



Wind's Eye Community Asset Transfer Proposal

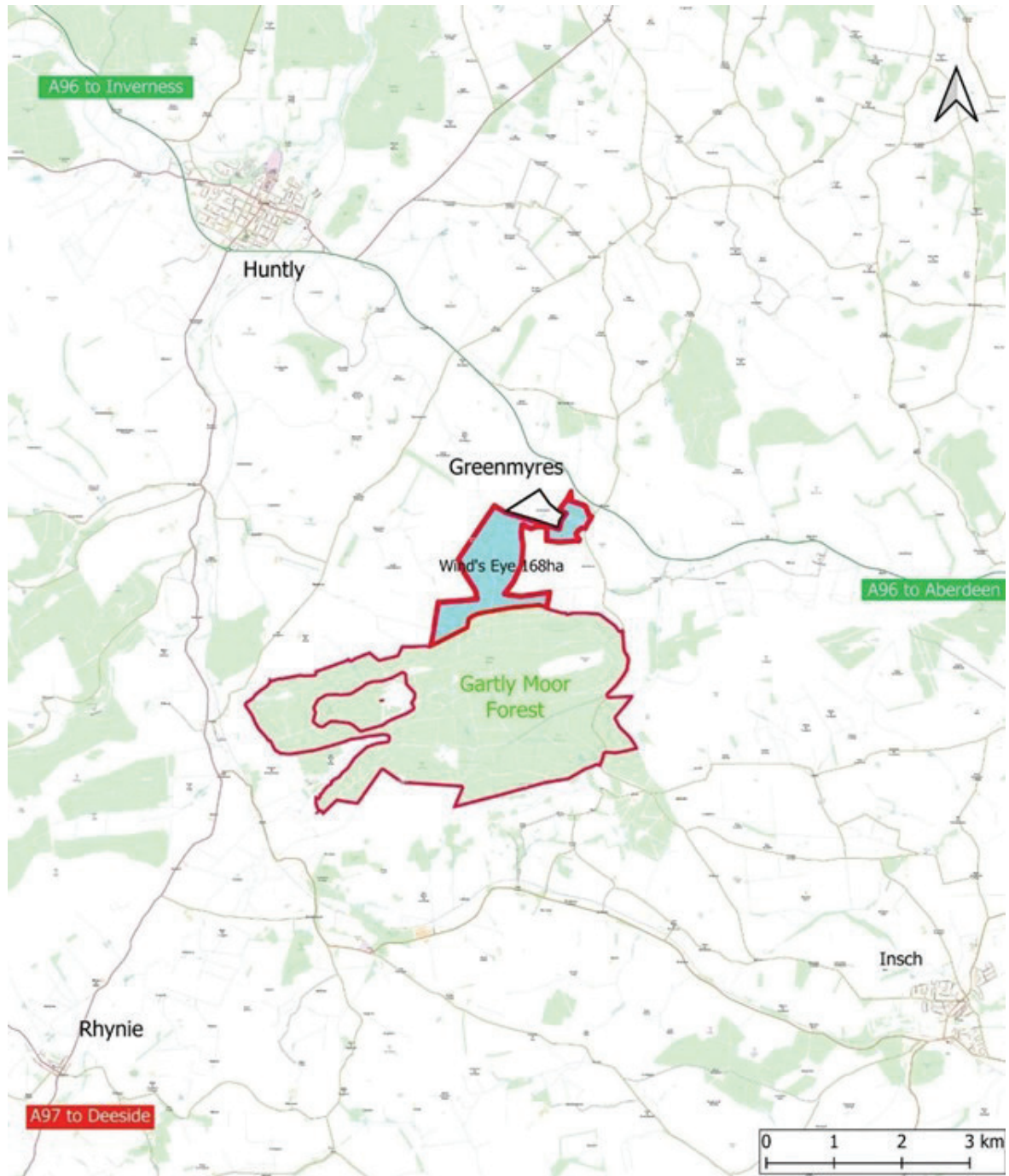
Community Consultation Autumn 2026

THE FUTURE OF 168 HECTARES OF WOODLAND
ON THE EDGE OF GARTLY FOREST



Huntly
Development Trust

Wind's Eye Location Map



Huntly
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Introduction

Since 2009, Huntly Development Trust (HDT) has been working with others to make our community a better place to live, work and visit. This includes delivering projects like Number 30, Greenmyres and the Huntly Travel Hub.

