



# AppleCoRRE: Community Rapid and Renewable Energy Hub

 Applecross Peninsula, Scotland

In 2015, Applecross Community Company (ACC) developed a 90kW hydro scheme, Apple Juice (Hydro), of which 50kW is exported to the grid and remaining energy used locally.

In 2020, ACC undertook an initial investigation into the installation of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Applecross and its integration with the 90kW community hydro turbine scheme.

The study was funded by Local Energy Scotland from the CARES Innovation Grant (Community and Renewable Energy Scheme), and Urban Foresight undertook the study. The study was split into two Phases:

- **Phase 1 Feasibility Study** – Feasibility of installing EV charge point(s) in Applecross along with associated infrastructure and battery storage.
- **Phase 2 Detailed Design** – Detailed Design for a 50kW Rapid and 7kW Fast charger with a battery storage unit, alongside an onboard inverter converting single-phase to three-phase.



The AppleCoRRE project has built upon this study and is identifying potential funders.



## Interview Questions and Responses

**How did you as a community agree the key objectives that you wanted your project to deliver?**

The main desire of the community was to get EV chargers in Applecross. The Applecross Community Company collectively recognised EV as vital for the tourism market in Applecross. In parallel, Applecross is 2 hours away from the nearest hospital and therefore the community needs the infrastructure and having a rapid charging station is key.

**How did you decide upon a single project idea that could deliver against those objectives?**

The transition to renewables could only be enabled by EV charging and a hydro scheme in Applecross. The Board of Directors of Applecross Community Company steered the community on the EV charger project as it is a larger scale project and enabled the community to come together on the idea.

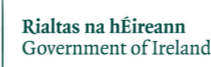
**Describe the process by which you achieved consensus around objectives and projects. Has that consensus held or does it remain challenged by some in the community? If so, how are you dealing with that?**

The project has encountered little opposition. There are some people with the issue of increased tourism, and it has been dealt with open dialogue.

The community company did a survey on EV vehicles and charging stations to gauge interest, which has built interest and consensus.

**How did you approach planning and project management around your selected idea?**

A Low Carbon Development Officer has been managing the EV project and providing broad updates to the community. For example, updating the community on developing a design, a feasibility study and the location of the EV chargers.



Funded through the Just Transition Fund and the Carbon Tax Fund

**How has that stood the test of time through the project? Have you had to revise your plans. How have you managed that process?**

A community land use plan for Applecross was undertaken and there were various locations for EV development and agreed locations, which supported the planning and project management approach.

If plans had to be revised, another adjacent site could be utilised and the community would be asked to vote on a site.

**How did you identify a funding need?**

The current hydro is community owned, with a community share issue unlocking a 4% annual return and any profit goes to the community company, making around £15,000 per year. The EV is critical for generating revenue.

However, funding was required for the initial brief design stage and feasibility study to OFGEM. Without this funding, the project would not have been able to proceed.

**How have you managed the process of bidding for funding?**

Urban Foresight identified funding options for the construction stage. The Board of Directors and the Low Carbon Development Officer have applied for OFGEM for the next phase.

**Did you have a need for specialist expertise for your project? If so how did you handle that and approach experts?**

Urban Foresight were procured to manage the two phases of the AppleCoRRE project, producing both the feasibility and design studies. Urban Foresight were sourced through open tender. Urban Foresight are also actively in contact with the Applecross Community Company to support the future development of the project.

**What have been the hardest difficulties to overcome and how did you overcome them?**

A key difficulty was a VAT issue which meant the feasibility study may have been over budget. All firms undertaking the feasibility study collectively agreed to reduce their costs to ensure the feasibility study would be under budget and factored into the next stage of the project.

This involved directly negotiating with the firms undertaking the feasibility study and collectively agreeing a fee.

**Has the community managed to stay true to the original project vision? If not, why not? If it has, how has this been achieved?**

The project is simple and therefore remained true to what the community company originally envisaged.

Only providing broad 'stage' updates to the community has kept the community on board.

**What have been the biggest learnings from the delivery of your project?**

Identifying issues such as VAT and recognising if you are a development trust or a charity is key before committing to large investments.

Guaranteeing funding further ahead of time following the feasibility study is a key lesson, alongside estimating the total project cost at feasibility stage.

Identifying the potential capital funding for construction, potentially sourcing private investors.

Communities need a robust planning approach for undertaking funding applications to avoid missing funding opportunities.

