

## Introduction

On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2022, the North East Scotland Climate Action Network (NESCAN) Hub, in association with the University of Aberdeen and Strathclyde University, and with the assistance of Alan Caldwell Associates, held a Mapping Community Climate Action in the North East of Scotland event.

## Structure and purpose of the event

The aim of the first half of the event was to map the various community projects that reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, and community organisations and groups working in this area. The purpose of this was to enable NESCAN Hub to have a clear idea of what is already going on in the region so they can be in a better position to support these groups and develop community climate action locally.

The mapping exercise was followed by an opportunity for attendees to visit drop-in sessions hosted by experts in sustainability, climate change and biodiversity, and access information and resources to expand their climate action projects.

The second half of the event focused on deepening and sharing learning, with workshops and presentations on how to access and increase community involvement and social inclusion in climate change, followed by a practical workshop on how to identify and access climate change funding.

There were also expo booths hosted by NESCAN Hub's partners and stakeholders, that attendees could visit, and opportunities for attendees to network throughout the day.

The whole event was a fantastic opportunity for individuals from community groups, 3<sup>rd</sup> and public sector organisations to share knowledge, ideas and resources, identify opportunities and solutions to the challenges faced by community groups, meet new people and build new relationships.

In preparation for the event, the NESCAN Hub emailed all attendees a [Mapping Community Climate Action in North East Scotland questionnaire](#), which they were encouraged to complete in advance as a way to start the thinking off and enable the collection of more detailed information on community projects that may not have been possible in a workshop setting. The questionnaire was also sent to non-attendees who couldn't make the event via email and the NESCAN Hub social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter).

The purpose of this report is to highlight the findings from the first half of the event, lessons learned and how these have been used to determine NESCAN Hub's next steps.

## **NESCAN Hub**

[NESCAN Hub](#) is a regional community climate action support hub, fully funded by the Scottish Government, that grew out of NESCAN, a wide network of community climate action groups in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

Our vision is to contribute to the creation of a flourishing, connected and sustainable North East Scotland through the provision of dedicated training, help and support for community led climate action.

Our aims are:

- To support and develop community led climate action throughout Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.
- To be the voice of community climate action and link into policy and decision making at a regional and national level.

## **Partnership working**

NESCAN Hub is a member of the [Community Participation in a Just Transition to Net Zero in the North East of Scotland](#) project board sponsored by the Scottish Universities Insight Institute (SUII), alongside Dr Rebecca Ford from Strathclyde University and Dr Tavis Potts and Dr David Toke from the University of Aberdeen and Teri Vogt from Powering Circle. The project consisted of three interactive workshops to:

1. Examine global concepts and advances in just transition and how they can be practically applied in North East communities.
2. Identify the narratives and values on just transition by communities and how these interplay with the wider energy system and can drive genuine change.
3. Enhance community agency in the energy system and create a platform for both behavioural and policy change to achieve net zero.

As the aims of the third workshop dovetailed with aims of NESCAN Hub's and their mapping exercise, it was decided to host both workshops as a joint event. It was

felt that this approach would reduce duplication, increasing resources available and attendance from participants, speakers and expo booth and stall holders.

## Event Format

The event was originally planned as an in-person event. This format would have been more interactive, informal and useful for the organisers and attendees and provided a valuable opportunity for face-to-face introductions and networking. Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions and the peak in COVID cases at the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022, it was decided to host the event online through an interactive platform called Hopin.

## Event Attendees

The event was open to representatives from community groups, 3<sup>rd</sup> and public sector organisations, elected members, and individuals with an interest in climate action and climate change and biodiversity in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

Direct invitations were sent from the NESCAN Hub via email to NESCAN members, community groups and existing stakeholders of the Hub and University of Aberdeen and Strathclyde University. Recipients were encouraged to disseminate the invitation across their own networks. Details of the event and how to register were also shared by the NESCAN hub, both universities and SU1 through their social media platforms and websites.

