



Development
Trusts Association
Scotland

A Thriving Community-led Network

New Futures: Former Places of Worship

Churches into community ownership – first steps



COSSS is a Scottish Government funded programme set up to:

- Help community groups take ownership of assets for community benefit
- Support local authorities and other public agencies (relevant authorities) to transfer assets into community ownership
- Provide dedicated support to communities looking to take ownership of churches through the New Futures: Former Places of Worship programme
- Deliver a Facilities Management Advisory Service

**Advisor-led
support**

**Across all 32
Local Authority
areas**

**Free to DTAS
members and
non-members**



What is the New Futures: Former Places of Worship programme?

- A three-year programme (January 2025 – December 2027)
- Funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic Environment Scotland and Development Trusts Association Scotland
- To provide enhanced support to community groups considering taking on a former place of worship (typically a church) across Scotland
- In direct response to the significant and unprecedented number of former places of worship that are due to for disposal over the next several years



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA



**Development
Trusts Association
Scotland**

A Thriving Community-led Network



Who delivers the programme, and what does it offer?

The Community Ownership Support Service, within the Development Trusts Association Scotland



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Networking & Events



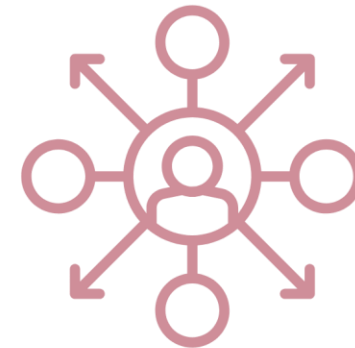
Advice & Support



Training & Resources



Representation & Influencing



Today's workshop: Churches into community ownership – first steps



- Presentation from Audrey Dunn, COSS Churches Advisor (North Scotland)
- Plenty of time for questions (at the end)
- Housekeeping:
 - Please keep yourselves on mute, to avoid background noise
 - Feel free to introduce yourselves in the chat; and if possible, put your name and church building in your profile
 - Please also put any questions in the chat/raise hand
 - This session is being recorded (after this slide!)
- Follow up:
 - We will send the slides out by email
 - Feedback forms – this week and in three months' time
 - Get in touch! With us – and each other (via us if you'd prefer)





Churches into community ownership – first steps

Today's agenda:

- Getting started
- Steps to success - Good governance, Practicalities of managing a historic building, Ensuring viability and sustainability
- Tools and resources
- Accessing support
- Case studies
- Q&A

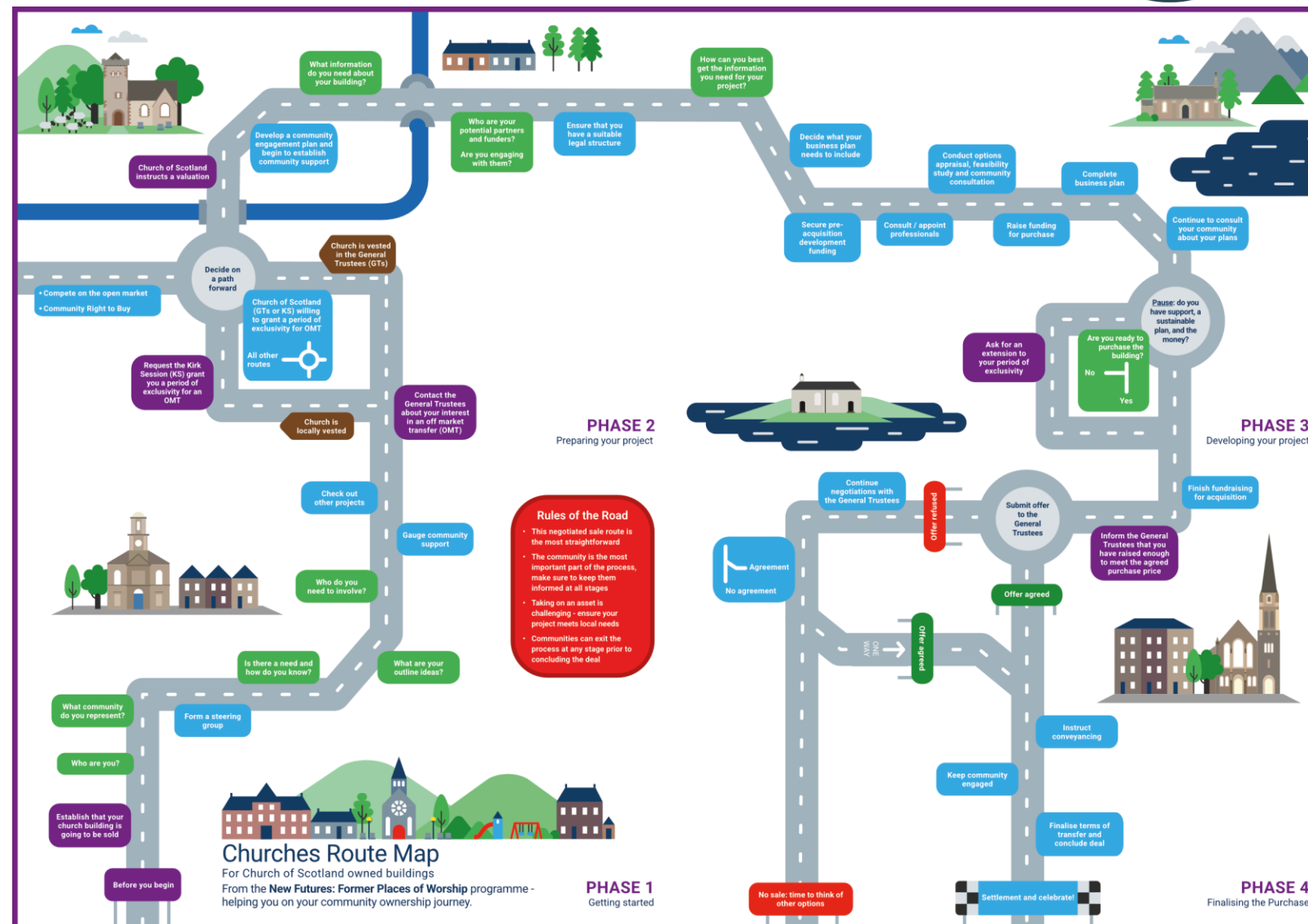
Photo Applecross Community Company (ACC) successfully brought Camusterrach Church into community ownership. Photo credits ACC.



The route to community ownership of churches



- [Churches Route Map](#)
- (Asset Transfer under the Community Empowerment Act doesn't apply, as the Church of Scotland isn't a "relevant authority")
- Community Right to Buy may be necessary – there will be a workshop on this in this series (date tbc), or ask us for more information



PHASE 2 - Preparing your project

Contact the General Trustees about your interest in an off market transfer (OMT)

Once you have worked out your initial ideas and formed a steering group, contact the General Trustees, the property owning arm of the Church of Scotland, at the following address: gentrustees@churchofscotland.org.uk to express an interest in an off market transfer. This process is outlined in the Church of Scotland's Off-Market Transfer Guidance, which is available on the Church of Scotland's website.

The General Trustees will inform you whether your church building is vested in the General Trustees, or locally in the Trustees of the Kirk Session.

Church is vested in the General Trustees

The majority of Church of Scotland buildings are vested in the General Trustees. This means that the building is owned centrally, by the property owning arm of the Church of Scotland. They will inform you whether they are willing to offer your group a period of exclusivity.

Church is locally vested

A minority of Church of Scotland buildings are vested locally. This means that the building is owned by the Trustees of the local Kirk Session.

In such circumstances, the Church of Scotland states in their Guidance that 'It is for the Local Trustees to decide how the building is sold and the General Trustees will not normally play a major role.'

Request the Kirk Session to grant a period of exclusivity for an OMT

When a building is owned by the Trustees of the Kirk Session, then you must persuade them, rather than the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland, to offer your group a period of exclusivity. This can either be an advantage or disadvantage, depending on the attitude of the Kirk Session to your project.

Try engaging with the Kirk Session as soon as possible, being transparent and collaborative in your approach to finding a new use for the building, to increase the likelihood that the Kirk Session is supportive of your buyout.

