**Community Ownership Support Service – Churches Advisor (fixed term)**

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| Post | Churches Advisor– Community Ownership Support Service |
| Location | This post will cover Central and Southern Scotland – office based in Edinburgh with the option for some home working. |
| Responsible to | Head of Community Ownership |
| Salary Range | £37,383 - £39,371 + pension (currently 11.5% employer contribution) The expectation is that we appoint at the entry level of the salary scale unless there are exceptional circumstances. |
| Length of Contract | Fixed term for three years to December 2027 |
| Hours | Our preference is full-time, 35 hours per week (excluding meal breaks), however we can consider part-time, either 28 hours (four day) per week or as a job share.  Please provide an indication of your preferred working hours in your covering letter. |
| Leave entitlement | 25 days p/a plus 10 public holidays |
| Probationary period | 3 months |
| Closing Date | Monday 13th January 2025 at 12 noon |
| Interviews | Interviews will be held on Monday 20th January 2025 |

DTAS’ Community Ownership Support Service (COSS) is establishing a new team to work with communities across Scotland on the sustainable transfer of former places of worship into community ownership. The Churches Programme will provide community groups with advice and support, as well as providing access to expert help, networking and training opportunities.

The programme is funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic Environment Scotland.

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**Purpose of this post**

This COSS Churches Advisor post will cover central and southern Scotland, and join an Advisor already in post, covering northern Scotland. We are also recruiting for a Programme Officer to provide the team with administrative support.

The COSS Churches Advisors will provide community groups with one-to-one advice and mentoring support at each stage of the acquisition process, signposting as appropriate to other support programmes, proving access to expert help, networking and training opportunities.

Working with other internal DTAS Teams and in partnership with the range of support organisations in the heritage sector, this team will develop a comprehensive range of resources and a workshop programme for communities considering taking church land and buildings into community ownership.

This is an exciting new programme with opportunities to develop new approaches; helping communities to sustain key local assets.

**Summary of main tasks**

**Community Organisations:**

* Respond to enquiries from community organisations interested in acquiring former places of worship, providing information and advice, as appropriate
* Assist organisations assess viability of proposed acquisitions; assisting with options appraisals and early-stage feasibility; provide developmental and business support
* Provide a critical friend role with community organisations with regard to business plans, funding applications, etc
* Assist community organisations access legal and other technical / heritage advice and support
* Attend and speak at relevant public meetings and board / management committee meetings
* Tap into relevant resources, providing access to support or training opportunities and signposting to other relevant agencies
* Develop a comprehensive workshop programme for capacity building within community groups and specialist ecclesiastic workshops
* Encourage and support the sharing of learning and information

**Public Bodies**

* Promote the service with local authorities and encourage uptake / engagement with communities interested in re-purposing church buildings.
* Encourage and facilitate peer support across the local authorities on the repurposing of church assets – inclusion in the COSS CPD Programme, Knowledge Hub channel and updates at the Quarterly meetings.

**General**

* Maintain up-to-date and accurate records within the DTAS / COSS information systems for both internal operational use and to support the provision of reports to funders and other stakeholders
* Support the research of the current data available on churches closures, identifying likely phases of work and cold spots. Develop a programme of work to raise the awareness in these cold spot areas; supporting communities to consider their options.
* Foster strong working relationships with key regional and national agencies
* Contribute to the development of new information sheets and practical resources
* Carry out other activities in line with current and future operational policies of COSS and undertake any other duties relevant to the post.

**Person Specification**

|  |  | Essential or Desirable |
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| **Qualifications** | Qualification to degree level or equivalent | E |
| **Practical Experience** | Providing business planning or financial or operational and governance advice to organisations at different stages of their development | E |
| Experience of income generation and fundraising | D |
| Mentoring organisations/ groups through the various stages of their development | D |
| Working in partnership with a wide range of other organisations, including public bodies | E |
| Organising/ managing events | D |
| **Knowledge** | Experience of the community-based regeneration sector | D |
| Experience of the heritage sector | D |
| **Skills** | Excellent verbal and written communication skills | E |
| Strong presentational skills and the confidence to represent COSS in external stakeholder forums | D |
| Ability to work proactively and professionally to deliver a work programme | E |
| Strong IT skills including Microsoft Office | E |
| Ability to work well as a team | E |
| **Personal Attributes** | A strong commitment to community-led enterprise and ownership | D |
| Self-motivated, able to work unsupervised, to take the initiative and meet deadlines | E |
| Highly organised with good time management | E |
| Ability and willingness to travel throughout the country | E |
| Willing to work some evenings and weekends with occasional overnight stays | E |

**Benefits**

* On-the-job training and relevant formal training
* 25 days of annual leave, plus 10 days of public holidays (pro rata for part-time employees) and an additional 3 days of fixed leave during Christmas
* DTAS pension scheme with an employer contribution of 11.5%
* Employee wellbeing group with all-staff activities, plus a personal wellbeing budget
* Flexible working

**To Apply for the Post**:

If you are keen to be considered for this opportunity, please email [kay@dtascot.org.uk](mailto:kay@dtascot.org.uk) with your CV and a covering letter detailing your reasons for applying and specific experience to match the criteria above by no later than 12 noon Monday 13th January 2025.

Interviews will be held on Monday 20th January 2025. These will be in person in our Edinburgh office but we can consider requests for Zoom interviews if required. Please confirm your preference in your covering letter.

If you have any questions regarding your application, please contact Linda Gillespie, [linda@dtascot.org.uk](mailto:linda@dtascot.org.uk), Head of Community Ownership.

**DTAS is committed to a policy of equity & diversity. We take the collection and use of your data seriously, please see link to the** [**DTAS Recruitment Privacy Statement**](https://dtascot.org.uk/sites/default/files/DTAS%20Recruitment%20Privacy%20Notice%20%202019.pdf)

**Background information:**

[Development Trusts Association Scotland](http://www.dtascot.org.uk/) (DTAS) is an independent, member-led organisation which aims to promote, support and represent development trusts in Scotland. Established in 2003, DTA Scotland now has over 350 development trust members, which makes it one of Scotland’s largest and most dynamic community-led networks. Our office is based in the Dalry area of Edinburgh, a short walk from Haymarket Station.

A development trust is a community-owned and led organisation. They aim to create social, economic and environmental renewal in a defined geographical area, creating wealth within that area and keeping it there. They are diverse in nature: large and small, rural, and urban, mainland and island based.

DTAS provides information, advice and support, and facilitates our development trust network. We run an annual conference, produce publications and resources, and provide a suite of peer-to-peer learning, training and support interventions.

We also operate our [Community Ownership Support Service](https://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/about-coss) which is funded by the Scottish Government to support community groups, local authorities, other public bodies in the sustainable transfer of assets into community ownership and [Democratic Finance](https://communitysharesscotland.org.uk/) Scotland, a programme of support for community and social enterprises to consider alternative methods of raising finance.