We are now proposing our next exciting step - buying Wind's Eye, the 168-hectare (415 acre) section of Gartly Forest (GF) right next to our Greenmyres venue.

Please read on to find out why and how we want to do this, what it could mean for Huntly and District, and how you can give your feedback on the proposal.

This is a genuinely transformational opportunity for our area - please take the chance to give us your views.

FUNDED BY

The Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES)
<https://localenergy.scot/funding/>

The Scottish Land Fund
www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/funding-programmes/scottish-land-fund

The Energy Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme
www.energyredress.org.uk

Huntly Development Trust

Huntly Development Trust (HDT) is a nationally-recognised, forward-thinking community organisation rooted right here in Huntly.



Huntly
Development Trust

We're passionate about creating opportunities to help our town and the wider district thrive — for everyone who lives and works here now, and in the future.

With support from more than 600 members, a dedicated team of 26 staff (14 full-time equivalent), and the guidance of 8 committed volunteer Trustees, we work with others to tackle local challenges and create real, positive change.



Since 2009, HDT has worked with many partners to deliver a wide variety of projects of increasing scale and complexity, such as:

- ✓ Bringing back life to Huntly town centre by redeveloping vacant properties and giving them new purpose:
 - ▷ The former RBS building, now home to **Orbs Community Bookshop**
 - ▷ 11 Deveron Street, the base for our **Huntly Travel Hub**
 - ▷ **Number 30**, our award-winning flagship venue on The Square. This vibrant community space, with its cinema, café, co-working spaces, learning zone & banking hub has become a place where local people come together every day. It provides twenty jobs & several training opportunities.
- ✓ Transforming **Greenmyres**, a former hill farm, into a biodiverse community asset for outdoor adventures (see next section)
- ✓ Helping people travel in practical, affordable & environmentally responsible ways. Our **Huntly Travel Hub** operates the **community minibus**, a two-car Co-wheels franchise, electric bike hire & promotes walking & cycling.
- ✓ Capturing enhanced benefit from local wind **energy opportunities**, including from two commercial developments, as well as our own community turbine at Greenmyres. This income has levered in ca £5.3 million of external investment towards the above projects – and many others.



COMMUNITY MINIBUS

Across all this work, our focus remains the same: thinking ahead, taking practical action and working with partners to create **lasting benefits** for Huntly and District



ORBS



Greenmyres

In March 2014, Huntly Development Trust acquired Greenmyres, a 63-acre (25 hectare) hill farm some 5 miles South East of Huntly.

Since then, we've:

- ✓ Installed the Greenmyres wind turbine generating green electricity and revenue for community investment
- ✓ Turned the deteriorating farmhouse into the Ecobothy, an award-winning fully-accessible, eco-friendly meeting venue, with ancillary storage/workshop, car parking and a dog park
- ✓ Completed the missing links in a foot/cycle path to Huntly, and built a link path into Gartly Forest connecting Greenmyres with its network of forest roads
- ✓ Constructed a cycle pump track, changing rooms and an extended lochan to host a variety of introductory-level outdoor activity
- ✓ Increased site biodiversity by digging two wildlife scrapes, and planting wildflowers, hedges and ca 7,000 native trees.



Greenmyres
Ambitiously Rural



Greenmyres is now a biodiverse, family-friendly adventure centre where young and old can enjoy the great outdoors and learn new skills. The site has become increasingly popular with uniformed groups from across the North East and enables us to deliver activities for local school pupils, some with additional support needs.