General Trustees willing to grant a period of exclusivity

All other routes

Get the details of your period of exclusivity in writing from either the General Trustees or the Kirk Session. Then proceed. If you are unable to secure a period of exclusivity, consider other routes to ownership.

Complete an open market Community Right to Buy

If you are looking to have the first option to purchase the asset once it is made available for sale, then Community Right to Buy may be appropriate. See the Community Right to Buy Route Map, available on the COSS website, or speak to your Churches Advisor for more information. Otherwise, you will have to compete on the open market to purchase the building.

General Trustees instruct a valuation

The General Trustees instruct a valuation on the building. The extent to which they will be willing to share the details of the valuation depends on who has been instructed as valuer. Sometimes they will be willing to share the entire valuation, the front page of the valuation, or the valuer may require a fee for the valuation to be shared.

Develop community engagement plan and begin to establish community support

Community support is essential throughout your project. You should begin your community engagement in earnest once you have your period of exclusivity secured. Be sure to make an engagement plan so you are disciplined about how you will do this throughout your project.

Read Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS)'s comprehensive guidance on your obligations and liabilities to members, as well as outlining your purposes. Certain funding programmes may have strict eligibility criteria - make sure your governing document fits with these.

The New Futures programme also hosts a workshop on Involving Your Community as part of our rolling series of workshops.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) have a useful Talking About Heritage resource, available on their website.

What information do you need about your building?

Consider all the work that needs to be done to make a case to the community, the owners or your funders that the project is worth supporting. To build a foundation for this, you will need to gather information about the building and its contents.

For church buildings specifically, the New Futures programme has guidance notes on this subject, available on our website.

Who are your potential funders? Are you engaging with them?

Now you know the information you need to gather, identify the funding you need to take the project to the next phase, and contact the relevant funders at an early stage.

Connect with appropriate organisations and funders to establish what support you will be able to access following acquisition.

It is also likely that you will need to raise funding yourselves locally through a range of different approaches, such as a crowdfunding campaign.

The New Futures programme has resources and workshops on grant funders, and crowdfunding, and business and financial planning, available on our website.

Ensure that you have a suitable legal structure

Now that you have an idea of what you are planning to do with the building and what services/enterprise activities you wish to run, it is time to either check that your current legal structure is appropriate, or set up a new legal entity to allow you to deliver on your ideas.

Your legal structure and appropriate governing documents are important - they set out your obligations and liabilities to members, as well as outlining your purposes. Certain funding programmes may have strict eligibility criteria - make sure your governing document fits with these.

The New Futures programme has a guidance note on the various legal structures you can use.

PHASE 1 - Getting started

Before you begin

The process of bringing a church building into community ownership can be challenging and complex, but the New Futures programme has resources which will help you get started.

Your Church, Your Community will give you a good overview of what you will need to consider at the outset if you are thinking about taking a church into community ownership.

You can find this, and other resources, online on our website.

Establish that your church building is going to be sold

The Church of Scotland's Off-Market Transfer Guidance explains how the Church approaches selling its assets to community organisations.

To find out whether the building you are interested in will be sold by the Church of Scotland, the New Futures programme keeps a record of which buildings have been earmarked for disposal.

For the most up-to-date information about whether a building has already been identified for disposal, please contact either your local Presbytery Office or the General Trustees (GTs) at: gentrustees@churchofscotland.org.uk

Who are you?

Are you an individual or group of people who want to help organise others in your community to bring a church building into community ownership? Are you a member of the congregation who wants to see the building used into the future?

What community do you represent?

Define your community and be inclusive. Are you a geographic community or a community brought together by shared interests? Be clear from the beginning what area your community covers (this will later be defined formally in your organisation's constitution).

Take note of potential future requirements from funders, or the legislation such as Community Right to Buy at this stage.

Form a steering group

Whilst you are exploring options, you may want to set up a steering group. This will give structure to your group, and create a formal entity to engage with the Church of Scotland.

The New Futures programme has a template for a steering group looking at church buildings, available on our website.

Is there a need and how do you know?

Many groups form in response to a church being sold, but it is important to ensure that your project meets a need within the community. If not, the project is unlikely to be sustainable in the long term.

What opportunities will owning this asset bring to your community? What are the needs of your community more widely? Be careful not to create wish lists - this is about being able to demonstrate a clear need.

What are your outline ideas?

You may be looking to take on a church building for any one of a number of reasons. Get your ideas down on paper so that you can relay them to others, gather support and research new ideas.

The New Futures programme has helpful guidance notes on our website which includes information on some of the most popular uses for church buildings.

Who do you need to involve?

Look at the people currently involved in your project. Think about carrying out a skills audit, this helps to identify skills gaps, allowing you to encourage others to use additional skills you need to get involved and help.

You might consider involving:

- local community organisations
- local businesses
- people with a connection to the church building

Church buildings already have a distinct community associated with them. Consider contacting the congregation and Kirk Session for support.

According to the Church of Scotland's guidance, 'The GTs will usually only consider an off market transfer if both the Kirk Session and the Presbytery are supportive.' So it is important that they are consulted at an early stage.

Gauge community support

See if your community supports your ideas in principle, through a simple survey or community meeting. Early-stage engagement will help you decide whether to proceed, and will support your request for a period of exclusivity.

Check out other projects

Identify similar projects that have gone through this process and speak to them about their experiences. This is extremely important as they can give you a 'warts and all' approach, and their experiences with funders, consultants, and others. You may be able to access funding to help with this.

The New Futures programme website lists a variety of examples and case studies of previous projects. You can also speak to your Churches Advisor, who will be able to direct you to relevant examples.

PHASE 3 - Developing your project

How can you best get the information you need for your project?

To be confident that you can deliver your project, you will need a full business plan with a costed budget. This will set out all the details about the organisation, the asset, the local community context, what activities will take place in the building, who your partners are, and how it will all be paid for.

It is an essential document to give confidence to you, your community and funders) that you have a viable and sustainable proposal to ensure the long-term success of an important community asset.

You might have the skills and experience within your organisation to do all of this yourselves, or you might need to commission external support.

Decide what your business plan needs to include

Decide what you can do yourselves, and what support you can get for free. Carry out a skills audit so that you know what skills and experience you have within your organisation and local community.

Find out what free support is available from other agencies such as your local Third Sector Interface, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise, Business Gateway, Social Enterprise Scotland, and Accelerate.

Following this, you will know what external support you will need to buy in.

Secure pre-acquisition development funding

Once you know what external professional support you need to buy in, you will need to source the funding for this. This may be from your own fundraising efforts. If you are applying for grant funding, most grant funders will require a minimum number of comparable quotes.

Consult/appoint professionals

Your project will need professional input, typically from architects, surveyors and other specialist services. You might need to contract with a consultant to carry out some of the work, so a detailed brief and open tendering process will be required.

It is best practice to have a well-designed brief before you appoint professionals, and you will also require a contractual agreement with your chosen consultants.

Conduct options appraisal, feasibility study and community consultation

Some of this work may be carried out by a consultant that you have contracted with, or by yourselves if you have the appropriate skills, time and resources available. It is important to consider all the options available to you both in terms of addressing the needs you have identified, and the proposed use of the property you are looking to purchase. Don't forget that the option to 'do nothing' should always be considered.

Raise funding for purchase

Capital funding is for any fixed costs such as purchase of the asset, construction or refurbishment. Development funding may be needed for additional costs. You may need further technical advice to make sure your project is sustainable. And you may wish to employ or contract with an individual to project manage the post-acquisition capital development phase.

Complete business plan

Once you have identified your preferred approach, indicative costs and how they will be funded, you need to compile a business plan to demonstrate the viability of your project. The plan should also include (among other things), financial projections, a market appraisal and an assessment of the risks. Your business plan will help you set out the case for funding and finance for the project.

Finalise fundraising

Now that you have support for the project, a detailed and sustainable business plan, and you have raised the money you need, it is time to complete the purchase of the building. Call in any outstanding pledges, make sure you have received the grants/loans you have been given, and close your crowdfunding campaign.

Inform the General Trustees that you have raised enough to meet the valuation

Let the General Trustees know that the money has been raised and that you will shortly be submitting an offer to purchase the asset.

