Development Trusts Association Scotland

A Thriving Community-led Network

New Futures: Former Places of Worship Workshop Series 2

Involving your Community

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

- A three-year programme (January 2025 – December 2027) – entering year two
- Part of the Community Ownership Support Service (COSS)
- Funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS)
- 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
- Staffing: three Churches Advisors and a Churches Programme Officer

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND | ÀRAINNEACHD EACHDRAIDHEIL ALBA

Made possible with Heritage Fund

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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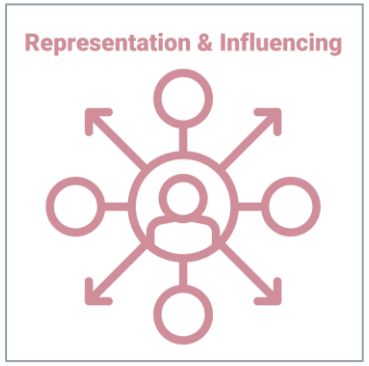


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What events are you delivering, and where can I sign up?

- Series two of our New Futures workshops are taking place **online on Zoom** from **November 2025** into early **2026.**
- There will four workshops before the new year: follow the link to sign up to each.
    - ~~First Steps to Community Ownership~~
    - ~~Standalone Workshop: Planning and Your Church~~
    - Involving your Community
    - Finance and Fundraising 1: Mainstream Funders – Thursday 11th December 2025
- In the new year, we will have the following workshops (Links to sign up coming soon):
    - Finance and Fundraising 2: Alternative Funding Methods – Thursday 15th January 2026
    - Your Building: A Guide - Thursday 22nd January 2026
    - Business Planning - Tuesday 3rd February 2026
    - Financial Planning - Thursday 12th February 2026
    - Community Right to Buy - Tuesday 24th February 2026

Today’s workshop: Involving Your Community

- Presentation from Harry Whitmore, Churches Advisor
- Two speakers from groups looking at acquiring Leith St Andrews and Girvan South.
- Plenty of time for questions during the Q&A 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 Zoom profile
  - Please also put any questions in the chat
  - Please keep any sensitive information confidential (Chatham House Rule) – this session isn’t being recorded
- 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 eachother (via us if you’d prefer)

Involving your community: what to expect



I'll be speaking for about 30 minutes to cover the core principles:

- What is community engagement?
- Why involve your community?
- What do we mean by 'your community'?
- How can you involve your community?
- What does successful community engagement look like?
- How might one go about involving their community? (guest speakers)
- Q&A

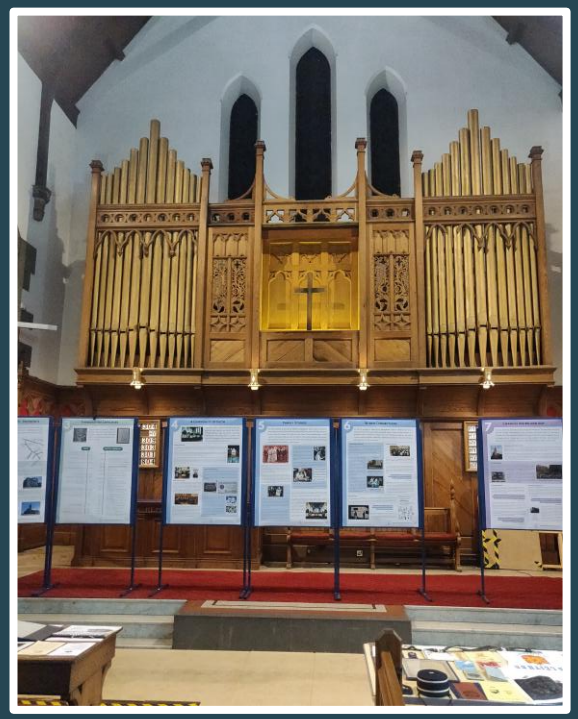
Involving your community: what to expect





