

Scottish Government's Register of Community Benefits and Shared Ownership

Narrative Report February 2025



About the Register of Community Benefits and Shared Ownership

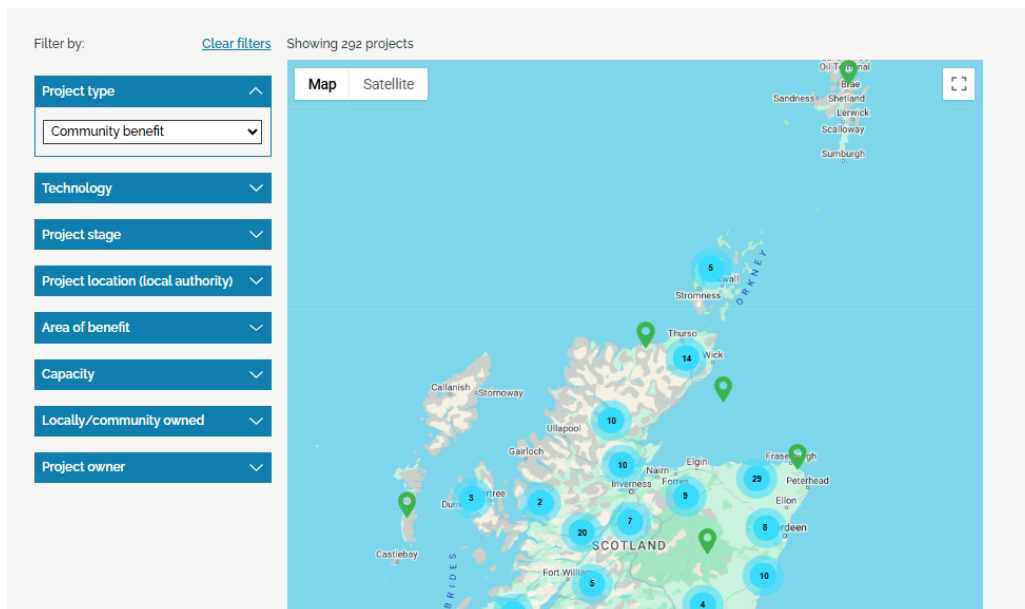
The Scottish Government's Register of Community Benefits and Shared Ownership (the Register) provides information on renewable energy projects across Scotland. It enables renewable energy businesses (or their nominated agents) to upload details of community benefit and shared ownership opportunities attached to these projects, guided by the Scottish Government's Good Practice Principles and Scotland's Onshore Wind Sector Deal. The results are displayed in a searchable online map and list.

The Register is not an exhaustive list of all projects. Our data sources include:

- DESNZ Renewable Energy Planning database.
- Energy Saving Trust's research on community and locally owned projects.
- Requests to add a project by a community or renewable energy business.

The quality and accuracy of the information on the Register relies on the information provided by the renewable energy business submitting it. The Register may, therefore, hold inaccurate or outdated information and should be regarded as a guide to community benefit provisions across Scotland.

This report focuses on the community benefits information captured within the Register.

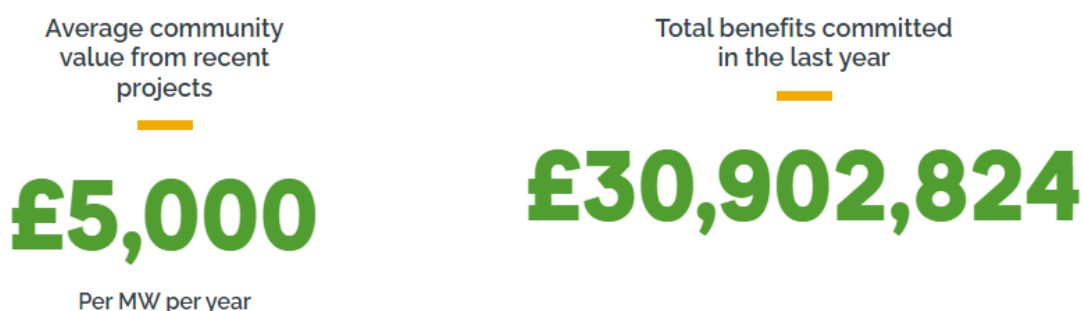


Headline figures

The public facing side of the website displays two figures. The first is an average of the value from recent projects (those projects that became operational in the last 36 months) in £/MW/Yr. The other is the total value from all recorded operational projects which have been offered to communities over the last year. As of February 2025, these values were an average of £5,000 per megawatt per year and a total value of over £30,902,824.