The event was attended by over **60** individuals from over **40** groups and organisations. These included:

- Aberdeen City Council
- Aberdeen Climate Action
- Aberdeen for a fairer world
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Alford Green Hub
- Aller Croft
- Ballater CAN (Climate Action Network)
- Bonny Muir Green
- CARES (Community and Renewable Energy Scheme)
- Circular Communities Scotland
- Community Land Scotland
- Community Rail
- Local Energy Scotland
- NESBiP (North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership)
- NESCAN (North East Scotland Climate Action Network)
- Old Torry Community Centre
- Perth and Kinross Council
- Robert Gordon University
- Scarf
- SCCAN (Scottish Communities Climate Action Network)
- Scotland's Rural College
- Strathclyde University
- Sustainable Ellon

- Deeside CAN (Climate Action Network)
- Friends of the Earth Scotland
- Greener Kincardine and Mearns
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Home Energy Scotland
- Huntly Climate Action
- Instant Neighbour
- Inverurie Community Energy Society Ltd
- Sustrans
- The Habitat People
- The James Hutton Institute
- The Secret Garden Society
- Udney Climate Action
- Unison
- University of Aberdeen
- Zero Carbon Daviot
- Zero Waste Scotland

Despite focusing on the North East of Scotland, the event was attended by individuals and representatives from groups and organisations throughout Scotland, eager to see what was happening in the North East Scotland region, what projects they could emulate and how to make cross regional connections.

### **Expo Booths and Drop-in Sessions**

Expo booths are virtual stalls created by stakeholders and organisations to provide information on the help and resources they can provide, including website and contact details. They operate just like a normal stall at a face to face conference. The expo booths at the Mapping event included a pre-recorded video and/or PowerPoint presentation, together with useful web links and documents and contact details. The expo booths were unhosted and opened an hour before the event started and could be accessed by attendees before, during and after the event. This enabled attendees to visit the stalls at a time and way that suited them.

The following organisations had Expo Booths:

- [Aberdeen City Council Rangers Service](#)
- [Aberdeenshire Council Sustainability & Climate Change Team](#)
- [CARES](#) (Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme)
- [CFine](#) (Community Food Initiatives North East) & Granite City Food Growing
- [Circular Communities Scotland](#)
- [Community Land Scotland](#)
- [Cycling Scotland](#)

- [NESCAN](#) (North East Scotland Climate Action Network)
- [Zero Waste Scotland](#)

The event also had live drop-in sessions. These were live hosted virtual information sessions hosted by representatives from stakeholders and organisations to provide information on the help and resources they can provide to community groups. These interactive sessions were held after the mapping event and enabled attendees to speak to and ask questions of the organisations hosting that session. Attendees were free to visit as many drop in sessions during the 45 minutes allocated, as they wanted.

Drop-in sessions were held by:

- [CARES](#) (Community and Renewable Energy Scheme)
- [Circular Communities Scotland](#)
- [Community Land Scotland](#)
- [Home Energy Scotland](#)
- [NESCAN](#) (North East Scotland Climate Action Network) Hub
- [SCCAN](#) (Scottish Communities Climate Action Network)
- [Sustrans](#)
- [Zero Waste Scotland](#)

### **Presentations and Workshops**

The first workshop was 'Mapping Community Climate Action in the North East of Scotland' hosted by Alan Caldwell, [Alan Caldwell Associates](#), and Alison Stuart, [NESCAN Hub](#).

The second workshop was 'Social inclusion in Community Climate Change Action' hosted by Oliver Armstrong and Tess Humble from Breathe and Robert Walley from the [University of Central Lancashire](#).

This was followed by the third and final workshop 'Climate Change Funding' hosted by Phyllis Martin from [Truffle Pig](#).

### **Mapping Community Climate Action in the North East of Scotland workshop**

Aim: Identify and map current and planned sustainability, climate change and biodiversity projects across Aberdeen city and Aberdeenshire. The results of which will be shared on an interactive map on the [NESCAN Hub website](#).

The purpose of this mapping exercise was to:

- Understand what climate change and increasing biodiversity community work is currently being done in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, including the type of projects and geographical spread.
- Identify gaps in both project type and geographical location so the NESCAN Hub knows where to concentrate its effort and resources to develop action.
- Reach out to those involved in or wishing to be involved in community climate action to build relationships between them and the Hub, and each other, and help increase the membership of and develop NESCAN.

