



THE SURF AWARDS: LEARNING FROM SUCCESS

An outcomes report from a series of SURF workshops in 2023

SURF and the Scottish Government deliver the annual SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration to identify and share examples of high impact in addressing social and economic problems in Scottish places.

In May of 2023, SURF arranged a series of in-person shared learning workshop events with representatives of the from the [2022 process](#). The goal of these events was to explore, in some depth, what transferable lessons these projects can offer to regeneration practitioners working in other sectors and geographies.

This report presents a summary of the main outcomes from the four online SURF Awards workshop events, and their respective themes:

- Successful approaches to housing led regeneration;
- Overcoming barriers to employability;
- Exploring place-based regeneration initiatives; and
- Taking creative approaches to regenerate communities.

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Introduction

The annual SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration process is widely recognised as being the most prestigious awards in the broad regeneration scene in Scotland.

The purpose of the SURF Awards process is:

- To recognise and reward best practice;
- To promote and disseminate best practice across Scotland as means of sharing knowledge and experience and enhancing policy and practice;
- To highlight the role that regeneration projects and initiatives have in improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

2022 was the 24th year of the SURF Awards, and the 19th that it has been delivered in partnership with the Scottish Government. Nominations to the 2022 SURF Awards were assessed by an independent panel of 20 expert judges drawn from national regeneration related organisations and community groups in Scotland. Working in teams, the judging panel members agreed category shortlists, made site visits to these shortlisted projects, and collaboratively selected winning projects.

The five category winning projects for the 2022 SURF Awards were:

- **Creative Regeneration:** [Alchemy Arts & Film](#)
- **Supporting Youth Employability:** [The Larder](#)
- **Community Led Regeneration:** [Bressay Development Ltd – Speldiburn](#)
- **Improving Scotland’s Places:** [Living Alloa](#)
- **Housing and Regeneration:** [Taighean a’Chaiseil](#)

These winning projects were announced at a SURF Awards Presentation Dinner event in the Voco Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow on the 8th December. SURF invited colleagues in all five winning

projects to participate in a series of SURF Awards shared learning workshop events with regeneration practitioners from the SURF network.

The events were designed to explore and highlight the main factors that led to the success of the 2022 SURF Award winning initiatives that could potentially help initiatives in other contexts and places.

The following sections of this report highlight the main areas of discussion and outcomes from the following three themed events in the series:

- **Successful approaches to housing led regeneration** with Taighean a'Chaiseil, 21 Main Street Wigtown, Lar Housing Trust, Scotland's Housing Network and Lintel Trust. Held on 4 May 2023 in Wheatley House, Glasgow.
- **Overcoming barriers to employability** with The Larder, McTaggart's Kickstart programme, Elgin Youth Development Group, Skills Development Scotland and the Third Sector Employability Forum. Held on 11 May 2023 in Linlithgow Burgh Hall.
- **Exploring place-based regeneration initiatives** with Living Alloa, Bressay Development Ltd – Speldiburn, Scottish Government, Scotland's Towns Partnership, and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Held on 18 May 2023 in Clyde Community Hall, Govan.
- **Taking creative approaches to regenerate communities** with Alchemy Arts & Film, Findhorn Bay Arts, CentreStage, Creative Scotland and Creative Lives. Held on 25 May 2023 in the Kinning Park Complex, Glasgow.

SURF is grateful to the Scottish Government for supporting the SURF Awards process, including these workshop events. The 2022 SURF Awards process also benefited from the support of the following additional partners in the delivery of thematic categories: [Architecture & Design Scotland](#), [Creative Scotland](#), [Highlands & Islands Enterprise](#), [Scotland's Towns Partnership](#) and [Skills Development Scotland](#).

Transferable Lessons

1) Successful approaches to housing led regeneration

With introductory presentations from SURF Award winning and shortlisted projects:

Taighean a'Chaiseil (who joined virtually) and 21 Main Street, Wigtown.

Additional presentations were provided by Lar Housing Trust, Scotland's Housing Network and Lintel Trust.

About the event

The first workshop in the series highlighted the 2022 SURF Award Winner and Highly Commended projects in the 'Housing and Regeneration' category.

The projects featured all used housing-led regeneration approaches to improve the communities in which they work.

First Presentation Summary: [Taighean a'Chaiseil](#)

This presentation was provided remotely.

Staffin, with a population of 560 people, is located on the Isle of Skye. The project, led by Staffin Community Trust (SCT), consisted of new housing provision, with additional health and business developments, on what had been a bare site. Staffin is a rural crofting community where there had been no affordable housing since 1999. In comparison, neighbouring Portree had 250 affordable houses built in the last decade.

A major issue facing the community was depopulation, with a 6.6% drop between 2009-2014, which equates to 40 people, significant when you have a fragile population to begin with. This also resulted in the school roll falling from over 50 to 11-12 pupils, creating a threat to the school and a wider impact on the community.

A housing summit was held, which brought people together to discuss challenges and potential opportunities. The Trust began a partnership with [Communities Housing Trust](#) and [Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association](#). They put out a call for a site. Most of the land was croft land that was bureaucratic to get hold of, with multiple challenges and red tape to overcome.

The project resulted in six 3-bedroom houses, which are jointly owned between the partners with two houses each. The homes were mixed tenure with different allocation policies, but primarily houses for families with children. Currently they are home to twelve adults and eight children. This has helped to bolster the school roll and prevent any immediate threat.

The Trust also developed, and have ownership, of a brand new health centre, which replaced an ageing building, at a cost of £250k. NHS Highland are a long-term tenant, with a GP practice and other services provided. A local aquaculture company called [Organic Sea Harvest](#) took long-term tenancy of two new business units, which are also community-owned. The creation of the business units has provided 18 local jobs.



The whole development cost, including the housing, health centre and business units, was £1.6m, with the majority in community ownership. Having made the investment, the Trust need to generate an income stream in order to look after the development for future generations. The annual surplus from rental income of SCT properties goes towards supporting other community projects.

Barriers

- **Landscape designation** provided an initial barrier. Areas of Skye are designated as a [National Scenic Area](#) (NSA) and [Nature Scot](#) thought the development impinged on the scenic area. [Development Trusts Association Scotland \(DTAS\)](#) and [Community Land Scotland](#) lobbied for the development. Complicated as some government agencies were in support and some were against.
- **Energy ratings** proved to be a major barrier that resulted in a loss of funding. The houses are made of larch with slate roofs, making them energy efficient. However, the mortgage company wanted a B rating but the development came back as a C rating. On Skye there is no access to mains gas so people rely on electricity. A funder rescinded their grant offer because of the C rating. This meant that SCT lost £20k because they couldn't reach B. Location meant that the outcome was weighted against them.
- **Crofting laws** also proved to be a challenge. The Trust had to go to court for the development as the land was tenanted by 14 parties and one objected. This resulted in a land hearing.
- **Delayed planning decisions** created a knock on effect on the project timeline.

Feedback from families and tenants has been very positive but there is a challenge for the Trust to manage the development efficiently and have money for maintenance. The Trust's current surplus of around £8k per year is not going to be enough long-term, and they are providing resource to support government services, such as the school and medical centre.

There is an abundance of second homes on Skye which means that the lights go out when not in use, but these homes mean that is not the case in Staffin.

Policy Ask

Communities should be able to get block grants from the government to manage maintenance.

Presenter:

- *Hugh Ross, Development Officer, Staffin Community Trust*

Second Presentation Summary: [21 Main Street, Wigtown](#)

[South of Scotland Community Housing](#) (SOSCH) is a community led housing support provider and enabler. They were established in 2006 to address a shortfall in rural housing supply in South West Scotland in response to a study by Shelter and based upon a Highlands model. They currently are currently engaged with 40+ communities in Southern Scotland, and started to provide support to the South East in November 2022.

They support community organisations through the housing process, from planning through to the build. Their work is supported by the [Land Reform Agenda](#) and [Community Empowerment policy](#). They access funding through the [Rural Housing Fund](#), which is the only funding piece of the jigsaw open to community organisations. Their approach is embedded in wider community ownership of assets and land and is driven by partnership. SOSCH work with communities in the long-term.

They focus on solutions that target local needs and allocations, but also repopulation. Long-term project lifecycle support to communities and a holistic approach to community led regeneration, empowerment and placemaking.

A lot of the challenges faced by the communities SOSCH work with echo those of Hugh in Staffin. There has been a shift in the housing market over the last few years. Second home ownership is now becoming more prevalent in the South of Scotland, making it harder to secure housing. The [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) helps to facilitate community asset transfer and the [Land Reform Acts 2003](#) and [2016](#) has provided support via [Community Right to Buy](#) and [the Scottish Land Fund](#). In March 2021, [Housing to 2040](#) announced an extension of the Rural Housing Fund and this platform for community led housing. There is an emerging agenda with [Community Wealth Building](#).

SOSCH work with communities to identify hyper-local housing need and capacity to deliver solutions. Perpetuity affordable housing within a wider context of community ownership of land and assets, contributing more sustainable, resilient communities. Mixed tenure developments provide potential for affordable rent and ownership and, other partnerships

[National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\)](#) and [Place Planning](#) should place housing as an integral element of community resilience, regeneration and growth. Economic growth in the South of Scotland has had an impact on housing supply.

Partnership and stakeholder support has always been critical to the delivery of every project. Addressing the pressures on locally affordable housing supply, and an undersupply of safe, warm, low-energy/affordable, secure homes for rent/purchase, particularly for families and older residents, whilst also aiming to deliver on the repopulation agenda.

Bank of Scotland in Wigtown



The property was a former bank but it also had a head start with a 3-bedroom house on the upper floors. SOSCH carried out a [Housing Need and Demand Assessment](#) on behalf of the community. In addition to community owned affordable housing there was also a real demand for affordable visitor accommodation to visit the Book Town.

The bank didn't engage so the community enacted [Community Right to Buy](#) to bring Lloyds Banking Group to the table. The project was delivered with no borrowing at all, underpinned by the Scottish Government Rural Housing Fund and [Dumfries and Galloway Council Town Centre Living Fund](#), which is a ring-fenced grant. Additional funding also came from the Scottish Land Fund and the [Architectural Heritage Fund](#).

The project was delayed by Covid, and also issues with Scottish Water, but was finally completed in 2022. The repurposed build consists of two homes, one large 3-bedroom family home and a 1-bedroom wheelchair accessible home. In addition, a community bunkhouse and a community growing space with allotments were included. The addition of the bunkhouse provided 3 local jobs.

Like all SOSCH projects, success was built on partnership and led by the community. The project provided visible small scale high street regeneration.

Mike played a short [film](#) about the project.

Town centre decline has led to absentee ownership, permanent changes to the retail market and depopulation within towns. There are pressures on services in rural settlements and smaller towns, schools, businesses etc. Developers are being faced with spiralling development costs and supply chain issues. There are evident issues of social inequality, particularly post-pandemic, such as rural homelessness often being disguised, a low wage economy and an ageing demographic. SOSCH is committed to learning and knowledge exchange. They have taken part in the [SHICC Project – 2017-2021](#) and the [NWE Interreg Programme](#) to test and develop urban community led housing models. They have also been involved in the European [CLT Network](#) which is a new network working to mainstream community led housing in response to the affordable housing and the climate crises. The Nationwide Foundation's [Backing Community-led Housing](#) project is engaging throughout the UK on a funding programme, sharing learning with community led housing hubs in England and Wales.

SOSCH have been working in partnership with the [Communities Housing Trust](#) to promote the community led housing model across Scotland, and have delivered a series of joint blogs.

Presenter:

- *Mike Staples, Chief Executive, SOSCH*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and areas of debate are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

- *One delegate asked about the issues with the bank.*

Mike responded that [Community Right to Buy](#) has not been used a great deal. The bank was clear that the property was to go on the open market. The community were worried that it would be sold for second home ownership. The bank was not responding until registered interest was made. The community were able to act quickly as they were well enough supported to do that. A lot of SOSCH supported work has been with empty buildings. Use of existing buildings and the relationship with sustainability. More communities should be doing this.

- *A delegate asked about the relationship with the tenants. Private lease? Via local authority?*

Mike confirmed that the lease is with the development trust, who are the landlord. It operates as a bit of a hybrid social rent/private tenure lease. You should always work with a third party to help with the management. There was a localised allocations policy agreed with the local authority, then presented as the package to the Scottish Government.