Alan Jeans, The South Girvan



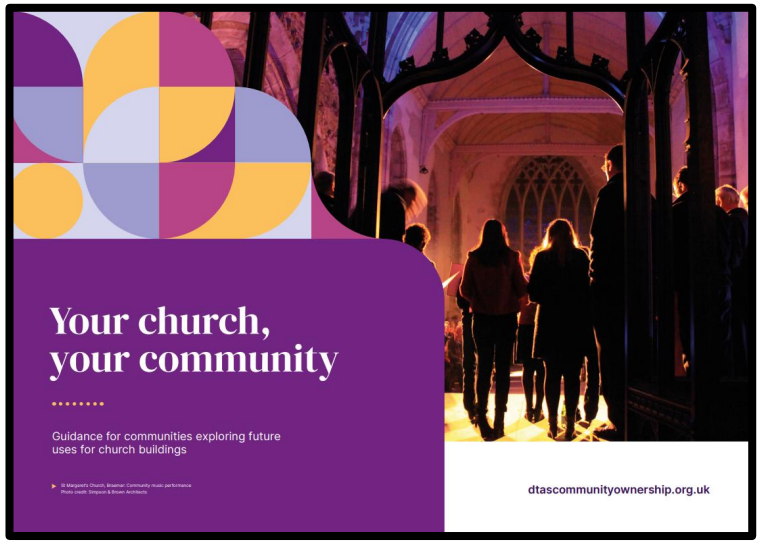


Dr Julian Grant, Leith St Andrews Trust

Where to start?

These questions are relevant because you are all community organisations! You will have ‘communities’ that you represent, and they will need to be involved in your project.

We’re going to be using the terms ‘involving your community’ and ‘community engagement’ fairly interchangeably throughout this workshop.



There is basic information in ‘Your Church Your Community’. The Community Ownership Support Service have a detailed resource called ‘*Involving Your Community*’.





Your church, your community

Guidance for communities exploring future uses for church buildings

St Margaret's Church, Braemar: Community music performance
Photo credit: Simpson & Brown Architects

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Community Ownership Support Service
Development Trusts Association Scotland

Heritage Trust Network

HISTORIC CHURCHES SCOTLAND
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3.3 Engage with your community

Engaging with your community to gather their views should be a key part of your plans and one of the first things you should do to ensure there is support as well as to gather people's views.

Community engagement is not something you do once, more of a continuous process as your project develops.

It can seem daunting if you haven't done it before, but it is essential to ensure that the decisions you make will benefit the area. The degree of involvement and exactly how to involve people has to be matched to your community, as well as the needs and status of your project.

It has a number of key benefits:

- Ensuring that the project reflects local needs, has local support and does not have any adverse unintended consequences
- Providing new ideas and different perspectives
- Identifying new partners and collaborators
- Finding people who can bring new skills, knowledge and experience to the project
- Giving your community, public bodies, funders and other organisations confidence that your project is rooted in community needs and has community support

It's important to be clear why, when and how you are going to involve people. Clarify why you are involving people at each stage of your project and explain how you are going to do it. You should be clear with the community about the scale of the challenge and the amount of work that will be required. It's important to manage expectations and be realistic about what is achievable.

Have a look at the COSS publication **'Involving Your Community'** for further ideas on local engagement

Types of community engagement

Informing people
Is the starting point and will be important throughout the project

Consulting people
Should take place when there are options to define or decisions to be taken

Engaging people
Should take place when there is clear support and commitment for your project and where people want to get closely involved

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP SUPPORT SERVICE
Development Trusts Association Scotland



INVOLVING YOUR COMMUNITY

A practical guide to the benefits and techniques for involving and consulting communities in community asset based projects.

www.dtascommunityownership.org.uk

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Delivered by The Development Trusts Association Scotland, the Community Ownership Support Service is funded by the Scottish Government to support the sustainable transfer of public assets into community ownership. This advisor-led service provides advice and information on all aspects of asset transfer on a Scotland-wide basis.

Introduction

This guide is intended for community organisations and other groups who are planning to undertake a community asset project. It will also be a useful tool on how to gather information and build relationships with their community for any project they undertake or issue they may have.

Involving your community in developing and managing your community asset project should be a key part of your plans. It can seem daunting if you haven't done it before and the benefits may initially be unclear.

This guide:

- Explains why community involvement is key to the development and ultimate success of your project.
- Suggests how and when to involve your community.
- Provides links to other sources of more detailed advice and information.