**What decisions, or elements of organisation have been the most important in the delivery of your project?**

The Board of Directors have been key in making decisions to continue the project as long as it is fully funded, although this will be shaped by future funding decisions taken by OFGEM.

**What were the most important sources of advice and guidance for your community as you moved through the different phases of the project?**

CARES have provided a lot of advice on the use of technology and also funded the initial design.

The Energy Saving Trust have also advised the community on the use of technology in the project.

Highland Council have been supportive as it is within its remit and have also provided grant support.

**Key contact**

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**Links**

**Website:** <https://www.applecrosscommunitycompany.org/company-projects/apple-juice-ev-charger/>



# Community led EV pilot project and Leitrim Community Car Scheme

**Carrick-on-Shannon, County Leitrim**

**A six-month pilot project to test how shared mobility can aid in the delivery of electrification of transport targets and supporting communities in net zero carbon initiatives, supported by Leitrim County Council and Leitrim Volunteer Centre (LVC).**

The aim of the project is to assess the needs and demands of community and rural EV-sharing initiatives, and to develop electric transport solutions. The project is complementing a recently published Climate Action Plan.

The Leitrim Volunteer Centre will have the use of a new Corsa-e for its daily trips as part of a new community electric vehicle (EV) pilot rolled out by ESB, and supported by Leitrim County Council. Leitrim Volunteer Centre has a volunteer driving scheme in place in Carrick-on-Shannon, Leitrim Community Car Scheme, with 27 volunteers and 40 clients taking trips in their own personal vehicles. The LVC will manage the pilot programme including access to the car.



The six-month pilot also involves the installation of a new charge point at The Hive in Carrick-on-Shannon by Leitrim County Council, with the infrastructure remaining in place after the programme is completed.



## Interview Questions and Responses

**How did you as a community agree the key objectives that you wanted your project to deliver?**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the civil defence authorities had provided essential services for vulnerable people in rural locations. However, there was a gap in provision of service following the pandemic. Therefore, the Leitrim Volunteer Centre (LVC), in partnership with Leitrim County Council and the Department for Rural and Community Development, signed a service level agreement to deliver community support and subsequently launched the Leitrim Community Car Scheme. The Leitrim Volunteer Centre and Leitrim County Council mutually agreed that a service was required urgently.

**How did you decide upon a single project idea that could deliver against those objectives?**

The biggest need after the COVID-19 pandemic was transport for older people in rural areas. Therefore, the Leitrim Volunteer Centre identified other volunteer car schemes around Ireland as being the potential solution and understood that additional bus services could not access the extreme remote locations.

ESB approached the LVC as part of its X\_Incubation programme to take part in the pilot project to gauge usage. The LVC realised that encourage volunteers to use the EV would reduce costs of the Leitrim Community Car Scheme, reducing emissions, whilst reaching those in the community most in need.

**Describe the process by which you achieved consensus around objectives and projects. Has that consensus held or does it remain challenged by some in the community? If so, how are you dealing with that?**

The consensus for both the EV pilot project and the Leitrim Community Car Scheme was built in partnership. The consensus has held strong and it has not been challenged. There is no local competition to provide the services and they have been very well supported. Subsequently, the LVC have built an expectation now for delivery.



Funded through the Just Transition Fund and the Carbon Tax Fund



### How did you approach planning and project management around your selected idea?

Launching a community car scheme was a project the LVC had never done before, therefore their approach to planning and managing the project was new and involved a high amount of research into requirements and ongoing learning.

### How has that stood the test of time through the project? Have you had to revise your plans. How have you managed that process?

The plans for the Leitrim Community Car Scheme have evolved over time, with the LVC developing a Code of Practice for drivers, formal role descriptions for advertisement for volunteer drivers, alongside formal health and safety, manual handling and emergency first aid training.

The LVC, with limited staff resources, have undertaken an ongoing learning process and managed this process independently, with some external advice from Leitrim County Council and TFI (Transport for Ireland) local link.

### How did you identify a funding need?

Funding is the most critical need for the Leitrim Community Car Scheme, as the LVC pay drivers expenses and mileage expenses, which can be very high if volunteers are driving 200 miles for an appointment. In the first year of operation (2022/23), the LCCS cost €17,000, operating at a €13,000 loss. The LVC does receive community donations and received a small grant from mPower, a digital hub delivering a local day care service.

The EV pilot project is being funded externally by ESB and the LVC were approached directly. The LVC were not actively seeking to obtain funding to launch an EV scheme.