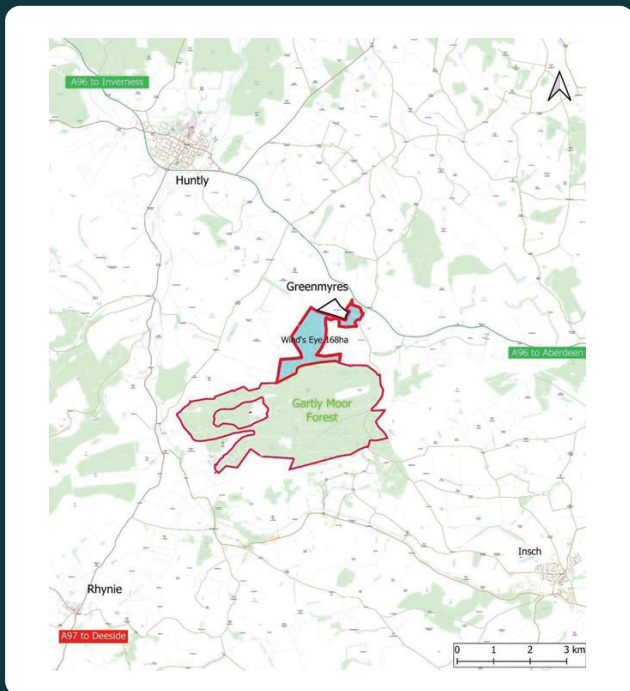
Acquisition of Wind's Eye would allow us to deliver more benefit from and at **Greenmyres**.



Wind's Eye & why HDT is proposing to buy it

'Wind's Eye' is the 168-hectare (415 acre) section of plantation woodland on the northern edge of Gartly Forest, adjacent to Greenmyres.

It is owned by Scottish Ministers and managed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS). HDT is proposing to purchase Wind's Eye through the FLS Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS).¹



Bringing Greenmyres and Wind's Eye together is a natural and strategic next step for HDT. It would enable us to build on the strong foundations we've already created and significantly increase the benefits we can offer for local people and visitors alike by:

- ✓ **Developing a community wind energy project adjacent to the existing Greenmyres/Dummuies turbine cluster to generate substantial community investment funds, and**
- ✓ **Providing more opportunities for recreation, health, education, volunteering and skills development, as well as more biodiverse, wildlife friendly forestry. All of this would be right next to Greenmyres and make use of the infrastructure we have created there.**

Wind's Eye offers a unique opportunity to tackle the challenges facing Huntly and District for generations to come. The proposal is completely aligned to national policies promoting community energy, community land ownership, community wealth building and improving biodiversity. In the volatile world we live in today, it will also contribute to national energy security and help tackle climate change.

¹ <https://forestryandland.gov.scot/what-we-do/communities/community-empowerment-cats>
Wind's Eye Forms ca 14% of GF, the rest will remain under Scottish Ministers' ownership & FLS management.



The benefits on offer

Community investment funds through renewable energy

Background work by our energy consultants, Locogen, supported by Local Energy Scotland, confirms that Wind's Eye's exposed location next to the 8 existing wind turbines at Dummuies/Greenmyres could support 3 larger modern wind turbines with a capacity of 16 megawatts (16 MW). This could generate ca £1 million per year for community investment for decades to come.

Independent research shows that the economic benefit of such community-owned energy is 34 times that of community benefit funds from commercial projects. **All profits stay locally**, supporting jobs, training, facilities and further town centre regeneration. We've already demonstrated this through our Greenmyres turbine. With public funds under ever-increasing pressure, securing independent income will become increasingly important to future-proof investment in Huntly and District.

The proposed turbines would be ca 180m tall, about twice the height of the existing ones at Dummuies/Greenmyres, but similar to other local proposals. This increased scale is needed to make projects financially viable due to higher costs and removal of previous incentives/subsidies. Also, turbine manufacturers are phasing out smaller models so by the time our project would be commissioned (post-2030), only such larger models will be available. We will work creatively with nearest neighbours to mitigate any loss of amenity.

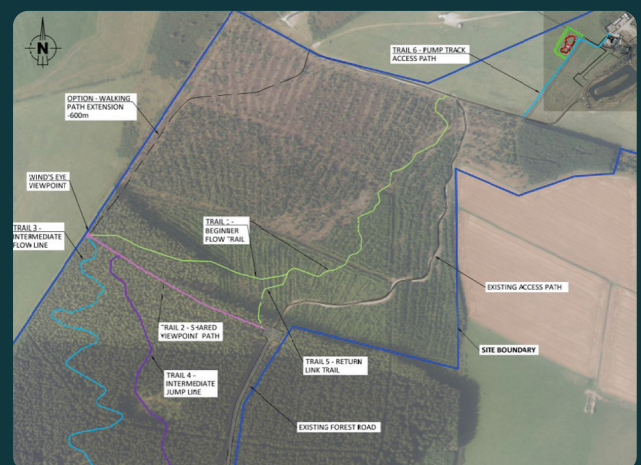
We understand that not everyone likes wind turbines, but they do generate income at a level unmatched by any other opportunity available to rural communities like ours. When any planning application for the energy project is submitted to Aberdeenshire Council it will be subject to the normal statutory process, including further community consultation. **On our website you will find images giving an idea of what the proposed turbines would look like in the landscape from a range of viewpoints.**

