**Date:** 27th February 2024

**Time:** 2 - 3.30pm

**Venue:** Virtual

[**Resources**](https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/community_engagement_topic_support_network_comm)

**MINUTES**

**Community Engagement Topic Support Network: Community Climate Action Hubs**

**Attendees:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Alice Smith | AS | EAUC Scotland |
| Severine Monvoisin | SM | Edinburgh College |
| John Thorne  Joan Lawrie | JT  JL | Glasgow School of Art  Highlands and Islands Climate Hub |
| Sarah Shea | SS | Glasgow Kelvin College |
| Sandy Greene | SG | ScrapAntics |
| Lara Fahey | LF | EAUC Scotland |
| Craig Leitch | CL | Fife Climate Hub |
| Rory Hill | RH | EAUC Scotland |
| Elisa Garcia-Wilson | EGW | University of Dundee |
| Chris Walker | CW | Cycling Scotland |
| Alice Hague | AH | James Hutton Institute |
| Anna Clark | AC | Heriot-Watt University |
| Amy Ledger  Nikolas Thomopoulos  Martin Webb | AL  NT  MW | APUC  University of Surrey  Edinburgh College |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Apologies:**

Kathleen Harper Ayrshire College

Louisa Harvey Scottish Government

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **14.00** | **Welcome and Introductions**  *John Thorne, Sustainability Coordinator, Glasgow School of Art & TSN co-convenor*  JT led a round of introductions. |
| **14.05** | **Introducing the Community Climate Action Hubs**  *Joan Lawrie, Hub Manager, Highlands and Islands Climate Hub CIC*  *Note: Unfortunately, Louisa Harvey, Community Climate Action Team Leader at the Scottish Government Directorate for Energy and Climate Change was unable to attend. Joan Lawrie kindly stepped in to provide a quick overview of the project from Highlands and Islands Climate Hub’s position as a pathfinder hub.*  The Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) ran between 2008 and 2022, and during this time was the go-to source of funding for community climate projects. However, the fund did not sufficiently encourage collaboration and innovation, and there was recognition of a need for grassroots climate action with a mechanism for support.  In 2020, the Scottish Government approached Thurso Community Development Trust and Aberdeen Climate Action with proposals to develop two pathfinder Community Climate Action Hubs – [Highlands and Islands Climate Hub](https://hiclimatehub.co.uk/) and [NESCAN](https://www.nescan.org/).  From these two initial pathfinder hubs, the network has developed and grown. There are now around 20 hubs, with most areas of Scotland now covered apart from some parts of Greater Glasgow.  The Scottish Government’s aim in creating these hubs was for them to be led from the grassroots. Thurso Community Development, for example, was chosen to lead Highlands and Islands Hub because of their holistic approach encompassing climate action and social justice. Aberdeen Climate Action had a readymade network across the North-East. These grassroots, place-based approaches were then replicated across the network of climate hubs.  The hubs have a broad remit, including to:   * Build awareness of the climate emergency and actions local groups can take * Develop local plans * Help groups take up funding opportunities * Facilitate networking * Ensure a more joined-up approach to tackling climate change at a regional level   JL shared a map of the hub distribution which can be viewed in the session recording.  Q&A  LF asked if there has been feedback that this model is more useful than the CCF. JL replied that there is still a gap - all the hubs have some seed funding to be dispersed within communities, but it is not on the scale of CCF and there is an emphasis on diversification of funding sources. |
| **14.15** | **Highlands and Islands Climate Hub**  *Joan Lawrie, Hub Manager, Highlands and Islands Climate Hub CIC*  JL shared a quote from Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” JL said that community groups can be influencers within communities.  The Highlands and Islands Climate Hub started in September 2021 as one of the Scottish Government’s two pathfinder hubs. They originally proposed to cover the North Highlands and Islands. However, networks formed organically, and they began supporting and covering the whole of the Highlands and Islands, working with Highland Council, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands.  The Hub’s vision is to be bold, collaborative and resilient by creating climate friendly projects and initiatives addressing community need to lead a transformational climate ready region. They do this through:   * Support – supporting groups through community development officers spread across the regions * Collaboration – through networks and partnership projects * Education & training – Carbon Literacy Training, fundraising and social media training, help with writing net zero plans and so on * Celebrating community climate action * Capacity building – by providing additional skills and support * Giving a voice to communities * Funding support – both through seed funding grants and supporting groups to find sources of funding   Climate Action & Community Needs  JL said that their climate action centres community needs. For example:   * Togetherness & mental wellbeing   + Community growing   + Active travel   + Improved greenspaces * Food security   + Community larders   + Community growing   + Local food * Fuel security   + Energy efficiency   + Renewable energy   + Renewable heating * Connected and equitable   + Repair cafes   + Bike sheds   + Tool libraries   Connecting Communities  Connecting communities and helping people to find each other is a priority of the hub. Communities know what the problems are and what the solutions are – they just need to be brought together to make things happen.  