



The Garioch Partnership

SUPPORTING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Annual Report 2015 - 16

Introduction:

This is The Garioch Partnership's fourth annual report since it was formed in January 2012. The Garioch Partnership (TGP) is a community-led organisation that uses its members' networks to build stronger, more successful, more sustainable communities in the Garioch Area of Aberdeenshire. It was granted charitable status in November 2012 and is recognised as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), Scottish Charity no: SC043548. It is governed by a Board of six trustees. It employs two development workers, one of whom is employed 21 hours/week, the other 18 hours/week, to support the partnership and its members, as well as the wider Garioch community. The second post was established in April 2014 in order to respond to the steady increase in demand from community organisations for support. Administrative support for TGP continues to be provided through an innovative partnership arrangement with Grampian Employment Opportunities (GO). Membership has grown during 2015/16 and there are currently 85 members, from a wide range of voluntary and community groups. All of the community councils in the Garioch area have joined the partnership.



The board making use of the Tesco Community Room in Inverurie

Role:

The role of the partnership is wide-ranging and involves working with community groups, statutory agencies and Community Planning Partners on local and Aberdeenshire wide issues, helping to advance sustainable economic, social and environmental development projects and increasingly helping to identify opportunities within the social economy leading to future sustainability. The partnership is confident that it plays an important role in the social and community economic development of the many diverse communities in Garioch and to the wider quality of life in the area.

Policy Context: Improved Outcomes

Aberdeenshire's Community Planning Partnership has identified in its Single Outcome Agreement (SOA 2013-2023), seven long term outcomes that it wishes to deliver for local communities in order to achieve the best quality of life for everyone in Aberdeenshire. These are:

- Children have the best start in life through action with parents and children pre-birth to eight years.
- Aberdeenshire will be recognised as a great place to live, work, invest with opportunity for all.
- The unemployment rate in identified areas of deprivation in Aberdeenshire will be less than the national average.
- Reduction in inequalities in health outcomes between communities and across Aberdeenshire.
- Older people will live independent, healthier lives for longer in a homely environment, in a community which respects and values them, with informal carers who receive support to continue to care
- Aberdeenshire is the safest place in Scotland
- Successful, inclusive and resilient communities with the confidence, capability and capacity to tackle the things that matter to them.

It is easy to see how these outcomes link to the national priorities for Scotland, namely early years and early intervention, economic growth and recovery, employment, health inequalities and physical activity, outcomes for older people and safer and stronger communities.

The main focus of TGP's work is its contribution to the delivery of stronger communities as described in the Aberdeenshire SOA, that is "***successful, inclusive and resilient communities with the confidence, capability and capacity to tackle the things that matter to them***" but arguably it makes a contribution to many of the other outcomes too.

At a more local level the partnership played a key role in achieving the main outcomes in the local Garioch Community Plan 2013-16, and will take a similar

role with the outcomes in the new 2016-19 plan, namely, healthier, stronger and safer communities, although our main contribution will be to Priority Outcome 2, Strong Communities.

“The communities of Garioch are successful, achieving and inclusive with the confidence, capability and capacity to tackle the things that matter to them.”

The publication of the Community Empowerment Act in 2015 will have a significant impact on Community Planning in the years ahead as the CPP will be required to produce a Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). This will set out the local outcomes that the CPP will prioritise for improvement, as well as identifying smaller areas within the local authority area which experience the poorest outcomes. Locality plans to improve outcomes on agreed priorities for these smaller areas will need to be prepared and published. Active and effective participation by local communities is fundamental to this approach and the partnership is clearly well placed to support and contribute to these locality plans through the well-established community action plan process..



A typical community engagement session

Funding:

To date TGP has been mainly funded by Aberdeenshire Council. The Council's investment this year (2015/16) was £37333. Most of this came from the Economic Development Service (£34333), with the balance from the Area Manager's budget. This budget is monitored through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Council and the Partnership. In addition, as in the previous financial year 14/15, the Garioch Area Committee transferred £10000 to TGP from its Area Top-up Budget to fund the Community Initiative small grants scheme. Additional funding for specific pieces of work has been sourced from the Local Community Planning budget and Aberdeenshire Rural Partnership Federation for work on Community Action Plans, from Aberdeenshire CPP for the organisation of the Community Empowerment Conference with AVA, as well as the Health & Social Care Integration budget and the Scottish Rural Parliament for community engagement activity. The Board is actively seeking alternative income streams and innovative partnership arrangements in order to increase TGP's capacity to respond to the ongoing support needs of community groups in the area as they take on additional responsibilities for community economic development, service delivery and co-production.



