NEWSLETTER

February 2026 Vol.1

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THE STORY of THE CHARITY

- **Formed in 2024**
- **Registered by OSCR as a SCIO**
- **Seeking community benefits and similar sources of income**
- **To benefit the whole of the county of East Lothian**

Members' Meetings

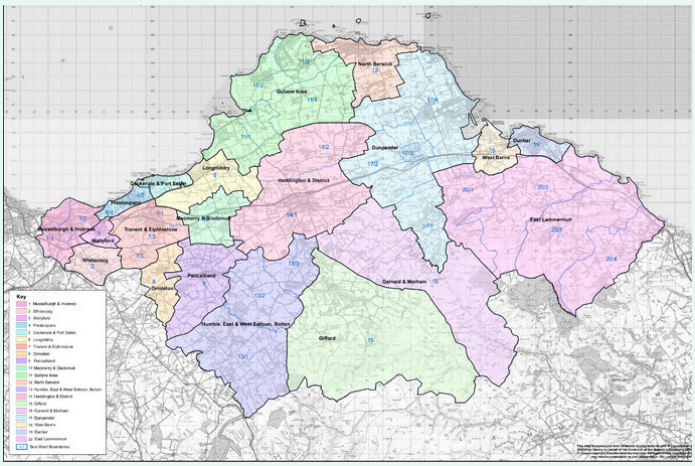
A members' vote is required whnever the charity is to make a major strategic decision.
Until such time as funding becomes available for the trustees to distribute, or some other major decision is required, we intend to work with members through the AELCC meetings and by electronic communication.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will elect trustees to the charity

WELCOME TO OUR FIRST EDITION

Our intention is to keep a wide audience up to speed with the activities of our charity. The newsletter is for onward distribution. It provides an opportunity to keep appropriate information flowing to individual Community Councils, to developers, to East Lothian Council, and to any other interested parties.



OUR MEMBERSHIP

Seventeen of East Lothian's Community Councils now have ELCB community members.
The three Community Councils which are still to join,when resources permit, are Garvald & Morham, Prestonpans and Whitecraig.

Currently, Alasdair Swan (recently stepped down from Dunbar Community Council) is the sole Associate Member and also serves as a trustee.

The charity trustees

ELCB has been delighted to welcome Jacqueline Campbell of Musselburgh & Inveresk CC onto the ELCB Board of Trustees, bringing the number to six.
The trustees meet once every second month to review progress.



Ralph Averbuch
Chair
Pencaitland



Chris Bruce
Vice Chair
East Lammermuir



Alasdair Swan
Treasurer
Associate - Dunbar



Haydn Thomas
Trustee
Dunpender



Ben Morse
Trustee
Cockenzie & Port Seton



Jacqueline Campbell
Trustee
Musselburgh & Inveresk

2025/26 achievements

Energy poverty and sustainable living – a feasibility study

The charity has commissioned a grant-funded report into the feasibility of using the surplus heat produced from our large industrial units (Viridor's Energy Recovery Unit and Tarmac's Cement Factory, for example) to fuel district heating systems across the county.

The executive summary states: "A volunteer steering group of local experts and community leaders formed in 2024 to explore this opportunity, commissioning a professional feasibility study with support from charitable funds. This study, delivered by consultants Viegand Maagøe, has confirmed the technical and economic viability of a county-wide heat network, including detailed modeling of heat demands, capital and operating costs, heat distribution, and socio-economic impacts."

"Early results are highly encouraging: even without subsidies, the proposed heat network could deliver heat at lower cost per unit than the leading low-carbon alternative (individual heat pumps). Moreover, an integrated regional approach – extending supply to neighbouring Edinburgh – further reduces costs for East Lothian consumers by leveraging economies of scale. These findings demonstrate that the East Lothian Heat Network can be both feasible and cost-competitive, unlocking local economic benefits, long-term price stability, and significant carbon reductions."

We would encourage everyone interested to know more to read the full report.
https://sustainingdunbar.org/files/2025/07/East-Lothian-Heat-Report-Web.pdf



LOTHIAN HEAT CIC

As a result of the above study an independent Community Interest Company, Lothian Heat CIC, has been established to take this idea forward, so the momentum of the original study has been maintained.

As our charity has been set up to focus on East Lothian, this new CIC is legally separate from ELCB. The new CIC has a wider geographical remit. One of the directors of the CIC is our representative Ralph Averbuch.

East Lammermuir developers

Negotiations are well advanced to secure community benefits from current developments. Consultations with the local community have established a general principle that these benefits should be used in the local area first for specified purposes, and will be extended to the whole of the county through ELCB (probably after five years) in proportions to be agreed. The immediate focus will be on the East Lammermuir Area to –

1. provide a local transport scheme;
2. improve the biodiversity in the area;
3. introduce energy efficiency changes into village homes;
4. encourage active travel by providing safer routes.



Foundation Scotland

ELCB has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Foundation Scotland who will work flexibly with the charity to provide administrative services to meet our needs. This will provide an added layer of governance over what the charity does, but more importantly provides more security and sustainability into our model. The work of ELCB is carried out entirely on a voluntary basis, so the trustees considered it wise to have a back-up solution in case the volunteer hours are no longer available. At the same time, the MoU recognises that ELCB may grow to a stage where it can employ its own administrator directly and so need less day-to-day support from Foundation Scotland.

2026 work-in-progress

Newlands Hill

The charity has a Memorandum of Understanding with Belltown Power that it will receive 1% equity ownership of the wind farm with an opportunity to acquire a further 4% of the project.

The application for 15 wind turbines and a battery storage facility is now proceeding to Public Local Inquiry after East Lothian Council raised an objection to the Proposed Development in September 2024.
Given the Public Local Inquiry process, Belltown Power is now expecting a determination of the application to be made in late 2026 / early 2027.

East Lothian Council dormant funds

East Lothian Council has 45 dormant charitable funds that it has found it challenging to administer. ELCB has offered to help in any way it can with these funds. Once we know the intentions of the people who so kindly left money for the benefit of East Lothianfor the money ELCB will be in a position to consult with the relevant Community Council member (e.g. in the case of the Inveresk Cemetery Fund) or with all seventeen Community Council members (in the case of more general purposes, such as the relief of poverty) to give our members a chance to identify worthwhile projects that would have positive outcomes for East Lothian in line with the settlor's wishes. (We would also include the three Community Councils who have yet to join ELCB, as appropriate).

A working group with East Lothian Council, Foundation Scotland and other interested third sector organisations will be set up to work through the feasibility of this project.

BESS community benefits

ELCB Trustees are providing support and advice to Cockenzie and Port Seton Community Council (and involved in conversations between C&PSCC and Prestonpans) in discussions with Gresham House relating to the Cockenzie BESS community benefits.

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We hope that you have found this newsletter informative and helpful. If you have any comments or would like to be added to a mailing list please contact editor@elcb.org