

Scottish Communities CAN Strategy 2016/2019 DRAFT v2

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1. Introduction

We are living in a time of huge change and uncertainty. Climate Change is happening and if we are to avoid its worst consequences, our use of fossil fuels needs to be phased out as quickly as possible. Our existing structures and ways of thinking and doing things are becoming less and less fit for purpose as we face interlinked and increasingly unpredictable social, political, economic and environmental challenges.

This time of crisis is also an opportunity. In our vision of the future, we find new ways to work together, to live in balance with our natural resources with improved wellbeing for all and stronger local economies. In this vision, communities have become empowered to shape their own futures and have reconnected with local democracy, local resources and with each other. They are resilient enough to adapt to unpredictable events and are actively creating the fertile ground for transformational change to a zero-carbon society.

2. Vision for Scotland

In February 2014, Scottish Communities Climate Action Network invited its members, community groups tackling climate change, to come together and share what they were working towards over the next ten years or so. The vision below is a synthesis of members' aspirations:

Empowered Democratic Communities

- *We are a nation of active citizens with a vibrant system of small-scale local democracy*
- *Communities have access to local land and resources and are able to devise and implement local solutions to create low-carbon, resilient places.*

Vibrant Local Food Culture

- *The Scottish Diet is based on high quality local produce*
- *There is an abundance of skilled and esteemed small-scale local food growers and producers*
- *Local food growing is evident everywhere - city centres, abandoned land, temporary spaces*
- *Small-scale mixed farms and community woodlands are enhancing bio-diversity*
- *Organic food production and ethically reared livestock are the norm*
- *Locally controlled sustainable fisheries supply local markets*
- *Food waste is a thing of the past*

Effective Local Energy

- *Scotland has a world leading low carbon, local energy economy employing many people in locally owned enterprises*
- *Communities have a significant stake in energy generation and supply*
- *Locally managed smart grids, match local demand to local supply*
- *New build housing is zero-carbon and a massive programme to insulate older housing is nearly complete*
- *District heating is commonplace*
- *Fuel poverty is a thing of the past.*

Living Locally

- *We are travelling much less as we mostly have local livelihoods and most of what we need is available locally*
- *Superfast broadband is available in all areas and community work-hubs are commonplace*
- *Excellent cycle/footpath infrastructure and a fully integrated public transport system has minimised the need for private cars*
- *Convivial, high-density urban living has created social spaces that are safe for walking and cycling*

Waste Not

- *A thriving 'remake' economy means that 'waste' has now become a resource*
- *We value well-being instead of consumption*

Happy Healthiness

- *We are healthy and happy because of our nutritious diet, creative livelihoods, quality local environments, physically active lifestyles and increased local, social interaction*

Practical Training & Education

- *Education emphasises practical skills and a deep connection to nature*
- *Participatory democracy and sustainability are central to the curriculum*
- *Cross-generational knowledge exchange is celebrated*

3. Purpose of Scottish Communities Climate Action Network

Scottish Communities CAN is a network of community-led groups and associated organisations across Scotland that are working to create low-carbon, resilient communities. Scottish Communities CAN exists:

- to enable its members to provide each other with mutual inspiration and support
- to work to put in place the resources and supportive infrastructure and policies our members require
- to encourage and promote community-led climate action across the whole of Scotland

Scottish Communities CAN's intention is to be a flexible and agile organisation that is itself resilient and able to innovate and adapt as necessary to meet the needs of our members in uncertain times. We plan to fulfill our purpose by focusing on four key **Strategic Objectives**:

1. **Healthy and Engaged People** – work related to the physical and psychological

well-being of individuals who are involved with community-led climate action including support for development of strong and healthy personal relationships within groups, opportunities for learning and sharing new skills and deepening a sense of connection to nature.

2. **Creating More Localised Economies within Ecological Limits** –work related to practical action to create stronger local economies that positively steward the local environment and resources, enhance biodiversity, cut carbon dependence and create meaningful, locally-based livelihoods that are not dependent on fossil fuels.
3. **Cross-Community Links** –work related to developing active links and partnerships between our members and across the wider community sector within and outwith Scotland, and with other sectors, including the public sector, government and business.
4. **Building a Creative, Inclusive Culture** –work related to enabling and encouraging involvement from all sectors and demographics across society, encouraging diversity and working for social justice, inclusion and equity as well as support for social and technical innovation, exploring novel ideas and ways of working.

4. Priority Outputs and Activities

In this section, we outline the priority actions that Scottish Communities CAN plans to take to help deliver our objectives. These activities are grouped under the most relevant heading but many of them will contribute to more than one strategic objective.