Access and recreation

HDT ownership of Wind's Eye would support managed, welcoming woodland access via:

- ✓ **Improved walking and cycling routes both within the forest and to/from neighbouring communities**
- ✓ **Family-friendly and accessible paths**
- ✓ **Mountain bike and multi-use trails**

CR Contracting and Collective Trax have produced initial plans for cycling trails in Wind's Eye. If purchase is successful, we will develop these further in consultation with bikers, walkers and others. Access improvements will be designed to respect wildlife, forestry operations and be inclusive of different ages and abilities.



² <https://www.aquatera.co.uk/news/community-owned-wind-farms-have-paid-their-communities-34-times-more-than-commercial-counterparts>

Health, wellbeing & education

Experience at Greenmyres and elsewhere shows that Wind's Eye could support:

- ✓ **Outdoor learning & forest school activities**
- ✓ **Training in woodland management & rural skills**
- ✓ **Activities for schools, youth groups, & older residents**
- ✓ **Volunteering opportunities**

Access to nature improves physical and mental wellbeing, reduces isolation, and strengthens community connections.

Nature, biodiversity & climate action

A key aim of our woodland management at Wind's Eye would be to enhance opportunities for wildlife, improve biodiversity and contribute to tackling climate change, just as we've done at Greenmyres. Under HDT ownership and management, we would:

- ✓ **Generate significant green electricity through the proposed wind project**
- ✓ **Protect and enhance habitats for species such as wildcat, red squirrel and woodland birds**
- ✓ **Increase the diversity of tree species**
- ✓ **Restore wetlands and heathland where we can**
- ✓ **Improve long-term woodland resilience to climate change**

We've already carried out ecological and ornithological studies as part of our early work on the proposed energy project.

We have also engaged with Saving Wildcats, NatureScot and others to agree opportunities to enhance habitat for wildcat in Wind's Eye, Gartly Moor and the wider area.

