

# SURF



# SURF Awards

# Awards

## 2016



SURF : sharing experience : shaping practice : celebrating success

## The SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration 2016



The 2016 SURF Awards is delivered in partnership with the Scottish Government, and with additional support from Architecture & Design Scotland, Creative Scotland, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Scotland's Towns Partnership, and Skills Development Scotland.

“This publication showcases the superb community regeneration initiatives shortlisted for the 2016 SURF Awards. Their impressive achievements say a lot about the dedication, hard work and rich talents of Scotland’s regeneration practitioners. It is also encouraging to hear that last year’s winners have built on their success.”



Pippa Courtts  
Chair, SURF

## The 2016 SURF Awards



Since 1998, the SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration has identified, promoted and celebrated some of the most effective work in reversing physical, social and economic decline in disadvantaged communities throughout Scotland.

This publication profiles the 13 projects shortlisted for the 2016 SURF Awards. We hope the innovative and high-impact examples detailed here provides a deep well of inspiration for everyone contributing to regeneration activities across the country.

### Balancing the Scales

The 2016 SURF Awards feature several themed categories to reflect regeneration activity at all scales. They range from initiatives managed by community and arts groups to major town centre investments and employability programmes.

The four categories are:

- **Creative Regeneration**
- **Youth Employability: Removing Barriers**
- **Community Led Regeneration**
- **Scotland’s Most Improved Town**

Our 18-member panel of expert judges independently considered applications to all categories over an intensive two-month process of assessments and site visits. Working in category teams, the judges were tasked with narrowing down all nominees to a shortlist of 13 and then ultimately selecting just three winners.

### People and Place – and Time

The ‘class of 2016’ successfully aligned local demand for place-based improvements with meaningful social and economic outcomes.

Our judging panel were highly impressed with the imaginative planning, collaboration and community engagement that went towards maximising the impacts from these initiatives.

The category winners – The Stove Network (see p6), Street League (p8), Tomintoul & Glenlivet Regeneration Project (p10), and Lochgelly (p12) – all share a long-term approach, with dedicated partners working strategically and inclusively over a number of years to develop comprehensive plans and deliver sustainable results.

On pages 16-17, you can learn about what last year’s winners have been up to since receiving their SURF Award at the end of 2015.

### A Team Effort

Like many of the successful initiatives profiled in these pages, the SURF Awards are a joint effort.

We are particularly grateful for the support of the Scottish Government, which has been our key SURF Awards partner since 2003. On pages 18-19, you can read about what SURF and the Scottish Government are doing to support improved policy and practice in regeneration.

We are also appreciative of the additional support from our five category partners: Creative Scotland, sponsor of the Creative Regeneration award; Skills Development Scotland, sponsor of the Youth Employability category; Highlands & Islands Enterprise, sponsor of the Community Led Regeneration category; and Architecture & Design Scotland and Scotland’s Towns Partnership, joint sponsors of the Scotland’s Most Improved Town category.

The credibility of the SURF Awards is largely based on the time, expertise and energy of our judging panel, who travel the length of Scotland to assess nominees (see map, p4). You can find out which experts were on the 2016 judging panel on p5.

Finally, SURF could not operate as Scotland’s regeneration forum without the active support, knowledge and experience of our 250+ member organisations: especially our 12 key delivery partners, who are listed on p20.

If you would like to know more about the SURF Awards, including the outcomes of previous iterations, please visit the dedicated section of our website: [www.scotregen.co.uk/surf-awards](http://www.scotregen.co.uk/surf-awards)

# Results

## Contents & Category Results

### Creative Regeneration

Purpose: to recognise best practice in embedding arts and creativity at the heart of a community regeneration initiative by demonstrating effective partnership working with artists. This category is supported by Creative Scotland.



Winner: **The Stove Network** – page 6

Also shortlisted: **Hippodrome Festival of Silent Cinema; Made in Easterhouse** – page 7

### Youth Employability: Removing Barriers

Purpose: to recognise best practice in providing employability support to help young people aged 16-24 fulfil their potential in the labour market. This category is supported by Skills Development Scotland.



Winner: **Street League** – page 8

Also shortlisted: **Stepping Up; X-CEED** – page 9

### Community Led Regeneration

Purpose: to recognise best practice in a regeneration project in Scotland that features representatives of a community of place or theme in a leading role. This category is supported by Highlands & Islands Enterprise.



Winner: **Tomintoul & Glenlivet Regeneration Project** – page 10

Also shortlisted: **Link Up Gallatown; UnstFest** – page 11

### Scotland's Most Improved Town

Purpose: to highlight the positive impacts of participative planning and regeneration processes in urban settlements across Scotland. This category is supported by Architecture & Design Scotland and Scotland's Towns Partnership.