Submit offer to the General Trustees

Your offer will need to be submitted by your solicitor. You can find a list of solicitors on the Law Society of Scotland website. Your Kirk Session and the Presbytery are the charity / Directors of the company.

The offer should be submitted to: The Church of Scotland Law Department, 121 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4YN, 0131 240 2203, properties@churchofscotland.org.uk.

Offer refused

Continue negotiations with the General Trustees

If you have been granted a period of exclusivity, and are able to meet the Church of Scotland's valuation, then the offer is likely to be accepted.

If the offer is not accepted for any reason, identify the problem and re-engage with the General Trustees immediately to try and find a solution that is suitable for both parties.

Agreement

If negotiations are successful and a solution is found, then proceed to the 'offer agreed' pathway.

If they are not, continue on the 'offer refused' pathway.

No agreement

No sale: time to think of other options

If you have been unable to agree a deal to purchase the land or buildings, it is time to regroup and consider your options. This might include taking another route to ownership, identifying alternative sites, or other ways in which you can deliver your project.

Continue to consult your community about your plans

It is important to consult your community about your plans as they develop, giving them the chance to collaborate, feedback and improve.

You can do this by holding one or more public meeting, which are available to attend in-person or online. Ensure that any event is well publicised and open to everyone. It is important to make sure people feel comfortable to provide feedback and that you take people's comments and suggestions on board.

Pause: do you have support, a sustainable plan, and the money?

Pause and think about whether you have everything you need to purchase the asset, and run it effectively.

Have you raised enough money to meet the valuation, and any other fundraising goals you may have, such as legal fees and running costs? Do you have a comprehensive and sustainable plan about how you will run the asset, and does your community support the plan?

Are you ready to purchase the building?

Now that you have assessed how things stand at this point in time, are you prepared to take on the asset?

If you are ready, then proceed to making an offer. If you are not ready, then ask for an extension to your period of exclusivity.

Ask for an extension to your period of exclusivity

In the Church of Scotland's Off-Market Transfer Guidance is the provision that they may be willing to extend a period of exclusivity. The guidance states that this decision will be based on the following:

- The building is still being used.
- The Kirk Session continues to support the transfer.
- A constituted body has been set up to take ownership of the building (e.g. SOCL) and
- The group can show clear progress in fundraising.

PHASE 4 - Finalising purchase

Finalise fundraising

Now that you have support for the project, a detailed and sustainable business plan, and you have raised the money you need, it is time to complete the purchase of the building. Call in any outstanding pledges, make sure you have received the grants/loans you have been given, and close your crowdfunding campaign.

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Offer agreed

Instruct conveyancing

Conveyancing is the legal process of transferring title (ownership) of a property from a seller to a buyer. It is important to check the terms and conditions of the sale thoroughly to ensure you will be able to carry out your plans. In particular, make sure that access rights are agreed, and that a comprehensive inventory of contents is included so that you know what you are acquiring by way of fixtures and fittings. Your solicitor will be able to advise you.

Keep community engaged

See the Church of Scotland's Off-Market Transfer Guidance, and the disposal of redundant churches guidance document for more information.

Finalise terms of transfer and conclude deal

As with every step in the process, ensure the community is kept informed of your plans. It is especially important to be transparent and communicative in the period before the asset comes into community ownership.

Settlement and celebrate!

Do a final check of the terms and conditions of the sale. If you have any concerns, take legal advice. Once you are satisfied, conclude the sale with the General Trustees.

You may wish to hold a public event to celebrate the official community ownership of the church building. You may also wish to issue a press release or speak to a journalist in advance about the story. Give everyone the opportunity to get involved and make sure you take lots of photographs. It may seem like it has been a long haul but remember it's only the very start of your journey.



Follow the QR code to the New Futures: Former Places of Worship programme website



The Community Ownership Support Service (COSS) is a Scotland wide service which provides advice and support for communities interested in bringing assets into community ownership. It is part of Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS), a member-led network of Development Trusts in Scotland.
Contact T: 0131 225 2080 E: cos@dtas.org.uk www: dtascommunityownership.org.uk/



The Community Land Team in the Scottish Government administers the various rights to buy under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Contact E: crb@gov.scot T: 0300 244 9822

The New Futures: Former Places of Worship programme launched in January 2025 to provide advice and support to community organisations considering bringing former places of worship into community ownership. It is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS).



Your church, your community



EAGLAISEAN
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA



Heritage
Trust
Network



Community
Ownership
Support Service

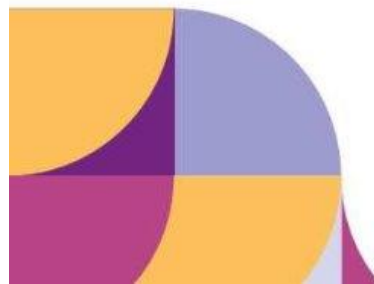
Development Trusts Association Scotland

3 Steps to success

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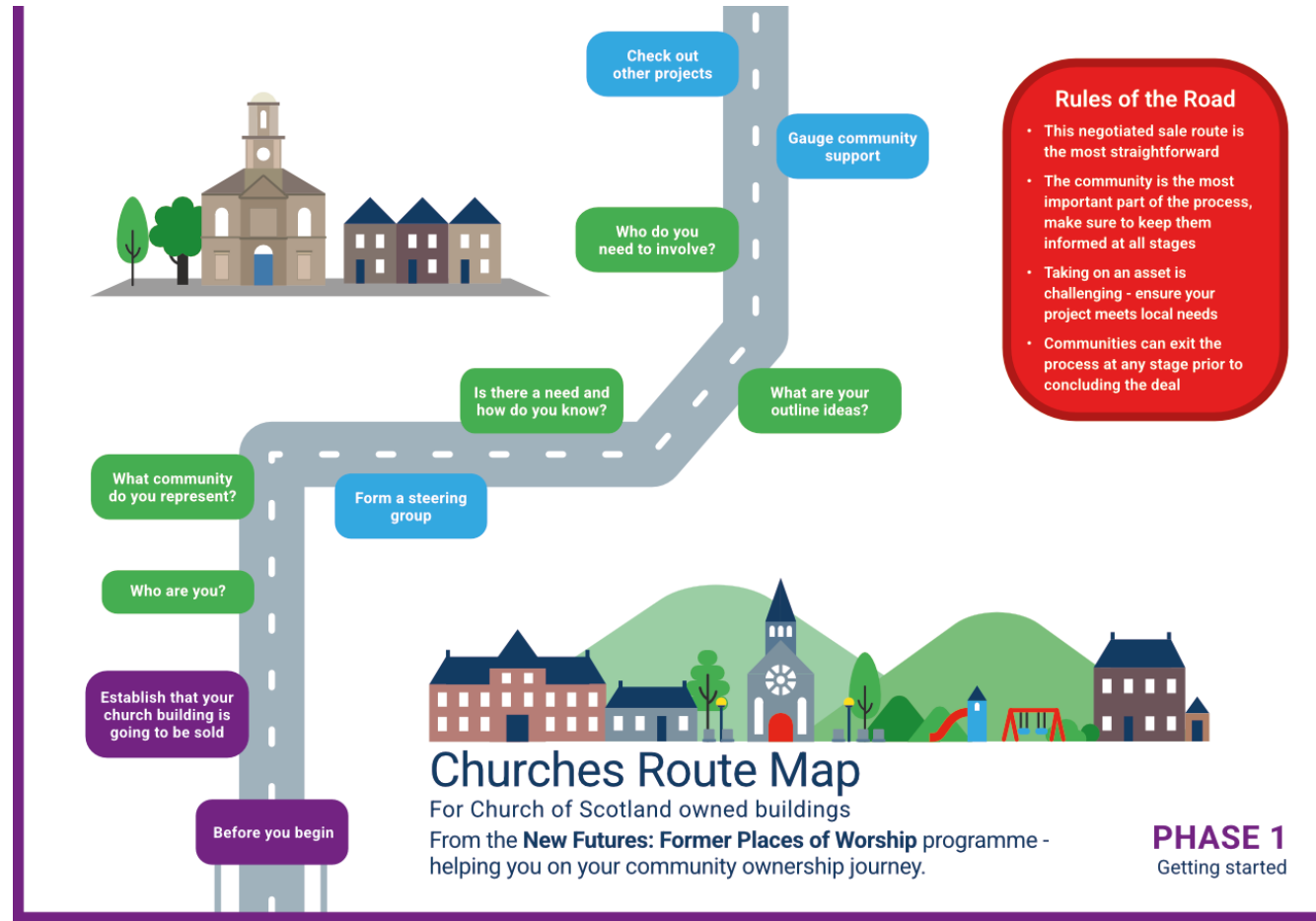
One of the most common questions that people ask when considering whether to undertake a project like this is – what do I do next?

