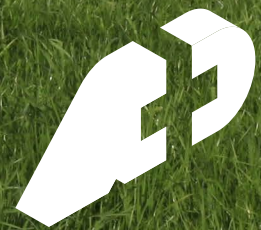


# Logie Coldstone Village Hall

Case Study produced by the A+DS  
Sust. Programme.



**Architecture+Design**Scotland  
Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

## Logie Coldstone Village Hall, Aberdeenshire

*This case study looks at a community-led refurbishment project in the scattered rural community of Logie Coldstone in Aberdeenshire. The project has provided the community with a refurbished, warm and comfortable community hall. The process of delivering the project has served to strengthen community ties and create a more resilient rural community.*

### BACKGROUND

Logie Coldstone is a small settlement in rural Aberdeenshire, with around 227 houses in the Logie Coldstone polling district. The granite village hall was built in 1897 and the timber small hall extension was added in the 1950s. There was a minor refurbishment to the hall in 1987 to update the toilets and kitchen and renew the main hall floor.

By 2003 the hall was in an increased state of disrepair highlighted by the fact that children were able to sneak in through holes in the external wall of the small hall. The community contacted a local development organisation and on their advice commissioned a structural survey and gauged advice from a local architect on the state of the hall, subsequently organising a public meeting to advise the local community of the issue.

At this point it became apparent that the constitution of Logie Coldstone Welfare Trust, who owned the hall and formed a two-tier structure of trustees and committee members, did not serve the community well. Some trustees were unaware that they were trustees and the committee had dwindled to just a few members. On the advice of a local solicitor, Logie Coldstone Trust was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status which took over from Logie Coldstone Welfare Trust in June 2007.

A comprehensive community survey in 2005 had confirmed that there was a continuing need for a flexible and cost effective community space. The survey findings prompted the hall management committee to explore the potential for Lottery funding, which was looking to fund community projects with a sound business case. A small rural hall with relatively low usage within a few miles of two similar buildings was not seen as a funding priority and funds were not granted. At this point, the Trust members were left in a quandary about how to proceed - How much could be spent on the project? Were there any other feasible uses for the hall?

In April 2008 the Trust commissioned an energy audit, which was undertaken by Real Alternatives, funded by the Cairngorms National Park Authority. The report recommended that an air source heat pump with improved insulation would be the most effective way to reduce costs and carbon emissions while improving the comfort of the building.

The management committee decided to commission a feasibility



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study to explore all options for redeveloping Logie Coldstone Hall and In 2008 consultants carried out a feasibility study for the retrofitting of the hall, including plans for the option of rebuilding the small hall which were presented at an open day. The design was received favourably but the potential cost of £600,000 was felt to be too high considering no guaranteed additional uses for the hall. In the meantime the trust made small improvements to the hall, such as painting windows, their confidence in embarking on a major project further dented by the economic downturn.

Logie Coldstone Hall in the rural setting of the Aberdeenshire countryside

A key impetus to move the project forward came in December 2010 when Aberdeenshire Council threatened the closure of Logie Coldstone Primary School. This galvanised the efforts of the Trust who made sure that the scattered local community was informed. In the end, the collective effort of the community and new Scottish Government policies on rural schools kept the school open, but the event helped to unite the community giving them the confidence that they were up to the task of refurbishing the hall. With the school remaining open, the Trust felt that it was even more relevant to ensure there was a flexible community space for future use.

Another driver for action emerged in December 2011 when the ceiling in the main hall collapsed and a structural engineer declared the hall unsafe to use.

### APPROACH

With the hall out of commission, Logie Coldstone Trust began to apply for funding for the immediate repair works but were



^ view from upstairs meeting room window

*“Buildings in and of themselves do not create communities. Buildings can be important if they are built on and from people, and in turn help to grow the power and resources of the communities in which they are built.”*

Logie Coldstone Trust

<< Completed Logie Coldstone Village Hall



The hall before the work, with later ^ timber small hall.

View of main hall before the work v



## Logie Coldstone Village Hall, Aberdeenshire

unsuccessful. Funders were not interested in funding basic problems such as ceiling repairs and to be eligible for support, the project would need to meet wider objectives. One funder offered a small amount of money on the condition that a bulk amount of funding was secured from other sources first.

The Trust sought funding from LEADER (Links Between Activities Developing the Rural Economy) but most of the available money for rural Aberdeenshire had been allocated. The breakthrough came in March 2012 when LEADER approached the community. There had been an underspend throughout Scotland so additional funding had been allocated to Aberdeenshire. LEADER encouraged the community at Logie Coldstone to consider a larger scale project, and not to be daunted by the fact they needed to secure match funding from other bodies.

The committee successfully applied for funding which was provided by The Robertson Trust, the Climate Challenge Fund and Aberdeenshire Council. The local community in Logie Coldstone raised 5% of the funding some of which was in-kind. The funding provided by the Climate Challenge Fund was to specifically fund energy and carbon saving measures.