Winner: **Lochgelly** – page 12

Also shortlisted: **Auchterarder, Gourrock, Linwood** – pages 13-14

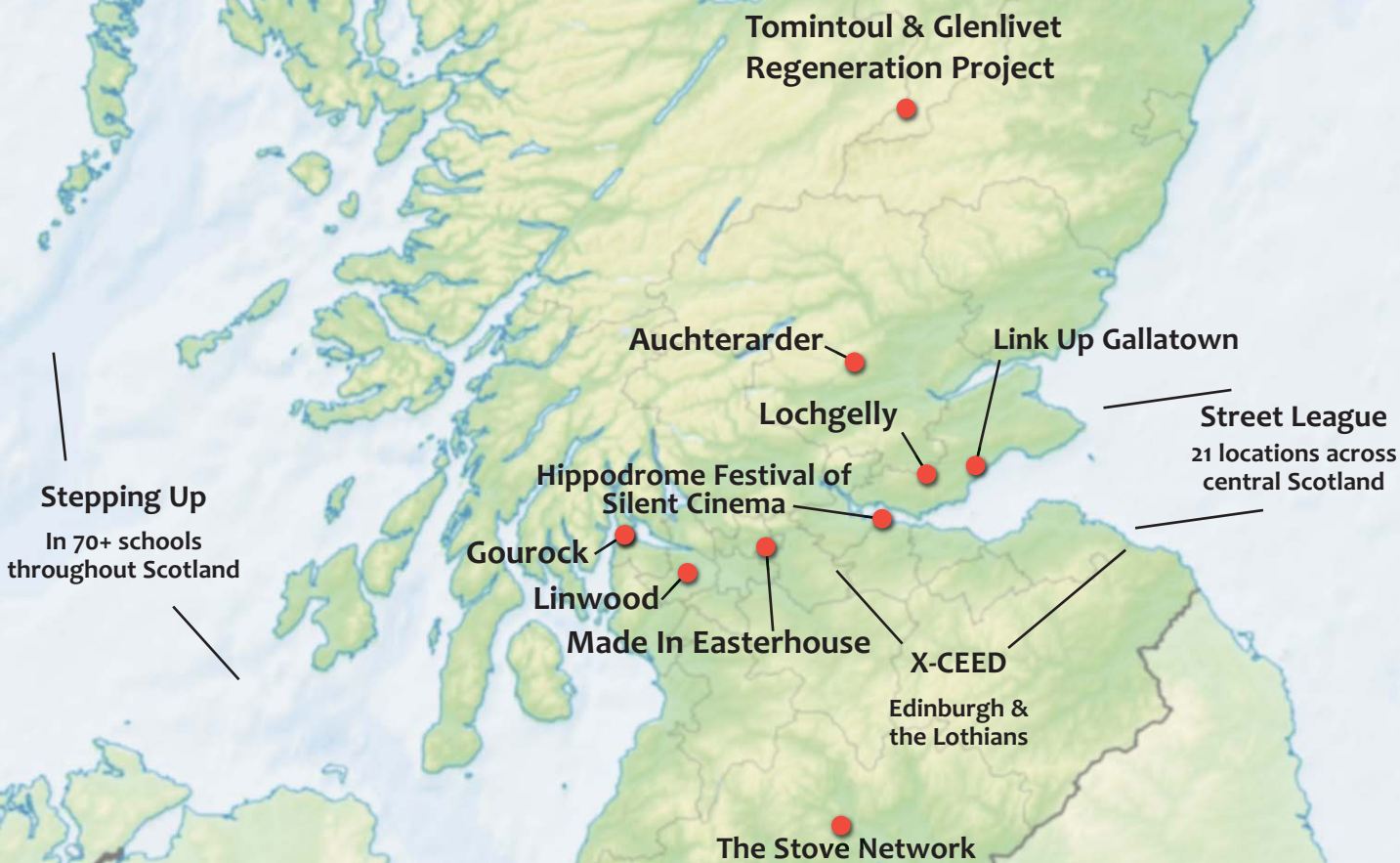


*In case you were wondering, 'leaf sheep' sea slugs are creatively adapted to produce their own energy – just like many regeneration projects.*



# SURF Awards

Recognising good practice  
across the country



“We believe in making the most of positive action in our towns and communities. The SURF Awards highlights those who have excelled.”



Phil Prentice  
Chief Officer  
Scotland's Towns Partnership

## Independent judging panel – and the projects they assessed

The 2016 SURF Awards were independently judged by a panel of 18 representatives drawn from national regeneration-related bodies and community organisations. Each panel member gave their time freely to evaluate, shortlist, make visits to, and agree a winner from, project applications in the respective categories.

The 2016 SURF Awards judging panel members are listed below. SURF is greatly appreciative of the considerable time and effort they provided to what is an essential part of the process.

### Creative Regeneration

Maggie Broadley (Craft Town Scotland)  
Moya Crowley (The Portal)  
Karen Dick (Creative Scotland)  
Kate Wimpres (North Edinburgh Arts)

### Youth Employability: Removing Barriers

Blyth Deans (Third Sector Employability Forum)  
Chris Holloway (Resilient Scotland)  
John Lindsay (Skills Development Scotland)  
Tam Munro (West & Central Glasgow Vol. Sect. Network)

### Community Led Regeneration

Campbell Cameron (Highlands & Islands Enterprise)  
Paul Nelis (Scottish Community Development Centre)  
Donnie Nicolson (Bellsmyre Development Trust)  
Stephanie Rose (Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland)

### Scotland's Most Improved Town

Fraser Carlin (Heads of Planning Scotland)  
Kate Houghton (RTPI Scotland)  
Kevin McGowan (Scottish Government)  
Daniel McKendry (Architecture & Design Scotland)  
Phil Prentice (Scotland's Towns Partnership)  
Steven Tolson (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors)

From Dumfries to the north of Shetland, the initiatives nominated and shortlisted for the 2016 SURF Awards are active in addressing physical, social and economic problems in communities throughout Scotland.

They also represent a wide spread of sectors and scales, with varied public, private and third sector management structures, and budgets that range from under £50k to tens of millions.

While only 13 shortlisted projects are featured in this publication, SURF is grateful to every initiative that was put forward for consideration. They all help us understand more about the important community regeneration work that they are all involved in.



Photos taken on the Creative Regeneration judging team's visit to The Stove Network, Dumfries.





# Creative Regeneration

# Winner

## The Stove Network

### What is the aim of the project?

To found an artist-led collective that engages with local people to deliver a range of culture-based regeneration initiatives.

### Where is it taking place?

The Stove Network is based in Dumfries town centre. Its activities extend across south west Scotland.



Dumfries town centre has been enlivened by creative activities

### What has been achieved?

The Stove Network was formed in 2011 after a group of Dumfries-based artists decided that creativity should play a more direct role in the town's future. It has grown into a major local regeneration player with 200 members. So far it has raised £400k of project funding and £160k of capital funding towards the successful delivery of more than 30 projects. It is based in a three-storey former shop building in Dumfries town centre's main square, which functions as a popular live music, film, theatre, dance & public art space, and a hub for project planning and delivery.



Nithraid is a popular annual boat race

The Stove's presence has helped to revive the fortunes of Dumfries town centre, which previously had more than 70 vacant shop units and a 'ghost town' atmosphere in the evenings. By working collaboratively to improve the town's cultural offer to residents and visitors alike, the collective is effectively tackling these and other local challenges. Arts, culture and creativity are used to engage and empower people to lead

on a number of physical, social and economic improvements. Just some of its many and diverse projects are:

- Blueprint 100: a platform to support young artists under 30 to deliver public activities.
- Charter14: in which local people produced a contemporary 'People's Charter' for Dumfries.
- Food Strand: a social enterprise 'super-café' with late night opening, live gigs, and training/education opportunities.
- Nithraid: a 'dangerous' annual sailing race along the River Nith from the Solway Firth to Dumfries.
- Our Norwegian Story: a programme of activities promoting Dumfries' historical connections to Norway.
- Submerge: a workshop series exploring the town's relationship with water and climate.

### Who is running it?

The Stove Network is an independent arts organisation that works with a wide range of local and national partners, including Dumfries and Galloway Council and the Scottish Government. It is one of Creative Scotland's Regularly Funded Organisations for 2015-18.



The Stove celebrates Dumfries' Norwegian connection

### Why did the judging panel like it?

The Stove Network demonstrates that a strong and uncompromising creative vision stimulates debate, giving the local community a greater voice in issues affecting Dumfries, from frequent flooding to high street regeneration. Plans for the town centre and a new focus on the Lincluden and Lochside area demonstrate a long-term commitment to community engagement, sustainable partnership working, and practical, inspirational change.

It was clear to the judges that The Stove Network has had a significant and transformational impact on Dumfries, and that the energy and drive demonstrated by the creative team, their partners, and the wider community will continue to revitalise Dumfries and make a real difference to the place and to people's lives. The judges confirmed The Stove Network as the overall winner in the 2016 SURF Awards' Creative Regeneration category.