Successful applicants at our Spring Forum and awards ceremony in March 2016

Activities and achievements:

Developing a strong partnership:

Considerable effort has been made to build on the partnership's successful beginnings, by continuing to raise awareness of what it can offer and forming a strong network of members. As mentioned above there are now **86** members, an increase of **13%** from the 14/15 figure. These members are from a wide range of community and interest groups, with an extensive range of skills and experience to offer to each other and the wider Garioch area. Good links have been established with many local, Aberdeenshire-wide and national agencies, to maximise the support available to community volunteers. A variety of marketing and publicity techniques, including a strong social media presence, have been used to increase awareness of TGP.

The ***Garioch Gazette*** is published quarterly as an electronic newsletter and circulated to members, partners and interested community members. It is also published on the website. Feedback remains positive, with many readers keen to contribute to future editions. Recipients are encouraged to share the newsletter and other TGP communications with their own networks. There is evidence that a number of individuals have accessed training and funding opportunities as a direct result of receiving the newsletter. There have been regular occasions through our partnership forums and other community engagement exercises for members and potential members to meet and interact to set the direction of the group and to learn together, as well as to share skills, best practice and information. In addition, this year the partnership has purchased some useful resources that can be shared for community events. It has also increased the services it provides to include Independent Examination of Accounts, which it supplies for a small fee.

A survey of the membership was carried out in 2013 and repeated in 2015. The results showed that members recognised the support they received from TGP, in particular they valued clear advice and information, personal support for volunteers, and help with funding. **87%** of respondents stated that the partnership gave good value for money and **74%** had recommended it to others.

Supporting community groups:

One of tasks assigned to the partnership via the SLA is to promote community economic development by providing information, advice, and support to community groups and social enterprises. We do this for non-members as well as members. This is now the major part of our work, as confirmed by the results of our membership survey. For some groups this interaction has been a single piece of advice or information, often on governance and funding. For others the support has been more extensive and more complex, and is ongoing. In 15/16 the partnership has assisted **9** Garioch organisations to either change their legal

status to become SCIOs or to establish a new SCIO. This change of legal status will enable them to access a wider range of funding streams. One of these, Westhill Community Sports Hub, became the first community sports hub in Scotland to achieve SCIO status. Since January 2014, we have directly assisted with 30 successful funding applications, drawing **£186.3** into the Garioch Area. As already mentioned in our 14/15 report, it is good to see this increased capacity and the clear positive impact of the partnership in attracting additional resources to the Garioch Area.

The paragraphs below give a flavour of the support we provide from the perspective of some of our member organisations and their clients:



“The Bailies of Bennachie is in the process of changing its constitution so it is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Without the help of Dawn and Anne from The Garioch Partnership we would not have known where to start. Dawn has been extremely helpful providing templates and guidance as our organisation enters the 21 Century”

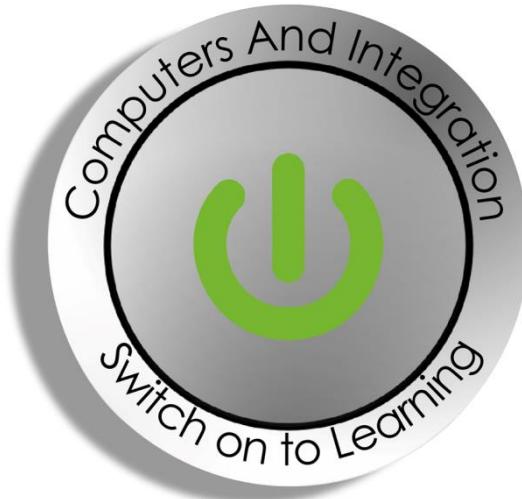
Jackie Cumberbirch, Chair



SensationALL charity supports children and adults with disability and their families or professionals who work with this group. We cover the whole of the North East and offer a range of different services to empower families through a range of direct specialist led activities or social groups, facility hire of Soft play and Multi-sensory rooms and needs-led training workshops for , individuals, families and professionals from all backgrounds. We work closely with other third sector organisations and statutory services and very much rely on our increasing group of volunteers to deliver these services. We cannot thank The Garioch

Partnership enough for the fantastic support in helping us with all aspects in developing this charity from very practical advice on creating business plans and funding through to helping signpost and guide us through the stages of applying for a CAT. Dawn & Anne have been an invaluable source of knowledge in this field as well as information on sharing relevant contacts and being an emotional crutch when things may have not gone as smoothly as we hoped. We are certain that without your help we would not have progressed as fast or as far as we haveso again, many thanks !!