Its key messages are:

- Effective community involvement is vital to ensure your project is a success.
- Involvement can range from informing and consultation to active engagement in taking decisions and implementing the project.
- The degree of involvement and exactly how to involve people has to be matched to your community, as well as the needs and status of your project.
- Community involvement should be planned from the start of the project and be a continuing part of the work.
- There are a range of approaches you can use and it is normally best to use a combination of them during the lifetime of a project.
- There are many sources of advice and support. A good place to start is to identify another project which has been successful in involving a local community.

Why involving your community will help

Involving your community in your project from the outset and at every stage will bring benefit for your project, your organisation and your community.

These can be summarised as:

For your project

- Ensuring that the project reflects local needs, has local support and does not have any adverse unintended consequences.
- Providing new ideas and different perspectives.
- Identifying new partners and collaborators.
- Finding people who can bring new skills, knowledge and experience to the project.

For your organisation

- Demonstrating your accountability to the community.
- Creating links with the community and ambassadors for the project and your organisation.
- Identifying and building new support, skills and experience that your organisation can potentially use for other projects and work in the future.

For your local community

- Strengthening local pride, sense of community and quality of life.
- Linking people together so that the social capital** of the community is increased and people feel empowered to take action on your project and other issues which are important to them.
- Encouraging volunteering.

For individuals

- Seeing their views and ideas listened to and acted on, and so developing a personal interest in your project.
- Providing an opportunity for volunteers to use their existing skills and experience in order to develop new ones.
- Feeling part of their community and meeting people.
- Gaining confidence.

For your stakeholders

- Giving your community, local authorities and public bodies, funders and other organisations confidence that your project is rooted in community needs and has community support.
- Demonstrating the capacity of your organisation to involve and enthuse your community.

**social capital can be described as the level of trusting relationships that exist which allows people to support one another. The higher the level of social capital you have within your community (whether geographical or thematic) the stronger and more resilient your community is likely to be.

These are all powerful benefits of effective community involvement. They help ensure that your project is the best it can be and progresses as quickly and easily as possible. They can also build foundations for future projects by empowering and energising your community to tackle other issues.

The effectiveness of community involvement depends on:

- Planning it from the outset as an integral part of your project.
- Being inclusive.
- Matching the type of community involvement to the stage of your project and the nature of your community.

What is community engagement?

And why do it?



What is community engagement?



Community engagement, is a means to achieve **inclusive, reciprocal**, and **transparent decision-making for your project and your organisation**.

It's about connecting with your community**: communicating information, consulting, and collaborating** with your **members and the wider community throughout the life of your project and beyond.**

Done right, this can ultimately lead to '**community empowerment**'. When **the community you represent is fully included,** participates in the processes of your organisation, and can **enact its priorities through your organisation**.

Why involve your community?



There are short-term, medium-term, and long-terms reasons why you should involve your community:

- **Short term (task impact):** more, stronger ideas; evidence for funding applications; opportunities to attract volunteers.
- **Medium term (project impact):** local buy-in for your project; a project which meets a wider set of needs across your community; a project which connects to other local agendas.
- **Long term (organisational impact):** strengthens governance; builds institutional support for your organisation and/or project; a good reputation in your community; succession planning and reduced risk of crisis.

Why involve your community?



Left unchecked, poor community engagement can be a key contributor to organisational crisis

Planning community involvement

Effective community involvement is vital to ensure your project is a success.

You will need to plan for community involvement from the **outset of your project**.

This means **identifying the key stages of the project** (project inception, business planning, fundraising) and deciding what type and action of community involvement is most suitable at each stage.

For example, how are you going to let people know that you want to bring your local church into community ownership? How will you decide how best to use the building? How will you raise the money to buy it? Community engagement is essential to getting to the answer.

The first step to achieving this, however, is **defining and understanding your community**…

What do we mean by ‘your community’?



What do we mean by ‘your community’?

DTAS’s [Negotiated Sale Routemap](#).



What do we mean by ‘your community’?

Who are you?

Are you an individual or group of people who want to help organise others in your community to secure the potential benefits from the development of land and building assets? This could be helping to meet the needs of the community through community ownership of an asset, or creating employment opportunities by developing the space for new enterprises.

Who do you need to involve?