### Where can I find out more?

Website: [www.thestove.org](http://www.thestove.org)

Contact: Andrew Ward, Stove Network Board Member and Lead Officer for the Creetown Initiative: 01671 820 654, [creetown@btconnect.com](mailto:creetown@btconnect.com)



# Shortlisted

## Hippodrome Festival of Silent Cinema

### What is the aim of the project?

To deliver a high-profile national festival of silent film that supports local community regeneration outcomes.

### Where is it taking place?

The festival is based in Bo'ness, a medium-sized town in the Falkirk local authority region.

### What has been achieved?

The Hippodrome Festival of Silent Cinema, or HippFest, was established in 2011. It is held over five days every March, and centred around the Hippodrome, Scotland's oldest cinema – which dates from 1911 – although a wide range of other community venues are also used to host events.

The festival programme features films from UK and international archives, often accompanied by specially commissioned live music. It also provides school and public workshops, talks on local cinema and cultural heritage, youth engagement activities, music composition projects, and community tours that take the festival to under-served audiences in rural areas.



Hippfest is delivered in collaboration with local businesses, and its brochure and website includes a community directory to support the hotels, shops, cafés and restaurants of Bo'Ness and the wider Falkirk area. More than 2000 tickets were sold for HippFest 2016, with a survey indicating that one fifth combined their visit with one to other attractions in the area.

### Who is running it?

The festival is run by Falkirk Community Trust, which manages a range of sport, recreation, arts, heritage and library services in the Falkirk Council area.

### Why did the judging panel like it?

The judges were impressed with the strong partnership which had been developed around the festival between businesses, the third sector, culture/heritage bodies, and the people of Bo'ness. The inclusive approach towards celebrating the area's unique heritage through an equally distinctive and high-quality festival programme is inspirational. The judges felt that the economic and social impacts were well articulated, that the local enthusiasm was infectious, and that the festival had helped to redefine Bo'ness as a creative place.

### Where can I find out more?

Website: [www.hippfest.co.uk](http://www.hippfest.co.uk)

Contact: Alison Strauss, Arts Development Officer & Director of HippFest, Falkirk Community Trust: 01324 503 740, [alison.strauss@falkirkcommunitytrust.org](mailto:alison.strauss@falkirkcommunitytrust.org)

## Made In Easterhouse

### What is the aim of the project?

To mark the achievements of a successful community arts centre on its tenth anniversary.

### Where is it taking place?

Easterhouse is a large neighbourhood in east Glasgow.

### What has been achieved?

The Platform multi-arts centre was established in 2006 as part of 'The Bridge', a culture and leisure complex in Easterhouse that has featured in previous SURF Awards. In its first ten years, Platform – with its theatre, rehearsal and meeting spaces, gallery, library and café – has proved a popular venue for a wide array of events and exhibitions.



The Made In Easterhouse project celebrates Platform's first decade by focusing on its tradition of facilitating audience-artist engagement and collaborations. Inspired by research undertaken by artist Deirdre Nelson during a year-long residency, a special 2016 programme of performances, exhibitions and workshops was developed in collaboration with local residents, community groups and strategic partners.

An example of the creative, interactive nature of the special events programme is the 'Big Band Tea Dance', in which participants created tablecloths on which to enjoy afternoon tea served by hospitality students from the local Glasgow Kelvin College. The programme helped Platform deliver 1153 events in 2015/16, with a combined attendance of 33k, 10k more than the previous year.

### Who is running it?

Platform is owned and managed by a charitable body, Glasgow East Arts Company. Key partners include Creative Scotland, Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Life.

### Why did the judging panel like it?

For the SURF Awards panel, Platform presents a great example of how a strong creative vision and a commitment to representing the local community can change lives for the better. The judges were impressed by the 'Made in Easterhouse' reflection of 10 years of success in community engagement and an integrated approach to programming and providing creative activities, all rooted in the Easterhouse area. The judges felt that Platform's strong track record will continue to have a lasting, positive impact on the perception of the area and the ambitions of local communities.

### Where can I find out more?

Website: [www.platform-online.co.uk](http://www.platform-online.co.uk)

Contact: Jenny Crowe, Arts Manager, Glasgow East Arts Company: 0141 276 9670, [jenny@platform-online.co.uk](mailto:jenny@platform-online.co.uk)



# Youth Employability: Removing Barriers Winner

## Street League

### What is the aim of the project?

To deliver a combined sport and employability programme that assists out-of-work young people into sustainable employment, education and training.



Academies are delivered in 15 local authority regions

### Where is it taking place?

Street League is a national programme with 21 delivery locations across Scotland, including Bathgate, Kilmarnock and Paisley.

### What has been achieved?

Street League offers open football and dance fitness taster sessions, which are used as a hook to engage 16-24 year olds that are not in work, education or training. Participants that subsequently join the programme take part in Football/Dance Fit Academies, which run from Mondays to Thursdays for up to 12 weeks.

Street League Academies combine sport and employability sessions. The sport aspect helps participants to make friends, get fit, and maintain motivation levels, while developing life skills such as communication and teamwork. The employability part encompasses how to search and apply for jobs, create a CV, and prepare for interviews, with training delivered via both one-to-one and group sessions. A further aim is for all Academy participants to graduate with an SQA qualification.

Most participants live in deprived areas

In the year to 31 July 2016, Street League supported 1050 young people across Scotland, 59% of which live in the 20% most deprived areas, into positive destinations.



The programme combines sport & employability sessions



Street League is currently the second biggest employability provider in Scotland, and a study showed that the programme has delivered a £14.5m gross welfare saving to Scottish taxpayers.

Academy participants are also tasked with organising and delivering a voluntary event in the local community. Past projects have included the arrangement of sports days for local primary schools, and football tournaments for homeless people. These activities encourage Street League participants to become active and contributing members of their communities.

### Who is running it?

Street League is a UK-wide charity that uses sport to tackle youth unemployment. Academy programmes are commissioned by range of organisations including Skills Development Scotland, the Department for Work and Pensions, colleges, and local authorities.

### Why did the judging panel like it?

There were a number of areas of Street League's operation that impressed the judges. Firstly, they have excellent relationships with some of the major employers in Scotland, which has played a significant part in the very impressive outcomes being delivered. It was also inspiring to see how Street League has evolved over the years to become a major training provider, and embraced the idea of delivering SQA qualifications and Employability Fund contracts at stages two and three of the Strategic Skills Pipeline. It is now comfortable operating within an output-related funding model.

Street League was chosen as the winner in this SURF Awards category on the strength of the outcomes being achieved, and the very high levels of enthusiasm from the staff and young people, all of whom spoke very highly to the judges of their experience. The feedback from the young people being supported by Street League speaks volumes about the quality, value and impact of delivery. Coupled with the keen contributions of all of their staff, Street League are well on their way to contributing to their vision of ending youth unemployment in Scotland.