Economic development & employment

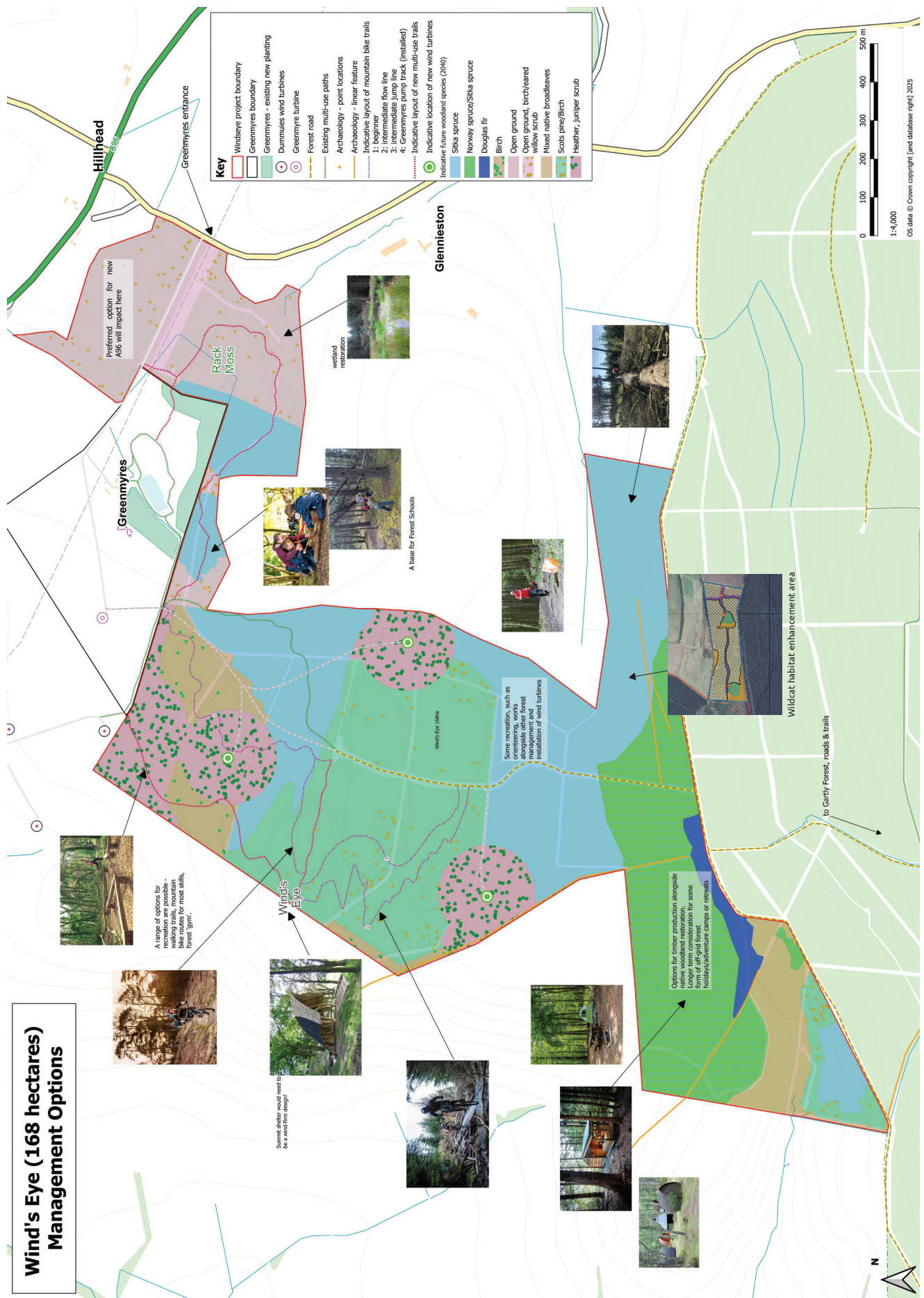
HDT ownership of Wind's Eye would provide opportunities to boost the local economy, creating jobs both on and off-site:

- ✓ **Increased outdoor adventure activity from Greenmyres**
- ✓ **Creation of woodland huts and/or small-scale visitor accommodation**
- ✓ **Timber harvesting & processing**

Community ownership would not stop commercial forestry at Wind's Eye, but some areas would be managed primarily for nature and landscape benefits. Where harvesting continues, it would support local and regional timber markets, provide income and allow us to:

- ✓ **Balance timber production with environmental & social goals**
- ✓ **Use a mix of clear-fell & continuous-cover forestry**
- ✓ **Gradually increase native & mixed woodland where suitable**

Wind's Eye (168 hectares) Management Options



Governance & management

If our CATS application is successful, Wind's Eye would be owned by HDT on behalf of the community of Huntly and District, just like Number 30 and Greenmyres.

Scottish Land Fund
Iomhaas Fearann Na H-Alba

FEARANN|COMMUNITY
COIMHEARSNACHD|LAND
NA H-ALBA|SCOTLAND

Development
Trusts Association
Scotland
A Thriving Community-led Network

Community
Energy
Scotland

Community
Woodlands
Association

LOCAL
ENERGY
SCOTLAND

It would be:

- ✓ **Governed by HDT's board, to which any HDT member can be elected. HDT membership is open to all**
- ✓ **Managed with professional forestry advice, potentially through a community forester**
- ✓ **Informed by the experiences of other community woodland groups across Scotland**
- ✓ **Supported by volunteers and partners, including national umbrella organisations of which HDT is a member.**

Decisions about how any future turbine income is used will be shaped through open and transparent consultation about what our community needs. We will work with local people, groups and wider partners to understand priorities and agree where investment could make the greatest difference. This will take into account previous consultations, so we are not starting from scratch and asking the same questions over again.

Like HDT's other assets, If the woodland were ever sold or HDT be wound up, the proceeds would be passed to other groups in the community of Huntly and District.



Purchase price & financing

In 2021, the estimated market value of the Wind's Eye land and timber crop was around £3 million. This will be updated during the CATS process through discussions between FLS and HDT. Whatever the outcome of those discussions, HDT will still need to find significant funds to make the acquisition happen.



