



Sustaining Dunbar, Annual Report 2009

Sustaining Dunbar is a member of the Transition Network as well as being a Community Development Trust for the Dunbar and East Linton ward of East Lothian. Its purpose is to bring people together to plan and start creating a low carbon, locally resilient future for our community.

Sustaining Dunbar was formally launched with a showing of the film 'Power of Community' in April 2008. In November 2008 it became a charitable company limited by guarantee with a board of directors elected from the membership. Membership is open to anyone resident and eligible to vote in the Dunbar and East Linton ward.

Much of the activity is organised by working groups of volunteers with an interest in particular topics such as food, energy, transport or enterprise. To date these groups have been instrumental in, amongst other things: the formation of Dunbar Allotments Association which is now progressing the creation of several new allotments sites as well as community gardens and orchards; the setting up of a community polytunnel; the setting up of Dunbar Community Bakery Ltd, a community owned cooperative; the drafting of a Dunbar Transport Action Plan and the securing of various crossings and path upgrades to make it easier for pupils to walk and cycle to school; the organising of numerous awareness raising events such as Bikefest and Apple Day, films and discussion workshops; the commissioning of a feasibility study into retrofitting biomass fired district heating into rural properties (and Halhill Steading in particular). The groups have also been developing 'resilience indicators' to allow monitoring of our progress towards a positive and sustainable future.

Sustaining Dunbar has established excellent links with East Lothian Council. We were closely involved in establishing the East Lothian Environment Forum, are playing a key role in forming the East Lothian Environment Strategy and an East Lothian Food Policy and are fully involved in the Community Planning process. We are also part of the East Lothian Community Engagement Strategy Working Group.

We hosted and helped organise the first Scottish Food Relocalisation Conference which has led to the setting up of 'NOURISH –a Local Food Network for Scotland'.

We hosted a 'transition training' weekend for community groups from across Scotland and have supported and encouraged the development of similar groups in nearby towns and villages, including Sustainable Haddington, Transition North Berwick and, in particular, Carbon Neutral Stenton which we are supporting with short term funding for a project worker. We are also represented on the board of Transition Support Scotland which is working to support the development of transition initiatives around Scotland.

The 'Zero Carbon Dunbar' project secured funding from the Scottish Climate Challenge Fund in January 2009 for a two year community mapping and action plan project, 'Dunbar 2025', and to employ a team of energy auditors to work with the 'BeGreen' energy advice service. This is developing a vision of a low carbon, locally resilient future and an action plan for bringing about the structural changes in the local economy which this will require, at the same time as assisting householders to make immediate reductions in energy consumption and carbon emissions by providing personalised home energy reports and follow up advice and assistance to implement energy efficiency measures and install micro-renewables.

Another Climate Challenge Fund grant has now been secured to fund a 16 month project, 'Connecting Dunbar', which will survey people's current travel patterns, gain an understanding of the current barriers to greater use of walking, cycling and public transport and which will develop and start implementing action plans to enable more sustainable travel.