### Where can I find out more?

Website: [www.streetleague.co.uk/scotland](http://www.streetleague.co.uk/scotland)

Contact: Tracy Davidson, Education and Training Manager,  
Street League: [tracy.davidson@streetleague.co.uk](mailto:tracy.davidson@streetleague.co.uk)





# Shortlisted

## Stepping Up

### What is the aim of the project?

To help young people with learning disabilities remove any barriers that impede their progress into employment, further education or training.

### Where is taking place?

Stepping Up is delivered in more than 70 schools in 11 local authority areas across Scotland, including North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire.

### What has been achieved?

Since a summer 2009 start, almost 1000 14-19 year olds with learning disabilities have participated in Stepping Up's comprehensive support service. Beginning with an initial introduction to the world of work, participants are supported to plan for their future, and to develop independence, confidence, and skills by engaging in one-to-one sessions and group activities. These include person-centred planning, independent travel training, job-searching, and work experience.

The service takes an inclusive approach by engaging with families, teachers and other professionals to communicate the aims of the project and agree personalised plans. Of the 758 young people who have graduated from the programme, 228 now hold full and part-time jobs, 157 are in training programmes including Modern Apprenticeships, and 485 have commenced further education, of which over 60% are mainstream vocational courses.



An impressive 98% of Stepping Up participants have achieved a positive destination. The project also provides a high level of after-care support. Those who 'step up' are encouraged to further develop their interpersonal skills by taking part in community activities such as gardening and painting.

### Who is running it?

ENABLE Scotland, a charity that aims to improve the lives of people who live with learning disabilities. The programme is supported by Inspiring Scotland's 14-19 Fund.

### Why did the judging panel like it?

The judges were impressed at how ENABLE has established the delivery of their programme within school settings by building effective relationships with education staff. There is a very strong "partnership ethos" evident, where project staff work well with Local Authorities, teachers, wider support staff, family members, employers large and small, and other providers such as the Venture Trust. Combined, this all contributes to preparing the young people well for the world of work, resulting in almost 100% moving into a positive destination.

## X-CEED

### What is the aim of the project?

To support vulnerable young people into positive destinations by using a personalised approach to improve their social and employability skills.

### Where is it taking place?

X-CEED (Extra Coaching to Exceed and Expand Development) operates in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

### What has been achieved?

X-CEED engages 'hard to help' 14-25 year olds, such as those who have been through the care and youth justice systems, live in deprived areas, and/or have challenging home lives. The project's person-centred approach involves a youth worker getting to know the young person, often via home visits, to understand more about their challenges, aspirations, interests and talents.

Flexible 9-12 month personal plans are devised and participants benefit from skills training workshops delivered in local employability centres. Depending upon the young person's goal, whether progressing to training, further education or the workplace – or returning to school – appropriate forms of additional support, including mentoring and aftercare, is provided.

In the past 12 months, 338 young people have participated in the programme, which has 16 targets comprising both hard and soft outcomes. Of these participants, 85% have reported improved life chances, 86% have reported improved self-confidence, while 87% have identified improved behaviours.



### Who is running it?

Rathbone, a UK-wide youth charity that specialises in providing access to training and qualifications. X-CEED is now in its fourth year. It is resourced by the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland. Referral partners include high schools, Careers Scotland, the Department for Work and Pensions, social services departments, and homeless charities.

### Why did the judging panel like it?

The judges were particularly impressed with the level of service user involvement in helping to shape the delivery and content of the X-CEED programme. This is achieved primarily through the creation of a national Youth Forum Network, consisting of a number of local Youth Forums which meet monthly, providing an environment for staff and young people to shape the project in line with their needs and aspirations. With 85% of participants seeing an improvement in their life chances as a direct result of their participation on the X-CEED programme, it is clearly making a significant impact.

### Where can I find out more?

ENABLE Scotland website [www.enable.org.uk](http://www.enable.org.uk)

Contact: Linda Barnwell, Programme Manager, ENABLE Scotland:  
01698 737 113, [Linda.barnwell@enable.org.uk](mailto:Linda.barnwell@enable.org.uk)

### Where can I find out more?

Short film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IY6kNgq-gtU>

Contact: Kate Still, Director of Devolved Nations, Rathbone:  
0141 229 6300, [Kate.still@rathboneuk.org](mailto:Kate.still@rathboneuk.org)

# Community Led Regeneration

## Winner

### Tomintoul & Glenlivet Regeneration Project

#### What is the aim of the project?

To support a rural area's socio-economic recovery by establishing a dedicated community organisation to identify and deliver appropriate regeneration responses.

#### Where is it taking place?

Tomintoul is a village in Moray, located on the northern slopes of the Cairngorms Mountains in the surrounding valley of Glenlivet.



The Smugglers Hostel was reopened as a community owned asset in 2013

#### What has been achieved?

The initiative began in 2010, following the closure of a number of key economic assets in the area such as the two main hotels in Tomintoul. A series of local consultations driven by local community and business leaders led the formation of a wide-reaching local regeneration strategy and the formation of Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust in 2012 and a Landscape Partnership in 2013.

Just some of the many activities delivered under the project umbrella are:

- Developing a viable business plan to enable the reopening of a Visitor Information Centre and Museum in the village;
- Saving the local youth hostel – The Smugglers Hostel – from closure by taking it into community management;
- Supporting major improvements in signage and footpath quality to improve the visitor experience;
- Providing a programme of festivals and gatherings to attract whisky, natural heritage, motorcycle, music and history enthusiasts;
- Establishing Glenlivet Mountain Bike Trails, which brought 12k visitors to the area in its first year of operation;
- Rolling out a successful community led broadband scheme.



Tomintoul Museum reconstructs a village smithy

This has all contributed to a greatly enhanced level of local tourism, embodied by the reopening of the two Tomintoul hotels that led to the project's genesis.

#### Who is running it?

Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust, which has six directors and 320 members. Project partners include Cairngorms National Park Authority, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Moray Council, and the Crown Estate.

#### Why did the judging panel like it?

The judging panel were particularly impressed with the ambition and vision of the Development Trust, which has provided a strong foundation for success in reversing economic decline by simultaneously attracting more visitors to the area and creating local employment and volunteering opportunities.

Over the years, the Trust has developed a well-earned reputation for managing resources, creating opportunities, and generally getting things done.

The panel were delighted to see that the Trust has found an ideal approach between community engagement and active agency support, with the 300+ community members clearly 'in charge' of strategy and drawing effectively on agency expertise and resources when needed.

Many of the events and facilities developed will draw additional visitors to the area for many years to come, which will further help to build the skills and confidence of local people and continue the financial and social regeneration of the area.