For this workshop, attendees were split into four groups, each one with a facilitator and scribe. Attendees were presented with 3 maps of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire on a Miro Board; Aberdeen City, North Aberdeenshire and South & Central Aberdeenshire, colour coded dots and a virtual whiteboard to record details. Each coloured dot represented a sustainability/climate change/biodiversity theme:

**Blue:** Nature

**Red:** Energy and Buildings

**Green:** Circular Economy

**Yellow:** Transport

**Brown:** Food

**Grey:** Other

Attendees were asked to discuss ongoing and future projects under each of these themes and where each was based. Each project was allocated a coloured dot with a number which was then placed on the map by the scribe. Details of the project; names, organisation and contact details, were then typed into the virtual whiteboard with the corresponding number.



# Mapping Community Climate Change in the North East of Scotland event



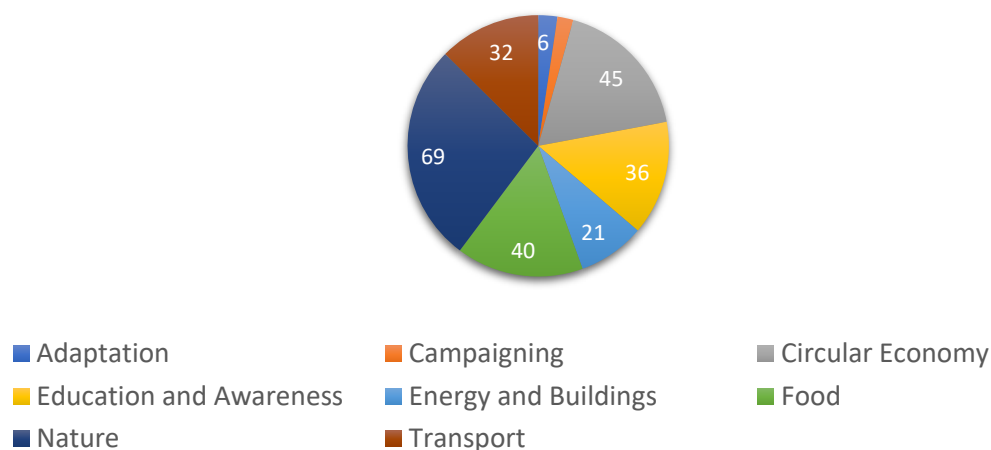
*Example of North Aberdeenshire Map used in workshop*

## Results:

Over 150 projects were identified by attendees in the 4 workshop groups. These were combined with the projects submitted through the 38 completed [Mapping Community Climate Action in North East Scotland questionnaires](#). Duplications were removed and additional themes created for projects classed as 'Other'.

The result was **254** submitted projects. These have been broken down into themes and locations.

