for a grant within the area of benefit; receiving, logging and assessing applications; presenting assessed applications and recommendations to the Panel; notifying applicants of Panel decisions; managing grant agreements and reporting to the Developer on Fund activity.

Decisions on funding are made by the An Suidhe Community Fund Panel which, guided by a Terms of Reference, comprises equal representation of two people from each of the four Community Council areas:

- Dalavich Area - The Dalavich Improvement Group (DIG)
- Furnace Area – Furnace Community Council (FCC)
- Inveraray Area – Inveraray Community Council (ICC)
- Eredine Area – Glenorchy and Innishail Community Council (GICC)

The Fund is not proportioned between the different communities; instead the Panel try to balance the funds across the four areas. In addition, the An Suidhe Fund operates a micro grants scheme which is available to un-constituted groups or individuals of awards up to £250.

There were 51 applications made in total to the An Suidhe Fund as at February 2014, of which 9 were rejected, one was withdrawn, and one was cancelled.

The number, distribution and total value of funded projects across the three areas is illustrated in Table 1. Up to February 2014 a total of 40 projects with a combined value of **£112,543** had been awarded funding.

Dalavich received the highest amount of funding, for nine projects; over twice as much funding as the Inveraray area for example, which had only slightly more projects funded. Projects in Dalavich therefore received on average larger grants than those in Inveraray, and indeed those in Furnace, which also had nine projects funded. The Eredine area

received significantly less funding than any other area, at around half the amount awarded to, Inveraray, which received the next lowest amount. Eredine also had the lowest number of projects.

*Table 1: Distribution of projects and funding across An Suidhe fund areas*

Area	Number of funded projects	Total value of funded projects
Dalavich	9	£43,181
Furnace	9	£31,516
Eredine	6	£9,429
Inveraray	11	£19,143
Pan-area projects	5	£9,274
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>£112,543</b>

## 2. Types of Organisations Funded

A coding framework was created for the Fund database to distinguish the main purpose of the organisation, and organisations were assigned a code from the following list:

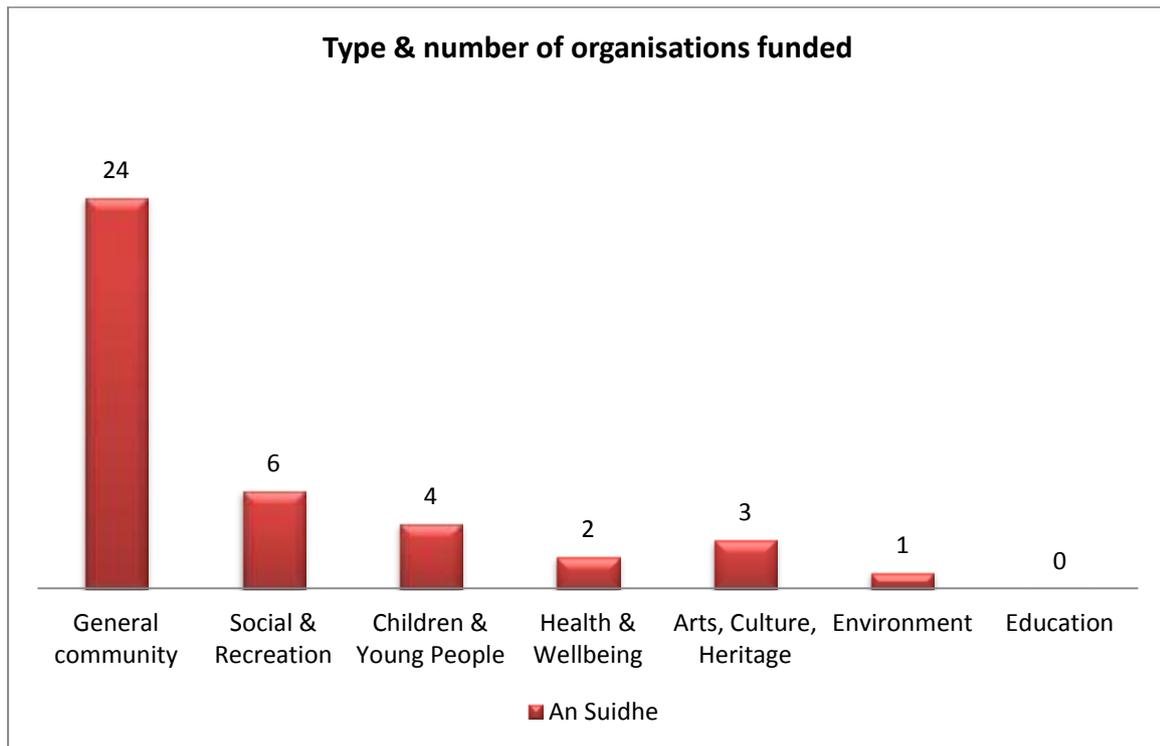
- Arts, Culture & Heritage
- Children, Young People and Families
- Education
- Environment
- General Community
- Health & Wellbeing
- Sports & Recreation