Mountain bike trails have attracted new visitors to Glenlivet



#### Where can I find out more?

Development Trust Website: [www.tgdt.org.uk](http://www.tgdt.org.uk)

Contact: Oliver Giles, Development Officer, Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust: 01807 580 358, [oliver@tgdt.org.uk](mailto:oliver@tgdt.org.uk)





# Shortlisted

## Link Up Gallatown

### What is the aim of the project?

To support a vulnerable community by facilitating the development of activities that address social and health issues, and deliver positive change.

### Where is it taking place?

The Gallatown is a neighbourhood in the town of Kirkcaldy, Fife.

### What has been achieved?

The project started in 2012 as part of the national Link Up programme, which now operates in ten disadvantaged Scottish communities. Link Up was formed on the premise that the ingredients for lasting change in a community are already present in the passion, strengths, skills, knowledge and interests of local people. Link Up workers enable local people to harness these assets by forming activities they want to take part in and support.

In the Gallatown, eleven activities have been initiated including a community café, two youth clubs, a Bike Hub social enterprise, an IT café, and a parent and toddler group. This has involved 1617 participants and 131 volunteers across 62 sessions, and the establishment of a formal Gallatown Gala & Community Group and a new 'Happy Daze' community facility in a shop unit that was previously long-vacant. Collectively, these activities have helped residents create new social networks in a positive and nurturing environment, and gain confidence, skills and support to make significant progress at personal, family and community levels.



### Who is running it?

The Link Up programme is delivered by a philanthropy organisation, Inspiring Scotland, which funds project workers. In the Gallatown, YMCA Kirkcaldy provides additional project support, while local activities are increasingly managed by the Gallatown Gala & Community Group.

### Why did the judging panel like it?

The SURF Awards panel appreciated the genuine efforts that the project is making to address long-standing social and economic issues. The many positive stories emerging from Link Up Gallatown demonstrates its profound impact on individuals and families over a short period, from creating employment, learning and training opportunities to achieving reductions in alcohol and drug consumption. The project has greatly increased the rate of local volunteering. It is a model of success in community-led social regeneration.

## UnstFest

### What is the aim of the project?

To attract visitors to a remote island and generate income for local activities by organising a celebratory community festival.

### Where is it taking place?

In the UK's most northerly inhabited island of Unst in Shetland.

### What has been achieved?

First arranged in 2008, UnstFest has developed into a major ten day festival that showcases Unst's strengths as a community and a tourist destination. For the 2016 edition, more than 70 events were delivered in venues across the island, including mystery tours, kart races, live music, record attempts, wildlife talks, practical workshops, cooking demonstrations, a family picnic, and a regatta, concluding with a popular carnival and dance.



The events, which attract visitors from across Shetland and further afield, are delivered by local businesses and community groups. Financially, accommodation is booked out and many businesses take on extra staff to help them cope with demand. The voluntary groups use well-attended events to help provide financial security over the rest of the year.

As the UK's most northerly festival, UnstFest has provided the island with a considerably enhanced profile as a tourism destination. It is a source of local pride, and the community benefit greatly from the energy and entertainment that the festival provides each year.

### Who is running it?

UnstFest is run by a local committee formed after a public meeting early each year. An advert is placed in local shops and all community members are welcome to stand for appointment.

### Why did the judging panel like it?

This project is an outstanding example of people working together to reinvigorate and regenerate an island. The whole community is behind the success of UnstFest, with the school, community halls, local businesses and community groups pitching in to make things happen. The panel were particularly impressed by the marketing efforts of the committee. These have successfully used social media, graphic design and press releases to create a strong brand and profile.

### Where can I find out more?

Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/gallatownlinkup](http://www.facebook.com/gallatownlinkup)

ConContact: Andrew Magowan, Link Up Programme Manager, Inspiring Scotland: 0131 442 8760, [andrewm@inspiringScotland.org.uk](mailto:andrewm@inspiringScotland.org.uk)

### Where can I find out more?

Festival website: [www.unstfest.org](http://www.unstfest.org)

Contact: Gordon M. Thomson, Chairman, Unst Community Council: 01957 711 695, [clerk@unstcc.shetland.co.uk](mailto:clerk@unstcc.shetland.co.uk)

# Scotland's Most Improved Town

# Winner

## Lochgelly

Lochgelly is a former mining town in Fife with a little under 7k residents. Its train station provides easy travel to Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline and Edinburgh, but despite a rich industrial heritage and a well-connected geography, the town has deep-rooted deprivation and perception problems.

In 2004, with its derelict housing and boarded-up shops, Lochgelly was named as the 'worst place to live in Britain', and was identified by HBOS as having the lowest house prices in the UK. In 2010 it featured on the Carbuncle Awards' 'dismal town' shortlist.



A 2010 charrette helped generate momentum

In the last six years, however, an altogether different story has taken shape as a series of collaborative projects have improved the town's urban fabric, pride of place, and external reputation.

Since the early 2000s, Fife Council, Ore Valley Housing Association and local community groups have been working together on a Lochgelly Masterplan. A Lochgelly Community Development Forum was later established, and a 2010 Community Charrette provided further focus on developing practical solutions to the town's problems.

A number of initiatives delivered in recent years are doing just that. Just some of the achievements are:

- A wide variety of community led improvements, such as a town centre heritage trail and floral decorations.
- The demolition of several dilapidated buildings, enabling new developments.
- Town centre vacancy rates falling from 37% in April 2009 to 18% in April 2016, helping with employment opportunities as well as an improved visitor offer.

- A refurbished Lochgelly Centre, with 415 seat theatre, local library and e-commerce suite.
- 31 new town centre living opportunities in former derelict buildings and a new OVHA affordable housing development on Main Street.
- Development of a new Business Centre and refurbished Miners' Institute, with a combined 51 business units (> 75% occupied).
- New leisure opportunities, including a closed loop cycling circuit and an improved visitor centre at Lochore Meadows.

A new retail & housing development brought fresh life to the town



Lochgelly has developed a robust partnership model to help achieve its community vision. The SURF Awards judging panel were impressed by the local authority's enabling approach, which encourages other partners to take action. Each play an important role in helping Lochgelly utilise its assets to create a town that offers a range of services and is able to support local businesses.

The new Community Action Plan has helped increase community confidence and foster local pride. This is evident in the strong "I Love Lochgelly!" branding that has been adopted locally to highlight the positive changes, and helped maintain low retail vacancy rates and accessible public services within the town centre.

The judges also appreciated the strong emphasis on creating new and appropriate housing opportunities in the heart of the town. Far from being the 'worst place to live in Britain', Lochgelly is now a vibrant town that has lots to offer local residents and visitors. For the judging panel, it was easy to see why local people love their town. They had no hesitation in confirming Lochgelly as Scotland's Most Improved Town for 2016.