- *Hugh was asked about the allocations policy in Staffin.*

Hugh said that this was the hardest thing they had to do. The focus was always about families and younger people. They took advice from Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association and the Communities Housing Trust. They really wanted to support the Gaelic language, which was problematic for Scottish Government funders and the Rural Housing Fund. The school is a dedicated Gaelic school, so if the kids go to the school it provides a way around issues. Their Board however wanted to be stronger on allocation. To attract younger people back, who have perhaps left for study, they developed a policy that if they had spent at least 3 years at Staffin Primary they would receive extra allocation points. But how do you weigh that up against people who had moved to the island. The allocations policy was heavily weighted towards families with

children going to the school, the more children attending the more points you were allocated. They have flagged up key workers as being a future priority. The allocations process was onerous and resulted in a mix of families either moving to the area or indigenous.

- *The next question focussed on funding for maintenance in the longer term.*

Hugh said that it is not just an issue with this project but also their other projects, which included the [Skye Eco-Museum Heritage Project](#). They have tried to spread visitors across all areas of Skye to stop a glut at the popular sites. They have built footpaths but need to factor in the maintenance costs. Trying to tie in with other restoration projects to reduce costs. They have installed donation boxes. They have created a sinking fund for long-term repairs to the housing, but also for things like grass cutting, septic tank emptying etc. Looking to generate income to pay salaries and invest in other projects. Grant funders want income to be self-sustaining but the £8k they generate yearly isn't enough. An example being, they required extra costs to replace whirly-gigs that blew down in the wind, getting something that withstands island life. The government could be looking at block grants to give communities comfort, and to ensure they don't go into the red whilst they look after the developments.

Mike added that SOSCH provides an enabling role and it is critical to mitigate any risk for the development trust. Sinking funds and maintenance costs are built into the business plan. Margins are slim on all of the projects, particularly now with increased costs. This project is making money and had no borrowing costs. Succession planning is really important, who will be there to take the reins of the development trust in the future.

Third Presentation Summary: [Lar Housing Trust](#)

Lar are an independent charity established in 2015 by the [Scottish Futures Trust](#) specialising in mid-market rental homes. They operate with no grant funding, as all funding is from loans, with £120M capital. To date they currently own and manage 700 homes plus 12 construction sites across 10 local authority areas. They own their own construction company and a company for letting and factoring.

The highest proportion of their tenants are single adults, followed by two adult tenancies. Single and two-adult families with children make up just over a quarter of their tenants. The highest proportion of their tenants are between 26-35 years, with the lowest portion being over 60. Almost 70% of their tenants work full time.

They are regulated by OSCR but are not a social landlord. They work closely with local authorities to take people off the homeless register. Originally they bought housing via [Section 75](#) from major developers but then decided to buy sites and design themselves. They offer internal transfers so that people can move flats but stay in the same community or building.

Lar secured its first building in Edinburgh in December 2017. Westwood House was previously used as commercial office space and has been re-designed and converted by Lar into 47 flats. These homes are very conveniently located, with views to the castle, shops and recreational facilities on the doorstep, with a large park and the Water of Leith to the rear. Completed in November 2019, the demand for these homes has been extremely high and a real community has built up within the building.

They bought the last remaining tenement in Niddrie. This has been transformed into 6 luxury 2-bedroom flats and is primarily occupied by adults with additional support needs.

They are often asked why they do what they do and the answer is that they get to take something that is a mess and make it beautiful. Buildings exist in communities. They listen to the community

and incorporate their needs and aspirations into the build. Things such as a local history gallery, Men's Shed etc.

Challenges of redevelopment

- Health and Safety – dangerous buildings, vandalism, insurance;
- Cost uncertainty;
- Establishing ownership/multiple owners;
- Title/access restrictions;
- Planning – uncertainty, time, requirements, consents, cost;
- Design guide – not suitable for refurbishments;
- Net zero – difficult to gain high EPC, but carbon capture is huge;
- Viability – end values can be low;
- Lay-down space – tight sites;
- Time/attention - lack of replication;
- Resource – more nimble if internal; and
- Consultants who are able/willing to assess risk.

One building had seven fires before they bought it. They try to mitigate health and safety problems by doing things such as tidying up the inside, so that if they are broken into they can lessen the damage. It is all costly.

Benefits of redevelopment

- The community is already there;
- There is generally public support for re-development;
- It upgrades the whole area and reduces anti-social behaviour and increases public safety;
- Amenities tend to be good, close and multiple;
- Close to employment opportunities;
- Significant carbon capture in existing buildings;
- Can often re-use parts of internal spec;
- Quirky homes can be more attractive and meet varying needs;
- Saves a building which would otherwise sit empty or be demolished, thus retains heritage; and
- Significant interest from the local community, offering opportunities for education.

Policy Considerations

- Large scale, lump sum, subordinated, patient loan finance;
- Portfolio approach for finance;
- Freedom to deliver – policies that are strategic, rather than process driven;
- Government as an enabler;
- Affordable housing grant/loans that recognise re-use and refurbishment of empty properties;
- Presumption in favour of conversion/development (permitted development rights); and
- Timescale for planning – fast-track if it is reuse of a derelict building.

Policy Ask

Started with a £55m low interest rate loan from the Scottish Government. Lump sum finance from the Scottish Government allows them to look at buildings and take risks. Private investment is not so keen on risks.

Do construction and crack on. Be an enabler. For local authorities, if it comes through planning and is an existing building then please fast-track as it reduces health and safety risks.

Presenter:

- *Ann Leslie, CEO, Lar Housing Trust*

Fourth Presentation Summary: [Scotland's Housing Network \(SHN\)](#)

SHN are the largest provider of data insights to Scotland's housing sector. They are a member body who work collaboratively. They have been offering a Benchmarking Service for 27 years. Developing to meet member needs. They have expanded from initially solely focussing on local authorities to include housing associations and cooperatives.

Services

- Charter preparations
- Data and performance insights
- Development value for money
- Private Sector services
- Resources and publications
- Practice self-assessment
- Governance self-assessment
- Value for money
- Welfare Reform services
- Practice Exchange

Data and benchmarking services

- Easy-to-use Business Intelligence tools, supporting their members to interrogate key datasets.
- Charter data – including aggregated averages - available for members the week after submission.
- Annual and Quarterly Indicators providing more granular detail on member's performance.
- Special data collections throughout the year, including:
 - EESSH data collection (C10 and C11)
 - Rent Consultation options being considered
 - Temporary accommodation costs
- Performance Analysis Visits – presenting your performance data to an audience of your choosing.
- ARC Validation services and support with Indicators.

The Scottish Government confirmed in November 2022, the requirement to participate in continuous improvement programmes as a condition of grants. They collect data on a quarterly and annual basis from members and send out an overview. Anonymised information initially. SHN identify trends and best practice and come together to discuss. They compare with the sector, looking at things such as value for money. They can link people together.

Their Assessment Tool provides landlords with a detailed analysis of cost, time and quality indicators at project level for new build developments. The Value for Money Tool supports business planning which is now more important than ever before. Benchmark framework assumptions against others in the sector, which is good for business plans going to committee members as it has been benchmarked against others. Also good for rent consultations.

SHN have launched a new website with a resources and publications page, which contains toolkits, policy briefings etc. Looked at best practice in terms of the cost of living crisis and put their findings together in a [report](#). If people can't attend the forums they can still access reports. They also published a [report](#) on tenants' view on climate change. Views on what the priorities are in terms of services.

They run Practice Exchange Forums on a variety of topics to share best practice. Rural housing was added as there was a gap in the market, partially around [20 Minute Neighbourhoods](#). The Forums moved online during the pandemic but have remained online for geographic spread. They have conference opportunities for in-person discussions.

Current Priorities

- **Global financial crisis**
 - Interest rates increasing faster than expected
 - Wage bill going up
- **Brexit**
- **Health and Safety**
 - Fire safety
 - Dampness and mould
 - Labour Shortages
- **Pandemic**
 - Material shortages
 - Material cost increases in excess of inflation rate
- **War in Ukraine**
- **Cost of Living**
 - Food bills up
 - Fuel costs up
- **Economic Outlook**
- **Decarbonisation**
- **New Build Development**
 - No longer affordable?

What do members want in terms of output? Housing providers need to make tough choices and can't do everything. It is about managing how you spend money.

Presenter:

- *Trudi Tokarczyk, Service Improvement Manager, Scotland's Housing Network*

Fifth Presentation Summary: [Lintel Trust](#)

Lintel Trust are Scotland's housing association charity set up by [Scottish Federation of Housing Associations \(SFHA\)](#) in 1979. They are independently governed by a voluntary Board of Trustees and are a funding provider to housing related projects. They developed a charitable fund management service in 2016 and joined the [Scottish Procurement Alliance \(SPA\)](#) in 2021.

They operate with one full-time member of staff and one part-time. It is a different landscape now from when they were first set up. They started out as grant givers, generating their own money. Providing a service to manage charitable funds. They are now part of SPA and provide charitable management services but also offer their own services.

They still have a very small grant giving fund. Big funders now fill the need that they originally provided. Instead they now offer good practice guidance, partly around community benefits. Making links between organisations is really useful, getting people to collaborate and not reinvent something happening elsewhere.

They offer best practice guidance to housing providers in the use of community benefits in procurement. Promoting the use of social value reporting in housing to evidence the societal value of housing associations. They are part of a team with [SFHA](#) to develop a light touch tool.

Lintel deliver small grant awards to community projects supporting housing residents. They lost fundraising opportunities during the pandemic, so don't know how long grants will last.

Their priorities include places, environment, people, communities, sustainability, health and the economy. Empowering people and communities to make the changes they want to see. Identifying and sharing funding opportunities. Enabling people to learn new skills. Promoting and highlighting community led activities. Encouraging collaboration with other community groups and making introductions. Generating more funding to create more opportunities.

Identifying and sharing funding opportunities. Giving communities some choice in where money is spent and enabling communities to generate their own funding – people power.

They have recently launched a project called [Reduce, Reuse and Recycle](#), which allows housing associations to raise funds for community projects. Social housing tenants are the least likely to recycle, as they have a lot going on. The project aims to encourage behavioural change through community funding. Working with [Rags to Riches Project](#) to offer housing associations and tenants upcycling workshops. Partnered with [Clyde Recycling](#), Housing Associations can choose to host clothing banks, and the money raised is ring-fenced for the community and the community decide how it is spent. This will provide a constant flow of small amounts of money going into communities. To begin with there are five pilot organisations.

Another project they run is called Lintel Soup. This is an engagement tool. The model works around the key ingredients of:

- 1 welcoming venue
- 5 potential sponsors
- 1 large pot of soup
- Lots of local people
- 'what you can afford' donations
- 3 community projects
- 5 minutes each
- 1 vote per person
- Three prizes to community projects!

It is based on the [Detroit Soup](#) approach. The soup comes from a local social enterprise or entity. Similar to a [Participatory Budgeting](#) setup. 50% of the money goes to one project and 25% to the other two. Good for community engagement and finding out about groups and what is going on. Experimenting with a private sector model.

Presenter:

- *Kate Christie, Business Manager, Lintel Trust*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and areas of debate are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

- *Kate was asked about the popular band night ran by Lintel.*

Kate said that they were struggling to make money back on that event. There was always a mixed response depending on what else was going on. The Board decided that they need to make income elsewhere and to reallocate the resource. Partnering with [Chartered Institute of Housing \(CIH\)](#) to reinstate a joint golf tournament.

- *A delegate asked about the [Town Centre Action Plan and town centre living](#). Need strategic policies rather than process driven.*

Ann said that there is often a need to do a lot of work in the building before they can start, so one big lump sum of money not tied to one specific project is key. There are design guides for new builds to meet which can prove difficult for town centre developments, with car parking, green space etc. There is a need to look at what is already in the area. Banks won't fund certain energy ratings which is something that needs looked at.

Trudi added that planning is key. A car park is often seen as better than affordable housing. Not everyone is on the same page.

Euan mentioned the people vs scenic value argument.

- *Ann was asked about Lar's construction company and if there are training opportunities for the community.*

Ann noted that they are only 7 years old. The first people they employed were a surveyor and an architect. They started the construction company so that they had the right skills, and it was also tax efficient. They have an interest in education and have had architecture students out on-site with follow up with CAD plans etc. They also had two trainees come through, with one on secondment from Heriot-Watt. They are keen to do more education in the future but this is dependent on capital finance.

- *A delegate raised that they had heard from projects that built modest amounts of housing and from developers saving buildings but there is a concern, particularly in Glasgow, around building decay etc. Government departments think on budgets and not the impact on social justice. The elephant in the room is urban waiting lists for social housing. Housing shortages pushing up prices.*

Euan mentioned silos in local and national government. Rural housing issues exist and is a problem that is not efficiently being addressed.