Due to the nature of grant funding, money cannot be drawn down until the first stage of work has been completed on site. This left the Trust with a considerable shortfall to fund the first stage of the works. On the advice of the LEADER fund project officer they sought an interest free loan, and wrote to four major local landowners seeking support. A landowner who was developing self-catering holiday accommodation nearby recognised the mutual benefit of an attractive community hall able to host a range of activities and events and offered an interest free loan of £20,000 as well as the services of his accountant who had previously been involved in a similar project. This proved invaluable for the Trust.

### PROCESS

The Architect was appointed to administer the construction contract from design to completion working in conjunction with a structural engineer and a quantity surveyor. The Energy Savings Trust carried out an energy audit in June 2012 and reiterated recommendations for air source heat pumps and increased insulation. An asbestos survey was also carried out on the hall, which found several small areas of asbestos in fixtures and fittings, but the handling of these didn't have any impact on the schedule.

In November 2012 a bat survey was conducted which found evidence of long-eared brown bats roosting in the roof space. As bats are a protected species work can only be carried out during the annual migration. The work was scheduled to begin in March 2013, but the evidence of bats could have necessitated a further emergence survey and a license sought from Scottish Natural Heritage. Due to



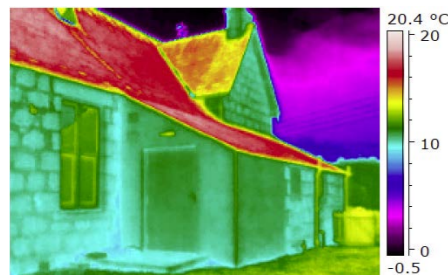
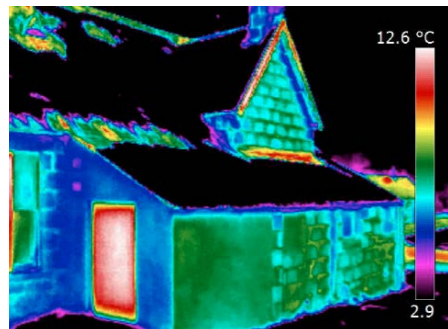
^ Work being carried out to the hall, including increased wall insulation and new timber partitions.

# Logie Coldstone Village Hall, Aberdeenshire



Thermographic images of the exterior from April 2012 (top) and March 2014 (bottom) illustrating how increased insulation has eradicated cold spots at the eaves, around the windows and at the corners of the building. Heat Loss from the unimproved small hall is very evident.

Thermographic images of the exterior from April 2012 (top- with snow on the roof) and March 2014 (bottom) illustrating the effect better quality windows and doors have on heat loss to the building.



the location of the bats this was not required but work to the roof was prohibited between April and November. As a result it was key that work start on site in as early as possible in March and work to the roof be completed by April, and so the Trust worked to a tight timescale to get through the tender process and finalise funding. If the refurbishment had been delayed to November the works could not have been completed by the deadline of March 2014 and funding from LEADER would have been jeopardised.

The air source heat pump and associated services were specified by Environmental Heating Solutions. The Trust opted for a system which was ducted from the main hall ceiling to keep the hall walls free of equipment, this had the added benefit of allowing for warm air to be circulated in the first floor meeting room.

The project started on site in March 2013 and largely kept to timescale until delays towards the end of the programme which were caused by the discovery of a lead water pipe and delivery delays. The following work was carried out:

- 120mm of insulation fitted internally to walls and in the roof space.
- New plasterboard fitted throughout.
- Replacement of all windows
- Repairs to the existing roof, including replacement of all timber barge boards.
- Existing timber floor sanded and resealed and new wood paneling up to window level in main hall.
- New fixtures and fittings to kitchens and toilets, new energy efficient lighting.
- The routing of services behind new impact resilient plasterboard walls in the main hall to allow for ball games to be played.
- Removal of the stage and replacement with insulated floor.
- Fitted Air source heat pump.
- New electric panel heaters in areas not served by the air source heat pump (foyer, toilets and kitchen).

## RESULT

The refurbished Logie Coldstone hall provides a valuable and attractive meeting space for the small rural community. Since the refurbishment the hall has been used more frequently and for a wider range of activities, including those with the aim of increasing energy awareness throughout the community. The work to improve the thermal performance of the hall has been very successful and the Trust has calculated a large reduction in CO2 emissions.

Based on September 2012 calculations, pre refurbishment, the annual CO2 emissions for Logie Coldstone Hall were 5.1 tonnes. Calculations estimated reduction of 2.63 tonnes in CO2 emissions for Logie Coldstone Hall would be achieved following the refurbishment of the

hall which would represent a saving of over 50%.

The energy use and heating costs are being monitored in the hall and the Trust aim to reflect on these to ascertain the optimum settings for heating the hall for different purposes. They aim to make an assessment on energy use following one year of occupation. As per the recommendations for the heating system, the Air Source Heat Pumps are on constantly, with the thermostat set at 16°, the temperature is raised for several events.

It is hard to ascertain whether true carbon savings are being made, as the hall is being used much more than it was before the refurbishment. It could be argued that as the hall is used more often, the community are gathering more frequently as a group in the hall, rather than heating several individual houses. As many of the activities in the hall are around the theme of energy awareness and carbon savings, it may be that the hall has infact not saved as much carbon as initially estimated, by being used more frequently, but the saving has been deflected to the wider community. Logie Coldstone Trust have instigated community energy usage surveys which they hope might give some indication of carbon savings made in the wider community.