Lochgelly Miners' Institute was refurbished into business units



### Where can I find out more?

Contact: Hazel Cross, Economic Adviser, Town Centre Development Unit,  
Fife Council: 03451 55 55 55 ext 47 18 53, [hazel.cross@fife.gov.uk](mailto:hazel.cross@fife.gov.uk)





# Shortlisted



**Auchterarder**

## Auchterarder

Despite having a population below 5k, the Perth & Kinross town of Auchterarder has a remarkably long high street. The 1.5 mile east-west main road is a source of local pride and the reason for the town's moniker of 'The Lang Toun'.

The length and corresponding shape of the town, however, presents difficulties around broadband accessibility. Fed up at being left in a very long, stagnant queue for mainstream communications suppliers to deliver an adequate service, a group of local stakeholders decided to look into how they might come up with a solution independently.

A ground-breaking not-for-profit initiative was developed by Auchterarder Community Partnership, with the full support of local traders and Perth & Kinross Council, and the help of specialist company Event Wi-Fi. Over three short weeks in early 2016, superfast broadband and intelligent Wi-Fi deployment established digital interactivity right along the high street.



**Gourrock**

Now promoted as a 'digital town', Auchterarder's local businesses have harnessed the benefits of reliable superfast broadband and e-commerce tools to engage new customers and increase revenue streams, enhancing the town's footfall, dwell-time and marketing reach. A digital portal connected to the Wi-Fi installation also captures raw demographic data, providing a powerful research and measurement database tool that provides impartial data to support intelligent future town planning.

On their visit to the town, the judges observed the community-driven enthusiasm that led to the identifying and taking of action that resulted in a much-improved town centre offer. The not-for-profit Wi-Fi initiative has fully engaged local businesses, stimulated community and economic activity, and improved Auchterarder's overall environment as a place to live in and visit. There is clear success, for example, in attracting new residents to live in the town centre, and encouraging more visitors from nearby Gleneagles Hotel to spend an afternoon in the town.



**Linwood**

This innovative approach has also engaged young people through the school curriculum, encouraging fresh enterprise activity and bringing generations together. This project is a good case study of a community recognising that in order to get things done, sometimes it is better to get on with it yourself. The project partners are now looking to build further on the momentum generated by becoming a Business Improvement District.

### Where can I find out more?

Contact: Geoff Gelder, Secretary, Auchterarder Community Partnership:  
01764 664 234, [acp@auchterardertown.co.uk](mailto:acp@auchterardertown.co.uk)

# Scotland's Most Improved Town

## Shortlisted

### Gourock

Gourock, a seaside town in the west of Scotland with a population of just over 10k, has a rich heritage as a holiday resort. People from Glasgow and beyond would travel to the Firth of Clyde town to enjoy their summers there.

Clyde coast tourism has, however, declined significantly in recent decades. Gourock's physical environment has suffered in tandem, as evidenced by large areas of vacant and derelict land throughout the town and insufficient public space on the waterfront. Common congestion on the main thoroughfare and a lack of car parking spaces further discouraged visitors.

In 2010, Inverclyde Council acted on extensive local demand to transform the town centre, and appointed the Riverside Inverclyde Urban Regeneration Company as the delivery agency for a major £5.8m redevelopment programme. After four years of community and stakeholder consultations, and complex land acquisitions, civil engineering firm RJ McLeod Ltd was appointed in late 2014 to commence the programme of works.

The central goal of the regeneration investments was to enhance the waterfront. A one way road system was created to aid the flow of traffic through the town centre. A new car park increased the number of spaces available to visitors, and the sea wall was improved. Better drainage and lighting, and new street furniture, was also provided.

The programme, completed in December 2015, has also served as a catalyst for a number of complementary activities, including investment in a new railway station at Gourock Pier, a refurbished Gourock Outdoor Swimming Pool and Fitness Gym, and a conversion programme for the former Gourock Municipal Buildings into a Business Centre. A number of planning extensions and change of use applications have since been made by cafes and shop owners.

SURF's judging panel were impressed at the level of joint working between Riverside Inverclyde, the local authority and the transport operators, which has not only helped improve the physical aspect of the town but helped ensure that Gourock's retail character remains a distinctive antidote to the usual corporate offer found elsewhere. The change to the physical environment is also helping to stimulate further community activity, with local retailers engaging closely with community groups.

### Linwood

Since the 1980s, the Renfrewshire town of Linwood (population just under 10k) has faced a number of problems caused by the loss of a car plant and other prominent local industries. Its once-attractive shopping centre became run-down, and the town centre's advanced decay was confirmed when it was voted Scotland's most dismal town in the 2011 Carbuncle Awards.

That same year, a grassroots campaign took shape and raised the profile of local demand for town centre redevelopment. In response to this campaign, a partnership involving Linwood Community Development Trust, Linwood Community Council, Linstone Housing Association, Renfrewshire Council and Tesco was formed.

The partnership has delivered a multi-million pound transformation of Linwood town centre, including a new shopping area and Town Hall. A new Tesco supermarket has created 350 new jobs and encouraged new occupation in nearby long-vacant retail units. Other local businesses have invested in property improvements, and new office space has been created.

The entrance to the town and main thoroughfares have been transformed by the work of community volunteers. Further progress was achieved with a £12m programme of housing improvements, a Tweedie Hall three-storey community centre and library, and a new sport and recreation facility, the ON-X.

When they visited Linwood, the SURF Awards judging panel saw that the town partners are visibly bursting with pride. The local community have worked tirelessly to change their town centre's appearance and reputation from dismal to vibrant. Using a development opportunity from a large retailer as the catalyst for change, it is clear that the local community have taken every opportunity to maximise local benefits from the new supermarket.

The energy, commitment and enthusiasm from each of the organisations in the partnership has led to a wide variety of positive change and an empowered, 'can do' culture. Alongside the creation of local action plans and the establishment of a new social enterprise, Linwood's new retail offer and improved housing have combined to deliver strategically considered physical and social benefits.

#### Where can I find out more?

Contact: Fiona Maguire, Interim Chief Executive, Riverside Inverclyde:  
01475 749828, [fiona.maguire@riversideinverclyde.com](mailto:fiona.maguire@riversideinverclyde.com)

#### Where can I find out more?

Contact: Adele Fraser, Chief Executive, Linstone Housing Association:  
01505 382 383, [afraser@linstone.co.uk](mailto:afraser@linstone.co.uk)



# SURF Awards...

Each December, some of the best regeneration projects in the country get a well-earned boost by receiving a SURF Award. But what happens next? We asked each of the 2015 category winners for an update. Here are their stories.