The steps that have been summarised on this page and in the more detailed information that follows, have been written for people who are considering the acquisition of a church for the community. These don't have to be completed in the order provided, but have been presented here in the order they are most likely to be carried out.



The Rules of the Road

- Negotiated sale most straightforward.
- Community is most important part of the process – keep them informed throughout.
- Taking on an asset is challenging – make sure your project meets local needs.
- Communities can exit the process at any stage prior to concluding the sale.





Church of Scotland procedure for communities



General Trustees Property Sale Guidance Document

Establish that your church building is going to be sold

Before you begin

Eligible Buildings

In some cases, where a building is in a desirable location, sits within its own plot of land, or is in a busy centre of population the GTs may need to test the open market to meet their duties as Trustees. Community groups can still make an offer in these circumstances.

Where the building does not fulfill this criteria, the GTs are often willing to give exclusivity to a serious community interest. This means that if your group is organised and ready to proceed, you may be able to secure the building without it going to open market.

If the interested Community Group and building are thought to be eligible as detailed above, please contact the GTs by writing to: **gentrustees@churchofscotland.org.uk**.



Church of Scotland procedure for communities –page 4

Exclusivity

If a community group meets the eligibility requirements and shows interest in an eligible property, the General Trustees may offer a period of exclusivity. This means the property will not be marketed during that time, and the Trustees will work only with that group.

The conditions of exclusivity are:

- Length: 6 months, starting once the valuation is confirmed.
- Purpose: To give the group time to engage with the wider community, secure funding, and complete the process of becoming a legally constituted body.
- Preparation: Ideally, much of this work should begin before the Church approvals process is completed, so the group is ready to move quickly.

In some cases, a short extension to exclusivity may be possible if:

- The building is still being used,
- The Kirk Session continues to support the transfer,
- A constituted body has been set up to take ownership of the building (e.g. SCIO), and
- The group can show clear progress in fundraising.

If these conditions are not met, the GTs may need to place the property on the open market. Likewise, if there are serious health and safety concerns or urgent repair issues, this may limit the GTs' ability to extend exclusivity.



Who are you?

Are you an individual or group of people who want to help organise others in your community to bring a church building into community ownership? Are you a member of the congregation who wants to see the building be used into the future?

What community do you represent?

Define your community and be inclusive. Are you a geographic community or a community brought together by shared interest? Be clear from the beginning what area your community covers (this will later be defined formally in your organisation's constitution).

Take note of potential future requirements from funders, or the legislation such as Community Right to Buy at this stage.



Establish a working group

- Get a group together - you can't do it alone!
- Define your community
- If possible, gather people from one or more existing local groups and include people from across the community
- Speak to the congregation
- Spread the word – ask for volunteers
- Be clear about the commitment that's needed
- Have a range of skills in the group
- Do a skills audit



TOP TIP! Ensure good governance from the onset



Set a code of conduct



Be clear in roles and responsibilities



Community ownership = collective leadership



Policies and Procedures



Communicate well



Once constituted – this is your bible!





Development Trusts – legal structures

Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG)

No share capital or shareholders & members have no claim to company assets

Owned by members on a collective rather than individual basis – democratically controlled by membership (1-member-1-vote)

Personal liability of members is nominal amount & directors personally protected

Can apply for charitable status on establishment or any later point

Flexible and democratic form – easy to set up

Two-tier Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)

Offer nearly all of the characteristics & flexibility of CLG with charitable status

Charities from the outset & regulated solely by OSCR – streamlined reporting requirements

Two-tier option is suited to development trusts (single-tier not suitable for DT model as not democratically accountable to members)

Well suited to development trusts that are sure they wish charitable status from the outset

Community Benefit Society

Similar to CLG in essence, **regulated by the FCA** – reporting requirements therefore slightly different

Can get **charitable status**

Allows you to do community share offer

DTAS has developed CBS model rules and guidance notes, working with Burness Paul

DTAS's partner service Community Shares Scotland can provide guidance & support

More information on legal forms can be found in the DTAS Legal Forms Factsheet and the DTAS Startup Toolkit

Establishing a working group & good governance: resources



- See HIE's [Ten Steps to Community Ownership](#)
- In particular:
 - [Starting out as a steering group](#)
 - [Carrying out a skills analysis](#)
- See SCVO's resources on [Good Governance](#)
- [TSIs](#) (Third Sector Interfaces) - Support and advice on project development, supporting social enterprise delivering services, volunteer support
- [Acas](#) - Workplace rights, rules and best practice
- Volunteer Scotland: [Volunteer Scotland](#)



Gather information on the building

- Get to know as much as possible about every aspect of the building – ask for information from the current owner
- Is it a Listed Building?
- Local significance for events or traditions?
- Ownership: graveyard, surrounding land, rights of access
- Conditions or burdens?
- Consider professional advice (surveyor / architect)





Key things to look out for

- Check roof, rainwater goods, walls, etc. to identify repair needs
- Get access to the inside - check internal structure; what works what doesn't. How flexible is the space, does it meet your needs?
- Anything of significance that needs retained? [Research in Action Church Heritage](#) can provide guidance and support on this.
- Utilities, does it have electricity, running water, etc.



BEDRULE CHURCH, SCOTTISH BORDERS

Gathering information on the building: resources



-
- Listed buildings are detailed in the Historic Environment Scotland database: [Search for a Listed Building | Historic Environment Scotland](#)
 - Additional information can be found in the Trove database: [Welcome to trove.scot | The key to Scotland's past](#)
 - There is guidance here: [Listed Buildings | Public Body for Scotland's Historic Environment](#)
 - Other information about churches in Scotland is available here: [Scotland's Churches Trust - living traditions of Scottish faith](#)
 - Maintenance resources from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings: [SPAB Maintenance Co-operatives Project Resources](#)
 - Conservation support from the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland: <https://www.ahss.org.uk/>
 - Research in Action on church Heritage: <https://churchheritage.scot/>



Gathering information on the building: resources

- <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings> - covers various guides from bat surveys, maintenance, looking after graveyards, achieving net zero
- <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/good-practice-guidance> - covers Conservation Management Planning, Management and Maintenance planning, (as well as procurement guidance and other things required to achieve grant funding)
- <https://churchgrowth.org.uk/support-resources/> - various docs we already have but technical issues offer insight into dealing with felt roofs, bats, fire exits etc.
- <https://www.ctfc.org.uk/caring-for-cumbrias-churches/resources/> - conservation/technical advice (videos)
- [General Trustees Off-Market Transfer Guidance Document](#)

