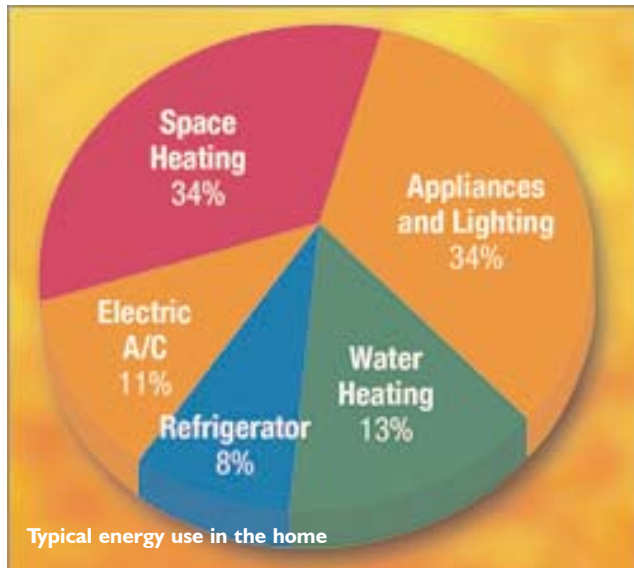


Reducing the carbon footprint in Comrie



Comrie, in Perthshire, is a small community with big ambitions to point the way to sustainable, low-carbon living.

Using the provisions of the Scottish Land Reform Act, the community has purchased a former army camp which it is developing sustainably to provide business and social facilities.

Comrie is also a Scottish Government exemplar in developing a community energy audit project.

Project

Comrie is a village and parish in Perthshire with a population of only 3,000, but big ambitions for the sustainable future of its community.

Comrie Climate Challenge has two main aims:

1. The sustainable development of the former Cultybraggan Army Camp, 90 acres of land which was purchased by the community in 2007 under the provisions of the Land Reform Act.
2. A street-by-street home insulation project in partnership with Scottish and Southern Energy, which will also save householders money on their heating bills.

Comrie is one of the Scottish Government's national exemplar projects for their Climate Challenge Fund.

The zero carbon development of the camp will include:

- Local food production including allotments
- Food production programmes for local school children
- Workspaces for local people and enterprises
- Sports and recreation facilities
- Ecological building construction methods
- Information events for local tradesmen and architects
- Renewable energy sources for the site and village
- Biodiversity areas and woodland planting
- Footpath and cycle ways to the site
- Holding learning events in the village on all aspects of sustainable development

The street-by-street energy reduction/insulation project, in partnership with Scottish and Southern Energy, is designed to reduce the community's carbon footprint and encourage lifestyle changes, as well as saving householders money on their heating bills.

Working across three very different Perthshire communities (Comrie, Alyth and Letham), the street-by-street project aims to achieve real

carbon savings through targeted energy efficiency advice, community engagement and measures such as cavity and loft insulation. In each location, project coordinators and energy efficiency advisors have been employed to contact as many residents as possible.

Local builders and companies have been used where possible to carry out the practical work, including loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and draught-proofing. Supporting local businesses helps to ensure the community retains the skills needed to be a sustainable community.

There have been many challenges met and lessons learned in all three communities and, as well as creating jobs for local residents and increasing climate awareness, all three areas are now undertaking new and innovative projects to help reduce their carbon footprint even further, including:

- Work with the school, local businesses and local organisations
- Focus on personal responsibility (travel, energy use, shopping habits)
- Carrying out energy audits and investigating renewable energy sources for homes and community buildings
- Developing community composting, wormeries and recycling

The Comrie Development Trust has received almost £300,000 from the Climate Challenge Fund.

Project leads

The project is led by the Comrie Development Trust. Membership is open to all who are on the local electoral register - membership is free and the liability of each member is limited to £1. Membership of the Trust is now over 600.

The trust has an executive board, with up to 12 positions elected by and from the membership with up to three co-opted positions to attract particular skills to the board.

The Comrie Foundation was launched in July 2009 with the aim of raising funds to support local projects and groups



Community Environmental Case Studies

produced with support from the Communities and Local Government Empowerment Fund

Location

Comrie is a village of some 3000 people in the heart of rural Perthshire. "Comrie", the name given by the Scots invaders of the 7th century, is derived from the Gaelic Comh sruth meaning 'flowing together', as our village sits where the three rivers of the Earn, Ruchill and Lednock meet.

In the 21st century, it is a place where ancient rivers and new ideas are flowing together through the initiative of the local community.

It is a centrally located village. Stirling is 29 miles to the south and Perth 24 miles to the west. Edinburgh and Glasgow are 67 and 55 miles to the south west and southeast respectively. Both are connected by a regular rail service from Dunblane, 22 miles away.

The community supports a good range of local shops and services and the market town of Crieff is only seven miles to the west. While there is an older population than that of the Scottish average, the last 10-15 years has seen an increase in young families moving to the area.

Whilst many commute, Comrie has an entrepreneurial community with a wide variety of small businesses, many utilising technology to thrive in a rural area.

Finance

The purchase of Cultybraggan was financed by a £350,000 interest-free loan from the Tudor Trust. The first repayment of £200,000 will be refinanced by a ten-year loan from the Triodos Bank and/or donations from the Comrie Bond.

A £105,000 short-term development loan from the Triodos Bank was repaid by the sale of a cottage of the Cultybraggan site for £145,000, the remainder of which was used to fund development work on the site (planning consents, site security, tender documents, etc).

£300,000 capital funding was needed to provide new infrastructure for Cultybraggan (building improvements, water, electricity and drainage). This will secure beneficial local uses in stage 1 of the development including allotments, sports and workspace, generating a self-sustaining revenue income in the short term. This will allow a pause to consider the longer-term strategy to realise the full potential of the asset.

