

## BANFF AND BUCHAN AREA COMMITTEE COASTAL

### COMMUNITIES FUND

(Grants between £1,000 and £25,000)

### Application for Assistance

<b>Name of organisation:</b>	Aberdeenshire Council
------------------------------	-----------------------

<b>Contact name:</b>	Malcolm White
<b>Position in organisation:</b>	Team Leader (Outdoor Access & Countryside Team)

<b>Address (including postcode):</b>	Gordon House, Blackhall Road, Inverurie, AB51 3WA
--------------------------------------	---

<b>Telephone number:</b>	01467 534417
--------------------------	--------------

--	--

**Applicants are encouraged to discuss their project with the Banff and Buchan Area Manager prior to submitting the application form. Tel: 01467 537131**

<b>Tell us about your group's aims and purposes (include details of your membership and evidence that the organisation has the right level of resources, skills, and capacity to deliver the project):</b>
--

Aberdeenshire Council – Local Authority.

At the Infrastructure Services Committee (ISC) meeting of 23rd January 2020, Aberdeenshire Council committed £25,000 of Coastal Communities Fund allocation to establish the Coast Aberdeenshire Project.

The principal objectives of the overall Coast Aberdeenshire Project are to:

1. Promote and enhance awareness, wider use and better integration of the Aberdeenshire coastal path corridor resource.
2. Deliver targeted local initiatives to improve some existing sections of the coastal path.
3. Explore sustainable strategies for ongoing promotion, development and management of the coastal path.
4. Assess linkage with regional long-distance routes.

The vision for the overall project is:

“An integrated community plan for the Aberdeenshire coastal path corridor which promotes and enhances the natural, built and cultural heritage whilst sustainably supporting the area’s social and economic aspirations.”

At the Infrastructure Services Committee (ISC) meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023, Aberdeenshire Council agreed that the Council would continue to repair and upgrade the existing sections of the coastal path where it has responsibility; that the Council should assist stakeholders with the identification of a potential and feasible route for the whole length of the Coastal Path Network and facilitate discussions with stakeholders to deliver the vision for the Coast Aberdeenshire Project; progress the following actions: coordinating and making available to community groups, the range of different funding schemes available which can be applied for to develop new sections of the coastal path; establish an officer forum for the project to share good practice; explore different options for identifying an overarching body which could coordinate the future management, maintenance and promotion of the coastal path; Identifying a feasible route for the full length of the coastal path between Cullen and St Cyrus, supporting and building upon the work currently being undertaken by a local interest group called MerCHaT and the previous feasibility study which was undertaken for the route between 2013 and 2015. Aberdeenshire Council employ an Environment Project Officer (Outdoor Access) on a temporary contract (based on receiving external funding), who’s main remit has been to take forward the actions outlined above which Aberdeenshire Council has a responsibility for.

**Tell us what would you like to do and describe the need and support for the project? Include an explanation of how your project will be sustained in the future and also how any risks will be managed (e.g. shortfalls in funding).**

**You must include the site or location of your project.**

It is proposed to employ a contractor to carry out works to address significant deterioration in the existing pathway from Sandend Village to Findlater Castle viewpoint. There has been significant change to the environment of the sea braes over the last 25 years. Extreme weather conditions and heavy use have contributed to a dynamic process of slippage causing land slips; in places, removal of grazing animals has allowed dense scrub to grow up. To the western end of the route, parts of the cliff and coastal slope carrying the path have already disappeared. Much of the path has narrowed and developed a steep crossfall towards the sea. Increased desiccation in summer and heavy rain in winter means that water periodically pours down the slopes, washing away structures and leaving sections of path absent or muddy and unstable. Summer or winter, some sections of the remaining path present a challenging and unnecessarily uncomfortable walk. As climate change continues, wetter winters and drier summers will inevitably contribute to further cliff falls and landslips.

The upgrading of the route will be achieved by moving the route, where necessary, on to firm ground minimising steep gradients and crossfalls, resulting in a pathway which is accessible, sustainable, and easy to maintain. It is planned to achieve a continuous accessible grass path 1.2 to 2m wide, over a distance of around 2.2km, conforming to currently accepted standards in terms of the path gradient and crossfall, while retaining the sea views and general character of the walk. Where necessary, sections of the historic route will be replaced with a more sustainable and access-appropriate

alternative. Stock fencing will be used to protect cultivated areas and livestock fields. Boardwalks and sections of steps will allow streams, wetland areas and steep slopes to be negotiated.

The proposed works will provide a safe, easily accessible maintained path which will be an asset for the future. The route will form part of the Aberdeenshire Coastal Path, a long-distance walking route along the North East Coast of Scotland.