- *Ann was asked how they select the buildings that they want to develop.*

Ann answered that they write their own business plan. Some of the buildings are on the open market, some just by chance and by approaching the landowner. Buildings need to work on viability. Loan funded models. Need to look at what they can change in the area. Rents vary across the country. Targeting urban regeneration but need more capital funding.

- *A delegate stated that this transcends physical regeneration so much more going on than physical regeneration of a building.*

Ann noted than in Niddrie people came into the building to see the bannister as it was a memory of their childhood. Can't explain this in a loan or grant application.

Trudi added, how do you achieve A and B energy ratings in old properties. Can't save heritage buildings and achieve net-zero.

2) Overcoming barriers to employability

With introductory presentations from SURF Award winning and shortlisted:

The Larder, McTaggart's Kickstart programme and Elgin Youth Development Group.

Additional presentations were provided by SURF Award partner Skills Development Scotland and the Third Sector Employability Forum.

About the event

The second workshop in the series highlighted the 2022 SURF Awards Winner and Highly Commended projects in the 'Supporting Youth Employability' category.

The projects featured are all using techniques to support dis-engaged young people into employment, training and further education.

First Presentation Summary: [The Larder](#)

The Larder is a social enterprise based in West Lothian. Founded by their CEO, Angela Moohan, in 2010 as a result of the rising unemployment in West Lothian, alongside the notable decrease in people's, particularly young people's, interest in cooking. They became a charity in 2011. Supporting youth employability but also supporting most vulnerable in West Lothian.

Over the past 11 years, The Larder has grown to be West Lothian's largest training provider and whilst they initially started as a cook school, have now pivoted into a thriving social enterprise, supporting the community through provision of needs-led, bespoke learning and high-quality food for all. They use food as a tool to engage, to allow young people to gain valuable life skills and realise their potential.



It is their mission to provide learning and development opportunities that ensure that we see a Scotland without hunger and for every young person, regardless of their start in life.

4 main areas of work:

- Training Academy - Bespoke, needs-led training for young people and adults who face multiple and complex barriers.
- Social Food - A food insecurity project, Catalyst Kitchen, supports the community through meal deliveries, dining events, cookery classes and community pantries,
- Food Enterprise - A newly opened bakery supports training and trades through baked goods where profits are reinvested to The Larder.
- Campaigning - Campaigning on the right to good food and for systemic change to eradicate poverty.

The Larder run the Training Academy throughout West Lothian, and are now moving into other local authority area. They have two training kitchens and an artisan bakery, which provide opportunities for work experience, and the bakery also provides them with an income stream. In addition, they have a training suite for non-work experience, plus a café. Over 35% of their staff came through the

employability programme. During the pandemic they started a service to deliver meals to the community, due to ongoing need they have continued to deliver this service.

Garry showed a short [film](#) about their work.

350 young people and adults have been supported through the employability training, 73 of which fall into the 16-24 category. This was an increase of 112 on the previous year. They are now delivering this model in the Falkirk area and also working in Lanarkshire and Fife, whilst also supporting schools in West Lothian. They also provide shorter employability programmes for adults.

Of the 73 young people, 81% of those learners reached a positive destination, i.e. employment, further education or training. 93% gained certificated qualifications, supporting them to reach their full potential. The Larder have broadened the offer beyond just hospitality and now include retail, care, construction and warehouse work. There was a rise to 73% last year and 90% this year of learners with a known disability.

They deliver a host of qualifications, ranging from core skills such as communication and numeracy to employability and sector specific skills, for example food hygiene and customer care. They also deliver a range of workshops, including support into college, work experience, cooking, outdoor team building, art therapy and sport and fitness. Their wellbeing workshop is very popular. The workshops don't lead to a qualification but provide useful skills recognised by employers.

They had to think outside of the box and change the programme due to the change in the Employability Fund to [No One Left Behind](#). They took the good bits of the Employability Fund and built from there. The change means that they are now able to help young people for longer, it is not just about qualifications. There has been a hold up in the No One Left Behind funding from the council, linked to a Scottish Government delay.

The biggest achievements have been to develop the new programme for No One Left Behind, to support more young people with additional needs, to work with a larger number of partners, and to extend the programme into new sectors. They are providing participants with life skills and a positive attitude.

Garry then played a second [film](#).

Presenter:

- *Garry Walker, Director of Training, The Larder*

Second Presentation Summary: [McTaggart's Kickstart](#)

McTaggart Construction are first and foremost a house builder for local authorities and housing associations, working in deprived areas. Their employability model creates work and opportunities in areas where they are already building.

4 Main Areas of Community Benefit:

- Jobs and Training Opportunities
- Education & Curriculum Involvement
- Community Development & Engagement
- SME Engagement

The flexible model works for different clients, whilst also working for McTaggarts. They have found that setting targets can be limiting. There is not a massive amount of money in social housing. The approach is about using existing partnerships and joined up working.

McTaggart Delivery

- Targets tailored to each contract.
- Early engagement/Existing relationships and who is in the area. What can they offer?
- Early Planning to manage expectations.
- Buy in from our partners and sub-contractors, a lot of the work is sub-contacted.
- Dedicated Community Benefit and Training Team which is often seen as an add-on to someone's job.
- Young people are part of the company from day one and treated like employees.

Stephen gave examples of young people who have come through the process. Levi was referred by Action for Children for a 2 week placement. He impressed the Groundworks Team who offered him a fulltime position. This is an example of how the programme is changing people's lives.

Approach

- Working in areas of deprivation;
- Sustained engagement;
- Additional support to remove barriers;
- Embedding ourselves in the local community;
- Offering onsite opportunities, allowing young people to prove themselves;
- At the forefront of Foundation Apprenticeships; and
- Upskilling our existing workforce.



Partnership working comes in to help remove barriers, support with elements like literacy skills etc. It is not for McTaggart to reinvent and duplicate services that already exist. The reason their approach is successful is because they embed in communities to build excellent relationships with existing agencies.

McTaggart offer onsite opportunities. When they approach partners the initial reaction is they have no opportunities available but when offered as a 2 week placement it results in jobs. It provides an opportunity for the young people to prove themselves. This is why the government's [Kickstart Scheme](#) was excellent, as it allowed them to provide longer placement opportunities.

Stephen gave an example of McTaggart working in the community. They established a project in a local park where they planned to get the local young people to build benches with materials from McTaggart. However, Covid hit so instead they bought benches and got the young people to install them, still gaining skills.

Further examples of young people whose lives have been changed through the programmed included Ryan who was employed as a Labourer for a year but wanted to be a Groundworker. McTaggart provided support for literacy and he is now doing an apprenticeship. Another example was Jordan who joined through the Wise Group on a 2 week placement and got a job doing mono-blocking.

The McTaggart Kickstart Scheme included 95 young people, between April 2021 and September 2022, on a 6 month paid opportunity at 25 hours per week, which McTaggart increased to 36 hours. The length and fully funded model meant that there was more buy-in from sub-contractors. Kickstart

allowed them to look at different avenues in construction. Of the 95, 47 completed the full 6 months, with 37 moving into a positive destination. 36 went into employment and 1 to college.

From the 48 early leavers, 20 moved to a positive destination, with 16 going into employment and 4 onto college. 8 decided that construction was not for them, and the remaining 20 left for a variety of reasons, including sickness and financial constraints. McTaggart linked with the [DWP](#) on some of the issues.

McTaggart covered travel expenses throughout the 6 month placement. The programme provided the young people with a real workplace experience, where they were treated as an employee. They completed timesheets and contracts etc. To get a place on the programme you had to go through a real life interview.

The programme also included additional focussed planned training, such as dumper truck driving, which made the young people more employable at the end of the 6 months, and there was a dedicated team to provide support. A WhatsApp group was setup to encourage peer support amongst the trainees. The recruits were provided with any necessary tools and work wear.

Challenges

- Buy in from Subcontractors
- Travel to various sites
- Understanding and expectations of working in construction
- Financial barriers for the individual
- Paperwork / compliance
- Upfront costs for company

Subcontractors can be tricky at times. They employ people from the local area but at the end of the build they will be asked to work somewhere else if employed. Challenging up-front costs as they had to pay wages and claim back.

Presenter:

- *Stephen Rodgers, Community Benefits Officer, McTaggart*

Third Presentation Summary: [Elgin Youth Development Group](#)

Elgin Youth Development Group (EYDG) are a very small organisation. Youth work is at the core of what they do. There are three main elements to their work; youth work and 2 social enterprises, including a training café. The activities are run by young people for young people.

Years ago the employability side was almost invisible and not embedded in the culture. Now young people are embedded in everything they do, including admin, café and social media work. Young people plan and deliver youth work activities. They set up and run the sessions, providing extra support to young attendees that are shy. Clair showed a slide that highlighted some of these activities, things such as pool, outdoor activities, laser tag etc.

The Inkwel is one of the social enterprises which provides meeting room hire, and the training café provides opportunities for young people to be involved at every stage. The employability programme is delivered at a small scale and aimed at young people aged 16-24, although most are under 20. All of the trainees have additional barriers to securing a job, and most have had support through referral agencies.

The programme offers paid work placements at 12 hours per week for 16 weeks. It is built around a person-centred approach. The team are told a lot about the young person before they start, but they also go through a light touch recruitment process. They believe in the value of hospitality beyond hospitality, as the training allows for skills to be gained and offers opportunities for the young people to learn how to handle working with people. On the job training provides life skills. Placements range from hospitality and catering, facilities, social media, admin and youth work.



The team at EDYG try to meet each individual's needs and make adjustments as required, things such as extra breaks etc. Most come to them not wanting to work in the café and want to be in the background, but over time they become more interested and part of the team.

Integral to the work is the role food plays. It is a way to bring people together into the building. It provides opportunities for trainees, and a valuable service for the community. Apart from the café food, the food from cooking classes etc. is given away for free. Their cooking classes are full and teaches the community how to cook on a budget, whilst getting a qualification.

Through the programme young people gain a number of skills, including: barista skills, food preparation and serving, keyholder duties, meeting room preparation, cleaning and administrative skills. Qualifications gained include: first aid, food hygiene, customer care and introduction to youth work. They are supported with CVs and finding work.

Outcomes

In the last year there have been 43 participants on the employability programme, 2 continued into further training and development, 8 have moved to partner organisations for tailored support, 8 have gone on to college and university, 18 have gone on to employment and 5 are currently on work placement with EDYG.

Young people start with very low confidence. 70% think themselves that their confidence has increased. Equivalent of 370% increase with the person who had lowest confidence.

What makes them slightly different is that they host the employability hub, [Moray Pathways](#), in their building, which allows them to offer a wrap-around service. They provide the resource to provide support with CVs, work coaches etc. There is a distinct difference between being supported and doing a job. Some young people say they feel supported but they don't actually like the work, but they are being paid to do a job. Once they have their first pay they realise that they need to put up with the parts of the job that they don't like as much.

Each person has an action plan and goals, plus 1-1 meetings are held each week to support with assessment and development. EDYG can draw upon partners in the building for additional support, such as money pathways. Having tenants also provides additional income from the rent.

Learning

There is a balance between welfare of the young people and performance, which can be difficult to get the balance right and is an all team endeavour. How you get that right is worth thinking through. What they want is for each young trainee to come in on time and check what is going on and get on with their job. They provide materials for them to use to be able to do their job independently.

Boundaries and clarity are key as young people become quite dependent and the team need to manage and be clear with what is acceptable, and what isn't.

It is a whole team approach. People who work with them need to understand that they have young people at the heart of what they do, which can be challenging and also quite draining. You need to ensure that the team feel good. The impact on the team when a young person doesn't turn up or needs a time-out affects the whole team. You need to work that into planning.

Presenter:

- *Clair Ferguson, CEO, EDYG*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and areas of debate are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

- *Clair was asked to elaborate on the young people having the responsibility of running things.*

Clair responded that it always starts with core staff, who provide guides and support. They identify things that can be done by trainees or the young people who do the youth work. They use tick lists to see what needs to be done and then allocate young people to do it.

- *A delegate asked Clair how the paid work placements were funded.*

Clair answered that they raise most of the money through trusts and foundations, rent from the Employability Hub and some other funders. It is a mix of funding.

- *A question was raised about the impact of the cost of living crisis.*

Garry said that it is difficult as everything has gone up in price, cost of ingredients etc. They are having to have discussions with schools and other partners about increased costs, when they are getting No One Left Behind grants of £55 per week.