## ***Projects identified in the workshop by theme***

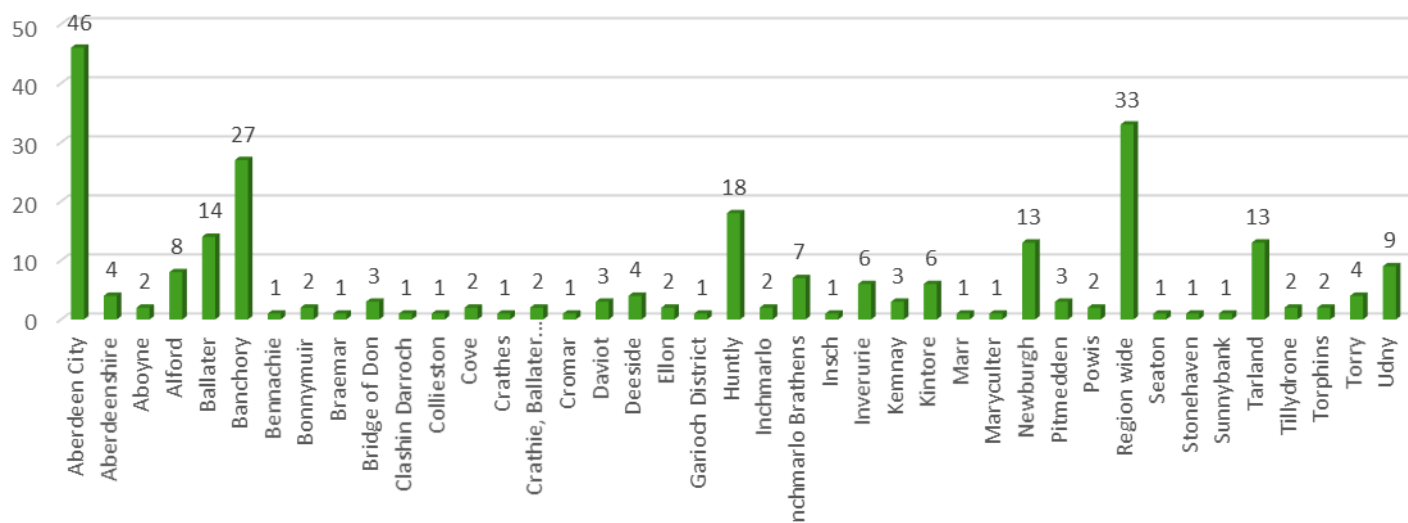


Over a quarter of projects recorded focussed on Nature (27%), followed by Circular Economy (18%), Food (16%), Education & Awareness (14%), Transport (13%), Energy & Buildings (8%) and then Adaptation and Campaigning (both with 2%).

- Nature includes projects such as tree planting, community woodlands and community gardens and wildlife recording.
- Circular Economy includes upcycling and repair projects such as Men's Sheds, mending and sewing workshops and community composting.
- Food includes food growing and preparation, reducing food waste, community fridges and food banks.
- Education and awareness includes workshops and talks, climate action networks, websites, social media and handbooks on various sustainability and climate change themes.
- Transport includes foot path creation and maintenance, bike repair and rental and installation of electric vehicle charging stations.
- Energy & Buildings includes retrofitting and carbon reduction in buildings, community hydro and windfarm schemes.
- Adaptation includes flooding and drought prevention and resilience, floodplains and mitigating erosion.
- Campaigning includes conversations with elected members, political campaigning and encouraging public involvement and action.



***Projects identified in the workshop by location***



For the location of the projects, 18% were based in Aberdeen City and covered the whole City and 13% were region wide meaning they covered both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Within Aberdeenshire, the locations with most projects were Banchory, Huntly, Ballater, Newburgh and Tarland. These areas have very active, well established climate action networks with numerous projects which covered various themes.

Additional findings from workshop discussions and questionnaire responses:

*Ask young people to be involved. Put the questionnaire on social media. Use the City Voice to ask questions of.*

*Link the activities of the many community flood resilience groups across Aberdeenshire.*

*Liaise with other climate action groups in NE Scotland to share knowledge, expertise and experiences*

*Getting together with local groups to share information and experience and encourage each other.*

*Engagement with relevant authorities and bodies is important for communities.*

*There is a need to get other people involved who aren't already interested in climate change*

*Would love to hear voices of fishing and farming industry on their personal thoughts of climate change.*

*Good idea, mapping, making the territory visible.*

For full results including, identified projects, their locations, theme, the organisations or group responsible for these projects, their contact details and website/social media links please see Appendix A. Mapping workshop outcomes.

### **Feedback from the event**

All attendees were sent a [Mapping Community Climate Action in the North East of Scotland Event: Post-event Feedback](#) Form to complete. This was completed by 14 attendees and the results were largely positive:

- 50% of attendees rated the event Excellent, 29% rated Very Good and 21% rated Good.
- Most attendees liked the chance to make contacts, get advice and share knowledge and experience.
- 93% of attendees found the event Very Organised and 7% found it Organised.
- 100% of attendees attended the mapping session, between 86% and 93% attended the later workshops. 64% attended the expo booths
- The most popular drop-in sessions were the Circular Communities Scotland and Home Energy Scotland sessions.
- 50% of attendees rated the Expo Booths as 4 out of 5, 37% as 3 out of 5 and 12% as 1 out of 5.
- 50% of attendees rated the Mapping Workshop as 4 out of 5, 21% as 2 out of 5 and 3 out of 5 and 7% as 1 out of 5.
- 50% of attendees rated the Drop-in sessions as 4 out of 5, 43% as 5 out of 5 and 7% as 2 out of 5.
- 79% of attendees found the event length About right, 14% found it too long and 7% found it too short.

For full feedback results, please see Appendix B. Mapping Community Climate Action in the North East of Scotland Event: Post-event Feedback results.