Our plan is to seek support from:

- ✓ **Scottish Land Fund (which helped HDT buy Greenmyres and contributed towards our Wind's Eye feasibility study)**
- ✓ **Other grant funders**
- ✓ **Community investment and fundraising**
- ✓ **Forward-selling income from forestry**
- ✓ **Commercial borrowing**

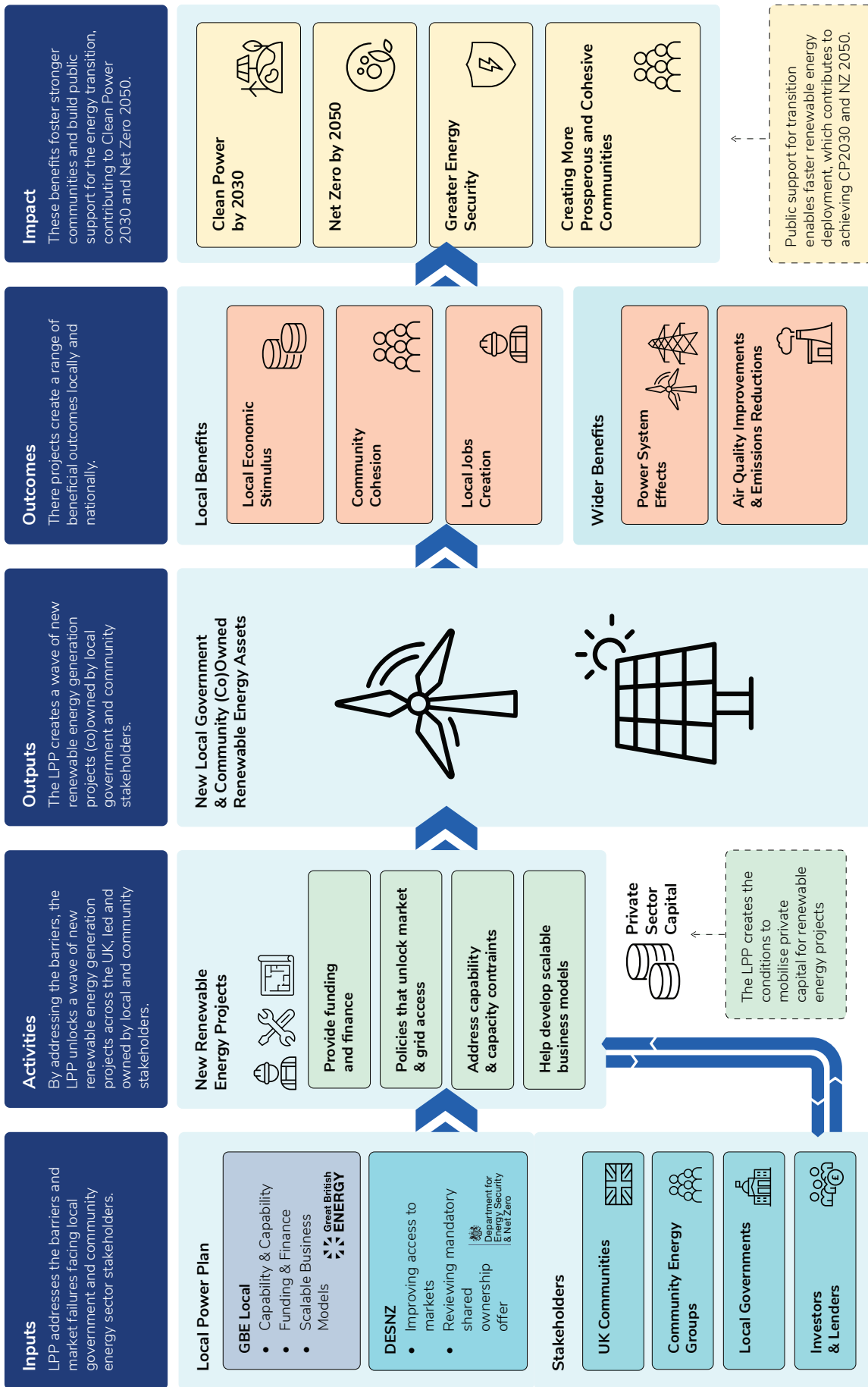
Money to develop future projects on the land at Wind's Eye would be sought from a similar range of sources, as well as HDT's own income.