Stephen added that McTaggart are giving awareness of healthy eating and bringing prepared lunches, rather than paying at burger vans. They are setting up shared travel groups and raising awareness of free bus travel.

Clair noted that their Eat, Chat, Chill project provides a free hot meal to secondary school children. To begin with they had 25-30 coming but now there are over 60. Numbers drop for sessions where food is not provided. The cooking classes are really busy and people can take the food home to their family. Utility bills are a really big issue for everyone.

- *Stephen was asked about next steps now that the Kickstart Scheme has finished.*

Stephen said that they have gone back to their own model with shorter-term placements. Although this makes it harder for sub-contractors to take a chance on young people.

Stephen raised the point that one of the barriers for young people is day one, as it can be a scary thought. It is good to have pre-meetup events so that they may have a friendly face.

Garry noted their aftercare service and disability awareness. Misunderstandings can lead to bad experiences for young people.

- *The final question was to Stephen about [CSCS training](#).*

Stephen confirmed that McTaggart do carry out CSCS and Health and Safety Card training. Some partners put them through the training via their programmes.

Fourth Presentation Summary: [Skills Development Scotland](#)

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) are Scotland's skills body. Their role is to deliver the best possible outcomes for people, businesses and the economy. They provide services for individuals and employers to achieve their ambitions. SDS work to build strong partnerships to deliver strong programmes which make the most difference.

Elaine gave some insight into what the judges saw at the project visits, noting that they were three very different projects. Watching the way employers are taking the lead with McTaggart is not seen often.

SDS no longer deliver the Employability Fund and it is now delivered under the new model [No One Left Behind](#) via local authorities. They have not abandoned the employability agenda and instead work with employers around apprenticeships and softer skills. Using their voice to help employers to understand the barriers.

The icon used for disability is a wheelchair, but that is not always the case, and employers think that these are the adjustments that need to be made in the workplace. SDS are working to get protected characteristics into the narrative via the [Equality Act](#). Care experienced young people are also very important and they are looking at their needs in-depth with the [Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board](#). It is the role of SDS to get the message out around what barriers exist. One such being Stephen's reference to the [DWP](#) and a young person living in sheltered accommodation.

[Careers Information Advice and Guidance \(CIAG\)](#) is a service offered in schools for both pupils and parents/carers. Working from early intervention at P5-P7 through to enhanced support at the senior phase to help make career decisions.

Career management skills look to people to assess themselves and to make use of the [My World of Work](#) website. Looking at Meta Skills (soft skills). What can they apply these skills and interests to? About understanding themselves and their skills. [Next Steps](#) is not just about working in schools with young people but also parents and carers, who are the most influential people. People with the highest level of need get the highest intervention. If they person is care experienced they get additional support for a longer period of time.

There has been [review of the Career Service](#) in Scotland, and also a review of SDS. This has been based on the following statement:

"The vision for our careers system is: For a world-class, professionally-led, aligned and flexible system of CIAG services which delivers for every citizen, regardless of where they live in Scotland, their age or circumstance. A system through which citizens can expect a high standard of support that meets their needs when they need it most, a system that is fully interconnected to ensure citizens access the right people and services which includes employability and skills support"

A new model is being developed with young people and employers. They have identified 80 changemakers through lots of consultation. A simple model should be established that defines career services, bringing definition to the variety of career services across Scotland.

The model recognises each person as an individual with their own distinct needs. It will offer meaningful and accessible support in career development, tailored to them when they need it. It

supports equity of access in any setting, meaning everyone will experience a similar standard of service irrespective of who is offering it.

Developing skills and habits is essential for the future world of work. Career education and services should be designed to develop, recognise and accredit the skills and habits essential for the future world of work. Collaborating with individuals throughout their own unique journey will offer diverse and equitable experiences, enabling the development of skills and career habits that help them thrive in the future.

It should be a person-centred career service. Individuals should be involved in identifying what they need from career services based on their own circumstances and context, which leads to a flexible and personalised service offer. Encouraging the exploration of each person's life, interests, morals, skills and values, building a narrative of their own story, deepening self-worth and belief in their contribution to the world.

Each individual is entitled to access fair, just and purposeful work-related learning embedded within their curriculum that aligns with their goals and ambitions. All learning incorporates equality and diversity principles that challenge and overcome entrenched ideas about the world of work, such as gender stereotypes.

Career services should be delivered within communities in a way that is aligned to social justice values and provides access to consistent national services. All communities, their needs and values are appreciated, understood and accepted, so there will be fair and equitable career services.

People should have a right to have a wide range of meaningful opportunities to experience work and understand what fair work is. Every person is entitled to accessible and inclusive work-related experiences embedded within the curriculum that incorporate equality and diversity and aligns with their goals and ambitions.

Enhanced digital services and online tools should be developed that present information about the world of work in an inspiring and accurate way. Through the development of inclusive, accessible digital services and tools all people can access inspiring, trusted and relevant content. This is complemented with access to professionally qualified, impartial one-to-one support to use, navigate, and process information.

Where appropriate, the roles across career services should be defined, to deliver the career development model in a coherent way. The career ecosystem will inclusively offer accessible and dependable support throughout an individual's diverse life experiences.

The effectiveness and impact of the whole career system should be measured using a suite of outcome-based measures that are integrated in all settings, supporting the delivery of responsive and flexible services. The approach places importance on identifying outcomes that reflect individual goals, distance travelled and career happiness, and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the career ecosystem for all individuals and its impact on wider economic and social objectives.

A coalition should be established that ensures the implementation of the Review's recommendations and the coherence of career services across Scotland, where young people, practitioners, employers and stakeholders are represented. The coalition ensures that equality, diversity and inclusion are at the forefront of career services, informed and represented by individuals with lived experience of all protected characteristics, key organisations and inclusive, fair work employers and trade unions.

SDS evolving by:

- **A significantly strengthened universal offer** including inspiring experiential digital services;
- **Improving and adopting asset-based approaches** that allow services to become more universal and lifelong;
- **Taking a leading role in the Career Services Coalition**, working in strong collaboration with partners across the ecosystem;
- **An organisation-wide approach to delivery** driven by the career development model;
- **Continued resource** prioritised towards career services;
- **Presenting career services** in a way which appeals to young people;
- **Even greater representation** of young people, employers' voices in service development and delivery;
- **Strengthened partnership arrangements** with community-based services;
- **Enhanced career intelligence** providing impactful insight into the world of work; and
- **Supporting partner service development** to ensure services are interconnected by design.

Presenter:

- *Elaine Walls, Senior Partnership Manager, Skills Development Scotland*

Fifth Presentation Summary: [Third Sector Employability Forum \(TSEF\)](#)

The Third Sector Employability Forum is a member-led organisation representing the views of the employability sector in Scotland. Its aims are to provide a voice and mutual support for the many and varied organisations working in the employability sector in Scotland.

Last year they refreshed their purpose and mission:

Purpose - TSEF exists to facilitate effective communication between third sector employability providers in Scotland and central and local government bodies at national level to help deliver a strong, vibrant and successful employability system.

Mission - TSEF aim to raise the voice and profile of the third sector's diverse and collective contribution to employability outcomes in Scotland, and through this to inform employability policy of the future so that it best meets the needs of people seeking support.

TSEF represents and engages with a diverse membership of just under 250. This includes third sector employability and training providers of both small and large scale, in rural and urban areas and with a range of specialisms. Members can be social enterprises, charitable organisations and third sector interfaces, or other representative bodies.

The Forum recognises that employability is also relevant to organisations working in other areas of social support. As such, they also welcome organisations involved in providing benefit advice, housing support, mental health services and any others who see employability as relevant to their purpose.

Governance

The Third Sector Employability Forum is supported and facilitated by an Executive Group. Established in 2011, the TSEF Executive is made up of a maximum of 13 volunteers selected to reflect diverse third sector perspectives involved in employability services in Scotland. They have recently undergone a recruitment process to get people onto the Executive Group in order to better share the workload. It consists of a mix of national and local organisations working with a variety of people. The TSEF is currently resourced entirely through voluntary activity of the Executive and membership. Online Forum space is hosted via SCVO, through the use of Basecamp.

They work closely with the Scottish Government, [SLAED](#), [DWP](#), the [Improvement Service](#), Third Sector Interfaces, Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs), [SCVO](#), [COSLA](#) and [Employment Support Scotland](#).

TSEF have been involved in the establishment of [No One Left Behind](#) across all working groups. They link with the Improvement Service to ensure that they are engaged with the new approach

Their activities include webinars and learning sessions, and consultations. They host in-person sessions covering a variety of topics, the latest included the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#), [DWP Polices and Priorities](#) and the [Scottish Government Employability Policy](#), amongst a variety of other topics.

They have had no funding for the past few years but are trying to get the Scottish Government to realise their role in No One Left Behind. They have convinced the Scottish Government to fund a post for partnership engagement working with the Improvement Service to map the status of engagement with LEPs.

Presenter:

- *Blyth Deans, Member, TSEF*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and topics of debate raised are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

- *A question was asked to the room about experience of the transition from the Employability Fund to [No One Left Behind](#).*

An example was given of an organisation that works in a consortium and one of the partners lost their Employability Fund grant, which has been crippling to the partnership. Hopes that the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) will cover this loss. It has been prohibitive.

A delegate mentioned the length of funding delays. This has left unknowns which have resulted in holding back from helping young people. Difficult but the reality.

There was mention of [SCVO research](#) on funding across the sector and the impacts of late funding decisions.

3) Learning from place-based regeneration initiatives

With introductory presentations from SURF Award winning projects:

Living Alloa and Bressay Development Ltd.

Additional presentations were provided by SURF Award partners the Scottish Government, Scotland's Towns Partnership and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

About the event

The third workshop in the series highlighted the 2022 SURF Award Winner in the 'Improving Scotland's Places' and 'Community Led Regeneration' categories.

The projects featured at the workshop varied in location, from Alloa in Clackmannanshire to the island of Bressay in Shetland, but are both using place-based approaches to regenerate their communities.

First Presentation Summary: [Living Alloa](#)

Alloa is located in East Central Scotland on the north side of the River Forth, approximately 40km upstream from Edinburgh. Clackmannanshire is the smallest mainland council in Scotland with 159sq km and a population of 51,000. Alloa is the main administrative town for Clackmanashire, with a population of circa 20,000.

The history of the town dates back to the 14th Century and the Erskines of Mar, who were granted Alloa as their principal residence by King David II and built Alloa Tower, which was once part of a much larger complex of buildings, and a designed landscape.

The town grew through from the 18th to 20th Centuries on industry. It became an important port on the upper Forth for trade and fishing, was surrounded by coal mines and at one time the town was dominated by textile mills, breweries and glass works. The town was at the forefront of the industrial revolution. Evidence of these industries can still be seen today, with brewing and glass making still important parts of the local economy.

The buildings remain but have been converted for other uses. The town experienced the same industrial decline in the second half of the 20th Century as other parts of central Scotland, and the economy and townscape took many decades to adjust.

The town centre was slowly transformed, with the retail and service sector emerging and physical regeneration enhancing the look of the area, along with many former industrial buildings, and re-connecting the tower with the town. Alloa was re-connected to the national rail network in 2008

Poverty is a significant issue, Alloa South and East are areas of high deprivation, with 100% of its population classed as living in SIMD Quintile 1, and male life expectancy is 6 years lower than other areas of Clackmannanshire. The rate of deaths aged 15-44 is almost 3 times higher than the Scottish average. 1 in 3 children are living in poverty.

Clackmannanshire Council had acquired a large vacant site in the heart of the town centre that had been a former department store, but was now a large gap site blighting the centre of the town and had no prospect of being developed for retail. This building was pivotal and the Council had foresight to buy the site. The development partner's plan was to create flats and retail but that didn't really work out and the supermarket development went elsewhere.

The Council Housing Service wanted to build flats aimed at older people on the site. Many older people were stuck in family homes that were unsuitable and expensive to heat, but had no suitable accommodation to move to and the cost of adapting these properties to meet the needs of ageing residents was a big expense to the Council. A consequence of this situation was that many families were stuck in unsuitable homes but could not get access to a family house.

The site had an existing planning consent that was uninspiring, dominated by car parking and failed to address street frontages. The site was in a conservation area and next to a Category A listed heritage building. There were other issues in the surrounding streetscape that needed to be considered along with the development, and also a perception that the town centre was perhaps not a suitable place for older people to live, with fears around crime and anti-social behaviour.



The Council needed to find a fast and effective way to gain stakeholder and community input to identify key issues and shape the plans. For these reasons, Planning Officers identified that the Council's development had to take a broader approach to planning the development and reached out to [Architecture & Design Scotland](#) (A&DS) to assist with the early design stages, so that these issues, and how the development could address them, could be fully considered. The need for this approach was further emphasised by the Council receiving Scottish Government grant money for town centres.