Get Facilities Management advice from DTAS



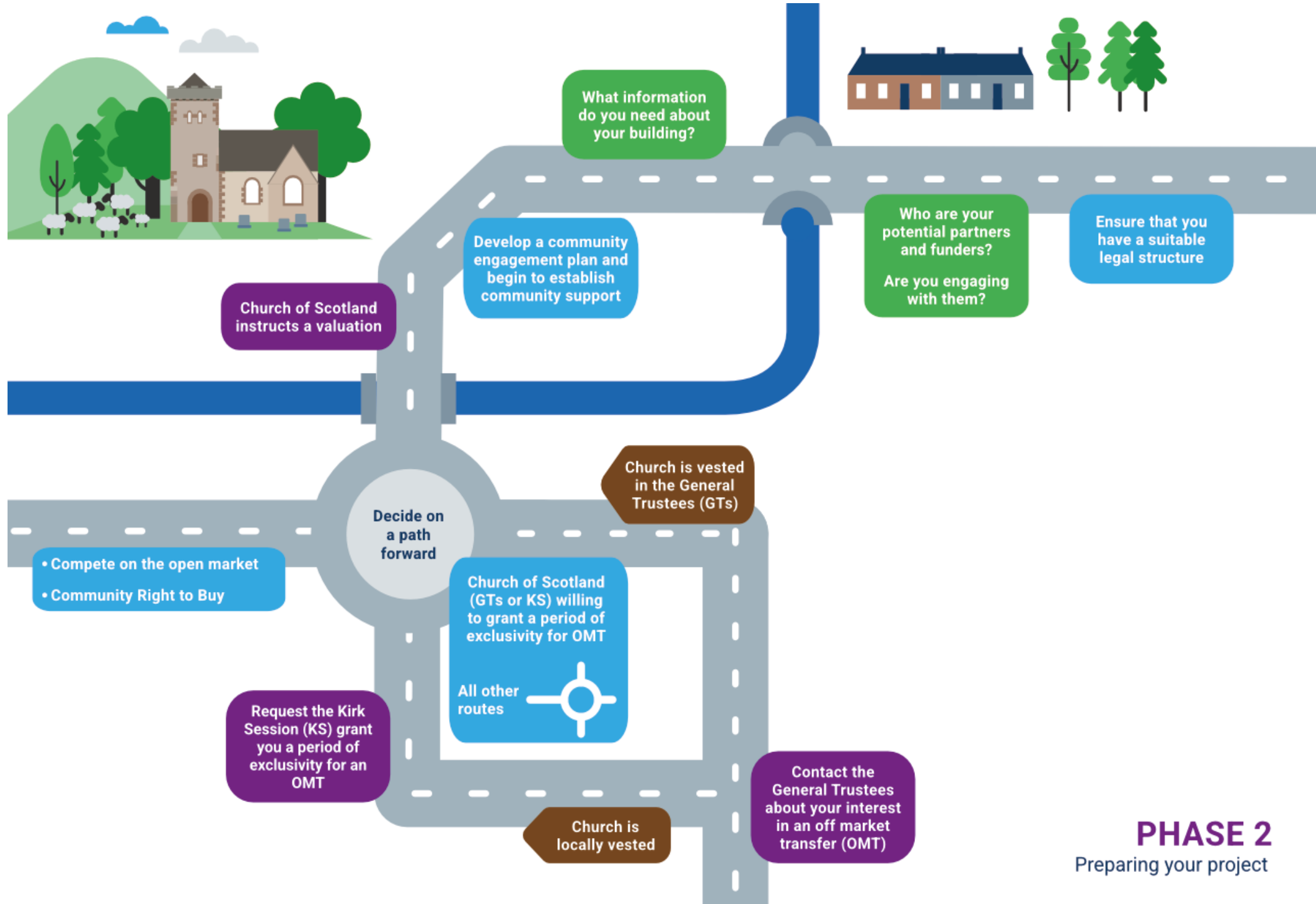
Andrew Aldous

Facilities Management Advisor

andrew@dtascot.org.uk

07946 024025

- Operational efficiency
- Health and Safety
- Risk Assessments
- Legal Compliance
- Environmental performance





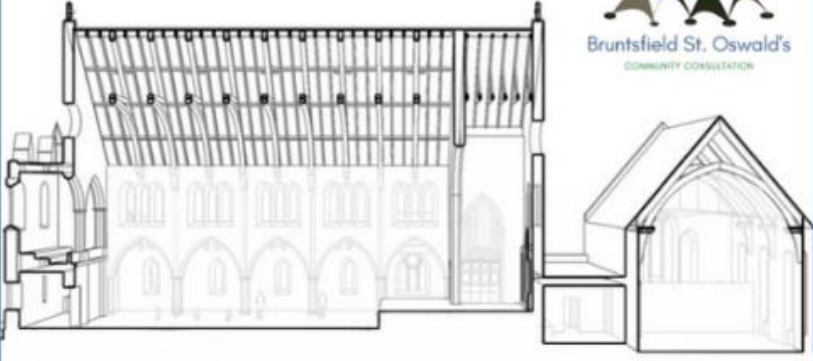
Engage with your community

- Community engagement is a continuous process (and is one of the first things you do)
- Gathering people's views, ideas and priorities will help determine if the church building can fulfil a useful function, be of benefit to the community, and has support
- Through engagement, the church building can be understood and evaluated in the wider context of other community assets



Community engagement

Draw what you would like to see inside St Ossies!



Bruntsfield St. Oswald's
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Please return to Bruntsfield St. Oswald's Community Group,
c/o Eric Liddell Centre, Holy Corner or
Bruntsfield Primary School

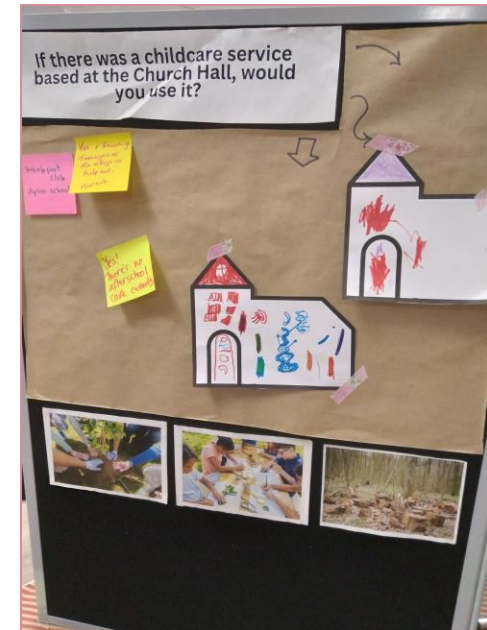
What's your vision for Bruntsfield St. Oswald's?
Share with us your ideas.

Your postcode: _____
Your age: _____

@bfieldstoswalds

Extract from St Oswald's Centre Business Plan

- Informing / consulting / engaging
- Is the church building important to us? If so, why?
- What future do we want to see for this building? How could it be used? What does our community need, and could this building help to meet that need?



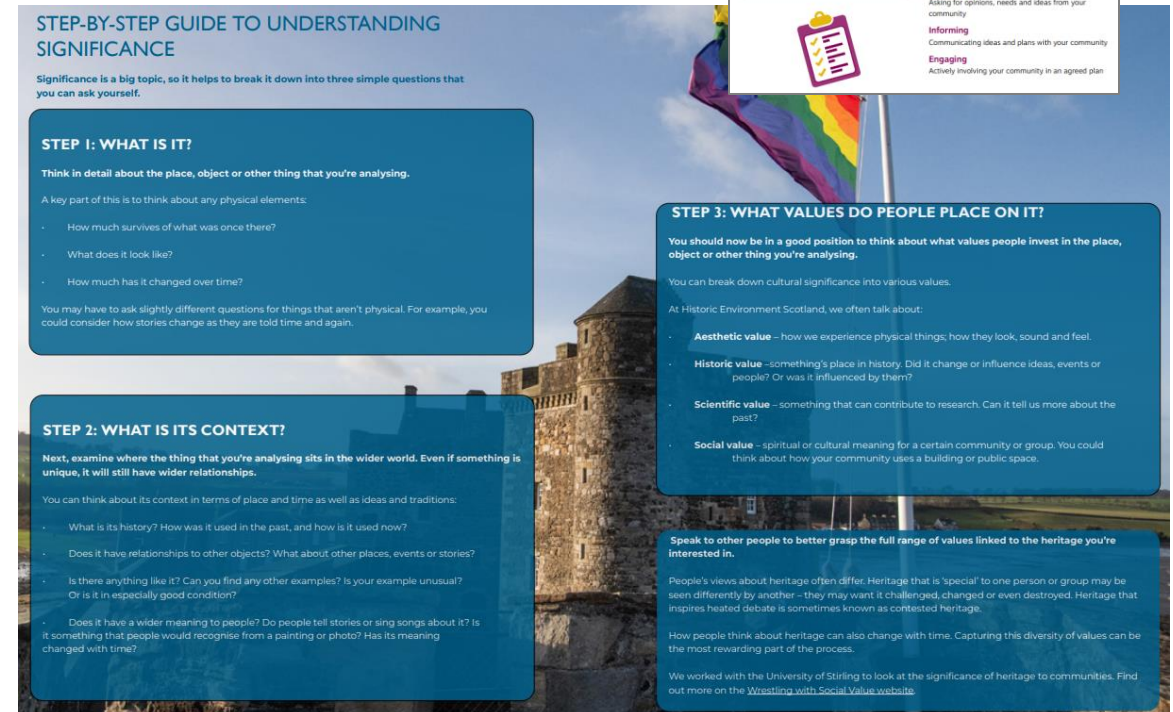
Lochwinnoch Church
consultation event

Photo: COSS



Community engagement: resources

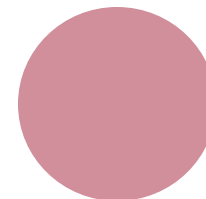
- DTAS resource: Involving Your Community | DTAS Community Ownership Support Service
- HES have developed this guidance: Talking About Heritage
 - See the questions on page 21 in particular; the step-by-step guide to understanding significance
- Plunkett guidance on community engagement for community ownership of assets (Under "Getting Started")



Learn from other communities

**scottish
community
alliance**

local people leading



Gain valuable learning from experienced groups



Case studies and presentations available



Get in touch with established groups; network



Visit other projects



Access grants through the Community Learning Exchange



Take heart, learn and be inspired!