The code was assigned based on the organisation name and the description of the kind of project work they had been awarded funding for. If there was any ambiguity an internet search was carried out to establish the type of organisation. In total, 40 organisations received funding through the An Suidhe Fund. Some organisations received more than one grant.

As Chart 1 illustrates, the majority (over half) of funded organisations were 'general community' organisations that exist to serve the whole community rather than one theme (e.g. environment) or beneficiary group (e.g. young people). Example of organisations under the 'General Community' code includes Community Councils, community support groups, development groups and residents associations.

The next most common type of organisation focused on sports and recreation, including bowling, tennis and football clubs and a games organisation. Whilst relatively few organisations have 'Environment' as their sole purpose, it is important to note that much of the activity carried out by some 'General Community' organisations may be for the benefit of the environment.

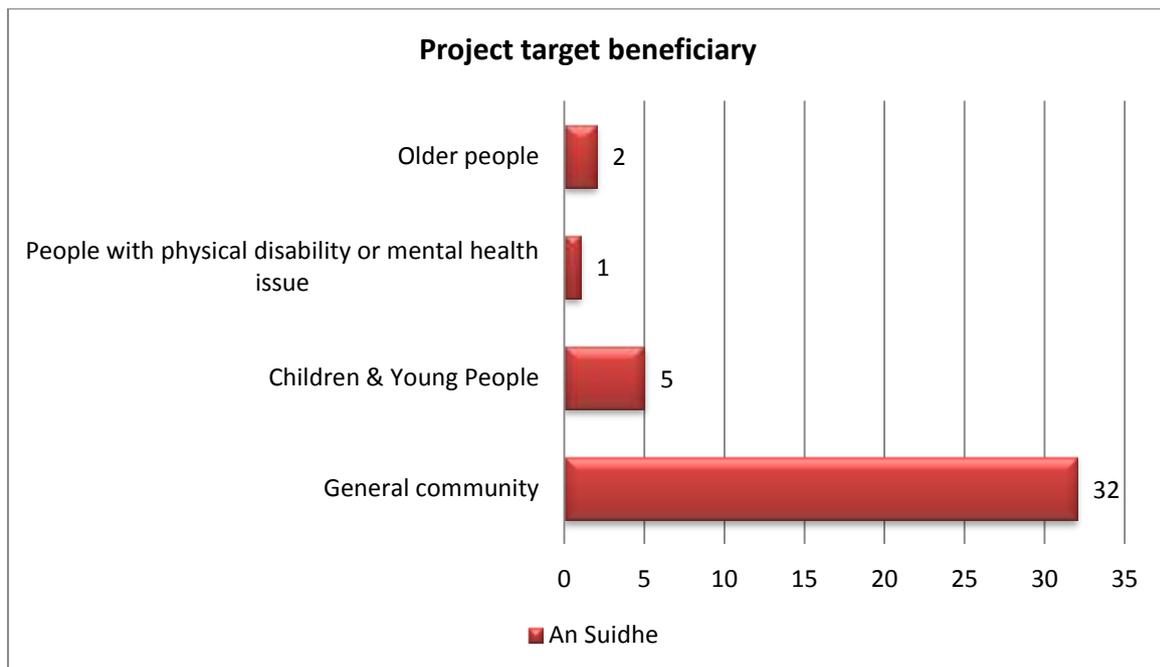
*Chart 1: Type & number of organisations funded*



### 3. Types of Beneficiaries Funded

A second code was created for the target beneficiaries of funded projects. Chart 2 illustrates that, in line with the most common organisation type, 'the general community' was the primary beneficiary group for the vast majority of funded projects (almost four fifth). There were few projects targeted specifically at older people and people with either physical disabilities or mental health problems.

