

**Distributing Harestones  
Community Benefit on behalf  
of ScottishPower Renewables**



**Helping communities  
to make positive  
changes**

## **Annandale and Nithsdale Community Benefit Company**

### **Project Case Study: Mossburn Community Farm – Learning with Horses**

*'I was anxious too but I go away from here with such a feeling of wellbeing and everyone looks so relaxed, I know it's doing everyone some good!'* Volunteer with Dementia Charity.

Mossburn Community Farm was awarded a grant of £49,998 in 2016 to fund salary and administration costs for three years. The grant has enabled the Farm to develop its provision of equine assisted therapies which integrate horses into the treatment process for people suffering from a number of issues including mental and physical disabilities.

Located near Lockerbie in Dumfries and Galloway, Mossburn Community Farm was originally set up in 1987 to provide help for misused, abused, unwanted and neglected horses and ponies as well as young people with physical and mental problems.

The grant has enabled the Farm to expand its 'Learning with Horses' programme. It runs sessions for people from all different walks of life and for varying ages from children as young as five years old to senior citizens who come for weekly sessions as part of an Alzheimer's group.

The Farm works closely with local schools and it has regular clients with behavioural issues and learning difficulties. Coming into the countryside away from a formal setting allows the children to have new experiences with the ponies and other animals, to talk freely about their anxieties and to process their thoughts and feelings. Children attend from local schools either in pairs or small groups. The programme also supports self-referring individuals who have a variety of issues.

The University of the West of Scotland are monitoring the effects of the dementia friendly sessions on the people with dementia and their families. The results of this study will enable the Farm to further develop the activities to gain the maximum benefit for the dementia patients.

The project outcomes are to:

- Enable the development of a self-sustaining social enterprise that will employ up to three FTE posts, providing a stimulus to the local rural economy.
- Provide equine assisted therapy to up to 120 people with behavioural, substance misuse or mental health issues.



*'I love it so much here! I want to live here!'* Seven year-old with behaviour issues & attachment disorder.

*'The horses taught me that it's ok to cry.'* Eleven year-old who had suffered the loss of her father in a car crash.

*'I was quite anxious before coming the first week but I love it and look forward to my Thursday afternoons.'* Wife of a dementia sufferer.

