

Asda carrier bag scheme donates to five social enterprises

When you forget to take your reusable bag with you to the supermarket at least you can be forgiven for buying the odd plastic bag as the proceeds go to charity. (The Edinburgh Reporter view is that any additional bags should be recyclable brown paper bags, but that is another story.)

Now at Asda they have raised almost £156,000 for five community based social enterprises across the country. Social Investment Scotland (SIS) has awarded the funding raised in the first six months by Asda's Community Capital Fund through the Scottish Government's 5p single use carrier bag charge introduced in autumn last year.

The investments have been made through a unique partnership between SIS and Asda, following the supermarket's pledge to donate half of the funds from the bag charge to support innovative social enterprises and community projects across Scotland.

The partnership, the first of its kind in the UK, has allowed Scotland's leading funder to the third sector SIS to distribute half the proceeds through loans, helping five third sector organisations who otherwise would find it difficult to access funding. The remaining proceeds from Asda's Community Capital Fund are being distributed by Foundation Scotland, in small grants to community projects.

The five successful applicants that will receive investment include Edinburgh's 'real bread' bakers – Breadshare, West Lothian Artistic Gymnastics Club, Cumnock Juniors Community Enterprise SCIO, conservation group Green Aspirations Scotland CIC and North Highland Radio. Each of the organisations will

receive investment capital of between £10,000 and £50,000 to help them continue delivering positive social impacts within their local communities.

Debra Riddell, Business Development Manager at Breadshare, added: “Since Breadshare launched in 2012 we’ve had to relocate the organisation to larger premises to ensure the supply of Breadshare products meets growing demand. Additionally, we now have over 20 volunteers a week, who learn about bread making and acquire invaluable skills at our new Portobello bakery. Thanks to the support of SIS and Asda we are able to bring the benefits of Breadshare to communities across Scotland.”

Kevin McBride, Asda’s Senior Director for Scotland, commented: “At Asda, we want the carrier bag charge to have long-term social – as well as environmental – benefits. Our partnership with SIS is about using the scale and expertise of Asda to make a real difference to the third sector and help nurture more resilient communities. We’re proud to be involved.”

The second round of Community Capital Funding is now open to applicants; Asda and SIS are keen to hear from more community projects across Scotland looking for investment to support future growth and expansion.

For more details please visit www.socialinvestmentscotland.com.