The Council engaged in a wider stakeholder engagement exercise, linking with [Clacks TSI](#) and [Alloa First](#). There were over 300 responses to the consultation. They began preparing a Place Plan and a Masterplan, moving at a faster pace.

The project aimed to make the town centre safer and more attractive, with better promotion of cultural and built assets and access to more and better green spaces. They wanted to reduce the dominance of car parks and the dual carriageway, whilst improving existing active travel routes. There was an opportunity for an office hub space in the town centre.

They looked to enhance public realm and consider reducing traffic in the town centre. Alongside the Primrose Street site there were other parts of the town centre that were in need of attention and could be fixed as part of a discreet project.

Scottish Government town centre and regeneration funding gave the Council around £1M to try and make an impact, and whilst there were competing priorities in other parts of the town and Council area, they convinced elected members that there would be more impact on focussing this investment solely in Alloa Town Centre, rather than spreading it thinly over a number of small interventions over several locations. The context of supporting town centre living for older people helped with this, as they had willing and active partners in third and business sectors.

Following on from the consultation exercises, the Council collectively identified a set of projects that would be transformational, support new residents and enhance the town centre for all, and of course be affordable.

The consultation exercises allowed them to pull a set of place-based projects and interventions around the Primrose Street development that, whilst by no means "solved" issues raised by the community, directly addressed some of the key issues that had been identified, and were deliverable within the limited budget.

Most importantly, the projects all enhanced the immediate environment around the proposed flats as a living place, and the term “Living Alloa” became the theme, as they were delivering a town centre living environment but also trying to breathe new life into the town centre.

The input from a cross-section of planning, architectural, housing, healthcare, dementia design and heritage professionals, facilitated by A&DS, also helped transform the layout and design of the flatted block. The development went from a generic building design with public space, dominated by parking, to a bespoke design that responded positively to its surroundings in scale, mass and finishes

The built frontages re-created a perimeter block, a fronted the lane opposite the Speirs Centre, with a new public space outside the Registry Office entrance. Private garden spaces and parking were moved to the rear, with parking numbers reduced in line with the town centre location.

All flats were made dual aspect, where only a few had been before. Large internal and external communal spaces were created for residents to pause or meet. Mobility scooter access to all levels was created with wide communal decks. Each flat was designed in accordance with dementia friendly principles, and these principles were continued into the layout and design of the garden. Dealing with tricky private land owners to take down walls to create a mural and a thoroughfare that was safe and attractive to stop and spend time in. The housing was completed in January 2023 and people have moved in.

The former public toilet, in collaboration with the Alloa First and the third sector, transformed into an active travel hub and community space known as [Alloa Hub - CTSI](#). Community groups and individuals can buy a share in the CIC. It is also home to the [Clackmannanshire Great Tapestry of Scotland](#). It has become so much more and acts as a shop, info point and meeting space. Crucially it also brought back a much missed local amenity near the bus station. A great example of the Council investing in a surplus building and allowing the community to take it on. Long-term savings following initial investment, and community benefit.

The Council have had success and recognition for the work that has been done, and a key to that success was the collaborative working that took place from the early stages of the projects through to completion. The use of the [Place Standard Tool](#) helped create the opportunity and facilitate the conversation that these partnerships were based on.

Although they are not resting on their laurels. The team know there is much more to do in the town, and also investment opportunities, for example through the [Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal](#), which they need to be on the front foot to fully capitalise on.

This project has been the starting point to what they do next. Developing a new Investment Strategy based on 6 building blocks. The town centre is one of those, and they have big ambitions. They are also working with Stirling University who are leading on City Deal.

Lessons

- No one can do it on their own.
- Find the common ground with partners.
- Don't expect everyone to agree.
- Be flexible and make space for other ideas.
- Talk to each other – a lot.
- If it's important, keep trying. If it's not, find another way.
- Use each other's influence to find ways forward.
- Be patient.
- Look back as well as forward.
- Fake it until you make it.

Presenter:

- *Grant Baxter, Principal Placemaking Officer, Clackmannanshire Council*

Second Presentation Summary: [Bressay Development Ltd - Speldiburn](#)

This presentation was delivered remotely.

Bressay is a small island, roughly 3 by 6 miles, opposite the town of Lerwick on Shetland. It is rich in heritage, wildlife, and a beautiful landscape which is good for walking or cycling. There are approximately 340 residents in 186 households. It used to be very self-sufficient, but is now connected to Lerwick by ferry and commuter numbers have risen.

Speldiburn is a long-term project to regenerate the local primary school. Island facilities, other than Speldiburn, include: a shop/Post Office, community hall, pub/hotel, Heritage Centre, Marina, playpark and football pitch, community woodland and Galley Shed.

They have an active and vibrant community. However, there is no longer a school, a once vital part of the community which closed in 2014 with only 4 pupils remaining. They are looking to address the impact on the community with Speldiburn.

The school building consisted of 3 classrooms, plus a nursery. The building had also served as a venue for classes and other activities. The closure had a devastating effect on the island. It was part of a series of service withdrawals, including the community nurse.

Bressay Community Development Association was set up at the start of the same year, after community consultation. The group's intention was to address major challenges faced by the residents of Bressay as a result of depopulation, an aging population, a lack of on-island services and the increasing ferry fare costs to the Shetland mainland. Their vision was to secure and sustain a vibrant future for Bressay in an active, connected, thriving and resilient community.

The objectives include:

- Promoting Bressay as a safe and accessible place to live;
- Retaining and supporting the population;
- Promoting infrastructure and affordable travel;
- Supporting community spirit, the economy, jobs, housing and the environment;
- Retaining on-island facilities, increasing community resilience; and
- Providing opportunities for learning.

In 2015 the group became Bressay Development Limited (BDL). They thought this was the best fit at the time, but are always thinking about whether to move to a charity. The group started leasing the primary school from the local authority to use it to provide activities. They were rent free for the first year and £5k thereafter. They had no idea how they would pay but carried on.

Using the existing facilities and layout of the school, the plan was to create a community hub with a café and business start-up studios. They now have an under 5's group in what was the nursery and one classroom became the Good as New Shop. In 2016, BDL ran a Skills for Sustainability project funded by the [Climate Challenge Fund](#), to address a lack of on-island recycling facilities and encourage carbon reduction. The Good as New Shop was born from community feedback to the project, and the Climate Challenge Fund grant supported painting the room and buying shop shelving.

Another classroom became the café overflow/craft/sales/meeting/workshop room. The general purpose room is now an NHS room. This is a pilot project in Shetland where visiting clinicians come to the island.

What was the school office is now a community office space. Other staff areas and remaining classrooms became artists' studios, and a knitting business is also located there. An exhibition space was created with a picture hanging system, and now host changing exhibitions from a range of local and visiting artists.

The cafe plays host to visiting groups. They partner with another business on Bressay, [Garth's Croft](#), to provide this. It is a good source of income.

Challenges

- Due to a series of losses for Bressay, there was a general lack of positivity at the time, meaning some residents were skeptical of the project succeeding at first.
- BDL was a new organisation, meaning the team were feeling their way and learning as they went. Some aspects took a longer time to start as a result.
- Finding out what services to have and when required a lot of research into need and demand.
- It takes time to figure out what works best, for example people might say they want the cafe open on a Sunday, but then not use it.
- Staffing is always an issue. Although the cafe has grown into a steady business, they need to reduce hours in the winter. As a small island so close to Lerwick, they are often competing for jobs with longer and non-seasonal hours.
- How do we fill the building? It seemed huge to begin with.
- There was no precedent for what they were doing, they were responding to community need to make things better, so had to be adaptable and responsive.



BDL received some grants to set up the office and café, but the grants only paid for certain things so they had to be creative. Some of the grants came from the Community Council, local authority and [Awards for All](#). They try not to be reliant on one source of income. Entirely volunteer led, and done on a shoestring. Painting and organising the building was all done by volunteers. Costs were kept really low. They borrowed chairs and tables from the community hall for larger events. The rooms are kept as flexible as possible. This allows the team to make the most of

opportunities, and respond to changes in need, for example office space during the pandemic.

Funding availability has led them in certain directions. Environmental grants led them to do things that were otherwise unthinkable, but it means they are now more sustainable, as well as more comfortable for visitors.

They don't want to be in competition with other businesses on the island so had to think about things such as the café menu. The pub on the island was closed for a very extended period, but now the island happily sustains both organisations, as they have different markets.

A few positives came out of the pandemic. Although Speldiburn was closed to the public, the team thought of lots of ways to keep supporting island residents. The highlights included:

- Growing, art and activity packs for children.

- Extra editions of their island newsletter and a section of the website was developed for online children's activities, and to advertise arts and crafts for sale.
- Continuation of Good as New Shop, with a drop-off/pick-up service.
- Sharing of growing and garden photos between residents.
- Wellbeing Walks on the island.
- Development of Community Markets.

In 2020, BDL carried out an Asset Transfer of the building, playground, sheds and multicourt. They paid £1 for the entire site. [Community Asset Transfer legislation](#) ensures that the asset will continue to be used for community benefit. They had a lot of support from [Highlands and Islands Enterprise \(HIE\)](#) and Shetland Island Council's Community Development Department.

Ownership allows BDL to secure grants and take on larger refurbishment projects. They are looking at making the building fit for purpose at the moment. It has allowed them to have funding for air source heating and solar panels.

Recent developments

- Local Crafts for sale;
- Classes and workshops;
- Increased visits from tour groups;
- UK's most northerly Park Run;
- A Wednesday Social Afternoon; and
- The establishment of a Woodland Group which began out of lockdown and is now in the second year of planting.

Current Opportunities and Challenges

- Staffing and limited a pool of volunteers. Numbers diminished after Covid as people want more time to themselves or to go to other opportunities.
- Looking for opportunities that can bring in a stable income in the longer term. They continue to run on limited funds.
- Now there is not enough space.
- NHS Clinic.
- Asked by Shetland Amenity Trust to look at Bressay Lighthouse and whether this could be a community asset.
- Work with other Bressay community groups i.e. for growing projects.
- Hard to get staff to come to the island. They are thinking about how to address this.
- They have got better at managing challenges.

Future Plans

- Fundraising and being sustainable. How to sustainably fund what they do is always key.
- A building refurbishment, costing approximately £2m for everything on the ideal 'wishlist'. They are now looking at cheaper solutions to enhance the building, allowing them to make the most of what's there without interrupting services.
- Employing a Wellbeing Officer. They are running groups without a dedicated member of staff. They need someone who can liaise with the new NHS room and support the Under 5s. If they get this funding to successfully recruit, it will transform the project and allow more people to access the building, and allow the team to do other pieces of work alongside community development.
- A Community Development Plan is in process. A key activity in assessing current community buy-in and needs.

Lessons

- Make sure your organisation knows what its vision and aims are. This is the foundation for everything - what you choose to do, how you secure funding.
- There is lots of help and funding out there, from places like HIE or whoever your local community enterprise organisation is, or from your council or local [Voluntary Action Service](#), and from places like [DTAS](#), SURF and more. You'll find it's a fairly tight knit community who can refer you to the best people to help.
- Things can, and do, happen on a shoestring.
- Communication is important. Keep your public informed, and keep inviting them.
- Start small and build on your successes. Don't be afraid to try things, and get things wrong.
- Experience comes as you go, you won't know everything before you start, and that's ok. People with a common vision make things happen.

Presenter:

- *Aimee Labourne and Heather Christie, Development Officers, Bressay Development Limited*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and areas of debate are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

- *Grant was asked about partnership. How they selected partners and about working with [Kingdom HA](#). Bressay were asked if the NHS are paying for the space.*

Heather replied that yes, they pay rent for using the room, and there is a possibility to rent other multi-purposes spaces for things such as a vaccine centre etc.

Grant said that Kingdom are the Registered Social Landlord delivery partner and that the other local housing association, Ochilview, stopped doing development. The development has resulted in people coming off the housing waiting list, particularly those with additional needs.

- *A delegate asked Grant about targets to reduce deprivation statistics.*

Grant replied that the Council and the health authority have targets but those are not applied to the place-based projects. He mentioned the [Shaping Places Programme](#). There is something around Alloa with men aged 25-40 not in work, addiction problems etc. and high male suicide rates. They are speaking to Stirling University about the next stage and targeting those people. There is also a longer term study option with residents with Kingdom HA on how health has changed, what are the lessons.

