



2019-
2020

A year of
hope & challenge

Annual report



2019-20

A year of hope and challenge

David Beuzeval,
Chair of CAfS Board of Trustees

Our financial year got under way in March 2019 to a backdrop of unprecedented momentum in the fight to stop the climate crisis. Public concern about climate change reached new highs amidst youth strikes, Extinction Rebellion protests and the high-profile voices of Greta Thunberg and David Attenborough, culminating in climate emergencies being declared in Cumbria, as across the UK.

After more than two decades of pushing for climate action, we suddenly found ourselves being pulled. Our small team had the new challenge of keeping up with requests for our advice and support, while continuing to deliver a demanding volume of projects and services. It was a good problem to have. We responded by expanding and realigning our staff team, enabling our chief executive Hazel Graham to move into a new role at CAfS to develop crucial networks and projects, with Karen Mitchell joining us as our new leader.

We stretched our capacity to organise a summit to help councils and community groups turn climate emergency declarations into action, bringing in expert speakers from across the UK. We also gave young people the chance to voice their concerns to Cumbria's MPs and other politicians at a youth climate question time event, along with supporting the county's first-ever youth climate summit.

We delivered a wide range of initiatives during this exceptional year, which have made a positive difference to people in Cumbria while driving towards our ultimate vision of a zero-carbon Cumbria. You'll read about a few of our successes here. None would have been possible without the many communities, partners and funders who've worked alongside us to forge a more sustainable and resilient future, and I extend my thanks to them.

As our financial year drew to a close at the end of February 2020, however, the world was beginning to look very different. Brexit eclipsed climate in the general election, the UN COP25 climate summit ended in a disappointing deal, and the Coronavirus pandemic was about to change our lives in ways we had yet to imagine. These challenges also bring opportunities, though, and you'll hear from our chief executive later in this report on how we plan to embrace these to help Cumbria build back better – more critical now than ever.





Uniting Cumbria to fight climate change

One of our biggest successes of 2019 was helping to bring together nearly 70 of the most influential organisations and people in Cumbria in a partnership to decarbonise our county, co-chaired by CArS.

The Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership will be instrumental in making changes happen at the pace and scale required by climate science, and ensuring that our county benefits from the opportunities this brings.

The group will plan and oversee a radical programme of action that will enable Cumbria to become a carbon-neutral county and to mitigate the likely impacts of existing climate change.



Inspiring greener homes & lifestyles

Our Green Build & Sustainable Living Festival in September 2019 helped more people than ever to gain the knowledge, skills and inspiration to cut their carbon footprint in their homes, businesses and communities.

More than 1100 people took part in our open home visits, training courses, workshops, talks, bus tours and film screenings.

Building on our traditional focus on retrofitting for energy efficiency and low-energy new-builds, our diverse programme of more than 50 events also offered attendees the chance to explore co-housing, food growing and foraging, community energy, climate emergency action for communities, climate science and even sustainable floristry.



Making cold homes cosy

More than 300 households benefited from our energy advice and draughtproofing service, Cold to Cosy Homes Cumbria, in 2019-20.

Residents will save an estimated £245,000 on their bills over 10 years through reducing their energy use, thanks to the advice and equipment we provided - from radiator reflectors to draught strips.

A further 15 vulnerable households in Eden now have better loft and wall insulation or new boilers thanks to the Warm Homes Eden service, which we delivered in partnership with Eden District Council. Many more residents took up our free advice at 8 Warm Homes Eden energy events around the district.



Empowering Cumbrians to drive change

Forty Cumbrians are better equipped to share knowledge among their networks and act on climate change in their own lives after attending our Carbon & Climate Literacy courses, launched in 2019-20.

The course, accredited by the Carbon Literacy Trust, takes attendees on an interactive journey through climate science and what we can do about it at home and in our workplaces.

Building on our two pilot courses in Carlisle and Kendal in September 2019, we were successful in gaining a grant from the Emergence Foundation to roll out the training more widely within Cumbrian communities.