The proposed wind turbines would be largely funded by commercial borrowing, but HDT is also keen to explore the potential for community shares/bonds. HDT's Greenmyres project is the Scottish case study referred to in GB Energy's recently published "Local Energy Plan", and the Wind's Eye project could be well-placed to attract support from their £1 billion community energy investment fund.



This diagram shows, step by step, how the Local Power Plan delivers real benefits for communities:

CREDIT: GB ENERGY

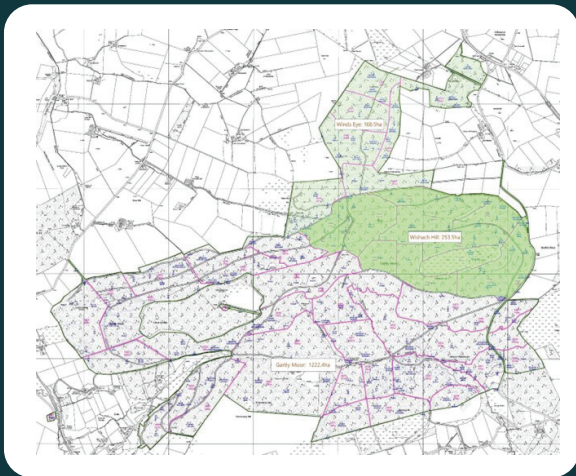


Risks & concerns

Purchasing and developing Wind's Eye exposes HDT to substantial risks, which we are taking seriously and mitigating wherever possible.

An example is through our decision to pursue 'only' acquisition of the Wind's Eye block, rather than larger areas of Gartly Forest we considered at the outset.

Together with our advisors, Community Woodlands Association (CWA), we concluded that Wind's Eye can deliver significant community benefit at the lowest acquisition cost.



ACQUISITION OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Remaining risks identified – operational, technical financial and reputational - include:

- ✓ **Funding challenges**
- ✓ **Timber price fluctuations**
- ✓ **Windblow & tree disease**
- ✓ **Community capacity & volunteer involvement**
- ✓ **Community concerns about the wind farm proposal**

We aim to mitigate these through open communication, careful planning, phased development, professional input, financial prudence, partnership working, considering alternatives and ensuring HDT continues its strong governance.

Learning from other community groups e.g. Abriachan Forest Trust (www.abriachan.org.uk) is a great way to identify risks and avoid mistakes. We will arrange learning journeys to them over the coming months and hope that interested community members will join us.

Should acquisition prove impossible, a fallback for us is to seek a lease of Wind's Eye from FLS. However, the CWA feasibility study clearly concludes that community ownership offers the best balance of community benefit, affordability, long-term control and flexibility for future generations. It effectively confirms our view that not trying to secure the opportunities that Wind's Eye offers is riskier than trying to do so!



Find out more, have your say & get involved

You can find much more about the Wind's Eye proposal on our website:

www.huntlydt.org/windseye

This includes the CWA feasibility study, the outline cycling trail plans prepared by CR Contracting and Collective Trax, and Locogen work on the proposed wind project.

We really want to hear your feedback - additional ideas, concerns, suggestions, priorities for the land, and initial thoughts on investment of future income from the proposed wind turbines.

You can do so via our short survey form which can be found at **the end of this document** or at

- ✓ Our website: **www.huntlydt.org/windseye**
- ✓ Drop in events that we'll advertise via the local press and our social media channels
- ✓ Key AB54 venues around Huntly and District.
- ✓ We'd be delighted to come and speak to your group about the project, if you'd like to invite us.

If you'd like to keep up to date with project progress or help make the project happen, we'd love to hear from you. There are many ways to get involved and every contribution counts.

Your involvement will help ensure that the project truly benefits Huntly and District. You can sign up at any of our public events, through our survey form, or by sending an email to: **windseye@huntly.net**

What happens next?

The consultation closes on **Monday 30th November 2026**

Once the consultation is over, and if sufficient support is obtained for the proposal, we will combine community feedback with our own research to prepare our CATS application to FLS. Their CATS team will have up to six months to decide whether to approve our bid, including the proposed purchase price. At the same time, we will be pursuing investment funds to enable purchase and developing the wind project up to a planning submission. This will mean that we are ready to proceed if our application is successful. If all goes to plan, we would then have approximately six months to finalise acquisition and make Wind's Eye another community-owned asset for Huntly and District. All of this would then help our community realise the aims of our Huntly Room to Thrive Community Action Plan.