Chart 2: Target beneficiaries of funded projects



#### 4. Types of Projects Funded

Codes were also created for different types of projects that received funding. Project types fell into eight different project types as per the following list:

- Physical goods (e.g. items of equipment)
- Refurbishment and regeneration (e.g. painting a hall)
- Information, publishing & publicity (e.g. community newsletter)
- Event (e.g. community day)
- Running costs (e.g. admin, travel costs, generally for Panel members' work)
- Research (e.g. community surveys)
- Advice & guidance (e.g. money advice)
- Project costs (e.g. paying for one-off costs such as materials or experts)
- Micro Grants Scheme

The number of projects funded under each code is illustrated in Chart 3. It shows that, outside of micro-grants, the most common type of project funded by far was **refurbishment** and regeneration projects, which included providing footpath maintenance, replacing windows in a village hall and maintaining a cemetery and its memorials. **Running costs** covered staffing costs for a community childcare group and a kids club, while **micro grants** were awarded to a range of projects, from funding for a village hall notice board and a community orchard to a knitting club and a fireworks display. No research or projects providing advice / guidance were funded. An award to Inveraray Highland Games was categorised under 'physical goods' rather than 'events', as the grant was for storage containers.

Chart 3: Number of projects funded by project type

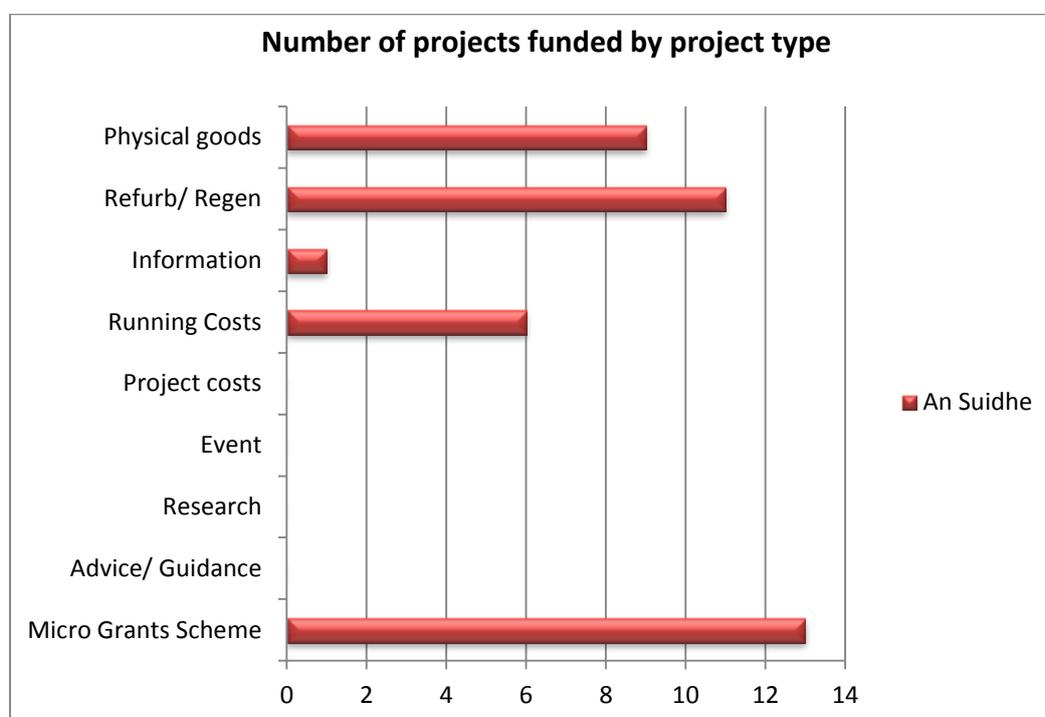