Look at the people you currently have backing you and your group. Think about carrying out a skills audit; this helps to identify skills gaps, allowing you to encourage others with the additional skills you need to get involved and help.

What community do you represent?

Define your community and be inclusive. Are you a geographic community or a community of interest? Be clear from the beginning what area your community covers (this should be defined formally in an organisation’s constitution). It can be more challenging to define this in a larger urban area. For rural communities that cover a wide geographic area, including different distinct communities can also be challenging and you may have to treat separate settlements differently whilst conveying the same message.

What do we mean by ‘your community’?

Typically, there are two types of community: a ‘community of interest’ and a ‘community of geography’. As community organisations, your community will be defined within your governing documents:

> Membership is open to any individual aged 16 or over who is in support of the organisation’s objectives to purchase, maintain and preserve Lyne Kirk for the cultural, heritage and spiritual benefit of present and future generations.

> The company has been formed to benefit the community of Stow and Fountainhall which comprises the Parish of Stow Community Council Area (“the Community”) with the following objects:

There are advantages and disadvantages associated with each approach. But essentially, as democratic community organisations, your ‘community’ is the group of people you’re acting in the interest of, and who you’ll be accountable to!

> For the Purposes of Jock’s Lodge Community Trust, the boundary of Piershill and Willowbrae are defined by the following postcodes:
>
> EH7 6LD, EH8 7AA, EH8 7AB, EH8 7AD, EH8 7AE, EH8 7AF, EH8 7AG, EH8 7AH, EH8 7AJ, EH8 7AL, EH8 7AN, EH8 7AP, EH8 7AQ, EH8 7AR, EH8 7AS, EH8 7AW, EH8 7AY, EH8 7AZ, EH8 7BA, EH8 7BB, EH8 7BD, EH8 7BE, EH8 7BG, EH8 7BJ, EH8 7BL, EH8 7BN, EH8 7BP, EH8 7BQ, EH8 7BR, EH8 7BS, EH8 7BT, EH8 7BU, EH8 7BW, EH8 7BX, EH8 7BY, EH8 7DB, EH8 7DD, EH8 7DE, EH8 7DF, EH8 7DG, EH8 7DH, EH8 7DJ, EH8 7DL, EH8 7DN, EH8 7DP, EH8 7DQ, EH8 7DR, EH8 7DS, EH8 7DT, EH8 7DU, EH8 7DW, EH8 7DX, EH8 7DY, EH8 7DZ, EH8 7EA, EH8 7EB, EH8 7ED, EH8 7EE, EH8 7EF, EH8 7EH, EH8 7EJ, EH8 7EL, EH8 7EN, EH8 7EP, EH8 7ER, EH8 7ES, EH8 7ET, EH8 7EU, EH8 7EW, EH8 7EY, EH8 7EZ, EH8 7HA, EH8 7HB, EH8 7HD, EH8 7HE, EH8 7HF, EH8 7HG, EH8 7HL, EH8 7HN, EH8 7HP, EH8 7HQ, EH8 7HR, EH8 7HS, EH8 7HT, EH8 7HU, EH8 7HW, EH8 7HX, EH8 7HY, EH8 7HZ, EH8 7JA, EH8 7JD, EH8 7JE, EH8 7JF, EH8 7JG, EH8 7JH, EH8 7JJ, EH8 7JL, EH8 7JN, EH8 7JP, EH8 7JQ, EH8 7JR, EH8 7JS, EH8 7JU, EH8 7JW, EH8 7JY, EH8 7LA, EH8 7LB, EH8 7LD, EH8 7RU

What do we mean by ‘your community’?

Your community **means a lot more than a set of postcodes**.

- Who lives in your geographic area or who belongs to your community of interest?
- Who are your wider users of your building? Either current or planned.
- Who is part of your community, but may face barriers to getting involved? How can you overcome those barriers?

Community can be further afield. Church buildings often have connections to a wider interest group – they can be included as associate members if you’re a community of geography.

Most of the time, church buildings will have had a pre-existing community – **the Congregation and Kirk Session**. Have you made contact?

What do we mean by ‘your community’?

Bedrule Church Future understood that the wider community associated with Bedrule Parish Church extended beyond the Rule Water in the Borders.

They contacted the ‘Turnbull Clan Association’ (TCA) based in North Carolina who had paid for their stain glass window. The TCA encouraged members to donate they ended up being key to raising the necessary funds.