4.1. Healthy and Engaged People:

- Training and support for community ‘change agents’ and steering group members:
 - Development of (and/or signposting to) resources and training for developing soft-skills in working in groups, delegating/building support groups, facing up to and resolving conflict
 - Development of a network of independent external facilitators and trainers to support members
 - Development of buddy systems, coaching circles and mentoring
 - ‘Unconference’ type events

4.2. Localised Economy Within Ecological Limits

- Promotion of a positive vision of the opportunities for meaningful, locally-based, low-carbon livelihoods –incl. telling the stories from where this is already happening, including the local economic benefits and jobs created
- Support for our members to become more self-financing and enterprising incl. development of (and/or signposting to) resources and support for community/social/local enterprise approach and for making use of Community Empowerment Act –and resources such as [REconomy](#), [DTAS/COSS](#), [Plunkett Foundation](#) etc.
- Explore opportunities for collaborative projects incl. development of shared support infrastructure and training –explore the fundraising and revenue

- generating opportunities open to groups of communities working together
- Lobbying of Govt. for supportive infrastructure and policies to support community action

4.3. Cross-Community Links

- Support for member-to-member links and knowledge sharing:
 - Mediated knowledge of what is happening where – *‘having someone who can filter all the information out there who knows what’s happening and can tell you the right people to get in touch with.’*
 - Support for peer-to-peer links between our members through direct visits and virtual connection and sharing of knowledge and resources
 - Support for development of regional networks.
 - Support for development of networks of interest, including Transition Scotland Hub
 - Networking events and conferences
- Development of active links with community networks in other parts of Europe through participation in [ECOLISE](#) and globally through links with Transition Network.
- Nurturing of relationships and development of partnership working with other sectors and actors –such as [Adaptation Scotland](#).

4.4. Inclusive Creative Culture

- Development and promotion of resources to enable our members (and others) to involve a wide range of their local population in conversations about climate change and action planning for resilience –such as ‘Are You Ready?’ and follow-on resources such as resilience compass, [3Horizons](#), World Game, scenario planning, [Shifting Normal](#) etc. –incl. training and funding of network of facilitators.
- Active participation in [Scottish Community Alliance](#) and development of relationships with other member networks to encourage mutual support and learning and support them to make climate change and planning for transformative resilience central to their agendas.
- Development of links created through the [MAJI](#), Climate Justice project and communication with members around climate justice and Malawi learning exchange.
- Linking with other organisations doing relevant work (e.g. eco congregations, Quaker meetings, schools sustainable development curriculum) or existing groups and organisations that could develop new activities with SCCAN’s support (e.g. community councils, local planning partnerships, Trust for Conservation Volunteers.....).

5. How we will work

Scottish Communities CAN’s aim is to enable, facilitate and support the transformational change to a post-carbon future. To be able to do that, we believe that we need to be open to exploring ways of working that may be different from those that have helped cause the unsustainable world in which we currently live.

We will seek to work in ways that actively promote Care for the Earth, Care for Each Other and Fair Shares for All.

In particular, we will seek to:

Respect resource limits –by considering carbon impact when planning and making decisions, minimising travel and using public transport where possible, sourcing supplies and services locally and ethically and with regard to environmental policies and practices.

Promote inclusivity and social justice –by being aware of the importance of race, gender, cultural difference and economic power, and by actively exploring ways to make our activities accessible and beneficial to disadvantaged groups.

Pay attention to individual wellbeing –by being aware of the danger of becoming stressed, closed or driven rather than open, connected and creative in response to urgent, global challenges. We will create space for reflection, celebration and rest to balance the times when we're busily getting things done. We will explore ways of working which engage our heads, hands and hearts and enable us to develop collaborative and trusting work relationships. We will share what we learn as we seek to model a healthy balance between being and doing.

Openly share our learning and respond to feedback –by drawing on each other's experiences and insights, encouraging an open-source, 'creative commons' approach and acknowledging and learning from failure as well as sharing success. We will be open about our internal processes and will actively seek and respond to feedback from network members.

Encourage development of local and regional networks –by recognizing that post-carbon communities will need to be adapted to their particular local needs and situation and that we need to encourage a diversity of approaches. We will encourage members to self-organise into local and regional support networks.

Collaborate and look for synergies –by recognising that we don't have all the answers and that the complex challenges we face will require the collective intelligence of different groups and organisations that are working for positive change. We will seek to develop a collaborative culture that helps to make positive links and connections.

Be positive and creative –by holding a positive vision focused on positive possibilities. We will seek to be creative in the ways we engage and involve people, encouraging them to imagine the future they want to inhabit, generate new stories, have fun and celebrate success.

Appendix 1. Summary of activity to date

Scottish Communities CAN was formed and developed by a group of volunteers during 2012. It was formally launched and a steering group elected at a meeting on 6th March 2013. At this stage there were 47 community group members and 11 associate members –organisations supporting community-led climate action.

We early on became a member of the [Scottish Community Alliance](#) (the meta-network of 18 Scottish community networks) and the UK Communities and Climate Action Alliance.