### How have you managed the process of bidding for funding?

The process for bidding for funding is undertaken by Josephine Stroker, the Manager of the LVC. She is always looking for funds and lobbying local and national government. Josephine finds the bidding process for government money time consuming, with applications now more complex and requiring more reporting afterwards.

### Did you have a need for specialist expertise for your project? If so how did you handle that and approach experts?

The external expertise has been obtained from ESB who approached the LVC directly to launch the pilot project. The LVC meet ESB, an external contracting organisation and Leitrim County Council to manage the project and share learnings.

### What have been the hardest difficulties to overcome and how did you overcome them?

The biggest challenge is funding for the Leitrim Community Car Scheme. LVC launched a 'gofundme' page to meet the initial €4000 shortfall. There was initially around €1,200 in donations, but it requires more promotions which requires human resource.

Another key challenge is managing expectations of the wider community. For example, the volunteers cannot directly deal with medical emergencies and only undertake transport activities.

A final challenge is the time requirement for volunteers. An online web page using IVOL system was used to recruit volunteers and proved successful, growing from 3-5 volunteers initially to 30 volunteers.

### Has the community managed to stay true to the original project vision? If not, why not? If it has, how has this been achieved?

Both the Leitrim Community Car Scheme and EV pilot project have stayed to their original vision of providing much needed services for vulnerable people in very remote communities.

### What have been the biggest learnings from the delivery of your project?

Accessing rural locations can be challenging for public buses and therefore low carbon community car schemes are important for supporting vulnerable people in rural Ireland.

Overall, through delivering the project, the LVC have gradually become local leaders in delivering the scheme. However, costs and human resource requirements are the biggest challenges and therefore learnings for others to consider in the early stages of project delivery.

### What decisions, or elements of organisation have been the most important in the delivery of your project?

The LVC hired a member of staff, working 11 hours per week to support operations in response to the lack of human resource for delivery.

The LVC took a decision in the early stages of the EV pilot project to meet every week virtually to ensure smooth project management, covering key learnings, key challenges and project changes, and solving problems. This group includes:

- Enterprise, responsible for maintaining the car and for using the app.
- Leitrim County Council representative
- Atlantic Technological University Sligo, who are researching into the EV pilot's operation
- External contracting organisation
- ESB
- Leitrim Volunteer Centre, responsible for operating the EV booking system and training drivers.

### What were the most important sources of advice and guidance for your community as you moved through the different phases of the project?

TFI local link (Donegal Sligo Leitrim Office) has been the main source of advice and support. The LVC are now preparing a report and proposal to potentially access operation or funding support from TFI local link.

#### Key contact

Josephine Stroker, Leitrim Volunteer Centre  
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#### Links

**News article for pilot project:** <https://esb.ie/media-centre-news/press-releases/article/2023/03/01/esb-launches-community-ev-pilot-project-in-carrick-on-shannon>

**Website:** <https://volunteerleitrim.ie/communityev/>



# Fingal County Council Community Car Service



Fingal County Council partnered with Local Link and GoCar to launch a 'Community Car' service pilot in 2019, marking the first of its kind in a local authority in Ireland. Initially, the service operated in the Howth and Skerries areas, using two electric vehicles. This has expanded in 2022 to include trips from Donabate, Portrane, Rush and Lusk.

The project involves volunteer drivers providing essential door to door transport for passengers which struggle to access other forms of transport for hospital visits, access to health services, access to shops and other important services. In June 2022 the project had 20 volunteers signed up.



## Interview Questions and Responses

**How did you as project partners agree the key objectives that you wanted your project to deliver?**

The objectives of the Fingal Community Car Scheme have been collectively agreed by the project partners, which include Fingal County Council, GoCar, the Skerries Age Friendly group and the TFI Local Link Louth Meath Fingal.

The objectives of the scheme were shaped by the mission of the Rural Transport Programme / TFI Local Link to provide a quality nationwide community based public transport system in rural Ireland which responds to local needs.

The community car scheme is needed to provide greater links for older members of the community to access local and regional health and social services in Skerries and Dublin.

**How did you decide upon a single project idea that could deliver against those objectives?**

Fingal County Council wanted to launch a pilot to understand its initial effectiveness over a 6 month basis before making a long-term commitment. Fingal County Council had the existing responsibility and funding to implement the parking spaces and charging infrastructure, driven by the Director of Environment, Climate Action and Active Travel.

In parallel, GoCar already had infrastructure and cars within County Fingal, alongside a strong existing relationship with Fingal County Council.