More information in our second workshop on fundraising!



The Church Community

Most of the time, church buildings will have had a pre-existing community – **the Congregation**. It is often **essential** to get the support of the **Kirk Session** specifically, if your project is going to progress.

Mechanics of Sale

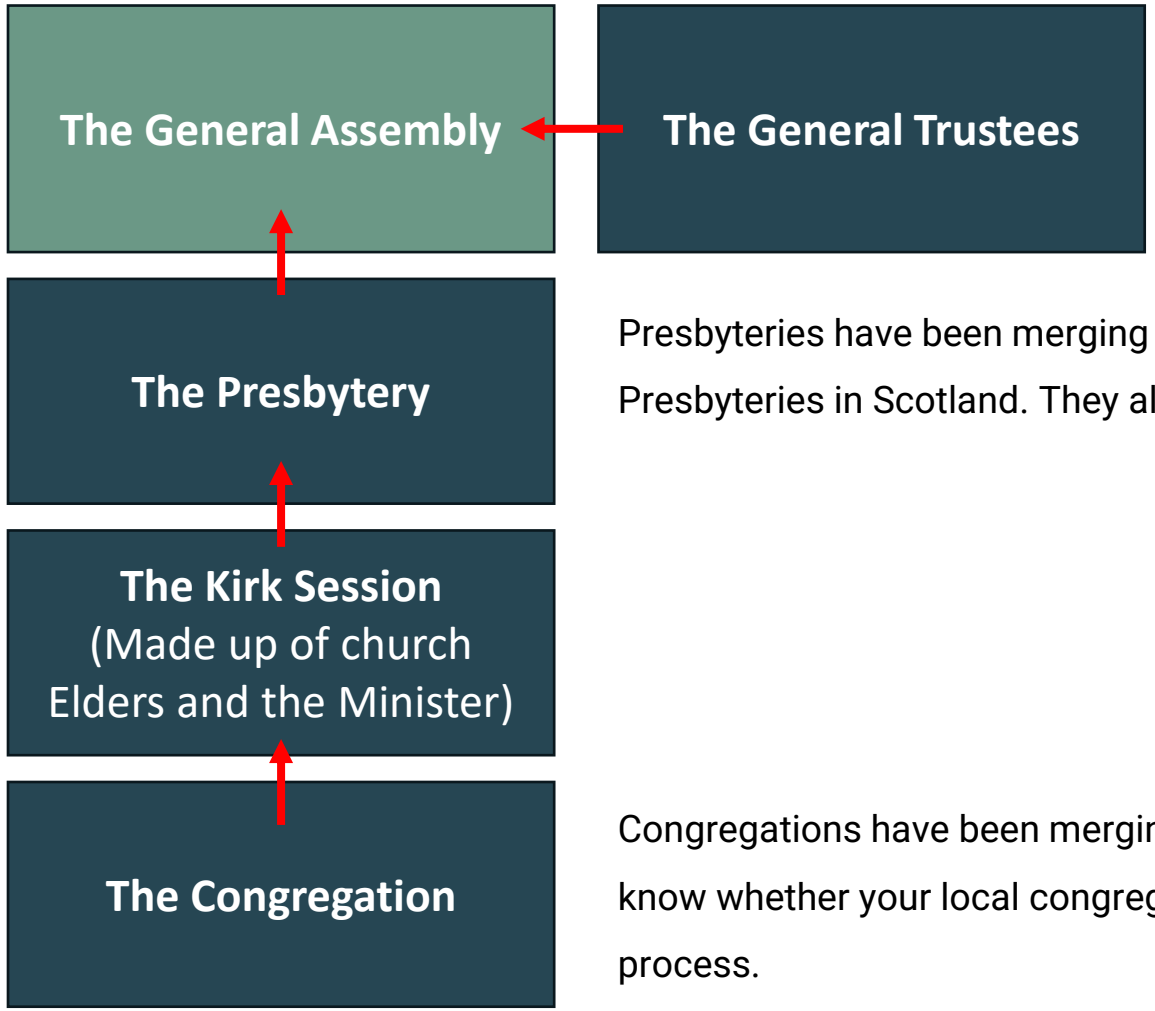
Who Decides How a Building is Sold?