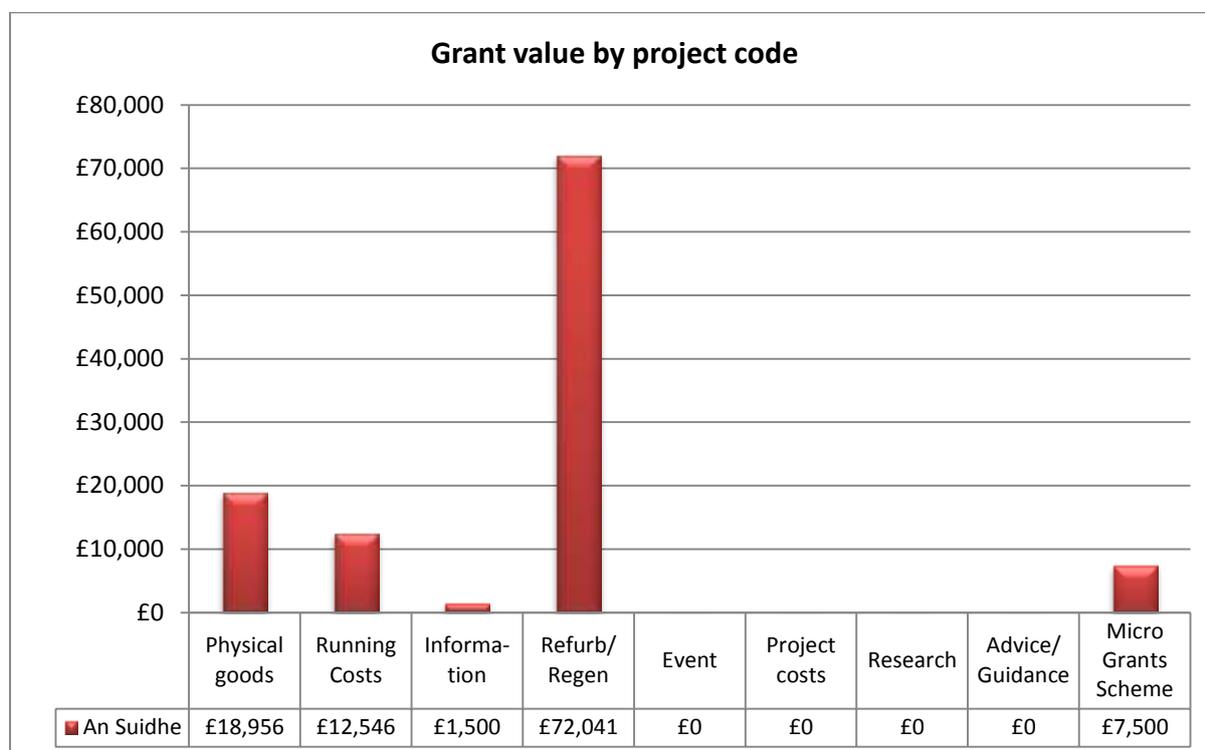


Chart 4 illustrates the total value of grants by project code across the Fund. The majority of funding (64%) was for refurbishment and regeneration projects.

Chart 4: Grant value by project code



## 5. Impact being achieved

Impact can be understood as the broader or longer-term effects of a project or organisation's outputs, outcomes and activities<sup>1</sup>. The three main priorities for the An Suidhe Fund (see Section 1) can be viewed as the longer term impacts the projects funded are working to achieve.

Because the Fund priorities are quite broad and encompass a range of different types of impact, it is helpful for the purposes of analysis to identify *how* the projects and activities guided by the broad priorities are impacting on individuals and groups of people (such as 'the local community'). This can be done through categorising impact into three different types:

- **Social impacts** – for example, developing people's individual skills, knowledge, health and wellbeing and, at a community level, developing social capital or cooperative relationships between people.
- **Economic impacts** – for example, generating income for and cost savings to the community and to individuals.
- **Environmental impacts** – for example, improving the aesthetic, safety, carbon footprint and accessibility of the built and natural environment.

<sup>1</sup> Outcomes and impact definitions from [www.ces.org.uk](http://www.ces.org.uk)

Each of these different impact types is explored in turn in this section, drawing primarily on interview data from grant recipients.