Funding has previously been secured from the Banff & Buchan Coastal Communities Fund in financial year 2023/24 to help deliver this project. As part of a wider application to help deliver several applications, £5,000, was secured towards: producing path specification; undertaking procurement process; managing construction contract; and issuing communications to relevant stakeholders on the progress of the works. Unfortunately, as previously envisaged, the construction works for the path were not able to be completed within financial year 2023/24. This was due to negotiations between the Landowner and the Council's Engineers, taking longer than anticipated to agree a route, due to getting the balance right between locating the path too close to the coastal edge that it is more susceptible to coastal erosion, and not taking up too much of the land further in from the coastal edge which is used for agricultural purposes. Therefore, the 'managing construction contract' aspect of the funding in 2023/24 wasn't utilised, but instead was allocated towards the aforementioned negotiations. This funding application is solely towards the construction costs of the path itself which have not been applied for previously.

**Please explain how your project has to tangible link to the coast and/or the sea and how it will deliver positive benefits including leverage of investment, economic growth, regeneration and rural or community development:**

The Coast Aberdeenshire Project focuses not only on the coastal paths, but path linkages to the coast, associated infrastructure such as car parks, toilets and interpretation – and other assets which may benefit from repair, maintenance or interpretation up to 1 mile inland. Once complete the path will be an asset to the local community who will be able to use it to help to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The benefit of this work will be seen not only by the communities local to this route, but by users from across the wider region. Overall outcome from this long-term investment is in making and keeping the full coastal route open for the future. Potential improvements to economic and social wellbeing within communities along the route may be reasonably expected as a result of investing in enhancing the full continuous route which links many settlements and towns across Aberdeenshire. Attracting long distance path walkers could potentially lead to a demand for facilities like accommodation, camp sites, camping barns, and provision of refreshments allowing diversification of the rural economy in the local area.

The Findlater to Sandend section of the path will provide a piece of work which can be used as an example to encourage further investment in and development of the wider project. Cumulatively – the project above which when delivered – will bring improvements along the Banff & Buchan coast which will make a positive contribution to the visitor offering, particularly needed at a time of growing 'staycations' and increasing visitor numbers locally. It is hoped that these improvements, in turn, will encourage repeat visits and benefits for local businesses. Some of these may be in the regeneration towns, but others are likely to be in the smaller villages and wider rural areas along the coast which to date, have not benefitted from the regeneration investment targeted to larger settlements.

**What is the total project cost? (The cost of everything related to your project, even the items or activities you aren't asking us to fund)**

£45,000

**Please tell us the costs of each item or activity you would like us to fund:**

Item/Activity	Total Cost	Amount Requested from Coastal Communities Grant
Construction works of Sandend to Findlater path upgrade and realignment		£25,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£25,000</b>

**Total funds raised to date and the amounts raised (including grants, your own fundraising activities and donations):**

Source	Amount	Date confirmed
Access/Environment Capital Budget Line	£20,000	22 February 2024
<b>Total</b>	<b>£20,000</b>	<b>22 February 2024</b>

**Other funding applied for (give details of the amount(s) and source(s) as appropriate – in particular Aberdeenshire Council sources):**

Source	Amount	Date confirmed
N/A		
<b>Total</b>		

**Will your project be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025?** Yes

**If you answered no, can your project be delivered in phases and if so please explain how this can be done?**

**Aberdeenshire Council Priorities**

**Tick the Council Priorities your project helps to deliver? (you must tick at least one)**

A strong, sustainable, diverse and successful economy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Have the best possible transport and digital links across our communities	<input type="checkbox"/>

Provide the best life chances for all our children and young people by raising levels of attainment and achievement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work with parents and carers to support children through every stage of their development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage active lifestyles and promote well-being with a focus on obesity & mental health	X <input type="checkbox"/>
Have the right mix of housing across all of Aberdeenshire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support the delivery of the Health & Social Care Strategic Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work to reduce poverty and inequalities within our communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver responsible, long-term financial planning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have the right people, in the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protect our special environment, including tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions	X <input type="checkbox"/>

**Give details of how your project meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 ensuring that it will be inclusive and not discriminate against any members of your community:**

An Integrated Impact Assessment which takes into account the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 has been undertaken for these works. A summary of it can be found below:

3 positive impacts – Adaptation: investment in the route will encourage active travel; Infrastructure resilience: Upgrade will extend the life of the route and prevent closure due to integrity issues; Economic and social transition: maintaining the route supports active travel.

1 negative impact – consumption of physical resources: use of new materials in the upgrade of the path, mitigated by re-using existing materials; waste and circularity: little waste generated.

All Negative Impacts can be Mitigated. Path upgrade will be using the “as dug” technique will minimise use of new materials by re-using the current materials and any waste streams will comply with legislation and standard Council practice.

**Applicant Declaration:**

**I certify that the information contained in this application is correct, and that I am authorised to make the application on behalf of the above group. I understand that decisions made by the Banff and Buchan Area Committee are final.**

<b>Name (Please print)</b>	Malcolm White
--------------------------------	---------------

<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	28 March 2024

**Checklist – please attach the following items:**

- Constitution or Memorandum & Articles of Association
- Your most recent verified accounts
- Three most recent bank statements
- Quotes/specifications

The application should be emailed to – [banffandbuchanamo@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:banffandbuchanamo@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

**Please note** that successful applicants will require to provide a short report on the project by no later than 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.