Most church and hall buildings are owned by the General Trustees. In these cases, it is the General Trustees who decide how and to whom a building is sold, though they will always consult with the local Kirk Session. The GTs will usually only consider an OMT if both the Kirk Session and the Presbytery are supportive.

In some situations, a building may be owned by Local Trustees. Where this is the case, it is for the Local Trustees to decide how the building is sold and the General Trustees will not normally play a major role. Local Trustees must make sure that their legal (fiduciary) responsibilities are met during any transfer.

Extract from General Trustees' 'Off-Market Transfer Guidance' – Published 2025

The Church Community



The General Trustees are the property-owning arm of the Church of Scotland, set up in 1921 by an act of Parliament. They will be the main point of contact for your project.

Presbyteries have been merging across Scotland. There are now 11 Presbyteries in Scotland. They all behave differently.

Congregations have been merging across Scotland. Make sure you know whether your local congregation has been through its merger process.

How can you involve your community?



How can you involve your community?

Invest **TIME** and **MONEY** into community engagement throughout the length of your project.

Six Key Principles:

Be **REALISTIC**

Be **TRANSPARENT**

Be **INCLUSIVE**

Be **CALM**

Be **MEASURABLE**

Be **ORGANISED**

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY!

How can you involve your community?

Communication

- Transparent, honest, accessible, timely, relevant information about your plans and activities as a community group.

Consultation

- Inviting feedback on plans from community members, local groups, and other stakeholders.

Collaboration

- Engaging community members in the decision-making process and collaborating with key stakeholders.

Empowerment

Decision-making is put in the hands of the community through two-tier governance, two-way communication and ongoing engagement.

How can you involve your community?

Communication

Why?

- Keeps community updated
- Gets people interested
- Builds trust
- Attracts help and new resources
- Makes consultation and collaboration easier

How?

- Audience mapping
- Varied but accessible channels (newsletter, e-bulletin, noticeboard, website, social media, drop-in days, etc.)
- Focus on key messages
- Be informative and transparent

Consultation

Why?

- Finds out community needs/wants
- Reduces opposition risk
- Generates new ideas
- Increases participation
- Embeds 2-way conversation

How?

- Surveys, questionnaires, events, creative activities
- Clear, realistic, questions
- Closed and open questions
- Inclusive, accessible, participatory methods

Collaboration

Why?

- Conversion to active members and partners
- Attracts new skills, expertise, and insights
- Embeds project in community
- Key to success and action

How?

- Define supporter roles
- Advisory panels, working groups and subgroups
- Volunteers
- Trustees on Board
- Stakeholder engagement

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 2 – CONSULTING – To obtain feedback on specific policies and proposals

Questionnaires

When to use

Questionnaires are useful when you want to gather views and get feedback on specific issues. For example, you may want to know how your community feels about a proposed closure of a public facility in the area and whether they think your group should be taking action on the issue. A questionnaire can be followed-up with a face-to-face activity which can provide more detailed insight into people's views and ideas, and allow those interested to get involved in planning and implementing future actions.

Objectives

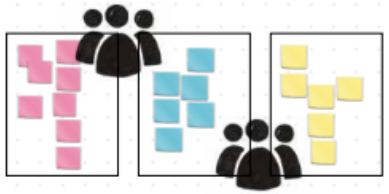
- To gather quantitative (numbers) information from your community on specific issues.
- To reach large numbers of people, or target specific groups.