## **5.1 Social Impacts**

Social impacts can be both at the individual and the community level. At an individual level, they might be supporting people's personal development through improving their self-esteem, knowledge or health and wellbeing. At a community level, social impacts may translate as social capital, i.e. fostering connections and relationships between people and groups through providing a range of opportunities for knowledge sharing, volunteering and community gatherings.

As the previous section revealed, the majority of projects and organisations receiving funding are aimed at the general community. It follows that the main impacts they have are at the community level, and are achieved through providing community facilities, creating opportunities to participate in community life through events, information services such as newsletters and through supporting small activities, groups and events through the micro grants scheme. Social impacts were also created at an individual level through projects targeted at specific beneficiary groups, namely young people and older people.

### ***Community facilities***

Community facilities were supported to carry out repairs, maintenance, renovations and extensions. The three project examples outlined below highlight the different social impacts that funding for community facilities can have.

The **Dalavich Social and Recreational Club** (DSRC) manage the Dalavich Community Centre in the northern part of the An Suidhe area of benefit. The community centre is of critical importance to the village as it is the only gathering place for the community in the village, with the only licenced bar and restaurant. Whilst there is a community shop and café, it has limited seating and is not open in the evenings. DSRC has received grants through the An Suidhe Community Fund to purchase a gas cooker in case of a power cut in the village, to install solar panels in the centre and to replace and extend the decking area around the centre, improve disabled access and provide an outdoor seating area.

The grants have contributed significantly to the viability of the social and recreational club with associated social and economic impacts. In terms of the self-sufficiency of the community, the gas cooker means that people, particularly older people, can cook meals if there is a power cut, and the solar panels installed on the centre roof provide an income for the community centre through feed-in-tariffs. The Club also provides a community meeting space for local art classes and the horticultural group as well as a place for community ceilidhs and live music.

There are 56 loch side cabins for tourists adjacent to the community centre, and tourists to the cabins make use of the social club bar and restaurant. The work on the decking and outside area of the centre, which has yet to take place, will open up the bar to the loch side and make the centre a more attractive and accessible social venue. The grant recipient explained the importance of the community centre to the village of Dalavich:

*"Without the community centre it would be a dead community. Number one, we wouldn't get tourists as they come because there is entertainment and somewhere to eat... We couldn't do without a social and recreational club." (DSCR spokesperson)*

The **Bell Tower in Inveraray** is a heritage site that attracts tourists and visitors. It is a war memorial, of interest as a historical item, and has the second heaviest peal of 10 bells in the country. The Bell Tower is a key attraction in the town, affording stunning views from the top of its 176 steps with an information exhibition in the tower itself. It is open to the public for three months over the summer and people visit from countries such as America and Canada to reflect on their ancestors who trained in the area around Inveraray in the First World War, which the grant recipient described as being the 'pinnacle' of some visitors' trip.



*View of Inveraray with Bell Tower (reproduced from [www.inveraraybelltower.co.uk](http://www.inveraraybelltower.co.uk))*

A surprise visit from an inspector revealed that the lightening conductor on the tower had broken and snapped and needed to be repaired quickly in time to open for the summer season. The An Suidhe Community Fund grant paid for the repair of the conductor and meant that the tower could open. Last year there were 5,000 visitors through the tower, from school trips and tourists and specialist bell ringing groups. Without the fund, the Tower would have had to close for the summer.

### **Events**

Community events provide a key opportunity for supporting a broad range of participation opportunities in community life. Events such as the **Inveraray Highland Games** were supported through the Fund for high value physical goods to facilitate its smooth operation. The Fund paid for the purchase of a wheeled storage container that can be used to store and transport equipment to the games field in the run up to the annual event.

The Games draws in tourists to the area from all over the world, raises the profile of the town through having press and TV coverage of the Games, and markets local produce through selling it at the games (e.g. venison and produce from Loch Fyne). The event also help to keep traditions alive and provide a focal point through having competitions for piping, highland dancing and field and track. Top competitors take part, and the Games showcase these.