Adaptation  Highland Adapts is a partnership project of the hub. They are currently working on a Climate Risk Assessment for the Highland region, which faces significant adaptation challenges – for example, one specific community is faced with a metre of sea level rise. Through the project, they are working with the community to build resilience plans.  Highlands and Islands Climate Festival  The month-long annual festival coincides with climate week. The theme of the festival is local behaviours - eating, shopping, active travel etc. This has increased engagement because people want to be connected to their local area. Last year, they held over 150 events reaching over 5000 people, which they hope to replicate again this year. They will also be holding a Highland COP to coincide with COP 29.  Climate Action Highlands & Islands Film  Last year, the hub produced a [film](https://hiclimatehub.co.uk/filmclimateaction) with young filmmaker Cameron MacKay showcasing their projects and exploring some of the issues faced by the community – for example, depopulation.  Membership  [Membership](https://hiclimatehub.co.uk/membership) is open to anybody based in the Highlands and Islands, and provides access to events, peer learning and training, and funding.  Q&A  AS asked about the Hub’s engagement with FHE institutions. JL said that there has been some engagement with the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and they have also worked with researchers from the University of Edinburgh.  JT asked how long the hub is funded for. JL said that they are funded until March 2026. |
| **14.35** | **Fife Climate Hub**  *Craig Leitch, Fife Climate Hub Manager*  The organisation that hosts Fife Climate Hub, [Fife Communities Climate Action Network](https://fccan.org.uk/) (FCCAN) has been delivering projects across Fife since 2015. In 2023, they were successful in their bid to host the Fife Climate Hub. The hub is one of the more established of the new hubs, having started around two years after the pilot hubs were established.  Fife Climate Hub’s aims include:   * Capacity – increasing skills and knowledge of individuals and groups to take climate action * Engagement **–** connecting with established community organisations * Networking – bringing together community groups to share learning * Collaboration – providing a platform for regional, cross-sector collaboration * Shared voice – for Fife communities to influence policy * Climate action map – to identify barriers and opportunities * Project support – enabling groups to take their ideas forward * Funding – offering a small grants fund   Training & Events  They deliver training including How to Win Hearts & Minds, Climate Literacy, and workshops on fundraising, communications and equality.  In terms of events, they deliver networking visits, how to events, consultation events, film screenings and more. They also deliver Fife Climate Festival. As well as this, they deliver partnership events with the likes of Fife Council, NHS Fife, Climate Action Fife and Fife College.  Grant Programme  In partnership with Climate Action Fife, the hub offers two funding pots – the Small Grants Fund and the Seed and Development Grant. So far, they have funded 31 projects from 25 organisations, for a total of £26,688.  The Small Grants Fund offers groups £500 to run climate-related events. For example:   * Aberdour CAN started a local climate film club * Balmullo Community Council planted fruit trees * Leslie Golf Club cleared a burn to stop flooding and started tree planting * St Andrews Botanic Garden developed an interactive Biodiversity workshop   The Seed and Development Grant offers up to £1000 for project development and capacity building. For example:   * Methilhill Community Children’s Initiative started a young children’s climate awareness programme * Fife Alcohol Support Service got materials to make up beginner seeding and soil packs * YMCA Glenrothes invested in their infrastructure with an irrigation system, fruit trees and window boxes   Fife Climate Festival  The Fife Climate Festival took place from 24th February to 3rd March 2024. They delivered 60 events across Fife, ranging from gardening workshops to swap shops.  Influencing Change  The hub has submitted consultation responses around energy and heat, community engagement, wellbeing and sustainability, active travel. Additionally, they have worked with Fife Council Environment Partnership, Food for Fife and other partners, as well as meeting with MPs and MSPs where possible.  Feedback  CL shared feedback that they have received from the community, pulling out threads including happiness, inspiration and motivation.  