## Lessons Learned

- Asking NESCAN members which date and duration would suit them best prior to the event via Doodle Poll increased engagement and ensured attendance was higher than anticipated.
- Combining two workshops with similar aims (NESCAN Hub and SUII workshop) increased participation, attracted attendees who may have only come to one of the workshops and was more efficient for both the organisers, presenters and attendees who only had to attend one event.
- Combining NESCAN Hub and SUII resources to fund a consultant (Alan Caldwell Associates) saved time, opened up the organisers to new ideas and methods of running workshops and engaging with attendees. This also gave the organisers access to ICT and online platforms such as Hopin and Miro Board and provided training for these.
- A virtual event may have increased attendance as there was no need to travel but was perhaps not as interactive as a virtual event.
- There were issues with the online maps in the mapping workshops in relation to visibility and usability for attendees. For similar exercises in the future, open discussions with attendees and a scribe to take notes without the map may be more efficient.
- Hopin was a good platform which allowed for a main stage, expo booths, and break out rooms. It did however require additional training for presenters and drop in session hosts prior to the event. Some attendees also reported issues accessing the event using this platform.
- Attendees really liked the fact that other support services organisations hosted drop-in sessions and expo booths. These were useful in terms of getting advice, making contacts and networking.
- The support service organisations that attended and hosted drop in sessions found the event an excellent way to reach out to those interested in their services and positively interact with them.

## Conclusion

The Mapping Community Climate Action in the North East of Scotland event was a success and beneficial to all involved. The collaboration between NESCAN Hub and the SUll project board demonstrated the advantages of working together for both the organisers and attendees. Furthermore, involving other stakeholders created connections and learning opportunities that would not have been possible otherwise. This collaborative working reduced NESCAN Hub's cost of funding the event, enabling the savings to increase NESCAN Hub Seed funding pot, which directly benefitted community groups and opened the door to further collaboration in the future.

The drop-in sessions and expo booths in particular were beneficial to attendees as they provided the opportunity to speak directly to experts, ask questions, learn what services were available to communities and groups and gather practical advice and resources on how to plan and run climate change projects.

There was great value in having more targeted workshops follow the Mapping Community Climate Action in the North East of Scotland workshop to further learning and capacity building. The topics of these workshops came out of the previous two SUll workshops and feedback gained from NESCAN members. This increased their relevance and effectiveness. All the resources from the SUll workshops and mapping event will form part of the NESCAN Hub online resources.

The feedback from the event highlighted how much attendees appreciated the opportunity to meet and network with other sustainability, climate change and biodiversity focussed groups and individuals and learn about all the different projects across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. This shows how necessary having a network and this knowledge is – it arose from the need and desire for it in the community.

There are lessons to be learned from the planning and outcomes of the Mapping Community Climate Action in the North East of Scotland event but on the whole the day was a success and met both NESCAN Hub and the SUll project board's aims. The event provided valuable learning and knowledge not just for the attendees but also the NESCAN Hub and has influenced their objectives for the next financial year and how the Hub can achieve its vision of contributing to the creation of a flourishing, connected and sustainable North East Scotland through the provision of dedicated training, help and support for community led climate action.

## Next Steps

NESCAN Hub have used these results:

- To create a virtual map on their website [www.nescan.org](http://www.nescan.org) that everyone can use to search for climate change projects by location or theme. Each entry provides a brief synopsis of the project and/or organisation, along with contact details and links to website and/or social media.
- To identify geographical gaps in community climate action within Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. NESCAN Hub is now working with a MSc student from the University of Aberdeen to identify the reasons behind why there is a low level of action in these areas, the barriers and challenges faced by communities in these areas and what knowledge or resource they require that NESCAN Hub or their support services partners can provide.
- To identify the thematical gaps in climate action within Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, explore why these gaps exist and to determine where resource, knowledge and support is required. For example, attendees within the working groups discussed their lack of knowledge of adaptation and climate change resilience and to link flood resilience groups. This has resulted in the NESCAN Hub planning a 'Community Climate Change Resilience and Response' workshop in June 2022.
- To influence NESCAN Hub's objectives and 2022 – 2023 project plan and allocation of resources.

## Further information

If you would like further information on the NESCAN Hub and our members, please visit [www.nescan.org](http://www.nescan.org) For further information on the content of this report, please contact NESCAN Hub Snr Project Officer Tara Murray [tara@nescan.org](mailto:tara@nescan.org)

## Appendices

Appendix A. Mapping workshop outcomes.

Appendix B. Mapping Community Climate Action in the North East of Scotland Event: Post-event Feedback results.