*Inveraray Highland Games (reproduced from <http://www.inveraray-games.co.uk/>)*

The economic impacts of drawing in 4-5,000 visitors for the Games, is likely therefore to be significant – both immediately in the town of Inveraray and for the wider area. The Games make a big difference to the community of Inveraray:

*'Good for the community as a whole – it binds people into the community, gives them a focal point at one point in the year when everybody gets involved. We've got families involved – husbands, kids, it's an ongoing thing.'* (Inveraray Highland Games spokesperson)

The Games receive no public funding, and are reliant on grants, sponsorship from local businesses and volunteer time. There are 10-15 core committee volunteers and another roughly 35 people who help on the days leading up to, on or after the event. The Games take three days to set up and a day to set down and relies exclusively on volunteers. Moving heavy equipment (e.g. large platforms for stages) from storage to the site takes time and has health and safety implications. Purchasing the wheeled container will save continuous double handling and guard against people having a back injury or other accident, helping to keep the essential volunteer workforce for the annual Games safe and motivated.

### ***Community information services***

Community information services such as newsletters and websites contribute to meeting social outcomes by helping to create connections between dispersed members of communities and raise awareness of opportunities for participation.

The **Loch Aweide Community Website Association (LACWA)** has been operating for 12 years providing a website with information for tourists and the community (see <http://www.loch-awe.com/>). Funding from the An Suidhe Community Fund contributed to an updated website that is easier to navigate for visitors to the site, and easier for the volunteers to update. Each community group in the area has their own page on the website, which means not only is there one place for people looking for activities, services or a chance to volunteer to go, but that community groups do not need to invest time and money into creating their own individual sites. The grant recipient explained that if the site wasn't there anymore, it would be greatly missed because,

*'Our 'what's on' page gets so many hits – we've all got used to it – that's where you go to find out what's happening. There's so much information on the website it's the one place you go.'* (LACWA spokesperson)

The Loch Awe website links to a Facebook page which a volunteer for LACWA explained is very popular with the community and enables LACWA to share news and events. The Facebook page helped recruit volunteers for a new community orchard through inviting people to the village hall the following week.



Volunteer recruitment via the linked LACWA Facebook page<sup>2</sup>

As well as the social impacts the website is helping to engender, since it has been redesigned it has attracted many more hits on the 'Accommodation' pages and encouraged more businesses to advertise on the site, which may be leading to more bookings and income for the local economy. An unanticipated impact of the website project is that it has up-skilled the LACWA volunteers as they have more awareness of how websites work and can update it themselves.

### ***Micro grants scheme***

The Fund operates a micro grants scheme of grants up to £250 for general charitable purposes to un-constituted community groups which Panel representatives are responsible for distributing. A total of £7,500 was distributed from the Fund for small one-off projects which ranged from a social events such as an Old Age Pensioner Christmas Lunch, a kid's Halloween Party and a firework display to providing goods or equipment such as a community noticeboard, materials for a knitting group and gardening club, an outdoor log cabin for a local primary school and sports kits and equipment for youth teams.

A Panel Member for the An Suidhe Community Fund explained the value of the micro grants scheme. First, in a remote and sparsely populated area such as much of the An Suidhe area of benefit, maintaining representation on charity boards can be a challenge as there is a limited pool of people who are available and willing to be charity board

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Loch-Awe-Connections/222498191168741>

members. Therefore, having a fund that people can access without the trouble of becoming constituted is important. Secondly, the micro grants scheme helps to create social impact through contributing to the vibrancy of community life by supporting little groups:

*'It help keeps little groups going – it's important to have a diversity of groups as we're quite remote. It helps them, probably, feel supported without having to bake cakes [to fundraise]'. (An Suidhe Community Fund Panel Member)*

### **Specific target groups: young and old people**

Social impacts were created at an individual level through projects targeted at specific beneficiary groups, namely young people and older people.

The **North Argyll Volunteer Car Scheme** (NAVCS), supported through the An Suidhe Fund, organises volunteers to give lifts to people who are unable to access public transport and who therefore have difficulty accessing health and social care or go shopping. A recent case study about NAVCS conducted by Foundation Scotland reported its key achievements in supporting individuals to stay in their own homes for longer and helping people who have difficulty getting around lead active lives.

NAVCS has also strengthened bonds within the community with friendships developing between drivers and passengers, and in some cases drivers providing assistance to carry shopping and ensuring passengers are into their home safely. As well as the social impact of the scheme, its 54 volunteers contribute between 2,500 and 3,000 volunteer hours a year, which at minimum wage amounts to £15,475 of volunteer time.