Transition University of St Andrews  This Transition group is linked to the University of St Andrews and is represented on the FCCAN Board, so can feed into the Hub directly.  Projects:   * Sharing, reuse and repair * Smarter travel * Climate KnowHow and Action * Local food * Greenspaces and wildlife   Q&A  AC asked how the Hubs approach the sharing of best practice. CL said that they are working towards a formal mechanism, but they do meet up regularly and support, in particular, new hubs.  AC also asked if the Hubs have explored renewable energy projects. JL answered that they work with community benefit funds managed by energy providers. For example, their Sustainable Spaces programme aims to provide guided support to decarbonise community spaces and help increase uptake of community benefit funds.  SS asked where CL sees colleges fitting into the work of the Hubs. CL said that the colleges are a good route into younger communities. SS asked if there is formal representation of young people and colleges through the Hub's governance. CL said that their local colleges are supporters of the network, and this relationship is still developing. |
| **15.00** | **Dundee Changemakers Hub**  *Sandy Greene, ScrapAntics*  SG is the Managing Director of [ScrapAntics](https://www.scrapantics.co.uk/), a creative recycling social justice enterprise that runs art studios, a ScrapStore and a community centre, working with schools and students across Dundee.  Introducing the Hub  The [Dundee Changemakers Hub](https://www.dundee-changemakers.net/) is around 6-months old. Its core team (marked in bold) and partnerships include organisations already working with communities around sustainability, isolation, cost-of-living and other issues. These are:   * Friends of the Earth Tayside * One World Centre * Faith in Community Dundee * Dundee Community Food Network * Eat and Drink Dundee * **Uppertunity** * **ScrapAntics** * **Transition Dundee** * **The Maxwell** * **Creative Dundee** * Changing for the Future * V&A Museum of Design Dundee * Dundee Cycle Hub * Hot Chocolate Trust * University of Dundee * Bonnie Dundee   How We Got Here  While an important city historically, recently Dundee has undergone a sort of wakening, having become a UNESCO city of design with major events and the opening of the V&A. A priority of the Hub is making sure that the whole community can benefit from this.  Just Transition  The early stages of the project have focused on how the five organisations that make up the steering group will work together. They have decided on a sociocratic model of decision-making by small groups with trust in collective decision-making. This model focuses on finding commonality. There are two staff coordinators whose job it is to take facilitation forward.  They have held several food events within communities aimed at finding placemakers, individuals who will be supported by the team to work on local projects addressing community need.  This structure aims to:   * Make existing work more efficient and scale up * Nurture new and existing relationships * Raise community voices in policy and practice * Amplify social and climate action   Connecting, Doing, Learning, Sharing  Doing:   * Visioning and neighbourhood events * 3 x neighbourhood pilot projects * 20 x micro grants * Support emerging collaborations   Learning:   * Network and active learning * Action research evaluation group * Exploring new ways of participating * Peer leadership programme   Connecting:   * Network facilitators to support collaborations, scaling up, visibility, focus, embedding, peer learning, access to resources * Regenerative consultation – listening * Proactive relationship building activities – building trust and empathy   Sharing:   * Participatory, creative, meaningful communications * For example: community and youth journalists share real people’s stories   Key Outcomes   * A shared vision – bringing Dundonians together * Increased number and impact of community climate projects * More effective collaboration and sharing of resources and energy * More collective influence on policy, practice and process * More community members are aware, involved and empowered to take part in climate action * Dundee shows what is possible when we embed creative and inclusive approaches   Q&A  JT asked if they have linked with local universities and colleges. SG said that they have brought universities in to help with evaluation and research. SG said that conversations about climate need to bring everyone along with them, mentioning that they are looking at difficult conversations training.  LF asked for more information about the difficult conversations training. SG said that it was being delivered by a local contact, but they will share details if it is successful. |
| **15.15** | **AOB**  *Severine Monvoisin, Community Garden Coordinator, Edinburgh College & TSN co-convenor*  JT said that the next Community Engagement TSN will be delivered in a hybrid model in October 2024. Further information will be shared via the Jiscmail.  CW asked if JL could share the map of the Community Climate Action Hubs across Scotland. JL will request this. |
| **15.30** | **Thanks and Close** |