

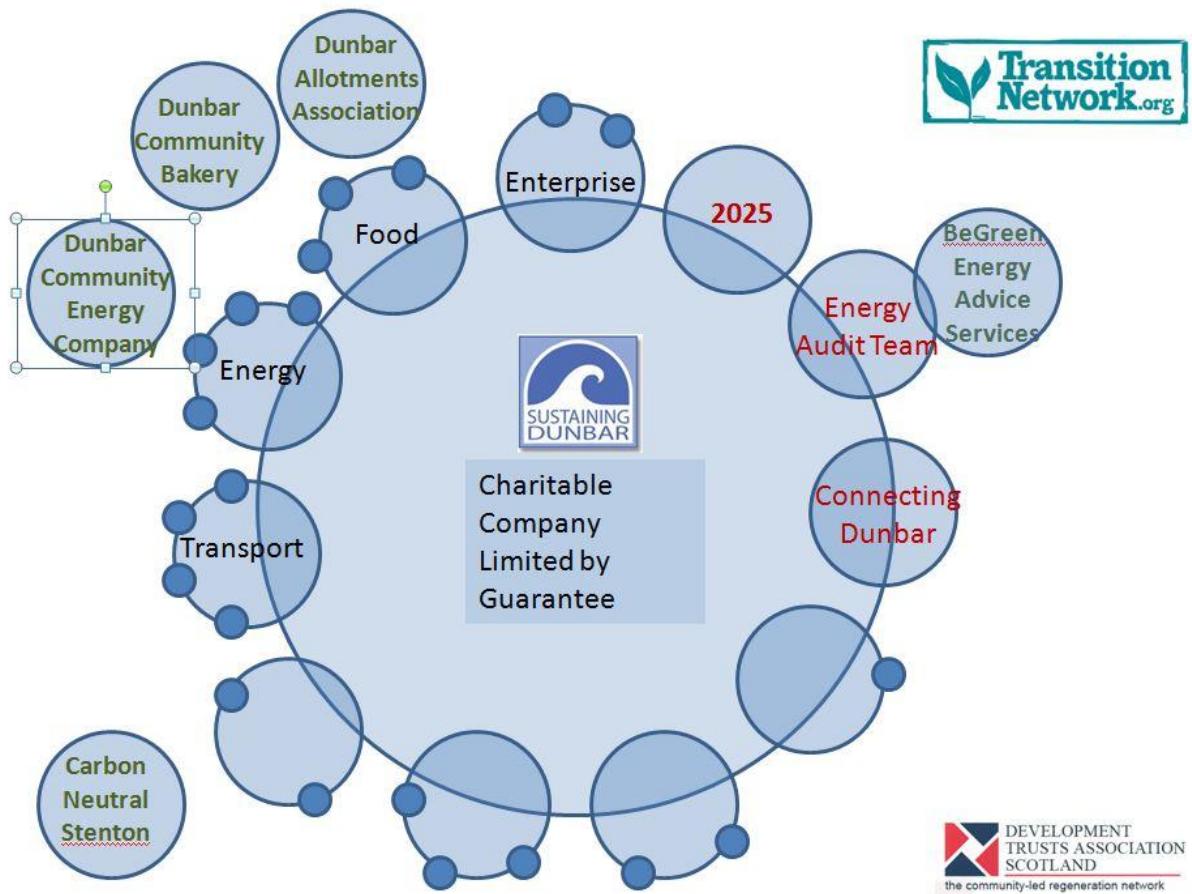
Sustaining Dunbar

Sustaining Dunbar's purpose is to inspire, nurture and facilitate Dunbar's transition to being a creative, low carbon, locally resilient community.

Dunbar is a small coastal town 30 miles east of Edinburgh where the Firth of Forth becomes the North Sea. Sustaining Dunbar covers the Dunbar and East Linton ward of East Lothian. The town itself has a population of about 7500 but with its rural hinterland of small villages and the larger settlement of East Linton, the ward has a population of about 12,000.

Sustaining Dunbar started life three years ago in the summer of 2007, initially as a group of local people talking, discussing and running events and practical activities. After nine months or so it coalesced into an 'unincorporated association' with an elected 'co-ordination group' and then, after another nine months, metamorphosed again to become a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee. This more formal structure was necessitated when we gained funding from the Climate Challenge Fund and became an employer.

Building on the idea that in any eco-system the edges are where there the greatest energy and creativity lies, and that a resilient system contains many connected networks, Sustaining Dunbar is attempting to maximise the 'edge', as well as building as many local relationships and connections as possible.



The charitable company endeavours to facilitate and enable and make connections, not to control. Working groups looking at particular topics, such as food, transport and energy formed early on and have spawned their own projects. The food group, for instance, got a group together to purchase a commercial polytunnel which is now owned and used by a dozen or so families and the local village primary school, growing food and learning new skills together. Several linked but now independent organisations, such as Dunbar Community Bakery, a community owned cooperative, and Dunbar Allotments Association have been brought into being and are progressing their own projects. A trading subsidiary, Dunbar Community Energy Company, is being formed to install community owned renewables and generate income for future community investment. The local village of Stenton has been supported to set up their own company to install a village wind turbine and generate income to invest in becoming carbon neutral.....Numerous other ventures are in the planning stages.

As well as being a Transition Initiative, Sustaining Dunbar is a member of the Development Trust Association Scotland. It also has close links with East Lothian Council. Apart from participating in the East Lothian Environment Forum and the council's Community Engagement Working Group, we are attempting to align our '2025 –Energy Descent Action Plan' project with East Lothian's local community planning process. This '2025' project is our overarching priority at present, using a community mapping process to engage with as many local people and organisations as possible to arrive at a vision of a low carbon, locally resilient future for our locality. We are endeavouring to ensure that this vision is grounded in awareness of the inevitability of a rapid reduction in our use of fossil fuels, the need to build local resilience to cope with the challenges ahead, as well as in the reality of our local resources, knowledge and skills. We are currently putting together the first draft of a vision for 2025 and will be consulting widely on this over the coming months.

Delivery of the '2025-Energy Descent Action Plan' will shape Sustaining Dunbar's activities and plans for the years ahead as we endeavour to create a vibrant and sustainable local economy. In the meantime, we have a team of energy auditors who are busy carrying out home energy audits and providing follow up advice and assistance to householders who want to reduce their energy consumption and/or install micro-renewables. Where appropriate, householders are helped to access the Government's Energy Assistance Package and the local BeGreen grants available as part of the community benefit from one of our local windfarms.

We also have a team running the 'Connecting Dunbar' project. This project is surveying people's current travel patterns and mapping the current barriers to people walking, cycling and making greater use of public transport. They will be publishing maps and devising other ways to make sustainable travel easier whilst also feeding into the longer term transport strategy in the '2025' plan.

For further information visit our website: www.sustainingdunbar.org