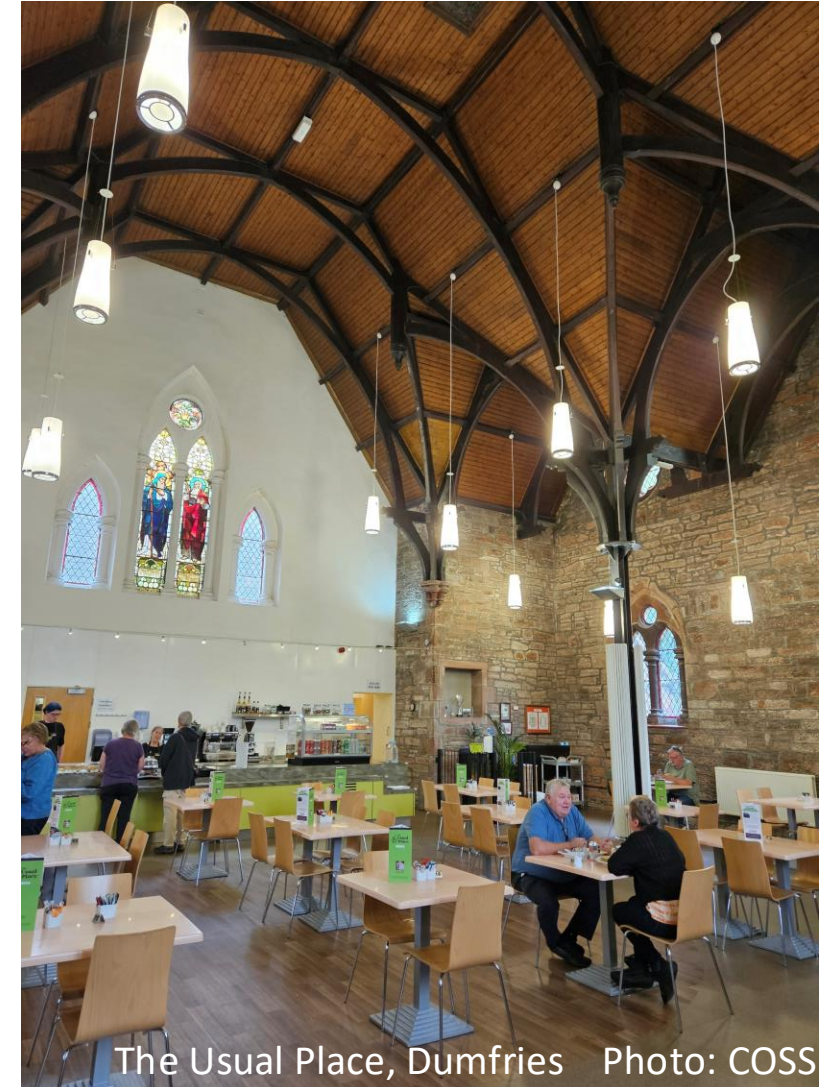


The Pyramid, Anderston COSS photo

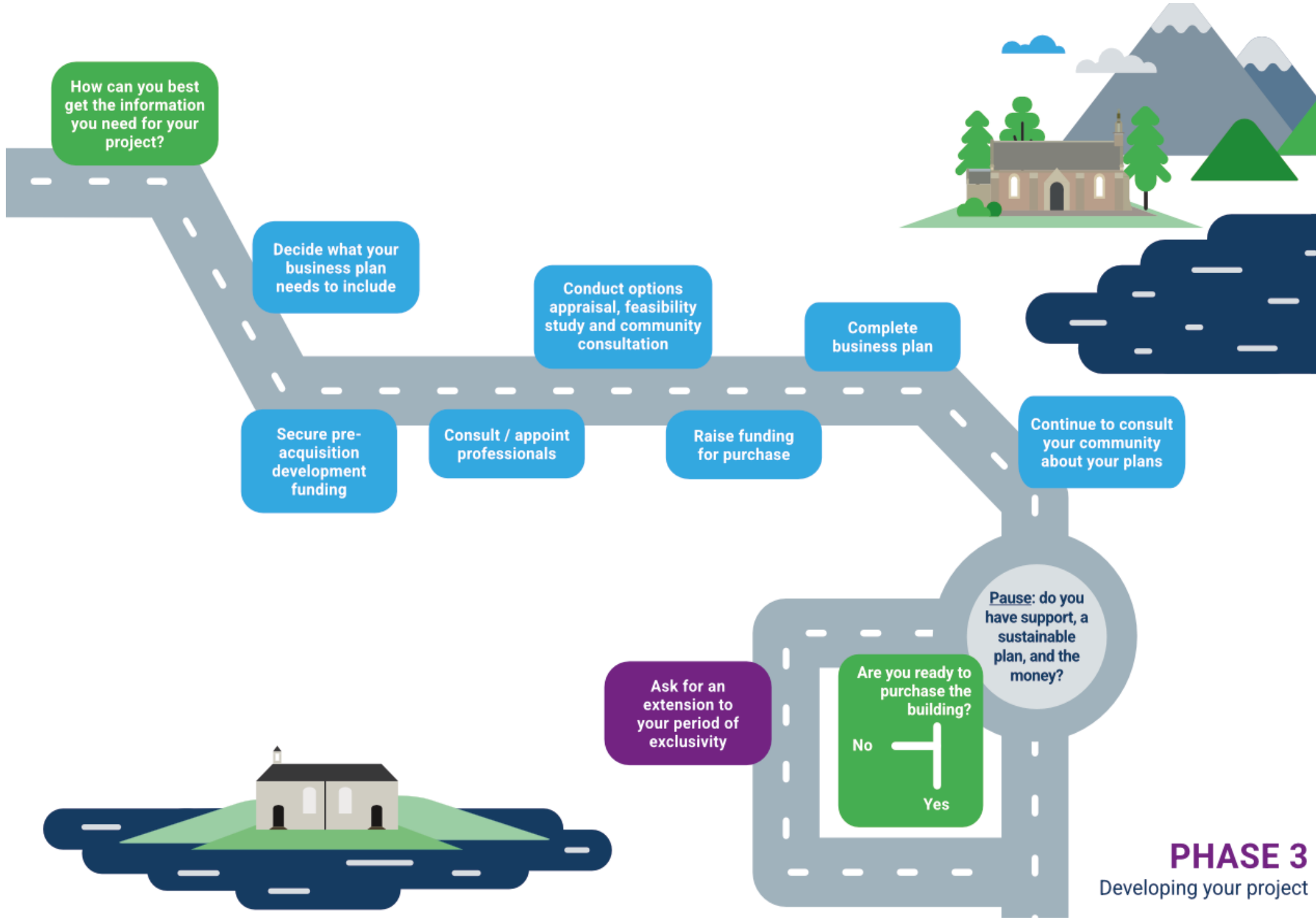
Learn from other communities: resources



- Community Learning Exchange funding: [Community Learning Exchange](#)
- OSCR website: [OSCR | Home](#)
- Companies House: [Find and update company information - GOV.UK](#)
- Ask us about visits you'd like us to arrange
- And come to our workshop: [Involving Your Community](#)