*Not just for Christmas!*

## Helmsdale Affordable Housing Project

**2015 SURF Award Winner, Community Led Regeneration**

Helmsdale & District Development Trust were absolutely delighted to be selected as the winners of the Community Led Regeneration category at the 2015 SURF Awards. It was

totally unexpected! We are ever so grateful to SURF and the judges for the recognition that the community has invested in itself and demonstrated its resilience over the past six years. Since accepting the prestigious award, we have grown further, with lots of activity in our rural community, whether it be twinning with other communities across the country as well as the northern hemisphere, to delivering an old fashioned 'Meals on Wheels' service is established as a new social enterprise, along with the scoping for a second phase of housing-based development, geared towards addressing health and wellbeing within the community.



Four capital projects keep us busy, a community land buyout from Sutherland Estates of all their assets in the community area, a high speed Wi-Fi Broadband project across three communities, a community wind turbine generating income to deliver the communities development plan and the re-opening of the derelict Filling Station in the community. Never a dull moment! We are further supported by two additional members to our board of directors as well as employing a project officer.

What is different about Helmsdale in comparison to any other community, fragile or not, remote or not, rural or not? Well, nothing really, but one overarching theme is the recognition by the community that they are sometimes better at delivering services themselves in a more sustainable way than can be done at present by others. In fact, we have just signed an agreement to deliver 'Home Care' to those in our community who have an identified need, as well as employing local people to deliver this important service is a huge task for the community, a challenge we as a community are relishing.

By Paul Harrington, Local Development Officer, Helmsdale & District Development Trust  
[www.hddt.org](http://www.hddt.org)

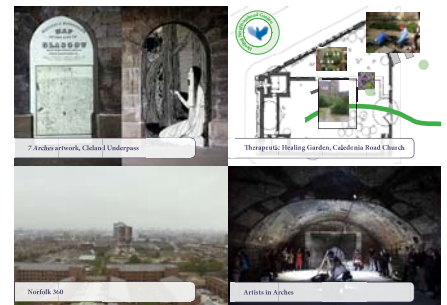
## Art & Living Laurieston: 'Open Spaces'

**2015 SURF Award Winner, Creative Regeneration**

Since winning the 2015 SURF Creative Regeneration Award for Laurieston's 'Open Spaces', WAVEparticle continues to implement the Laurieston Art Strategy, a contemporary vision of events-led works that are embedded and aspirational, and allow great scope to involve community members in shaping the place they live.

2016 has seen the continued creative use of Laurieston's 'Open Spaces' - the Artists in Arches, 23 un-refurbished railway arches at Cleland Lane; the iconic Caledonia Road Church; and the Laurieston Arena at Norfolk Court by Gorbals Street. Over the last nine months these spaces between them have hosted over 30 events and activities, including exhibitions for Glasgow International.

These community workshops and activities, art exhibitions, sound installations, film screenings and theatre performances, have reached a local city-wide and international audience. To pick a few highlights, there's the new Therapeutic Healing Garden in the grounds of the Caledonia Road Church; 7 Arches, the opening of a striking new permanent public artwork for Cleland Street Underpass by Gorbals Arts Project; and NORFOLK 360, a project focused on gathering images & stories, centered on documenting the demolition of the last remaining tower block in Laurieston from 32 camera positions.



When making the award to Laurieston's 'Open Spaces', the judges particularly noted the level of partnership involved in the whole process around the development and delivery of the Laurieston Art Strategy. Relationships continue to be essential - the process continues to be owned by a wide network of individuals and organisations - from key people in the New Gorbals Housing Association, to the team in Urban Union, to great support from Glasgow City Council's DRS Housing & Regeneration Section and its Stalled Spaces initiative, to a couple of fantastic managers in Network Rail, to all our friends at Gorbals Arts Project, the Citizens Theatre, The Barn, the local community, schools, organisations, individuals and artists who have made wonderful things to see!

By Peter McCaughey, Lead Artist, WAVEparticle  
[www.lauriestonlivingarts.com](http://www.lauriestonlivingarts.com)

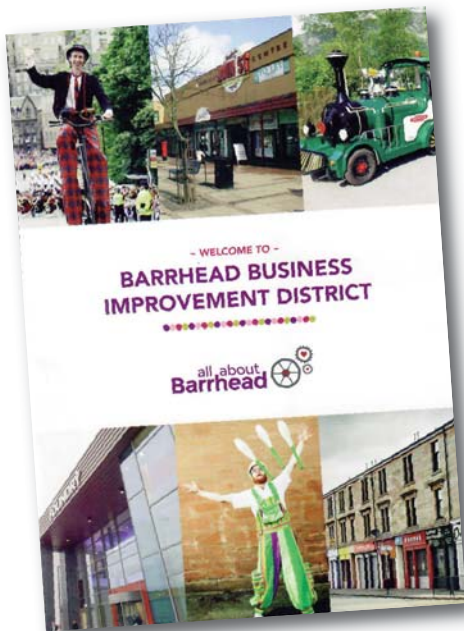
We asked each of the 2015 category winners for an update.

# Not just for

## Barrhead

**2015 SURF Award Winner, Scotland's Most Improved Town: Small & Medium**

Since winning the SURF Award, Barrhead has benefited from an increased confidence in the town, and also from further investment.



In summer 2016, Barrhead town centre retailers voted to establish a new Business Improvement District – All About Barrhead – to lead an exciting programme of social events to bring more people to the town centre. The second phase of Barrhead's regeneration, focusing on the redevelopment of brownfield land for employment uses, has taken several steps forward. Council-developed industrial units at Crossmill Business Park are being snapped up and a preferred developer for the 17 acre former Nestle site has now been selected. This strategic development will bring new commercial and retail uses to the town and over 300 new temporary and permanent jobs.

On the south side of the town, the first planning applications have been submitted for the Barrhead South urban expansion area. As well as over 1,000 new homes, Barrhead South will deliver a new railway station, access improvements and high quality greenspace. Back in the town centre, plans are progressing for a linear park to provide pleasant pedestrian and cycle links through the town centre.

By Gillian McNamara, Economic Development and Regeneration Manager, East Renfrewshire Council.

## Kilmarnock

**2015 SURF Award Winner, Scotland's Most Improved Town: Large**

The 2015 SURF Award gave Kilmarnock a huge boost. It raised the profile of the town in a very positive way, showing in particular that it was ambitious, hard-working and open for business. The drive for Kilmarnock to "move forward" has never been greater and without doubt has been given added impetus by winning the award.



It confirmed to all those involved in making Kilmarnock a better place to work, live and relax that it was indeed on the right road. It highlighted that if we all continue to pull in the same direction even greater things can happen.

So what has Kilmarnock been up to in the last year? There is so much that could be highlighted but three projects stand out:

- The new Kilmarnock campus for Ayrshire College welcomed its first students in October 2016; the building provides a truly innovative learning experience.
- A new town centre business hub targeting new and small but growing businesses is well on the way to completion.
- Dean Castle and Country Park, set within the heart of the town, will benefit from nearly £10m of investment. This last year has enabled the full funding package to be assembled and work is already underway to create an attraction that will be amongst the very best of its kind.