Community benefits

Committed by renewable energy businesses to support communities



In the last 36 months we have recorded 12 newly operational projects with community benefit packages. All of which are offering a community benefit package of £5,000/MW/Yr. These were all onshore wind projects.

As of February 2025, 86% percent of wind, solar and hydro projects over 5MW have data attached. Approximately 27% of all projects (any capacity and any technology) have data attached. We recently merged the Community and Locally Owned Database with the Register of Community Benefits and this has resulted in 760 projects under 5MW (many of which are small biomass, heat pump and solar PV systems) being included in the register reporting.

Highlights from the last year

In the last year we [recorded a significant milestone](#) on the Community Benefits Register. For the first time ever, it was shown that £30 million worth of community benefits have been recorded as committed to be paid to Scottish communities from renewable energy businesses in a 12-month period.

We also published a new case study on the [Hagshaw Energy Cluster](#), which was set up in response to the Scottish Government's call for more collaboration in the

onshore wind sector. The case study identifies some of the achievements of the Hagshaw Energy Cluster and provides insight into lessons learned.

The [Onshore Wind Sector Deal](#) between industry and the Scottish Government was signed in 2023. The deal includes a joint commitment for the Sector and Government to collaborate with other relevant stakeholders to establish a standard approach to the financial management of community benefits funds by the end of 2024 to ensure:

- Transparency in how funds are managed and spent,
- Effective reporting of the impact of community benefit in Scotland's communities,
- That a national register of community benefit and community shared ownership is created and updated on an annual basis.

In response to this, the register has been updated through consultation with industry and community stakeholders. It now includes new features such as:

- More search and filter options for the map and list.
- The option for users to download and interrogate the data.
- The ability for renewable energy businesses to add annual reports to demonstrate transparency in actual spend of community benefits.
- The ability to capture details of community shared ownership projects.

The updated version of the register was launched on 5 November 2024.

With support from Scottish Renewables, Local Energy Scotland provided training on how to update the new register to 100 people in November 2024. A [recorded version](#) of the training is available.

Renewable energy businesses are now updating the site with new information, including actual spend and it will take time for new annual reports to be added. As of February 2025, 72 annual reports have been provided covering the period from 31/03/2023 to 31/12/2024. In this period over £11 million of actual spend has been recorded.

Potential future trends

In 2024, 10 windfarms were consented. Of these, nine stated in their planning submission that they would be paying community benefits. Where the information provided stated the £/MW they would provide, seven said this would be £5k, the remainder did not state a value. While we don't know if and when all these schemes will proceed, it is positive to see so many proposing to fund community benefits at the £5k/MW rate promoted by the Good Practice Principles for onshore renewable energy developments in Scotland.

Further to this, four solar farms were consented. Of these two said they would be paying community benefits, one provided further details saying that this would be at a rate of £600/MW/Yr.

Community Benefits Register development

In 2025 we will start to add projects that are consented and in planning to the Register. This will enable us to capture earlier stage information about community benefits and shared ownership.

Case study

In September 2024, Local Energy Scotland development officer Mhairi MacSween wrote a blog to share her insight of her working knowledge of supporting communities in Scotland to access the [Highland Sustainable Development Fund \(HSDF\)](#), part of SSE Renewables community benefits package, helping communities to match funding from CARES.

As a Development Officer for CARES in the Highlands area, Mhairi has seen the impact of this fund first hand. The HSDF has assisted with match funding for many community groups to install renewable technologies through the Local Energy Scotland, bringing long-term positive impacts and successfully contributing to Scotland's transition to net zero.

You can read more about Mhairi's experience of the HSDF on the [Local Energy Scotland website](#).