The **Inveraray Golf Club** holds an important place in the local community as it is one of the few sporting facilities in the town, and visitors come to play the course, so it provides an important draw for tourists, with accommodation providers advertising the fact that there is a golf club in the town. Besides one part time employee, the club is run and staffed by volunteers and does not generate enough income from membership fees to afford to pay for larger items of machinery and course improvements.

The golf club received funding through the An Suidhe Fund to cover the costs of Professional Golf Association (PGA) training for three coaches so that they could run a training course for young people from the area and club, to purchase new practice equipment and tools to maintain the ground and to contribute towards the cost of improving the tees, greens and fairways to make the course more playable all year round. The coaching for young people has been a great success, with 16 young people taking part (there are 74 in the entire local school), which gave them a positive activity to do throughout the summer:

*'What do the kids get out of it? Freedom to go out and play – gives them a focus in terms of a sport, there are no other clubs in the area. Activities for the kids and they have unlimited access to the course in the summer.'* (Inveraray Golf Club spokesperson)

In terms of unanticipated impacts, some of the mums of the young people being coached have asked for coaching themselves on a different night to their children, the coach is hoping to do a session as part of Active Schools in the local school and to share training courses as part of a potential Inveraray Sports Hub development, and one of the young volunteers who helped out with the coaching sessions last year is going to undergo coaching training this year.

## 5.2 Economic Impacts

As the Social impacts section highlighted, often economic impacts can be a secondary impact of projects that are primarily geared towards achieving social outcomes. Examples of this kind of economic impact may be community halls receiving funding and therefore being able to keep hire costs down and remain viable meeting spaces for community groups and tennis courses for young people being affordable so that the cost for taking part is not prohibitive.

Within the An Suidhe Fund however, some projects had a more explicit primary economic than social impact, for example the provision of affordable childcare services. **Cairndow Community Childcare** has impacted on the local economy in several ways through keeping the costs of childcare as low as possible, using local suppliers (e.g. for maintenance), providing local jobs for childcare staff, saving residents fuel and time costs for taking children to childcare elsewhere (the centre serves towns and villages in a 30 mile radius). Besides the economic impact, the centre provides an important place for wider education provision, learning and skills development through having placement students, being used by Argyll & Bute Council as centre for early learning, being registered for pre-school and providing for looked after children and those with special educational needs. Having a childcare facility also helps to attract families to the area, and helps to address the issue many rural communities face of declining and ageing populations.

## 5.3 Environmental impacts

Organisations with a primary environmental focus were not a significant feature in the range of awards under the Fund, although this is not to say that there were no secondary environmental impacts from funding. The exception was **Loch Awe Safety Company**, which received an award to provide two sets of safety equipment on each side of the loch that can be deployed in case of emergency. However, some of the projects coded under the project type 'refurbishment/regeneration' could be interpreted as 'environmental' to some extent.

## 6. Conclusion

The An Suidhe Community Fund has clearly become a significant resource for three of the four areas involved. As a small and dispersed community along the shores of south Loch Awe, Eredine has not yet secured a significant proportion of the funding available. The newly formed South Loch Aweside Community Company is a response to this, and is currently developing a community plan as part of efforts to ensure a proactive and strategic approach to funding opportunities.

Whilst the deliberately broad Fund priorities make it relatively straightforward for applicants to demonstrate the relevance of their project relevant to the Fund, they also make for some lack of clarity when trying to disaggregate the ways in which Funds impact on communities. Moreover, most organisations and projects funded were aimed at the whole community; therefore it would seem there has to-date been limited differentiation of need by specific beneficiary groups.

The Fund has been able to support a range of different types of relatively low- level community activity but which provide high value opportunities for people to interact and

connect with each other. It has also supported some more significant refurbishment and regeneration projects at community facilities and heritage sites for example. The relatively small size of the Fund will limit its ability to fully fund more transformational projects, however it can offer a useful match funding avenue for these.

Social impacts from the Fund were common and well demonstrated, however direct economic impacts have been harder to discern. The Fund is not being accessed by organisations with a primarily environmental focus; in an area with such outstanding natural assets, this is perhaps surprising.