**Describe the process by which you achieved consensus around objectives and projects. Has that consensus held or does it remain challenged by some in the community? If so, how are you dealing with that?**

Challenge to the scheme has been minimal due to the large costs involved in travelling to Dublin hospitals from Skerries, costing potentially between €100 – €120 for a return journey.



Funded through the Just Transition Fund and the Carbon Tax Fund

Consensus within Skerries has been primarily enabled by the Skerries Age Friendly who worked with the community to get support for the Scheme and with TFI Local Link. Meetings with potential volunteers regularly to understand improvements and development of the service on a continuous basis.

### How did you approach planning and project management around your selected idea?

Every partner has a role in the project. Fingal County Council are responsible for providing infrastructure, GoCar provide electric car, technology and insurance on the car, Skerries Age Friendly attract the volunteers and feedback, and the TFI Local Link connect volunteers and drivers.

In the initial stages, all partners met very frequently however following the successful launch and delivery of the pilot, partners connect on an ad-hoc basis.

### How has that stood the test of time through the project? Have you had to revise your plans. How have you managed that process?

This partnership approach has worked very effectively and when plans for the project had to be adjusted, each partner is responsible for their own project activity. The project is open to change as demand increases.

### How did you identify a funding need?

Fingal County Council had a strong interest in EV charging infrastructure and identified Skerries as a location with an ageing population with an opportunity to launch a pilot project in partnership with GoCar, TFI Local Link and Skerries Age Friendly.

GoCar has taken a positive corporate responsibility approach and provided the electric vehicle to the scheme on a voluntary basis, therefore minimal funding was required aside from the investment of Fingal County Council into EV charging infrastructure and normal TFI Local Link staff costs.

There is a service level agreement between Fingal County Council and GoCar for the scheme, TFI Local Link manage the service internally and Skerries Age Friendly provide services on a voluntary basis.

### Did you have a need for specialist expertise for your project? If so how did you handle that and approach experts?

GoCar were the specialised expertise for the project and were approached by officers in Fingal County Council using existing working relationships. Local Link had the experience in scheduling and training. Age Friendly had local knowledge and connections.

### What have been the hardest difficulties to overcome and how did you overcome them?

Ensuring the availability of volunteers is the hardest difficulty. This has been overcome by Skerries Age Friendly and TFI Local Link meeting with volunteers regularly to discuss problems and sharing volunteer stories with the wider community to attract new volunteers.

In addition, partners have ensured the EV car is very visible in Skerries, adjacent to a popular coastal walking route. This has prompted the interest of the community and acted as a catalyst for new volunteers.

### Have the partners managed to stay true to the original project vision? If not, why not? If it has, how has this been achieved?

All project partners have stayed true to the original vision, highlighted by the project is going beyond the original 6 month timeframe. This has been achieved by close partnership working in the early stages and building upon existing organisational relationships.

### What have been the biggest learnings from the delivery of your project?

Key lessons include:

- Establish a strong volunteer base.
- Begin with an accessible car which could be supported by an employed community worker with a paid part time or full time contract.
- Create a booking system which suits the size and scope of the potential scheme.
- Have clear aims and objectives of the car, age demographic, purpose, maximum distance of journeys and overall rules of the car.

### What decisions have been the most important in the delivery of your project?

All partners agreed to ensure the scheme was open as possible. For example, this has been achieved by supporting journeys to both public and private hospitals from Skerries to Dublin. Local social trips are also encouraged.

Establishing a centralised booking system and database for managing user requests and organising future volunteer activity initially via a WhatsApp group, and then moving to creating larger Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

### What were the most important sources of advice and guidance as you moved through the different phases of the project?

The Fingal Community Car Scheme is an exemplar in its field within Ireland. However, the TFI Local Link have networks with organisations such as the Irish Cancer Society to understand the use of potential booking systems. This enabled the partners to design a booking system which suited the scheme's size and scale.

### Key contact

**Patricia Cassidy**, Meath Accessible Transport Project CLG  
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### Links

**Website:** <https://www.fingal.ie/fingal-community-car>

**Website article:** <https://www.fingal.ie/news/fingal-county-council-expand-vital-community-car-service>



# Launch of Bolt e-bikes in Sligo Town

 Sligo, County Sligo

In the summer of 2022 Bolt launched their pilot shared electric bike scheme in Sligo, marking the first Irish electric bike service. The launch in Sligo was part of Bolt's wider mission to deploy 16,000 electric bikes across Europe in 2022.