*A town centre that belongs to us,
With a campus for learning and play.
A rural place with transport that works for us,
Where the focus is people, environment and culture,
And real opportunities exist for enterprise.*

Huntly Development Trust | 28-30 The Square | Huntly | Aberdeenshire | Scotland | AB54 8BR
Email windseye@huntly.net Online www.huntlydt.org/windseye



Huntly
Development Trust





Creating Opportunities for Huntly & District

Working with others to create a
resilient, inclusive, enterprising
community, capable of dealing with
ongoing change



Wind's Eye Gartly Forest Community Consultation

Introduction

Huntly Development Trust (HDT) is proposing to purchase the Wind's Eye block of Gartly Forest from Scottish Ministers through the Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS).

If successful, the purchase of these 168 hectares (415 acres) would offer HDT and our community two main benefits:

- ✓ A site for potential development of three wind turbines adjacent to the existing Greenmyres/Dummuies turbine cluster. If developed successfully, these would provide significant funds for future investment in Huntly and District.
- ✓ Land on which we can deliver a wider range of social, economic and environmental woodland activities next to our Greenmyres venue. These include mountain/gravel biking trails, walking paths, huts and other accommodation, and more biodiverse, wildlife friendly forestry opportunities.

The purpose of this survey is to gather community feedback on the HDT proposal. The survey provides an opportunity for community members to suggest additional or alternative projects to include - now or in the future – and to raise any concerns/questions about the proposals. Thank you in advance for your response.



THIS IMAGE PROVIDES LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSED WIND DEVELOPMENT

Questionnaire



Huntly
Development Trust

1 About you

1.1 Name (optional)

1.2 Postcode (compulsory)

1.3 Are you a member of HDT? (compulsory, please tick)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

1.4 What age are you? (compulsory, please tick)

☐ <16 ☐ 16-29 ☐ 30-49 ☐ 50-67 ☐ 67+

2 Proposed activities – woodland activities

2.1 Do you support the proposal to develop a range of social, economic and environmental activities at Wind's Eye/Greenmyres? (compulsory, please tick)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

2.2 Which activities do you consider to be the priorities for development? (optional, please tick)

Activity	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	I'm not in favour
Mountain/gravel biking trails				
Walking paths				
Woodland huts				
Small scale holiday stays (e.g. cabins/pods/yurts)				
Education, skills and training opportunities				
Timber production and processing				
Biodiverse, wildlife friendly forestry				
Food offering at Greenmyres				
Renewable energy/wind turbines				

2.3 Are there any other activities you would like to see developed at Wind's Eye and/or next door at Greenmyres? (optional)



2.4 Do you have any other comments? (optional)

3 Proposed activities – wind turbines

3.1 Do you support the proposal to develop three community wind turbines at Gartly Moor? (compulsory, please tick)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

3.2 Would you be interested in investing in the project via community shares or community bonds? (optional, please tick)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

3.3 Bearing in mind that any proceeds from the development would only start flowing after 2030, do you have any suggestions for how the revenue should be spent? (optional)

3.4 Do you have any other comments? (optional)

4 The proposed acquisition overall

4.1 Overall, do you support the HDT proposal to acquire the Wind's Eye section of Gartly Forest from Forestry and Land Scotland? (compulsory, please tick)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know



4.2 Do you have any other comments? (optional)

5 Other general comments

5.1 Do you have any other comments? (optional)

6 Staying involved

6.1 If you would like to remain involved/updated about the Wind's Eye project, please leave your e-mail address here and we will add you to the project mailing list (optional)

Please send your comments to

Huntly Development Trust

28-30 The Square | Huntly | Aberdeenshire | Scotland | AB54 8BR

Email windseye@huntly.net





Huntly
Development Trust

COMPANY REGISTERED IN SCOTLAND **SC358964**
REGISTERED SCOTTISH CHARITY **SC043353**
VAT GROUP NUMBER **230 5503 51**

WWW.HUNTLYDT.ORG/WINDSEYE