From the staff and Board of SensationALL



“the support given by Anne and Dawn has been superb, both have a wealth of knowledge and are always willing to share”

Sandra Turnbull, Business Manager, Computers and Integration



Westhill Men's Shed

“Westhill Men's Shed is thriving. It is meeting a need in Westhill for men to have somewhere to go to talk to other men and produce equipment from our workshop for the community and ourselves. The result is a healthier population of men with a more positive outlook on life. We must thank The Garioch Partnership for a ‘filtered information service’. There are so many initiatives these days that the tendency is to ignore them all due to lack of time to understand who they are and whether they are of relevance to us. A few words at the start of an email can put this context into the information guiding us to the important parts and where we can get support and grants”

Nick Pilbeam, WDMS committee.



Cornfields Scotland Ltd and The Garioch Community Kitchen have worked together to deliver healthy nutrition sessions with funding from the Community Initiative Fund



“I have enjoyed these sessions learning more about nutrition and food types, trying new foods I wouldn’t normally have” “The group have all been friendly and very helpful”

Participants

Community action plans:

Another key task allocated to TGP through the SLA is to lead on the production of community action plans in areas identified through the community planning process. Two communities in the Garioch were identified in 2014-15 where partners felt that prioritised community action plans would be beneficial, namely Kintore and Port Elphinstone. The Kintore plan is being overseen by Action Kintore and Kintore & District Community Council and was published in October 2015. Its content was informed in a number of ways, firstly using a community consultation at the 2014 Summer Festival, followed by an online survey, then two community engagement events in Spring 2015. Work has already begun to implement some of the actions, in particular the development of Kintore Town House. A different approach was taken in Port Elphinstone, where the *Port Priorities* project was based in the Port Elphinstone Community House and sought the views of the community via events there and in the local primary school. This plan was published in July 2015. The Port Elphinstone plan has been overtaken by the serious flooding that affected that community in December 2015.



The next two plans will be developed by the communities of Blackburn and Kemnay. Community engagement activity has taken place in both communities, and steering groups and local partnerships set up to oversee the production of the plans. Publication is planned for late summer 2016.

Community Initiative Fund:

This small grants scheme was introduced in 2012/13, utilising the underspend in the partnership's budget caused by the delayed appointment of the development worker, and topped up in 2013/14 year by £5k from the Garioch Area Committee's Area Budget. In 2014/15, and again in 2015/16 the Area Committee agreed to provide £10k to the partnership to continue the scheme.

TGP continues to use its "grants panel" of local volunteers to assess applications and make recommendations to the Board, thus involving community members directly in decision-making; in other words it is an example of Participatory Budgeting. The scheme continues to attract applications from a wide range of groups. There is no doubt it is contributing to strong, resilient communities in Garioch, with local people leading, and taking responsibility for things that matter to them in their communities, whether geographic communities or communities of interest. Since the last report eighteen awards have been made, from nineteen applications. Details are shown on the next page.



supporting people and communities

CIG AWARDS 2015/16

Organisation	Project	Amount awarded
Fetternear Hall	Kitchen equipment	£750
Computers & Integration	I-pads	£716
Blackburn Rotary	Movable sink	£750
The Philosophy Cafe	World of Words	£275
Inverurie & District Men's Shed	Disabled access	£750
Kemnay Breakfast & After-School Club	Play equipment	£750
Echt Parent Council	Breakfast club set-up	£500
3 rd Inverurie Rainbows	Storage	£500
Inverurie Wind Band	Music scores	£750
Insch Parent Council	Waste project	£600
Premnay Hall	Kitchen equipment	£750
Gordon Forum for the Arts	25 th Annual Exhibition	£750
Garidge Theatre	Youth festival	£750
Exercise After Stroke Inverurie	Exercise class	£500
Cornfields Scotland Ltd	Foody Group	£750
1st Insch Scouts	Equipment	£500
Hatton of Fintray Parents Association	Community garden	£750
Inverurie Events	Equipment	£750

A total of £11841 has been invested in these community projects. Further information is available on the partnership's website and FaceBook page. TGP is delighted that the Garioch councillors are keen for the scheme to continue and recognise the added value that these small amounts of money can bring to local groups. The Garioch Area Committee has already agreed to support the fund in the coming financial year 2016/17 and augment the fund from £10k to £15k.

