

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



- SURF Award Shared Learning Workshop
- Banff & Macduff Two Towns Big Ideas Grant Fund
- David McCubbin, Aberdeenshire Council

Background to Fund



- Priority action in Banff and Macduff Development Partnership Action Plans 2016 - 2021
- Stimulate creativity, innovation and community-led regeneration
- Support small-scale, high-impact local projects
- Encourage collaboration, pride of place, and long-term town centre vitality
- Increase in vacancy rates above national average
- Community Surveys highlighted vacant buildings as a concern of residents

Community Engagement



- *“There needs to be more investment in the empty units.”*
- *“There needs to be less vacant shop units.”*
- *“Try to encourage re-use of vacant shop units to create a town centre worth visiting and exploring.”*
- *“Need to try and fill the empty shops.”*
- *“Businesses should be supported to open up in the empty units.”*
- *“Regenerate the empty shop units.”*

Noted Successes



- Two month online/in-person community engagement process to shape grant fund criteria & eligibility Criteria
- Pop-up engagement in locations with footfall
- Representative Community Steering Group
- Decisions made collaboratively to ensure fairness and local ownership
- Simple, transparent application process to encourage participation
- Eight applications received, six eligible and received funding
- SURF Awards 2025 Finalist
- Early engagement essential for building trust and participation
- Small grants can deliver meaningful local impact
- Ongoing support post-funding strengthens long-term outcomes

Funded Projects



BANFFSHIRE HIGHLAND FESTIVAL



BICENTENARY EXHIBITION OF GENERAL JOSE DE SAN MARTIN



CATTLESKATE ACADEMY CIC



MISSION CONNECT



MACDUFF & BANFF YOUTH HUB

"This project sets the groundwork for a transformative youth-led initiative that not only provides a vital service for the young people of Banff and Macduff but also strengthens the community by addressing key social challenges like anti-social behaviour and town centre decline."

THE FORGE





Challenges Faced

- Pre-Christmas Fund Launch in December
- Competition from Coastal Communities Fund with larger maximum grant award
- Difficultly contacting absent property owners/landlords
- Lack of interest from contactable property owners to support programme
- Eligible projects value below the total grant budget, public vote did not take place.

Aberdeenshire Town Centre First Policy

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Aberdeenshire Council will put the health of town centres at the heart of proportionate and best value decision-making, seeking to deliver the best local outcomes regarding investment and deinvestment decisions, alignment of policies, targeting of available resources to priority town centre sites, and encouraging vibrancy, equality and diversity.

We commit to: A collaborative approach which understands and underpins the long term plan for each town centre.

Outputs Table



TOTAL PROJECT OUTPUTS	Totals	TOTAL PROJECT OUTPUTS	Totals
ECONOMY		BUILT ENVIRONMENT	
No. of jobs created	5	No. of New or Improved Buildings	2
No. of Businesses Supported – financial (i.e., receiving grants)	6	VISITOR ECONOMY	
No. of Businesses Supported – other	40	No. of Marketing or promotional campaigns	15
No. of Enterprises sign-posted to other support	0		
No. of New Enterprises started	2	SKILLS	
No. of Sectors supported / developed	13	No. of Training Events held	
No. of New products, processes or services enabled or supported	7	No. of Training Places Created	1
PARTICIPATION		EVENTS	
No. of community projects / initiatives supported	37	Individual Event Footfall	3878
No. of Community Events held	63		
No. of local Consultations held	15		
Number of Participants (total)	3890		
No. of Young people Engaged (where recorded)	344		



Legacy



- All 6 funded projects active and delivering two years after grant funding
- Strengthened community networks and confidence in local action
- New groups established and continuing beyond initial funding
- Visible improvements to shared spaces and local pride
- Model for future participatory funding approaches
- Continued collaboration between Banff and Macduff communities
- Ongoing Econ Dev activity in Banff & Macduff Town Centres

Fraserburgh BIG Ideas Fund



- Fraserburgh BIG Ideas Fund launched on 11/5/26
- Town centre footfall decline
- Increasing town centre vacancy rate
- 18 vacant premises
- Online/in-person consultation in March/April
- Information drop-in sessions held in May
- Closing date of 22nd June