Helping Ambleside to act for the future

The community group Ambleside Action for a Future has an exciting vision for their town to be carbon neutral. We've been able to support them, thanks to funding from South Lakeland District Council.

- We helped the community to plan actions for their place as a whole.
- A carbon footprinting study showed sources of emissions, informing future actions.
- We worked with Lancaster University to develop a groundbreaking new methodology for mapping the PV potential of roofs and applied it in Ambleside, and started exploring options for community renewable energy.
- The community picked up ideas through events, and a new film spread the word about the project.



Drawing up a sustainable greenprint for Alston Moor

Communities on Alston Moor have laid the groundwork for a more sustainable future, supported by our three-year Greenprint programme, which drew towards a successful close this year.

Our creative consultation events and activities helped the community to articulate how they want their area to be, with their sustainable vision now a golden thread running through the new community plan.

We're particularly pleased to have sown the seed for community food growing, helped get a new repair cafe up and running, and supported the new solar PV array at Alston Primary and Samuel Kings' schools, crowdfunded by Alston Moor Community Energy (AMCE).



Leading the charge for electric vehicles

Switching to an electric vehicle will soon be an option for many more Cumbrians who don't have their own driveways to charge in, thanks to a new programme to install community chargepoints.

CAfS is helping to install more than 100 chargepoints in Cumbria and Lancashire, in a programme led by the community-benefit society Charge My Street.

We supported Charge My Street with its successful bid for government funding for the project, and started work as a partner in November 2019.

We'll be using our expertise and networks to help promote community share offers to raise funds for the chargepoints, and to identify premises to host them.



Rebuilding after Storm Desmond

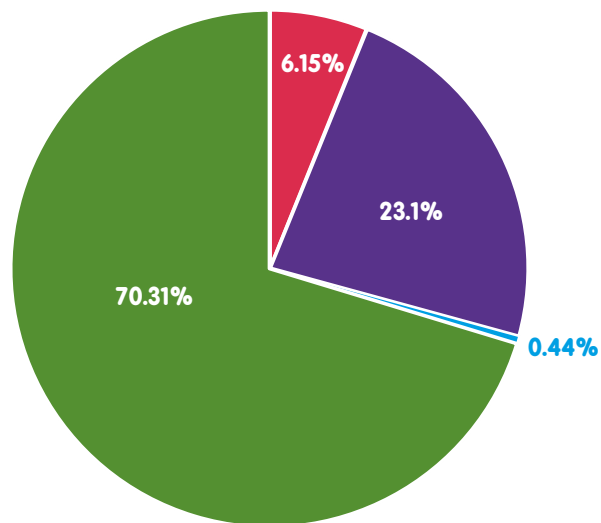
Since October 2016, CAfS has been helping Cumbrians adapt to the challenges of flooding and extreme weather, which are made more likely by climate change.

As a partner in the Rebuilding Together programme, by the end of our financial year 2019-20 we'd helped nearly 1000 people to make their homes more resilient and to work within their communities on projects to reduce their carbon emissions, the main cause of climate change.

This year, we gave Cumbrians the chance to learn from renovation works at a terraced property in Appleby to make it more resilient to flooding, with video diaries and on-site visits.

CAfS' financial summary for 2019/20

Income

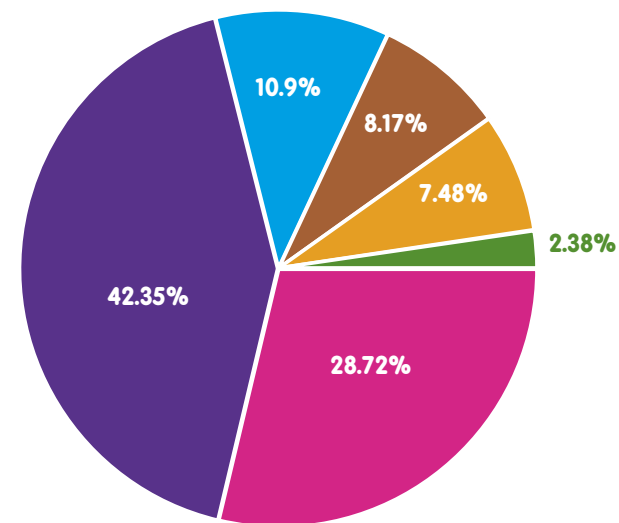


Our sources of income during 2019/20:

- Grant income
- Earned income
- Donations & fundraising
- Investment income

Total income: £361,616

Expenditure



Our expenditure during 2019/20, by topic:

- Whole community support
- Domestic energy
- Climate change education & awareness
- Community renewables
- Low-carbon transport
- Fundraising/governance/core costs

Total expenditure: £407,195

Expenditure is greater than income for the year due to a number of our funders paying grants in arrears.



2020-21

Powering ahead

Karen Mitchell,
Chief Executive

I am writing this just over a year since I joined the brilliant team of staff, trustees and volunteers at CAfS. As David, our chair, described in his introduction, 2019/20 was an incredibly busy year for the charity with growing demand prompted by the global spotlight being thrown on the climate crisis.

When Coronavirus appeared, and all attention was diverted from the climate crisis to the health crisis, CAfS faced what felt like a very uncertain future. After having temporarily suspended most of our projects from late March to June, it was a source of great jubilation when we heard in August that we had been awarded a major grant from the National Lottery's new Climate Change Action Fund - £2.5 million of funding for a five-year programme starting in January 2021. This project came to fruition largely because of the staff time and expertise that we invested into developing the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership of over 70 organisations from across the county. The Partnership helped us write the winning bid and will be delivering much of the programme, which will enable Cumbria to achieve zero carbon by 2037.

The team of 14 staff at the start of our 2019/20 financial year will soon have grown to 23 as CAfS makes its own contribution to the growth of the green economy. Almost all staff now work from home and we have quickly transitioned to delivering online events. Our virtual carbon literacy training courses are in great demand. We've continued to expand our Cold to Cosy Homes Cumbria service, which now covers the whole county and is more important than ever in these difficult economic conditions. We have also been able to continue working with communities in South Lakes, particularly Ambleside, thanks to ongoing support from SLDC and will soon be rolling out carbon footprinting tools to residents and businesses.

In partnership with two research teams we have secured funding to identify the potential for green jobs in the county. Work is now under way to assess the economic impact of moving from high-carbon to low-carbon options across various sectors including industry, housing, waste management and renewable energy generation. Our project to secure electric vehicle chargepoints to benefit communities has been extended. And, when it is safe to do so, we are undertaking home energy audits, which bring in valuable core income.

So, after a shaky start to the year, we are now flying along! Thanks for your interest and support along the way.



Thank you to our supporters

The very real impact that CAfS has made in 2019-20 and the wide range of successful projects we have delivered would not have been possible without our supporters.

We would like to thank our trustees and all those who have given up their time as volunteers to help us. Thank you also to our donors, subscribers and all those who took part in our many projects and events or helped to make them a success.

We're very grateful to all our funders, partners and clients for their support this year, including:

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria

AgilityEco

Alston Moor Partnership

Bierce Surveying Ltd

Burnside Community Energy

Carlisle City Council

Centre for Leadership Performance

Charge My Street

Community Energy Cumbria

Coop Explore (Cooperative Foundation)

Copeland Community Fund

Cumbria Community Foundation

Cumbria Council for Voluntary Service

Cumbria County Council

Ecology Building Society

Eden District Council

Electricity North West

Energy Saving Trust

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

Fellfoot Forward

Genesis Homes

Green Build Store

Historic England

Innovate UK

Lake District National Park Authority

Local Energy Action Programme

National Lottery Community Fund

North Pennines AONB

NHS North Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group

Quantum Strategy & Technology

South Lakeland District Council

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