The Scottish Government contracted KSB, and later Changeworks, to provide a secretariat service and manage a small fund for development work. This enabled us to set up a website and social media communications and to print an explanatory leaflet as well as to take forward some projects intended to start tackling some of the barriers facing community climate action:

- HOW CAN COMMUNITY GROUPS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES WORK BETTER TOGETHER? A research project with Cambium Advocacy to find out what our members' experience of working with their local authority has been.
- A FUNDING "ROUTE MAP". A resource for communities to help them with finding funding and planning to become self-financing, produced with Alan Caldwell Associates
- HOW ARE ENERGY SAVING TRUST'S SERVICES SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES? Provision of feedback to EST on how well its support for community projects, through the Energy Saving Scotland advice centres was working.

Through 2013-14 we focussed on developing our membership and communications, establishing and building on relationships with potential and existing partner organisations, disseminating and following up on the results of our previous research and developing further resources for our members, including around methods of community engagement. We started actively matching up and connecting our members so as to encourage peer-to-peer networking and accelerate learning and sharing. Our second annual Gathering developed a shared **Vision for low-carbon Scotland** and the role that community-led initiatives can play in bringing this into being. We expanded our membership to 67 full members and 20 associate members.

Apart from the community network members of the **Scottish Community Alliance**, we started establishing, or further developing, relationships with organisations from other sectors including: Adaptation Scotland, Architecture and Design Scotland, COSLA, Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, Energy Saving Trust, Greener Together, Keep Scotland Beautiful (Climate Challenge Fund and Sustainable Scotland Network), Scotland's 2020 Climate Group, the Scottish Government, Scottish Environment LINK, Stop Climate Chaos Coalition, Transition Network, Transition Scotland, Zero Waste Scotland, Carnegie UK and more. We also started developing links with academia through the EU funded [TESS](#) project.

During 2015, we have further shared and promoted our **Vision for a low-carbon Scotland**, shaped by empowered communities, and our Spring Gathering event was focussed on starting to explore how the transformational changes it involves can be brought about.

We participated on the steering group for the Scottish Government's Scotland 2030 project to develop web and offline materials to engage the general public with life in a low-carbon Scotland.

We have expanded our membership to 86 full members and 30 associate members.

We have established the **SCCAN Community Interest Company** so as to be able to take an enterprising approach to better provide support services for our members, open up potential to generate income and raise funds for collaborative projects. To date we have secured funding for a one-year project to support the further development of the Fife Community Climate Action Network which we hope may become a model for other self-organising regional networks of Scottish Communities CAN members and we are collaborating with Adaptation Scotland to develop and promote a community engagement resource and toolkit ('Are We Ready?').

With supplementary funding from Scottish Government, we ran a **Community Engagement support** project to offer coaching to groups to support their community engagement, inviting members to provide or to receive coaching from a pool of peers and specialists. A series of case studies and an extract of the evaluation are being published and a Community Engagement peer-learning event is being planned in conjunction with KSB's CASP programme. To further support opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, we are encouraging our members to participate in the Scottish Community Alliance Community Learning Exchange programme.

We have partnered with consultant Osbert Lancaster to develop a version of the ISM (Individual Social & Material) Tool for communities working to tackle climate change – **Shifting Normal**. This community version of ISM is intended to support community organisations to improve their understanding of how best to take a holistic approach to support behaviour change and to design community scale projects that encourage and enable individual and household level change.

With the intention of highlighting concerns around climate justice, we are a partner in the **MAJI project**, in Malawi. This aims to help communities plan to become more resilient and better able to cope with the effects of climate change. Coordinated by VSO-Malawi and CISONICC (Civil Society Network on Climate Change), the MAJI project receives funding from the Scottish Government Climate Justice Fund. We hope to develop an ongoing relationship and learning exchange with groups in Malawi.

We are now a member of **ECOLISE**, an emerging coalition of organisations engaged in promoting and supporting local communities across Europe in their efforts to build pathways to a sustainable future. The members of ECOLISE include international, national and sometimes regional networks of community-based initiatives, as well as other bodies engaged in European-level research, training, communications and other activities supporting community-based action on climate change and sustainability. By bringing these organisations together, ECOLISE seeks to establish a common Europe-wide agenda and a platform for collective action.

We are continuing to work with the TESS project in which several of our members are collaborating as case studies. The research is assessing the social, economic, political and environmental impacts of community organisations and exploring how community-led climate action can be better supported and enabled. One output is likely to be an on-line tool and associated resources that build on the previous work of Carnegie UK's 'Exploring Community Resilience' project. We are also establishing relationships with the Centre for Environmental Change and Human Resilience at Dundee University and with the International Futures Forum.

We ran a very well received '**Unconference**' event for members at Comrie Croft in partnership with Transition Scotland. This was aimed at providing a structured opportunity for members to share their ideas, knowledge and concerns as well as to input ideas for the future development of Scottish Communities CAN.

Transition Scotland is now functioning as a network under the wider umbrella of Scottish Communities CAN and is working to become recognised as a formal 'transition hub' to support transition groups in Scotland and make Transition Network resources available to all Scottish Communities CAN members.

The current Scottish Government contract with Changeworks to provide part-time secretariat support expires at the end of March 2016.