Community Planning:



TGP is a key partner in the community planning process in the Garioch area, working with communities to build their capacity and to link their identified needs with the relevant delivering agencies. The development workers take an active role in the Garioch Local Community Planning Group, and in delivering the local community plan. TGP is also involved in raising awareness of the Health & Social Care Integration agenda and represents the Third Sector on the Garioch Health & Social Care Integration Local Reference Group. The partnership contributes at Local Authority Level too, with one worker representing the Local Rural Partnerships on the Community Planning Executive and Aberdeenshire's Learning Communities Strategy group while the other is on the Council's Self-directed Support User reference group. As stated in the SLA, TGP, as one of the voluntary sector partners, acts as an intermediary between Aberdeenshire Council, Community Planning Partners and the Local Community Planning Group to ensure that they represent the wider community and to ensure a two-way flow of information relating to needs and priorities.

Community Engagement:

TGP promoted, organised and delivered one round of Ward Forums in the spring of the financial year 2015/16. Four events took place across the Garioch area, in a variety of venues. The attendance at these was poor so a decision was made to take another approach which we have called ***Gad aboot and Gab aboot Garioch, (GAGAG)***. The nub of this is that we will engage with communities at their local events instead of expecting them to come to us. The information we gather will be shared with partners and if appropriate fed in to the Garioch community plan, or into a community action plan. In some cases we will use our knowledge and experience to provide advice and information and make community connections. So far we have attended events at Logie Durno and Meikle Wartle, with others in the pipeline.



GAGAG at Logie Durno Hall

Over the last year we have participated in a number of other networking events including Inclusive Inverurie, Groupfest and the INverurie project. We also assisted the Health & Social Care Partnership by running two well-attended community-based awareness raising sessions in Garioch.

Community Empowerment:

The publication of the Community Empowerment Act in the summer of 2015 provided the opportunity to hold a one day conference on 1 October aimed at community members last October. This was promoted and organised jointly by TGP and Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action, and funded by Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership. Some 80 delegates participated in a very successful event, with workshops on Community Asset Transfer, The Impact on Community Planning, Community Access to Allotments, Participatory Budgeting and Participation Requests. The keynote speaker was Marco Biagi MSP, at that time Minister for Local Government and Community Empowerment. This policy conference was followed up later that month with a practical session on Community Asset Transfer delivered by DTAS's COSS team. We anticipate that once the guidance on the Act is published there will be a need for further learning events on this topic.



Community Empowerment Conference Workshop

Community Led Local Development (LEADER):

This year TGP has been heavily involved in the South Aberdeenshire Local Action Group (SALAG), with one development worker on the main SALAG committee and the other on the Project Assessment Committee (PAC). While it is good to have the opportunity to influence first the production of the local development strategy which was launched in November 2015 and now its delivery, this is a growing area of work that we will need to monitor with regard to its impact on our support to communities.

Learning Community Partnerships:

Another new area of work this year has been the roll out of local Learning Community Partnerships. There will be three of these in Garioch, in Inverurie, Westhill and Kemnay as they are based around the catchment of the three Garioch Academies. Our membership of these is not in our current SLA but Aberdeenshire Council's Education and Children's Services is keen that the rural partnerships are members. The Inverurie one is active, the other two will be established in the next few months. It remains unclear what role we will play and what added value participation will bring as the main focus appears to be on the provision of community learning not community development.

Other Links:

The development workers meet regularly with their counterparts in Aberdeenshire at the Local Rural Partnership Federation meetings where various issues of mutual interest are discussed and progressed. There is also a twice yearly meeting with Community Economic Development Partners to explore future sustainability issues for the partnerships. TGP also maintains regular contact, and has active working links, with people working for the economic and social prosperity of the area including, amongst others, Garioch's Area Manager, DTAS, Scottish Government, the Council's Community Learning and Development staff, AVA, NHS Grampian, and the Garioch Community Planning Officer.

Conclusion:

TGP is confident that the funding Aberdeenshire has provided in 2015/16 through the SLA has been used efficiently and effectively to meet the Service Level Agreement. TGP trusts that Aberdeenshire Council and its partners will recognise that the confidence they have placed in the partnership has been well-founded and that the growth of the partnership has had a positive effect on Garioch's communities. TGP is eager to ensure that the high level work continues. It is supporting one of its development workers through a work-based University course to become a fully qualified CLD worker. It is planning to improve and expand its administrative and research support in 2016/17, and is succession planning in regard to its staff and its Board. TGP wishes to grow, to further strengthen its "brand" and to expand the services it delivers. TGP is delighted that the SLA now covers the three years from 2014-2017 in recognition of the impact that area rural partnership activity brings.

John Chapman, Chairperson
Anne Simpson, Development Worker
Dawn Brown, Development Worker

31 May 2016