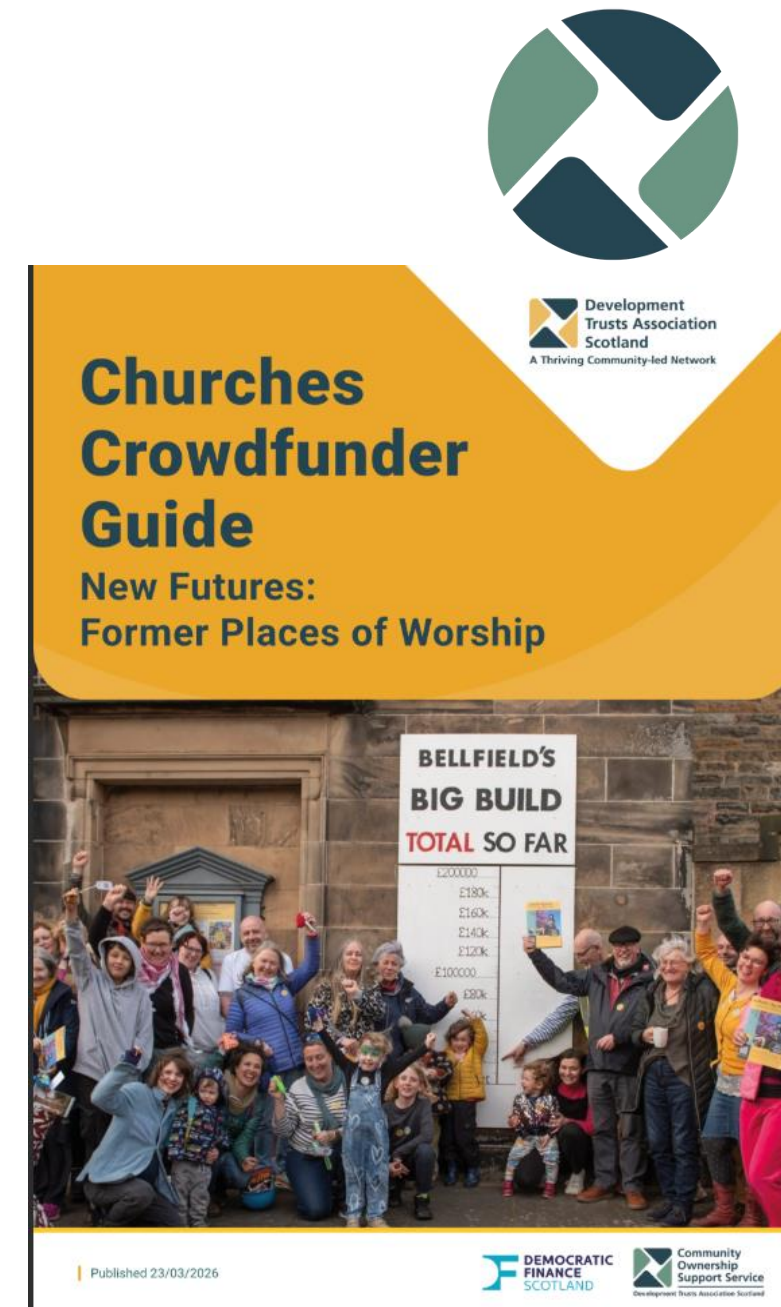


The Usual Place, Dumfries Photo: COSS



Funding

- Capital funding to acquire the building itself
- Post acquisition renovation and project costs
- Start-up and development costs for professional support
- Think beyond the usual suspects!
- Churches Crowdfunder Guide
- And come to our Funding workshops:
 - [Finance and Fundraising 1: Mainstream Funders](#)
 - Finance and Fundraising 2: Other Funding Methods



Funding: resources



- [Scottish Land Fund](#)
- [NL Community Fund](#)
- [William Grant Foundation](#)
- <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/>
- [Grants and Funding | Historic Environment Scotland](#)
- Fundraising toolkit: <https://inspiringfundraising.co.uk/>
- If you are remaining as a place of worship, even in part (committing to six services per year at minimum), then you would be eligible for grants from [National Churches Trust](#).



Action Party: The Bellfield

Develop a sustainable business model



It is an essential document to give confidence (to you, your community and funders) that you have available and sustainable proposal to ensure the long-term success of an important community asset

Developing a clear business model for your organisation will:

- Help to identify the potential challenges
- Help to determine if the project is viable and sustainable for the long term
- Demonstrate how you will generate revenue to cover all your operational costs
- Clarify what the business offers and to whom

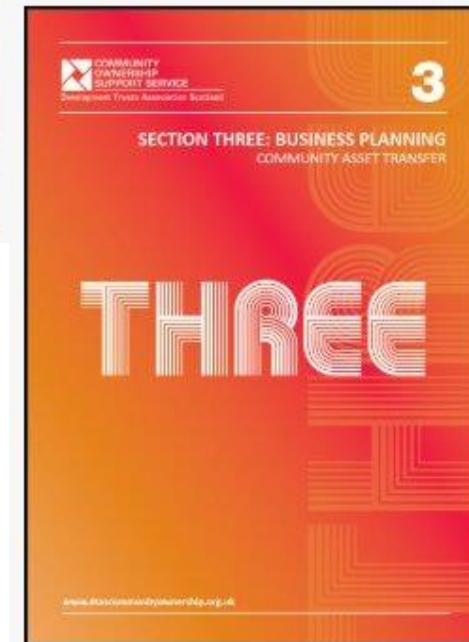
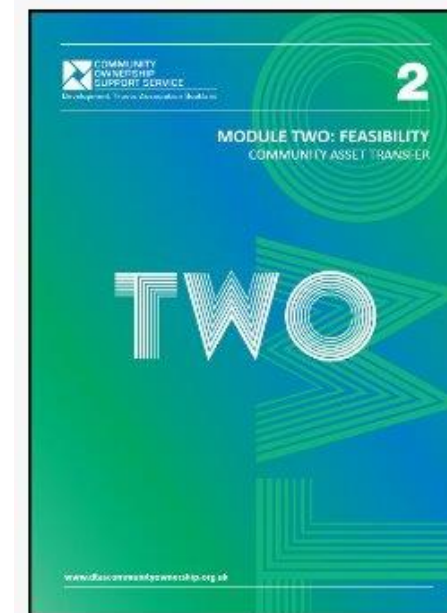


Bedrule Kirk

Develop a sustainable business model



- COSS resource: Feasibility Study (prior to BP) [2-COSS-Module-2-Feasibility.pdf](#)
- Business Plan:
 - Setting out the delivery of the project
 - 'Investment ready' / 'operational'
 - It is never a static document – it should be designed to evolve
- COSS resource: [3-COSS-Module-3-Business-Planning.pdf](#)



Community ownership of churches



- Bellfield Church, Portobello (2016)
- [About Action Party | Bellfield](#)

OUR STORY

Bellfield is a vibrant community space in the heart of Portobello. Formerly Portobello Old Parish Church, Bellfield offers hire space for every occasion and a programme of regular classes and events. Since opening in June 2018 following a community buy-out, our halls have become a hub for Portobello's lively community, providing a local venue for people to come together to meet, play and celebrate.