- *A participant asked Heather about the move from renting to owning and the effect on sustainability.*

Heather replied that the biggest cost is for energy, and the biggest result came from the installation on the solar panels and air-source heat pump, which brought costs down by 1/3. Renting the studios and the knitting workshop, plus café income, results in lots of little businesses pouring into one pot. They had a business review done with [HIE](#).

- *Heather was asked if low population is a concern and if there are future plans for the school to reopen or a hybrid approach to education to try and futureproof.*

Heather replied that more housing is needed due to the shortage on Shetland as a whole. There are more jobs than people. People want to live there but there are no houses, and can't budget for materials to build. The situation is fraught with difficulties. Aimee is leading on a housing assessment need project. Circumstances don't match with the housing available. Bressay is often overlooked as people think they won't get a house. Four or five mini-bus loads of children get bussed to the school in Lerwick. Wouldn't come back to Speldiburn now but hopes for a new school in the future. If kids are already established in school in Lerwick it is difficult and will take time. Bressay is a desirable place to live, due to the proximity to Lerwick. There is a need for a younger population.

- *Another delegate asked Heather about referencing the lack of optimism on Bressay and how they engaged the community.*

Heather responded saying that there was a bit of negativity as people felt beaten down. There was drive from the people involved. As things got going, like the café, momentum built, this takes time and grows each year. There is an element of proving yourself, engaged with people who wouldn't have otherwise. They have just completed an island questionnaire exercise and the response was positive. Membership has risen to 60 and volunteer numbers have increased. 1/3 of the island households are members, which is significant.

- *A delegate asked both projects what winning the SURF Award meant to them, beyond the profile.*

Grant said that it gave them political capital locally and brought money in. It was a change to the normal approach of spreading jam thinly. Having the third sector backing was influential. Gave power to the elbow. Will do a lot more of that in the future. There is now a lot more trust.

Aimee added that it doesn't make much difference to the islanders, although they knew more about the Awards, but to funders it makes a huge difference. It is a way of proving themselves to the wider world. The process of going through the application gave the Directors and staff a boost.

Third Presentation Summary: [Scottish Government](#)

The key purpose of regeneration is to improve advantage. The Scottish Government's current focus is on the poverty agenda, which is top of the new First Minister's priorities. Regeneration provides opportunities.

Main priorities include:

- New First Minister's priorities around equality, opportunity and community;
- [National Performance Framework](#);
- [Bute House Agreement](#) (Green party);
- Climate Change Plan – [Just Transition](#) to net-zero and [Climate Action Towns](#);
- [National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#);
- [Community Wealth Building](#);
- Covid recovery;
- Cost of living crisis and cost of doing business; and
- [National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\)](#).

Regeneration now sits with Planning and Architecture. This highlights the importance of town centres and fits with climate changes and net-zero, as out of town retail forces people to need cars.

Community Wealth Building sits within the portfolio of their previous Minister [Tom Arthur](#) who is really pushing that forward. [Joe Fitzpatrick](#), the new Minister for their directorate, has local government, planning and regeneration, but both are working to make these things happen together.

The team also have a focus on sustainable economic growth and a stronger focus on wellbeing and a [wellbeing economy](#), they aim to support an inclusive green wellbeing economy. They have policy and then funding programmes to support and deliver on all of the priority policy areas.

It is all about working with communities and using the [Place Principle](#) and the [Town Centre First Policy](#), with a focus on facilities in town centres. The Town Centre Action Group, led by Leigh Sparks, was established and has delivered the [Review of Town Centre Action Plan](#) in 2020 and [A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres](#) report in 2021. In April 2022 [COSLA](#) reaffirmed their commitment to the Town Centre First Principle.

The recent draft for consultation on [20 Minute Neighbourhoods and Local Living](#) aimed at providing guidance to Planners. They now need to look at how to implement that guidance. There is a need for funding to enable people to live well locally.

A three step structured approach is offered in the guidance. The first step is understanding the context of a place; not just a spatial understanding, or only through the mapping of assets, facilities and amenities, but through the gathering of useful information from local people. Secondly, collaborative models of working need to be adopted to inform place-based planning and design. The third stage is trickier, aligning the investment opportunities and portfolio to develop delivery capacity and new ways of working. Successful placemaking and place-based regeneration can be brought about incrementally by the repeating of this approach, achieving multiple outcomes for those communities, including improved quality of life, health and wellbeing, improved local economy, and sustainability.

[Land use planning](#) is one of the critical levers in achieving place-based regeneration. The concept of 20 minute neighbourhoods has its foundations in urban design and planning, and with the adoption of NPF4 as the National Statutory Development Plan, there is a call for a new way to consider and plan our places so that they support the creation of connected and compact neighbourhoods, which prioritise environmental, social and economic sustainability.

NPF4 embeds local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods into decision making, and through planning reform, [Local Place Plans](#) will capture the aspirations of communities that will be fed into a new generation of local development plans. This statutory framework in itself will help to ensure people are at the centre of decisions made about a place. However, local living is a collaborative endeavour, cutting across council departments and across sectors.

There is direct alignment between the planning and regeneration policy landscape but in addition, the concept has been embedded across Scottish Government policies and initiatives; including [Housing to 2040](#), Community Wealth Building, Climate Action Towns, the [Retail Strategy](#), the [Infrastructure Investment Plan](#), [Investment for Active Travel](#), the [National Transport Strategy](#), and the Work Local Programme. This helps to ensure decisions impacting on places and communities reflect the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept, and contribute towards our [National Outcomes](#).

The [Place-based Investment Programme](#) provides funding and a framework to make that happen. It consists of an aligned programme of place based investments. It builds on the impact of the [Regeneration Capital Grant Fund \(RCGF\)](#) and the Town Centre Action Plan to accelerate ambitions for place, town centres, regeneration and Community Wealth Building, and includes an allocation of £140m to Local Government. The funding goes directly to local authorities.

RCGF is part of that programme and is competitive. The partnership with local government and COSLA is really important to that. To date over 200 projects in disadvantaged and fragile rural communities across Scotland have been supported. Examples include, the [Castle Mill Works - Creative Industries Incubator](#) in Edinburgh, the [EGG Shed](#) on Ardrishaig and [The Fraserburgh Conservation Area Renewal Scheme Townscape Heritage project](#).

The [Vacant and Derelict Land Fund](#) is directly allocated to 6 local authorities. It is used to support innovative local approaches to tackling persistent vacant and derelict land as part of a 'just transition' to net-zero. The fund contains £50m over this Parliament and complements the Place Based Investment Programme.

The [Empowering Communities Programme](#) supports communities to do things. People can't always just be volunteering. This can be used to fund local plans. The programme provides resource funding, complementing their capital investment, supporting community-led regeneration, enabling communities to tackle poverty and inequality on their own terms.

It is a range of funds and strategic partnerships enabling communities to:

- Create local plans;
- Acquire /develop local assets;
- Create jobs; and
- Deliver services /projects in response to local needs.

The Strengthening Communities Programme supports and provides funding to enable Community Anchor Organisations to build their resilience and sustainability, and to deliver more ambitious projects and services.

The [Investing in Communities Fund](#) supports and empowers communities to identify and deliver solutions to local priorities and challenges enabling them to tackle poverty, child poverty, inequality and rural disadvantage on their own terms.

The team also fund Strategic Partnerships which includes [SURE](#), and also sponsorship of the [Community Ownership Support Service \(COSS\)](#), [Coalfields Regeneration Trust](#) to deliver their programme regeneration, [Scottish Community Development Centre \(SCDC\)](#) helping build community capacity, and the [Wheatley Group](#) partnership delivering programmes supporting over 1,000 people in some of our most deprived communities.

The [Our Place](#) website highlights best practice examples and promotes place-based working. This includes the Place-Based Framework as a how to guide. Joanne asked for suggestions and comments as they need feedback to make it work.

Presenter:

- *Joanne Boyle, Regeneration Unit, Scottish Government*

Fourth Presentation Summary: [Scotland's Towns Partnership \(STP\)](#)

STP, launched in 2014, speak on behalf of Scotland's towns and villages. They are a membership body with an extensive and varied membership. They are the go-to organisation for Scotland's towns and places and provide resources such as events, insight and networking. They also deliver programmes on behalf of the Scottish Government. Localism lies at the heart of everything they do.

They host the [Understanding Scotland's Places](#) platform which allows you to compare and contrast different types of places, and they also host the [Town Centre Toolkit](#). Mhairi added that STP's monthly 'Funding Finder email' is an excellent source of currently available grants.

The [Town Centre Action Plan](#), now on version two, is their key policy document and was jointly produced by Scottish Government and COSLA. It outlines aims and aspirations for our towns, and embeds the [Town Centre First](#) approach. It also supports a low carbon future through the best use of existing buildings, walkable places and connected services.

Promoting towns through [Scotland Loves Local](#), which is being used by councils and other organisations to increase local spend. It is tailored to the local level. The Scotland Loves Local gift card currently has 700 individual places registered and involves distributing pre-paid cards, where the money is returned to the local authority area. The programme was born out of lockdown to help local businesses fight for survival. It encourages people to choose local. It is a critical weapon in the armoury to support Covid recovery, the climate emergency and the cost of living crisis. It has grown into a significant force for good in bringing action needed to build stronger places to live, work and visit.

[Improvement Districts](#), added to STP's remit in 2017, are where a collection of local organisations and businesses come together to deliver new stuff that will improve their place. It is funded and controlled at the local level by those organisations and businesses that voted to set it up. They support localism, [20 minute neighbourhoods](#) and they drive new investment into our towns and neighbourhoods.

STP lead on Improvement Districts on behalf of the Scottish Government. There has been a huge uptake in Scotland, better than the rest of the UK. There are currently 30 active and 15 in hand. STP can provide a seedcorn grant and advice and support to those thinking of establishing an Improvement District. Initially set up as Business Improvement Districts, there are now different types focussing on specific topics, such as tourism and food and drink, and more recently a Community Improvement District. Mhairi gave the example of 2021 Highly Commended [Remaking Saracen](#).

Improvement Districts are helping communities to grow, playing to their strengths and allowing individuality to shine. They are driving inclusive local economic growth by providing national strategic guidance, training, practical support and strong partnerships. Levering local investment, encouraging innovation, unlocking opportunities and sustainable change.

STP are the main sponsor of the Improving Scotland's Places SURF Award, in partnership with [Architecture & Design Scotland](#). This gives them real insight into the practical aspects of working in towns across Scotland. Mhairi has sat on the judging panel for this category for the last 5 years and over this time has seen a wide range of submissions; from island and small rural villages to large city neighbourhoods; from places that have made a real difference through delivering one key project to others that have had multi-million-pound regeneration, and it's not always the big guns that win.

It's an over-used phrase, but they are looking for those places that are enabling transformational change in their place across physical, social and economic factors, and where there is clear support from the local community.

Last year, in discussion with SURF, they changed the category title to make it clear that it's open to those places that are still delivering big changes. Projects don't need to be at the end of the road. They do need to be on the road, and they do need to have good stuff to show for their efforts. Mhairi would encourage anywhere that's been working hard to improve their place to submit an application.

Presenter:

- *Mhairi Donaghy, Vice Chair/Associate Director, Scotland's Towns Partnership/ Scottish Futures Trust*

Fifth Presentation Summary: [Highlands and Islands Enterprise \(HIE\)](#)

HIE are one of the three economic development agencies for Scotland. HIE and the [South of Scotland Enterprise \(SOSE\)](#) agency have a remit for economic development and community, which differs from [Scottish Enterprise](#). Part of that is because of the place discussion. They focus on specific places so no one is left isolated, which is important.

HIE work in a diverse region which extends from Shetland to Argyll, and from the Outer Hebrides to Moray, covering more than half of Scotland's land mass. They have teams across the region helping communities and businesses to develop and grow. They help people across those areas of Scotland to build a stronger economy and a better future. They want the Highlands and Islands to be a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable region, attracting more people to live, work, study, invest and visit.

HIE Priorities

- Build successful, productive and resilient businesses.
- Enable strong, capable and resourceful communities.
- Create the conditions for growth and a green recovery.
- HIE has a Regional Development activity and focus, working with public sector partners to develop infrastructure.
- People, Place, Planet and Prosperity.
- **BUSINESSES** - Offer a range of support including advice, events, funding and property to help develop and grow your business.
- **COMMUNITIES** - Support communities across their dispersed region, recognising the pivotal role that strong, resilient and capable communities play in the overall success of the economy.
- **SOCIAL ENTERPRISES** - Have a close working relationship with around 150 social enterprises across the Highlands and Islands through their account management approach.