In Spring and Summer 2023 Bolt will add an additional 30 electric bikes to Sligo, bringing the total to 100. The bikes are available at over 50 designated parking zones across the town, which cost €0.15 per minute.



## Interview Questions and Responses

**How did you agree the key objectives that you wanted your project to deliver?**

The Government of Ireland are currently prioritising the development of e-bikes, e-scooters and transport hubs. Sligo County Council undertook a call to the market to develop and attract industry experts to develop a pilot e-bike scheme.

**How did you decide upon a single project idea that could deliver against those objectives?**

There is a specific mandate in national government legislation for County Councils to provide clean mobility solutions. The Government of Ireland contacted Sligo County Council directly to develop the project.

The project idea aligns with the Sligo County Council Climate Action Plan and the need to increase to 500,000 walking and cycling journeys per day in Sligo.

**Describe the process by which you achieved consensus around objectives and projects. Has that consensus held or does it remain challenged by some in the community? If so, how are you dealing with that?**

There have been no objections to the pilot to date. If there are objections, Sligo County Council would directly consider them and consider community input.

**How did you approach planning and project management around your selected idea?**

Bolt manages the planning and project management activities as the operator of the pilot. Sligo County Council transport team met with Bolt bi-weekly at project launch and now on a monthly basis to manage the project.



Funded through the Just Transition Fund and the Carbon Tax Fund

**How has that stood the test of time through the project? Have you had to revise your plans. How have you managed that process?**

There has been a collaborative approach taken with Bolt. Sligo County Council took a lot of direction from Bolt initially. There was a process of joined up thinking and collectively identified certain areas of high take up and e-bike parking spaces were targeted over time.

**How did you identify a funding need?**

There was a low amount of funding required for marking e-bike parking areas which was low cost and the National Transport Authority provided funding for line marking under its Active Travel Investment Grants.

Sligo County Council are currently examining charging locations for 4 e-bike chargers and that cost is a larger capital investment.

As this is a pilot scheme, Bolt is undertaking the project on a commercial basis for 12 months. The initial capital investment into the e-bikes and operations and maintenance is the responsibility of Bolt.

**How have you managed the process of initiating the pilot?**

Sligo County Council identified industry leaders and wrote directly to companies to invite to bid and launch a pilot. The County Council actively advertised the opportunity directly to potential suppliers and enabled Bolt's initial interest.

**What have been the hardest difficulties to overcome and how did you overcome them?**

Parking areas and locating them was the biggest challenge. Sligo County Council identified hotspots such as an industrial estate or key employment centre using software provided by Bolt.

However, some parking bays are only large enough for 12 bikes and 4 may turn up, others may have none at all turning up. The demand was mapped on a GIS system using an internal resource. This enabled the adjustment of parking space accordingly and splitting of demand.

**Has the project team managed to stay true to the original project vision? If not, why not? If it has, how has this been achieved?**

The pilot has stayed true to the vision. Sligo needed an e-bike system which was assessable and to enable small journeys inside in Sligo and there has been a large-scale uptake.

**What have been the biggest learnings from the delivery of your project?**

Advertise the opportunity to see which industry firms are interested and procure a service provider which has a proven track record, ideally an established international firm.

Provide information on usage to enable funding bodies and industry to understand your usage during the pilot, this enables communities and County Councils to highlight success on a monthly basis and to gain strong consensus. Firms such as Bolt can capture this data.

**What decisions, or elements of organisation have been the most important in the delivery of your project?**

The first key decision was to advertise to the market.

The second key decision was working with Bolt to co-design the pilot and launch with a reasonable number before scaling to a number which suited Sligo.

The next key decision is potentially working towards a more formal arrangement with Bolt.

**What were the most important sources of advice and guidance as you moved through the different phases of the project?**

Knowledge and expertise in developing e-bike pilots currently lies with industry experts such as Bolt who were critical in developing the project. Leading firms developing e-bike projects were identified through desk research when inviting firms to develop and launch the pilot.

**Key contact**

**Paul O'Rourke**, Sligo County Council  
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**Links**

**Facebook:** <https://zh-tw.facebook.com/boltireland/posts/516806326793207/>

**Independent Sligo:** <https://www.independent.ie/regionals/sligochampion/news/sligo-to-get-an-extra-30-e-bikes-from-bolt-to-bring-total-to-100-42363668.html>

**RTE:** <https://www.rte.ie/news/business/2022/0516/1298287-bolt-to-launch-pilot-e-bike-service-in-sligo/>