By April 2014, Comrie Development Trust aims to be financially self sufficient as an organisation, using volunteer expertise and employing three core staff to:

- Deliver grant assisted projects to benefit the village
- Develop Cultybraggan Army Camp as an income generator for the village
- Secure gifts, donations and investment funds from supporting individuals, businesses and organisations through the 'Comrie Bond'

Three-year revenue funding for the Office Manager and Carbon Challenge Officer (including all on costs and operating costs) was agreed from December 2008. These posts are central to the smooth operation of the trust and the delivery of the Carbon Challenge Project. Support for the Development Director post has come from the LEADER programme.

Delivering grant funded projects

Projects that are wholly funded from grant assistance will be delivered at cost. For example, the Comrie Carbon Challenge is 100% grant funded by the Scottish Government with a £300,000 grant.

Delivering Cultybraggan

The asset will be transformed in stages reflecting the practical challenges in developing this complex site to meet local needs.

Stage 1 has been designed to secure the beneficial use of part of the site generating enough revenue to cover ongoing basic annual costs associated with owning the site (From April 2009 onwards)

This includes tenants for nine nissen huts, the former mess and 30 allotments and the use of 20,000 sqm of playing fields for sports and recreation use.

Stage 2 proposes further development utilising the remaining capacity of the first stage infrastructure (April 2010 onwards)

Stage 3 proposes larger scale development requiring further investment in the infrastructure (2012-13).

This includes a larger number and broader range of tenants/users, development capital secured by the increased commercial uses, further development of sports and recreation uses and an increased income to ensure the Trust is financially self sustaining from April 2014

Delivering Investment Capital, Gifts and Donations

The Comrie Foundation was launched in July 2009 as the fundraising arm of the Development Trust.

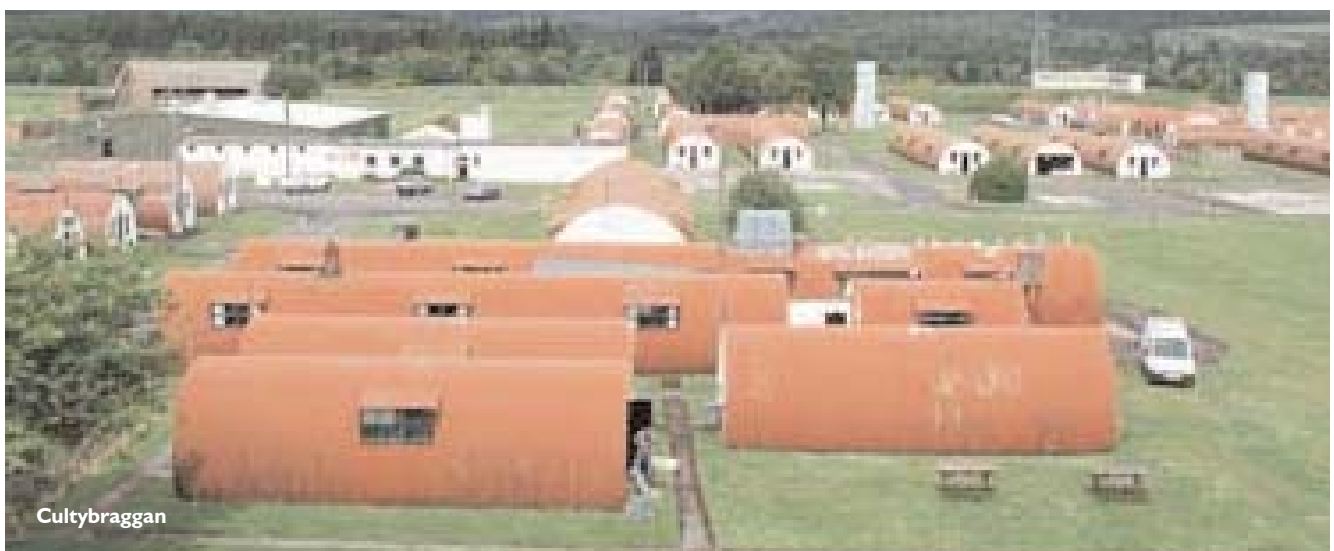
What works well

Energy savings

Based on current estimates from the Energy Savings Trust the average household can expect to save £340 and reduce CO2 emissions by 1.5 tonnes a year by becoming more energy efficient. For Comrie, this amounts to potential savings of around £300,000 and 1350 tonnes of CO2.

Community Meetings

Since the launch of the trust, the community has turned out in force to 15 large-scale meetings to plan work and progress key projects. Healthy numbers attend the monthly open meetings of the trust and there are



Cultybraggan

some 75 active volunteers in the organisation.

Volunteering

With 56 local groups in the village, it is estimated that approaching one third of the community volunteer in local activities - from organising the village bonfire to serving affordable and nutritious lunches in the village to young and old alike at the Thursday Club throughout the winter.

Cultybraggan Army Camp

A guiding principle is to keep work as local as possible. There is a local caretaker and contracts such as grass-cutting are undertaken by a local business.

Exemplar of sustainable development

The aim is for the village to be a leading example of sustainable development for rural communities across the country. To achieve this they will learn as they go, document successes and failures and make their story accessible to others.

Activities planned include:

- Monthly open meetings, major community meetings and village events on significant themes.
- Organise formal training.
- Hold an Annual Conference: for communities to share their experience of building a sustainable future.
- Publish the Comrie Bulletin to keep people informed of progress.
- Work with the press and media both locally and nationally. "
- Measure progress and social benefit, developing a clear example of how to measure and value the social benefit from investment in an entrepreneurial community like Comrie.

Further information

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Comrie Foundation: <http://www.comriefoundation.org/>

Comrie Climate Challenge video:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6h_mHxXwyk



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