They provide support to build successful, productive and resilient businesses; to enable strong, capable and resourceful communities; and to create the conditions for growth and a green recovery. HIE work with all of the actors and provide direct support to businesses. Within communities they work to ensure entities are strong, and work to help with project development. They have a similar approach to supporting social enterprise. They have 8 area-based teams, plus specialist teams. There are currently 6047 social enterprises in Scotland, 21% of which are in the HIE region which is a significant proportion.

HIE provide advice, support and funding to support social start-up and recovery in the following areas:

- Governance
- Leadership
- Specialist advice
- Innovation
- Community Assets
- [Scottish Land Fund](#)
- Use of Gaelic
- Culture and Heritage
- Woodland Crofts
- [Community Wealth Building](#)

- Net-Zero
- [Fair Work](#)
- Decarbonisation plans
- Green jobs potential
- Local food production
- Shared ownership models with wind farms
- Opportunities to adopt low carbon land uses
- [RIPEET](#)
- Benefits from heat resources

On the ground they support sector development activity by creating an environment for new industries to flourish, such as offshore energy and spaceports. They also support communities to do real things in real places, such as Bressay. Some community land owners are generating an income stream for themselves to then go on and do other developments.

HIE supports by providing advice and assistance, financial support, peer-peer learning, and access to resources. Find out more about how HIE [work with communities](#) and [see HIE's business and community case studies](#).

Mags encouraged attendees to find out about [#GoPlaces](#) and to find out how HIE are [supporting net-zero transition](#). Lastly she highlighted a website to find out about [business support](#) in your area.

Presenter:

- *Margaret McSparran, Head of Social Enterprise Development, Highlands and Islands Enterprise*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and topics of debate raised are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

- *One delegate asked about testing and evaluation.*

Mags said she had 3 answers.

1. HIE as an organisation has 55 years of experience in economic and community development, but the climate is always changing.
2. They are starting a pilot looking at social impact measurement and giving organisations a tool to send their story back. What the impact really is.
3. Evaluation.

- *The second question also focussed on evaluation and whether they evaluate all projects or just certain types.*

Mags said that at one time you structured an intervention based on need for a project but things are changing with new technology. You set up a programme based on demonstrating a case, and project reports provide the evidence.

Mhairi added that STP understands how they have made a difference via engagement. They provide feedback to the Scottish Government and use their Board and members etc. to gather that feedback. It is about understanding what people want and need. STP don't always do evaluation but they did for Scotland Loves Local.

Joanne added that the Scottish Government are not doing 'the doing' so don't need to do evaluation as such. The evaluation framework needs tweaking. If you are going to evaluate properly you need to capture a baseline. How things were at the beginning, has it changed because of this or are other things affecting the outcome?

- *A question was asked to Joanne about the RCGF and how it actually works. From the website it looks like projects need to be proposed to the Scottish Government by local authorities. Some local authorities advertise but some seem to have specific projects in mind.*

Joanne said this is not her area of work but said to contact her separately and she would get a definitive answer. Like other funding, the local authority needs to buy-in to the project.

Mhairi highlighted the [STP Funding Finder](#).

- *A delegate said that they need to evaluate for funders and chase funding. Asked that they give more funding but not create more funds. Asked if the speakers agreed that the funding landscape if simplified would take background noise and absorptive work out of the system.*

Mags acknowledged that if you are in the position of a voluntary organisation with not enough staff it can be difficult and if cash-flowing it is a business risk. As technology advances it would be great to see how funders develop the landscape. The evaluation framework that they are working on will tell the deep and meaningful impact projects are making, not just jobs and turnover.

- *A participant pondered what Kirkintilloch, Laurieston and Alloa are going to look like in 5-10 years. Many developments seem wonderful when first completed but what happens in the longer term. This is what makes people have a sense of pride. It is about maintenance. There is a current funding crisis, in that all funding is capital funding. Is there an opportunity from Scottish Government to make money available for maintenance of projects who have had capital investment in the past?*

Joanne answered that resource is the biggest challenge. Try to be as flexible as they can with the terminology of capital.

- *A participant stated that they find increasingly that communities are keen to be involved and get involved in the maintenance of places.*

Iain Wardrop, who was leading the discussion, mentioned the [Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland](#).

Mhairi said that it is difficult as community resources are very constrained. We should be thinking twice about investing in capital developments when they don't have resources in place for the long-term. We need to take a longer term view than 5-10 years.

Joanne added that capital funding does have maintenance costs built in for the competitive funding streams, but for non-competitive they expect it to be included in the costs.

Mags said that for community led projects to grow in places, it is about working with entities to be financially sustainable going forward.

- *A delegate noted that we have to focus on the long game but a lot of funding is short-term.*

Mags added that there is a challenge with funding and also volunteer fatigue.

- *The final question asked how we get other town centre initiatives [Levelling Up](#) money. How do we influence them with principles and ideas to get involved? Funds come with different ideas and expectations.*

Mhairi said that people should get themselves involved and make a noise.

Joanne added that this is a political hot potato but need to try and make it work. The Scottish Government are talking within departments to try and get alignment.

Mags added that for some funds there are consultants being appointed to try and support delivery on the ground. Keep an eye on funding pages.

Emma concluded the event and noted that funding for maintenance was also a key ask at the housing workshop.

4) Taking creative approaches to regenerate communities

With introductory presentations from SURF Award winning projects:

Alchemy Film and Arts, Findhorn Bay Arts and CentreStage.

Additional presentations were provided by SURF Award partner Creative Scotland and Creative Lives.

About the event

The final workshop in the series highlighted the 2022 SURF Award winning and highly commended projects in the 'Creative Regeneration' category.

The projects featured are all using creativity and artistic approaches to engage with and support members of their local community.

First Presentation Summary: [Alchemy Film and Arts](#)

Alchemy have been based in Hawick, in the Scottish Borders, since 2010. Hawick is a town in Scotland furthest away from the sea. They work with communities and artists both locally and internationally and are values-led, providing inclusive and accessible ways to come together, have conversations, and creatively collaborate. They integrate international artists and resident artists with the community. Collaboration is key to the success of their projects, including a Film Festival which is held each year. They ensure everything they create is of high quality, meaningful and worthwhile, whilst also being deliverable and manageable. These values fit with both their ethos and partner needs.

The team create ways of working tailored to working with existing groups, driven by values such as being open, warm and making people feel comfortable in the space. They offer a flexible and responsive approach that places inclusion, equity and social justice at its centre.

They started off as a community film project but have grown over 5 years, and the ethos of the organisation now runs through all strands of Alchemy's work. They don't deliver simple one-off projects, but instead work with groups over time and grow and change as required. Putting people into everything they do, and to try and include community films where they can. Community film projects are shown at the Festival, and the creators are paid the same rates as the visiting artists. This creates a nice atmosphere where everyone is equal.



Filmmaking is just part of the overall outcome of their projects. Tom mentioned a film about Autism, and young people gaining confidence and being able to do things they couldn't have done before, such as public speaking.

Branching Out is a programme for 16-25 year olds with additional support needs which started in 2020 during lockdown. To adhere to restrictions their first film was made outdoors using nature as an instrument for sound. It delivers meaningful and impactful projects that are led by the group. So far, the group have created 4 films and 1 interactive installation with a sensory room. They get to try different techniques, from direct animation to documentaries. The programme helps the young people to get over their fears. They have a new project on human rights starting in the winter.

Viewfinders was a programme which engaged with the local school and showcased filmmaking and digital skills. Alchemy worked with seven primary schools and 1200 pupils. The programme aimed to enhance teaching and learning opportunities across the curriculum. Funded by the [Paul Hamlyn Foundation](#), it showed primary school teachers how to use iPads for filmmaking, and to raise awareness around limited storage issues on iPads for filmmaking. The pupils made a film called 7 by 7, which was shown at the Festival. It showed a day in the life of Hawick primary schools with the screen split into 4. Classes from all schools came together to watch their film and experimental shots. There are lots of ways iPads can be incorporated into school life. Alchemy bought the iPads, green screens and other necessary equipment.

Alchemy hosted a programme of residencies as part of [Culture Collective](#), that encouraged community-led practice. One of which was The Wool Aliens by artist Julia Parks. This involved the creation of four new films working collaboratively with community groups and local historians. There was a focus on the heritage and culture of the textile industry, and its impact on our environment. Another example was a film set in a local community garden. They ran a workshop called Cultivate, which was also turned into an installation for the Festival. The residency programme showcased different approaches to filmmaking.

The Film Festival is how Alchemy started, and is held on the May bank holiday weekend each year. It is not just a platform to screen artists' work but also to engage the community with film perspectives that they may not be familiar with, in comfortable settings. This year for the first time they screened in parallel twice for one of the films and streamed the Q&A live from a sister venue. They offer inclusive and accessible screenings, exhibitions and events. The Festival is a very sociable experience which draws a varied audience, where everyone is equal.

Tom mentioned a final project by young people, inspired by the [Black Lives Matter](#) movement, about feeling like an outcast. The Borders can be a closed off community given the rural location. The end result was an installation. They are now looking at movements created by the slave trade.

Tom concluded with a film.

Presenter:

- *Tom Swift, Our Film Town Coordinator, Alchemy Film and Arts*

Second Presentation Summary: [Findhorn Bay Arts \(FBA\)](#)

Since 2012, Findhorn Bay Arts have been making creative things happen in Moray. Based in Forres, but working across the Moray area, they promote the region as exemplary place of culture. Their work ticks boxes for government priorities on [Community Wealth Building](#), regeneration and economic growth. Their project engages with people of all ages and abilities to develop new opportunities, and to showcase their creativity.

FBA offer opportunities for artist residencies and commissions. The team support artists to connect with communities, and each other, through long-term residencies, particularly within community halls. Embedding artists long-term with community organisations such as Women's Aid, LGBTQ community, schools, families with children with autism etc. Their last residency programme supported 6 artists. The opportunity also allows artists to build relationships and develop their skills. It is about the 3 C's - conversation, collaboration and community.

They deliver a Festival every 2 years, but there was a 4 year gap due to the pandemic. The Festival celebrates creatives, community and pride of place, whilst also allowing for skills to be developed. At its essence are a sense of joy and hope. The most recent Festival offered over 90 ticketed and free

events across 10 days, with 281 individual artists and creative practitioners participating. There were 11,061 total attendances across events and activities, and it employed 327 creative professionals and artists. They have over 40 programme, community and business partners to support the delivery of the weekend event and over 898 people participate, including 69 volunteers. In economic terms, it resulted in an estimated £987,948 in local economic benefit. It happens because they work with the community and take them on a journey, it is not done to them.

Challenges and Learning

- Barriers to participation
- Partnerships and collaboration
- Purpose of the programme
- Long term vs short term funding
- Impact of Covid-19



Barriers to participate include money worries, mental health and people feeling that it isn't relevant to them. Having time to build partnerships and embed artists into the community is essential, co-designing projects with people. FBA offer an access fund and money for travel costs and other incentives. They also run 'pay what you can' and free events.

Working in partnership is at the heart of what they do. It helps them to understand the barriers and need, and unlock potential, but it is not one size fits all, it takes time to build trust and embed in the community.

You need to understand shared goals, roles and what the exchange is. Have an outline agreement/partnership agreement, which can be formal or just an email, depending on what works. It is ok when things need to change.

Understand your core purpose and the purpose of the programme. Creating thought provoking work with organisational values at the core. Creation of art requires a framework of values. Things such as hope, respect, openness and collaboration. You have your organisation's values but it takes time to create programme values and shared partner values. These help to inform the development of briefs to underpin relationships.

Funding is always a barrier. Long-term and flexible is great as it allows for relationship building and development of a programme of delivery. Providing space for needs and aspirations to evolve and change. You shouldn't go into it creating a programme to fit the funding. The [Culture Collective](#) model was helpful. They are now looking at various models and avenues. Everything is connected so cuts to funding has wider impacts, the work doesn't just stop but it creates gaps that need filled. Seeing things in long-term is essential.

Covid provided unknown challenges and FBA had to stop and pause, and then adapt. They done a huge amount differently and tried new ways of working. The team are now reflecting on that and how you draw on that learning for the future. Challenges will keep coming, but stay rooted in your values. Those are what enable communities to build resilience and community wellbeing, and thrive.

Presenter:

- *Kresanna Aigner, CEO/Creative Director, Findhorn Bay Arts*

Third Presentation Summary: [CentreStage](#)

At its heart, CentreStage is a place for people with the vision to create a community where everyone can experience the joy of music, arts and wellbeing, and seamlessly access all they need to flourish in life. Since 2006, CentreStage has been located in 15 different buildings, working with 15 different communities of people, where no-one has to know why you are there or where you have come from, everyone is equal regardless of background or disability.