## IN USE

There is a visitors' book in the hall and the Trust has received many positive comments. Feedback has indicated that the space is now warm, bright and inviting. Hall users have commented on the incomparable comfort level the air source heat pumps and added insulation have offered.

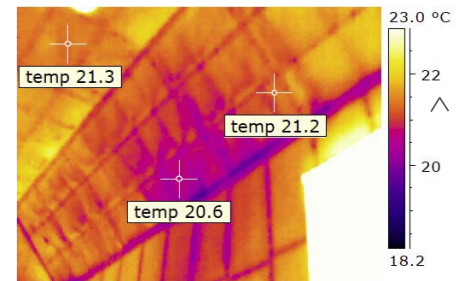
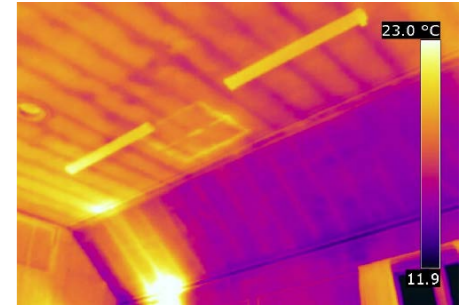
One small issue that has emerged is that care was taken to use impact resilient plasterboard in the main hall, so that ball games could be played, however they later decided to install wall lights which, unfortunately have been broken. In hindsight the Trust agrees that research into more resilient light fittings should have been undertaken.

The heating bills for the first quarter have been higher than expected, it is believed that this was due to the electric panel heaters (in areas not served by the air source heat pump) set higher than necessary this has now been rectified. Members of the Logie Coldstone Trust have been trained in the basic maintenance of the air source heat pumps.

## KEY LESSONS

Logie Coldstone Trust makes several recommendations for other communities considering taking on a similar project: make sure the legal structure of your organisation is appropriate; assess whether or not the community is ready for the project.

- establish a resilient committee that is prepared to meet as often as fortnightly during the project, and a core group of 2-4 people available to make day-to-day decisions; do plenty of research before



Thermographic images in the main hall from April 2012 (top) and March 2014 (bottom).

Thermographic images in the kitchen from April 2012 (top) and March 2014 (bottom) illustrating the positive effect of increased insulation



## Logie Coldstone Village Hall, Aberdeenshire



Kitchen after refurbishment



refurbished meeting room



Air source heat pump



beginning and take plenty time for this - after the public meeting in January 2004, the committee envisaged having the main hall refurbished and the small hall rebuilt in 6 months - but it took nearly 10 years to get the main hall completed! Allow for the cost of all professional fees in the project budget - Logie Coldstone ended up using the following professional services in addition to the architect: structural engineer; quantity surveyor; bat survey; asbestos survey; CDM coordinator.

- engage with the community to 'take ownership' of the project and input their views on their needs - the following were incorporated into the proposals: a warm and economically heated building; a hearing loop in the main hall; a light, bright foyer with room for community information to be displayed; portable staging; a landscaped seating area; a wheelchair accessible toilet with a baby changing area.

- Never underestimate the power of community cooperation and what it can achieve; improve communication in the community by whatever means: newsletter / website, social media, simple events for folk to come to and get to know each other - all of this helps to build the capacity of a community to undertake such projects - communities need everyone to tackle projects like this.

- In retrospect, while the hall was being comprehensively upgraded the Trust believe they may have missed the opportunity to install under-floor insulation in the hall, and agree if they were to carry out the work again, this is something they would definitely reconsider.

Consider ways to make the management of the hall easier - in this case Logie Coldstone Trust has:

- had the building wired to make electronic access possible in the future to minimise the need for committee members to come along to open up and lock up;
- installed a heating system which is much easier to manage - this avoids having to come down hours before a meeting /event to put on the heating;
- assess the objectives of new projects and try to seek funding from the appropriate bodies, Logie Coldstone Trust spent too long seeking lottery funding which was not appropriate for the project - the project became much easier once funders were identified to fund objectives which matched the Trust's aims;
- do not put too much faith in external consultants to come up with a solution, the wider community is often able to come up with a realistic and workable solution, specifically tailored to suit the communities needs.



^ External view of refurbished Logie Coldstone Village hall

∨ The refurbished main hall



## Project Information

Location: Logie Coldstone, Aberdeenshire  
Client: Logie Coldstone Trust  
Date Completed: December 2013  
Project Value: £198,000  
Gross floor area: 206 sq m (main hall)

Architect: Andrew Keir  
Civil Engineer: Rubislaw Engineering  
Quantity Surveyor: McTaggart and Dallas  
Main Contractor: Gordon Coutts Ltd

Funders: LEADER £83,000  
Climate Challenge Fund £65,000  
Aberdeenshire Council £30,000  
The Robertson Trust £10,000  
Logie Coldstone Trust £10,000  
  
Interest Free Loan- Cairngorm Lodges £20,000

Image Credits: Logie Coldstone Trust, Sue Dewhurst

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