THE BELLFIELD VISION

1

A PLACE TO
CELEBRATE

[Read more](#)

2

A SPACE TO MEET

[Read more](#)

3

A HUB FOR
CREATIVITY

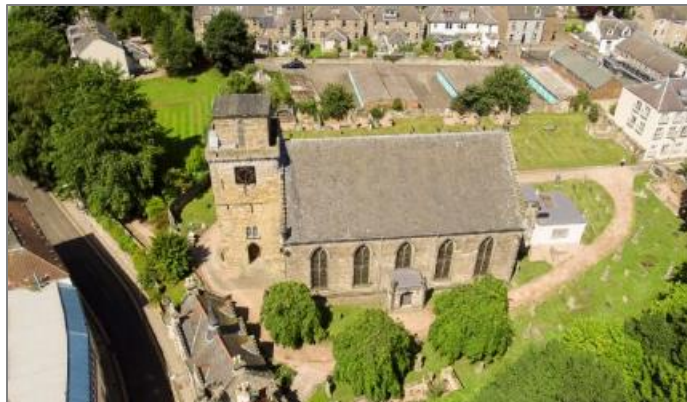
[Read more](#)

4

CONSERVING OUR
PAST AND OUR
FUTURE

[Read more](#)

- Kirkcaldy Old Kirk (2011)
- [Kirkcaldy Old Kirk Trust](#)



Kirkcaldy Old Kirk Trust

maintaining Kirkcaldy's heritage for the community

Community ownership of churches



- Kilmaronock Old Kirk (2017)
- [Kilmaronock Old Kirk | Community Venue](#)
- [How To Take a Kirk Into Community Ownership - Historic Environment Scotland Blog](#)
- St Monans Auld Kirk (2025)
- [St Monans Auld Kirk Enterprise](#)
- [Case Study: St Monans Auld Kirk Enterprise](#) (Heritage Network)
- [St. Monans - Fife Historic Buildings Trust](#)
- [FHBT-Three-Churches-Viability-Report.pdf](#)



St Monans Auld Kirk Enterprise

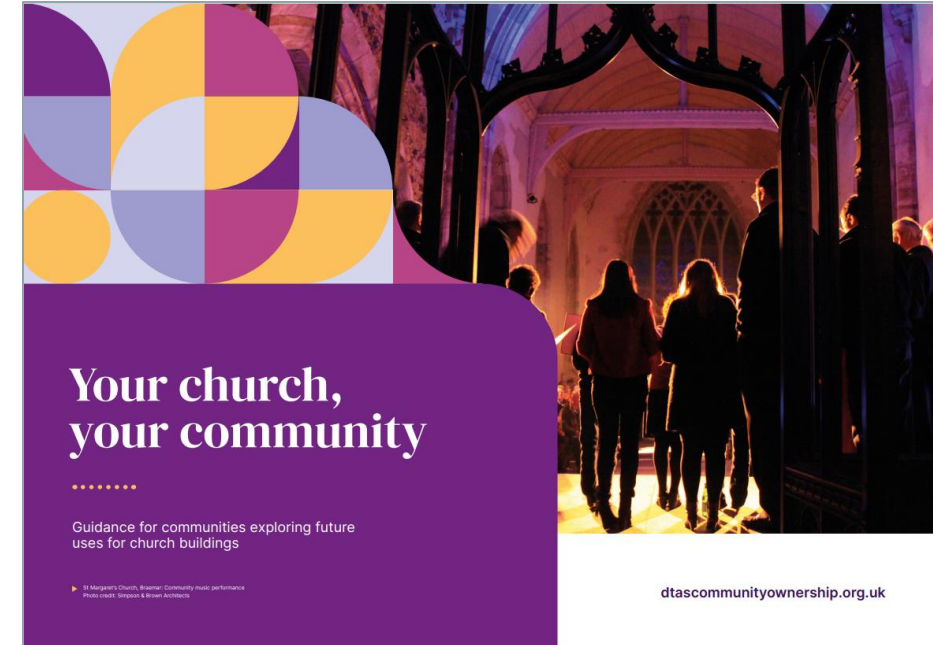
Award £171,741

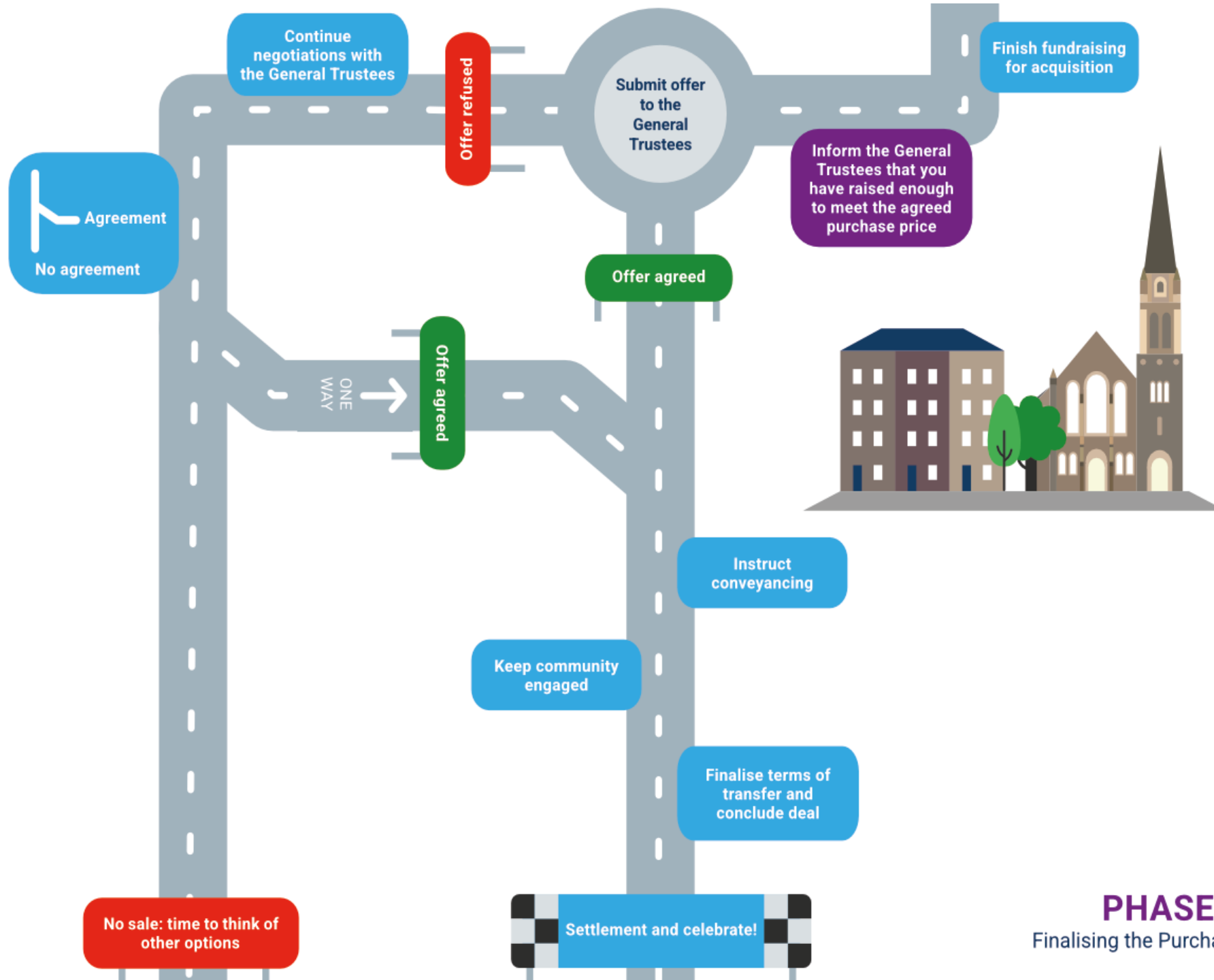
St Monans Auld Kirk Enterprise (SMAKE) will purchase the Grade A-Listed St Monans Auld Kirk in St Monans, Fife from the Church of Scotland. The group will develop the asset into a multi-use social hub and café for the community as well as a space to hold life events such as weddings.

Resources



- [Your church, your community](#)
- [How To Take a Kirk Into Community Ownership - Historic Environment Scotland Blog](#)
- <https://hereford.anglican.org/crossing-the-threshold-toolkit>
- step by step of taking on a church project from set up
- <https://www.befs.org.uk/latest/crucial-time-scotlands-places-worship/>
- <https://heritagetrustnetwork.org.uk/a-future-for-your-church/>





PHASE 4

Finalising the Purchase



Our current online workshop programme

Next up: Involving your Community
on Tuesday 20 October, 12pm midday

Then...

Finance and Fundraising 1:
Tuesday 27 October, 11am

Rolling Workshop Programme

1. First Steps to Community Ownership
2. Involving Your Community
3. Finance and Fundraising 1: Grant Funding
4. Finance and Fundraising 2: Alternative Funding
5. Your Building: A Guide
6. Business Planning
7. Financial Planning
8. Community Right to Buy

Follow the QR code to our eventbrite page or go to our website to sign up to our rolling workshop programme.





Contact details

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