Their key organisational values are based on hope and inclusion, and their work has included working with some of the most excluded members of society, including a project with HMP Kilmarnock. Some people are not academic but the current education system doesn't work that way, and people don't get opportunities. When attendees come through the doors of CentreStage they are made to feel happy, safe and included. Sometimes people come to them due to a lack of statutory services available within the community. CentreStage provide creative alternatives until they can find partners to plug that gap. They use the arts as conduit to reach other services.

They had the idea to transform a disused building into a theatre and events space. However, they hit an initial stumbling block with finance when the banks said that Kilmarnock doesn't do the arts.

In 2019, the transfer of Kilmarnock Academy came up for [Community Asset Transfer](#). The team had looked at various places and carried out feasibility studies. The site comprised of 3 buildings at the cost of £5.2m, in comparison the cost to build a new super school was £40m. This was Scotland's biggest Community Led Asset Transfer. The buildings now house a 280 seat theatre and events and conference space.

Covid and the resulting lockdowns created huge challenges for them. They normally generate income from services and their café. The activities that they run were not allowed to operate under government restrictions, and were some the last to resume. They received funding to create the garden, which allowed them to provide an outdoor food and music festival.

CentreStage are very much rooted in the community and link with neighbouring organisations, who bring their complementary strengths and talents, supporting CentreStage's vision, maximising outcomes and minimising duplication. They have a shared vision of moving from isolation to co-location and the principles of a [wellbeing economy](#).

Can't deal with economic growth if not dealing with social inequality. Like the buildings, organisations had to go down to foundations and rebuild after Covid. To some over the years, buildings provided the arts and a safe space, but the new space also provides progression and employment opportunities.

People are often labelled and not given a chance, but the arts allows people the opportunity to change their story and unlocks potential. Health, language barriers and difficulties around responsibility to adapt to a new country are often seen as barriers, but engaging with the arts can help to overcome these hurdles.

Presenter:

- *Fiona McKenzie, Founder, CentreStage*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and areas of debate are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

- *CentreStage were asked how long the building had been vacant.*

Fiona responded that it was empty for 1 year. They took partial occupancy before the sale went through due to arson attacks in the area. The local authority originally wanted them just to take the historic building.

- *A question was raised about artists creating both outcomes and outputs and what funders are looking for.*

Kristina responded that they take evaluation really seriously and meaningfully. It is really important to them and to funders, and that they use different methods. Most recently they have trialled a model called [CHIME](#). What are the changes it makes to a person's personal life and to their mental health? A mixture of hard data, stories and case studies, embedded throughout projects.

Tom said that they are far more interested in the development of the people they work with and not motivated by funding. You need a mixture of hard data (economic) and softer outcomes. As filmmakers they can document how people interact throughout the process. He gave an example of working with a group where one person didn't engage but by the end of the project they were taking the group photo. It is hard to show this, but it is really important to the organisation and to funders.

Kristina added that they all have to do this and get data punched in, but they are working with artists to find creative ways to collect the information. There is lots of evaluation and consultation fatigue.

- *A participant asked about collaborative approaches to evaluation where different elements are more important. Diversity and joined up thinking.*

Fiona said that with collaboration we all need the funding, but what has changed over recent years is talking to partners first and worrying about money later. This helps prevent drifting into funding for the sake of it. Work with funders who understand your way of working and not working to changing KPIs. That way you are allowed to admit what is wrong and learn, which is far more robust in outcomes and has allowed them to work with really interesting partners. People have stopped talking about how important engagement through the arts is. Collaboration work is important.

- *A delegate asked all three speakers about mentioning hope as a key value, noting that evaluation never mentions that as it is seen as intangible. How do you identify and know it is happening in people's lives?*

Fiona said that they use a holistic conversation approach which is future focussed. Where are we now and where do you want to get to. Identify challenges that might get in the way and how to overcome them. Hope never left throughout the pandemic.

Kristina added that it is a strong value. It is what people come back to them with. The outcome is, have skills been developed, confidence increased etc. Telling the story and case studies.

Tom said that for a film organisation they encourage groups to have conversations amongst themselves. Project where people interviewed each other on experiences of Covid. Create a nurturing environment and make people feel comfortable enough to share experiences with each other, becomes a more tangible thing for measurement. Through case studies and working with partners.

- *A delegate said that capital funding is easier to get but that there is a revenue challenge. Could the organisations be self-funding?*

Fiona said that the third sector has such a challenge. People like them but don't really trust them as they are heart driven. CentreStage had to become far more business orientated and seek help from the business community. They had not had local authority funding until this year, as although they liked them they didn't see the fit. You need a business case to look like a safer bet. If you can generate income you should, financial output and social output. As a sector they don't have the same dignity apportioned. You have to beg for funding. CentreStage is built on an extra curriculum model. If you can pay for classes, you do but that money supports those who can't. It is going to be difficult going forward. Recommends that you work with the business community.

Kristina commented on Moray Council cutting the arts budget by 100% 10 years ago. They had to build relationships with departments within the Council, which produced tiny pockets of money. As councils are cutting essential services, which are basic human rights, the third sector are picking those up. There is a strain on fundraising as they are all trying to get the same funds. There is a perfect storm coming. She recommends having lots of different income in your portfolio and broadening the funding portfolio. They will always need funding with this type of work. Longer term thinking, they may just bet funding one activity but if that funding is cut it has a wider impact on other services and activities.

Tom said that funding is essential. If you want to make money as a filmmaker, you need to make commercial films, and that is not Alchemy's ethos and they wouldn't be able to do their core activities. Doesn't have an answer as to where the money comes from but having to constantly apply so you can fundraise doesn't seem sustainable.

Fourth Presentation Summary: [Creative Scotland](#)

Creative Scotland are the national body that supports arts, screen and creative industries. They are a non-departmental government body funded by Scottish Government and the [National Lottery Community Fund](#). They manage relationships with local authorities, [ALEOs](#) and Trusts.

They deliver the [Place Partnership Programme](#) which provides opportunities to make a change in a place, based on challenges or existing issues, like in Moray. They have been operating the Scottish Borders Place Partnership for over 10 years. North and South Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway are not included as they were already doing it.

People and organisations working in the arts and creativity are supported to make work of quality and ambition that enriches life in Scotland for all. They work to ensure that more people from all parts of society are accessing and participating in a range of artistic and creative activities. Art and creativity is being recognised by people at home and abroad as a central part of our nation. Creative Scotland's Annual Plan supports people to take part in any of the three areas, with opportunities to engage wherever you are. Their main goal is to support culture and creativity in Scotland, which is seen as vital to society.

Creative Scotland work across 4 key areas;

- **Equalities, diversity and inclusion** - Supporting a diverse range of creative people, communities and activity. Promoting an equality of opportunity to create, participate and engage.
- **Sustainable Development** - Helping tackle the climate emergency and supporting the growth of sustainable creative businesses across Scotland.
- **Fair Work** - Promoting fair pay, conditions and employment opportunities across the creative sector. Not just about pay and industry standards but conditions and treatment.
- **International** - Developing innovative and sustainable ways of strengthening international collaboration and promoting creative and cultural exchange.

Most people that engage with Creative Scotland are interested in funding. They currently have 4 strands of funding; Regular, Open, Targeted and Delegated. Their funding supports individuals and organisations, from individual professional development and creating new work to festivals, creative programmes and residencies.

They have now announced updates on their new [multi-year funding](#) which will replace their current Regular Funding stream, but there are lots of smaller funds, including a new participatory arts and mental health fund, that support both individuals and organisations. You can find out about funding on their [website](#), and the Enquiry Team are always happy to provide support.

[Awards for All](#) is delivered on behalf of The National Lottery Community Fund and can support anything from professional development up to festivals, and everything in-between. Funding is constantly under lots of demand and is very competitive.

The Open Project funding programme supports things to make them happen. This includes personal development or projects such as festivals and creative regeneration. This funding can be up to 2 years.

Targeted funds come in the form of support such as the Youth Music Fund, Create Inclusion and the Touring Fund. Place Partnership funding is another example. They can provide support where intervention is necessary. This can come at Scottish Government request or if they recognise a barrier or opportunity.

[Culture Collective](#) started in 2020, funded by the Scottish Government, and was designed as a Covid Relief Fund to support artists and freelancers to ensure that they got paid. It has become a network of creative practitioners, organisations and communities. The projects are providing employment opportunities for creative practitioners and are actively engaging people in shaping the future cultural life of their community. It included 26 collectives delivering for up to 2 years. This has led to thinking around how they can take learning from programmes and build on it. What is important when working with communities is that you are not doing things to them, and that the work is driven and determined by the communities themselves, supported by organisations and artists. They are hoping to get further funding for Culture Collective in the future.

Culture Collective created an ethos around writing songs, traditional arts and culture, with no pre-determined outcomes. People determined what they wanted to see happen. It is not just about books or what happens on a stage, the process is as important as the output.

Presenter:

- *Karen Dick, Head of Place, Partnerships and Communities, Creative Scotland*

Fifth Presentation Summary: [Creative Lives](#)

Creative Lives have been around for over 30 years, previously known as Voluntary Arts Scotland, and support creative organisations to do the work talked about at the workshop.

They work to 3 main strategic aims:

- Building strong connections and relationships to support participation in creative cultural activity.
- Demonstrating how taking part in creative cultural activity improves social connectedness.
- Opening up more public spaces for creative cultural activity.

They support organisations to turn the work done throughout the sector into tangible outcomes. Working across all 4 UK nations and the RoI, but via individual teams.

David showed a [short film](#) describing what they do and giving examples of who they support.

Creative Lives offer a [Microgrants Programme](#), in partnership with [Scottish Communities Alliance](#) and the Scottish Government, which helps support activity such as; to a community studio to deliver various projects, events and exhibitions; and to support engagement with a wide range of participants including autistic young people, low-income families, the elderly, people with mental ill health, and disengaged youth. Creative Lives directly supported former SURF Award winner [RIG Arts](#) to adapt and respond to unique challenges presented by the pandemic, and the investment continues to benefit our delivery to this day.

It has been a very difficult few years for the voluntary sector. Data from the [Scottish Household Survey](#) states that 370k people across Scotland are involved in volunteering. Volunteers are more focussed on doing and delivery than carrying out administrative tasks.

Post-pandemic there has been a focus on supporting organisations to let space, get materials and transport costs. Recent recipients include [Sewing2ogether All Nations](#) based in Paisley, a project for migrant women. A little bit of money makes a big difference.

They offer their own Awards scheme called the [Creative Lives Awards](#), which provide an opportunity to demonstrate best practice. Awards provide the argument for creative people being around the table.

Creative Lives also provide opportunities to bring people together that are not normally together. They host thematic and regional networks, roundtable discussions and peer to peer groups. They also offer a specific group for local authority cultural departments. These networks and roundtables support advocacy and policy work; everyone should have the right to access creative opportunities.

There are challenges and threats to sector. Creative Lives want to work to enable and create new solutions, and to understand more about creative opportunities brought to communities.

Presenter:

- *David McDonald, Scotland Policy and Partnerships Coordinator, Creative Lives*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and areas of debate are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

- *One delegate asked what the speakers need from the people in the room to do their work and to make the case?*

David answered that it is not always easy to know. Funding things to improve how we speak to each other and share learning would be a starting point.

Karen added that Creative Scotland sit on multiple networks and roundtables across the culture sector, including those that are not within their remit. They have good picture of the big things happening nationally and regionally. One of the key points is the [Scottish Government Enquiry](#). Public funding for the arts is good but it is necessary. It is not a statutory service for local authorities to provide, but was a key focus during lockdown for cultural activity to sustain people, and it impacts on economic growth and development within communities. It allows people to collaborate and work together and see that impact on things such as social benefits, wellbeing, health etc. Impacts across many policy areas. Constantly having to make the case, which is both tricky and costly.

- *Another question asked about the relationship between Creative Scotland and Creative Lives.*

Karen said that Creative Scotland fund Creative Lives and that she is their Lead Officer.

David added that the funding they get from Creative Scotland is so important for advocacy work. They are often at the same meetings and have good communications.

- *The final question was to the room from Euan about an ask for Scottish Government Minister Joe Fitzpatrick, whom he was meeting the following week.*

The single answer was long-term funding.

End of paper

Emma Scott, Events, Information and Communications Manager

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SURF – Scotland's Regeneration Forum

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