To sum up, winning the award has given Kilmarnock the recognition it deserved, infused it with great pride and provided it with the confidence to do even more.

By Karl Doroszenko, Development Planning and Regeneration Manager, East Ayrshire Council.



Here are their stories.

# Christmas!

## Ullapool Harbour Infrastructure Enhancement

### 2015 SURF Award Winner, Large Scale Infrastructure

In 2015, the largest ever construction project undertaken at Ullapool Harbour to facilitate the arrival of the new Ullapool-Stornoway ferry (MV Loch Seaforth) was completed. Works included a 33 metre extension of the ferry berthing pier, a new linkspan and a second-storey extension to the terminal building to accommodate a new passenger access system. At the outset, the harbour consulted with local community groups and individuals to explore meaningful uses for the building outside ferry times from a social and cultural aspect.



Announced shortly after completion, our SURF Award was accepted as a true accolade. We were hugely honoured to be included among some very deserving projects. For us it seemed to underscore, particularly at local level, just how well received the building was. It was also a real injection of affirmation at the end of a hugely significant and valuable project.

The building has proved a remarkable success hosting meetings, music and literary performances, exhibitions and talks from local, national and international performers. We have hosted Lesley Riddoch's Nordic House Exhibition (pictured); award-winning author Philip Hoare has delivered a fascinating talk; and it's become a second home for our Living Seas Highlands group. As we write, Ullapool Museum are holding their AGM. It's even accommodated a funeral service!

As we look at an expanding list of bookings, we are so pleased that we worked with our local community to develop what has become a beautiful building of real use. Thank you, SURF Awards judges, for recognising our effort and the building's potential.

By Kevin Peach, Chief Executive and Harbourmaster,  
Ullapool Harbour Trust  
[www.ullapool-harbour.co.uk](http://www.ullapool-harbour.co.uk)

## The Wheatley Pledge

### 2015 SURF Award Winner, Employability

During 2016, the Wheatley Pledge has continued to grow, with over 90 employers now signed up, creating over 300 job, apprenticeship or training opportunities for our customers. Over half of these opportunities have been secured by people aged 16 – 29 years.



We have also been exploring different ways that employers who currently have no opportunities available could get involved with the Wheatley Pledge. One approach that has already proved successful is our partnership with MCR Pathways "Young Glasgow Talent" programme – an innovative mentor programme that works with looked after young people as they unlock their potential and find their talents.

To date, over 20 Wheatley Pledge employers have committed at least one staff member to provide weekly one-to-one mentor support or to provide Talent Tasters (intensive three hour work experience sessions that are designed to inspire the young people and help them make positive choices about their future careers).

By Lynne Guthrie, Community Renewal Manager, Wheatley Group  
[www.wheatley-group.com/improving-lives/wheatley-pledge/](http://www.wheatley-group.com/improving-lives/wheatley-pledge/)

“Every year, the SURF Awards demonstrate remarkable community regeneration projects from all over Scotland. This publication highlights the best of those successes and the remarkable economic and social impacts they are achieving. SURF will work with them to share their valuable practical experience across our extensive networks of practitioners and policy makers.”



Andy Milne  
Chief Executive, SURF



**As Scotland’s regeneration forum,  
SURF’s overall objective is to address  
poverty and inequality in Scotland’s  
disadvantaged communities.**

SURF is the primary arena for debate on community regeneration in Scotland. It acts as a channel for information, consultation and policy proposals, based on the knowledge and experience of its extensive membership and wider connections.

SURF network activity includes seminars, conferences, policy exchanges, research programmes, an annual awards for best practice, responding to policy consultations, and distributing information and publications.

This all provides a truly independent network to explore current practice, experience and knowledge, with which to positively influence the development of more successful regeneration policy and practice.

SURF was established in 1992 as a not-for-profit social enterprise. It is directed by a board of 20 voluntary directors drawn from its extensive membership.

We have a database of over 3000 regeneration contacts and a membership of over 250 organisations from across Scotland.

SURF members range in size from small community groups to large private companies and also include local authorities, academic institutions, housing associations, charities and professional bodies.

**Further information on SURF’s activities, and how to get more involved, is available on our website:**  
[www.surf.scot](http://www.surf.scot)





“Everyone, irrespective of their background, should benefit from a fairer and prosperous Scotland, therefore tackling inequalities and poverty is at the heart of everything we do. That is not only the right thing to do but the smart thing.

The SURF Awards demonstrate how effective communities are when empowered to deliver the priorities that matter to them most, and I am impressed by the diversity of this year’s projects and the positive impact on people’s lives.”



Kevin Stewart MSP  
Scottish Government Minister  
for Local Government and Housing



## A Fairer Scotland

The winning projects showcased at this year’s SURF Awards demonstrate how effectively community-led approaches to regeneration are revitalising our communities.

The Scottish Government’s regeneration policy delivers inclusive growth by supporting interventions that respond to local circumstances, address market failure and increase opportunities to attract investment and jobs in our most disadvantaged communities.

The powers we introduced through The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 provide a framework to empower community bodies through the ownership of land and buildings, and to strengthen their voices in the decisions that matter to them.

Our Empowering Communities Fund, and new European Social Fund programme, will continue to enable communities to design, develop and deliver sustainable community-led solutions to combat poverty and improve people’s lives.

Tackling inequality and poverty is at the heart of the Scottish Government’s approach to creating a more prosperous and fairer Scotland. The Fairer Scotland Action Plan is the Government’s response to last year’s fairer Scotland conversation. The plan’s 50 fairness actions reflect our ambitions to develop a more dynamic, sustainable and inclusive economy by 2030.

Regeneration is vital to this and, as a shared endeavor, SURF is a key partner in helping to influence, shape and challenge regeneration policy in Scotland.

As local needs vary, regeneration requires that public sector, third sector, businesses and communities work together to deliver change. And, in partnership with other community planning partners, local authorities can ensure that available resources are directed by the genuine needs of local people and that effective working relationships are in place to deliver regeneration for their communities.

To find out more about the Scottish Government’s regeneration policies, visit: [www.gov.scot/regeneration](http://www.gov.scot/regeneration)



# SURF Awards Learning Workshops

With support from the Scottish Government, SURF will be arranging workshop events in May 2017 to explore transferable lessons from the success of the four winning SURF Awards projects.

To receive information on these free and informal learning exchange events, please sign up for our mailing list at the following link or contact the SURF events team on 0141 440 0122.

[www.scotregen.co.uk/stay-informed](http://www.scotregen.co.uk/stay-informed)

# Members and Sponsors

SURF is very grateful for all the support it gets from over 250 member organisations, and in particular from its 12 key delivery partners. Their backing provides the political, administrative and financial independence that helps SURF play a unique role in linking policy and practice across all of the sectors concerned with regenerating Scotland's communities.

