

## **Report on BWCE Fund Progress under the Funder Commitment on Climate Change**

March 2023

In May 2021, the [BWCE Fund](#) became a signatory to the Funder Commitment on Climate Change. As a signatory, we recognise the severity of the climate emergency and we aim to do everything we can to address the causes of climate change and support adaptation to its effects. We have signed up to the [commitment](#) in full and, from now on, our publicly available BWCE Fund Annual Reports will include details of our progress on the five goals listed below. We are committed to continuing to develop our practice, learning from others and sharing our learning.

The Bath & West Low Carbon Community Fund Charitable Incorporated Organisation, known as the BWCE Fund for short, was set up in 2014 with the following aims:

- The promotion of the advancement of environmental protection or improvement and the prudent use of resources
- The relief of poverty, including but not limited to the improvement of the conditions of life in socially and economically disadvantaged communities

for the benefit of the public within Bath and the surrounding area.

Our income derives predominantly from an annual grant from [Bath & West Community Energy \(BWCE\)](#), an Industrial and Provident Society established to develop and promote renewable and low carbon energy in the Bath and surrounding area. As a Community Benefit Society, BWCE donates surplus income generated from its development to the fund each year for community benefit.

### **Progress to date against the five goals of the Funder Commitment on Climate Change**

This report demonstrates our progress to date on the five key goals below. We will also include details of our progress in our 2022-23 Annual Report.

#### **1. Educate and learn**

The first goal involves making opportunities for our trustees and stakeholders to learn more about the key causes and solutions of climate change. All of our trustees are committed to continuously learning about and acting on climate change and they also work professionally in climate, environment or another aspect of sustainability in addition to their contribution to the BWCE Fund.

We aim to educate stakeholders about climate change through our publicity and public engagement around our annual funding round, which supports local projects that target carbon reduction and/or fuel poverty. We engage with local organisations on climate issues

and work with the local authority and other local funders to try to support one another and maximise our impact. Examples of local organisations and groups that we work with include Bath-based third sector charity 3SG and the newly created Bath Social Impact Network, which has been set up in 2023 by Bath Spa University and 3SG.

In 2022-23 we also focused on learning more about fuel poverty and how our grants could help organisations to support vulnerable local residents in environmentally preferable ways. We set up a fuel poverty working group and explored effective ways to help. This resulted in a number of grants that are allowing local organisations to provide targeted energy advice and support, energy saving packs and heated over-blankets as a cost effective and low energy way to keep people warm. We are also funding slow cookers and education on low energy cooking.

For example, Penny McKissock MBE from Southside Family Project says that; “We are very grateful to the BWCE Fund for this timely grant for Southside. It will enable our team to support families experiencing fuel poverty, helping them to use their energy more efficiently and reduce their energy bills. This will benefit families significantly during the cost of living crisis and difficult winter. We will provide targeted advice and support, alongside energy saving packs, including radiator reflectors, draught excluders and energy saving bulbs, tailored to their needs. We will be able to support families to reduce energy/other waste and understand simple ways to make their home more energy efficient.” Since handing out grants in January 2023, we have had very positive feedback from grantees in terms of what they have been able to achieve.

## **2. Commit Resources**

The second goal is to commit resources to accelerate work that addresses the causes and impacts of climate change. Each year we receive an annual grant from renewable energy cooperative Bath and West Community Energy (BWCE) BWCE and we use this grant to fund local projects. To be eligible for funding, project proposals must demonstrate that they promote environmental sustainability, low or zero use of energy and/or alleviate fuel poverty in a way that also includes environmental efficiency and/or environmental measures.

In the most recent funding round in 2022-23, we received £35,000 from BWCE and handed out 11 grants totalling £31,505. We have no paid staff and our trustees run the BWCE Fund with the help of Quartet Community Foundation, which administers the grant programme on our behalf. Our funding approach means that, each year, we commit all of our available resources to tackling climate change.

The 11 grants that we provided in 2023 are as follows:

- £4,908 to Southside Family Project for fuel debt advice and energy efficiency training for Southside Support Workers. Helping local families in fuel poverty to reduce their energy use, alongside the provision of energy-saving packs.
- £5,000 to Bath City Farm for an air source heat pump to supply heating and hot water to the main community farm building.
- £2,650 to Bath Share & Repair to invest in a thermal imaging camera and put together materials to support a number of workshops in partnership with community organisations aimed at helping people to learn how to save energy and reduce fuel costs.
- £1,800 to Climate Friendly Bradford on Avon for a feasibility study of a proposed new traffic-free, multi-user greenway between Bradford on Avon and Trowbridge.
- £1,200 to Climate Hub Bath & North East Somerset toward the development of a physical Climate Hub in Bath that can act as a focus for climate action work locally.
- £1,600 to Fairfield House toward implementing the Fairfield House Sustainability plans to improve the energy efficiency of the bungalow on site.
- £2,700 to Keynsham Community Energy to provide slow cookers and energy efficiency advice to parents at Keynsham Children's centre, reducing people's energy bills and cutting CO2 emissions.
- £1,100 to Kidical Mass Bath for free learn-to-cycle sessions for families and adults (all levels of riders). To learn, practise and gain confidence in cycling, with the support of expert coaches and free access to loan bikes.
- £4,875 to Oasis Hub Bath to provide slow cookers, slow cooker recipe books and heated over-blankets for food pantry members this winter.
- £2,472 to SWALLOW for the group's Energy Saving project that will make information easy to understand for people with learning disabilities. Helping them to reduce energy consumption, increase energy efficiency and save money.
- £3,200 to Transition Bath for a paid student intern to grow Eco Together climate empowerment. This project will help form new Eco Together groups.

### **3. Integrate**

The third goal is that, within all our existing programmes, priorities and processes, we will seek opportunities to contribute to a fair and lasting transition to a post carbon society, and to support adaptation to climate change impacts. Our income is provided by renewable energy cooperative BWCE and its members and the entire purpose of our fund is to support carbon reduction and climate education and awareness. As such, climate is integrated into how we are funded and everything that we do as an organisation.

### **4. Steward our investments for a post-carbon future**

The fourth goal of the Funder Commitment on Climate Change is to steward investments. The BWCE Fund has no investments as we redistribute the funding that we receive each

year from BWCE. We bank with Triodos Bank, a leader in ethical banking and sustainability and unspent grant funds are held by our administrator, Quartet Community Foundation, a fellow signatory to the Funder Commitment on Climate Change.

## **5. Decarbonise our operations**

The fifth goal is to decarbonise our own operations. The BWCE Fund is a small, virtual organisation with no offices. We minimise printing and our meetings have been predominantly online in the past year. Our trustees, who run the fund, seek to minimise their own carbon emissions.