Methods

- Questionnaires can be carried out in a variety of ways. Using door-to-door collection is the most effective way to maximise your returns, although it is time consuming. If you are dropping off and picking up by hand, it is a good idea to attach a note to your questionnaire stating the day and approximate time you'll collect it.
- Stopping people in the street can work well if you are asking very few questions.
- Online questionnaires can be developed and distributed to a mailing list using free software such as SurveyMonkey. This site also helps you to collate and analyse your results. Twitter and Facebook can also be used to share the link to your online questionnaire. It is highly likely that you will be analysing the data in relation to the percentage of responses from your target population. It is therefore important that you consider including some identifying questions such as confirmation of membership – residence in a particular area – postcode etc.
- Keep the questionnaire as short as possible. For every question think about why you need that information and what purpose it serves in relation to the issue you are researching.
- Avoid leading questions such as "Do you agree that the community facilities here are rubbish?" Good questions are phrased in a neutral way to ensure answers reflect the respondent's views. For example, "How would you rate the facilities in this community? Very Good – Good – OK – Poor – Very Poor"
- Keep wording simple and only include one idea per question to avoid confusion.
- Have your opening questions arouse interest and ask easier questions first.
- Prepare 'closed' questions which can be answered by ticking boxes. You may need to include some 'open' questions which give you more detail but these are more difficult to analyse.
- It's a good idea to test out your questionnaire to ensure the questions are easy to understand and are likely to give you the information you are looking for.
- Include a covering letter which explains the purpose of the questionnaire and why it is important, both of which should motivate the recipient to complete it.
- A prize draw can offer a good incentive for people to complete and return your questionnaire!

Focus groups - Planning

Pink – positive
Blue – negative
Yellow – suggestions



Focus groups and workshops

Focus groups are basically about getting a group of people together, usually around 7-15 people in total, and asking their views on a set of questions. A really good aspect of focus groups is that people can build on and challenge each other's ideas, thereby creating some rich learning. For example, you can get people to discuss some findings that you already have, explore ideas, ask why they came to a particular view, and generally probe answers. For this to work effectively, it is a good idea to have both a facilitator to guide the discussion and a second person to take notes.

Confidentiality should be stated and agreed by everyone at the outset. It should also be respected after the event while the findings are analysed and reported on. Focus groups need to be planned in advance to ensure you get the information you're looking for.

Things to consider:

- How much/what kind of space do you need? Ensure it is appropriate for a focus group – comfortable, warm, and conducive to people wanting to stay and contribute.
- Do you need to provide support facilities, such as a crèche? Make sure these are available and meet the requirements of the participants.
- Can you provide tea and coffee? This will help people chat and break the ice on first arriving.
- What are the key questions you want to ask? Is there a logical order to put those questions in? How long have you got altogether and how much time can you reasonably allocate for each question?
- How many people do you need to help facilitate the event?

Some creative approaches to running workshops are outlined below. Again, these can be used and adapted to suit your purposes and contexts.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

AI is an approach to running focus groups or workshops where you want to get detailed insight into people's experiences and ideas. The process can be used at the early stage of your group's development, or later as a review and evaluation of past successes and a means of re-focusing energies for further actions. This is a method which would benefit from using a facilitator as experience is required to run it well.

Objectives

- To learn from past successes and consider what works well.
- To develop a vision for the future based on these successes.
- To stimulate a co-creation process to realise this vision.

Methods

AI typically has four stages:

1. **Discover:** Through a process of 'positive questioning', success stories should be drawn out from participants.

Examples of 'positive' questions

- What have been high points for you as a member of our community?
- What are your three wishes to make this a more enjoyable place to live?
- What do you imagine your role might be in making that happen?

The group then identify common themes about what works and what can be built on.

2. **Dream:** From the discover stage, a dream or shared vision for the future is developed. This is presented in a series of statements that sum up how your community would like to be in the future. The statements are challenging and stretch the notion of what's possible.
3. **Design:** The group identify what they need to do to realise their vision for the future through developing specific action plans.
4. **Deliver:** The implementation of the action plans.

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APPENDICES

World Café

World Café is effective when you want to get a group of people talking about a particular issue, or series of related issues, in a relaxed setting. It can help in gathering collective views and ideas and allow people to work through issues together.

Objectives

- To generate discussion around things that matter.

Methods

- A theme for the café is decided beforehand and the event is publicised to encourage attendance from people whose views you wish to hear.
- The venue is set out like a café: small tables with paper tablecloths (or pieces of flipchart paper) so people can make notes or draw pictures to capture their conversation. It is important to make the space as welcoming and hospitable as possible.
- People get their refreshments and then gather around tables to talk about the issue. Participants are encouraged to discuss what is important to them and to hear other views. Questions or issues that genuinely matter to your community are identified and discussed while other small groups explore similar questions at nearby tables.
- After a reasonable period (30 minutes) people move around with one person staying to make sure that people find out about the previous conversations, share common themes and develop ideas further.
- The tablecloths or flipchart sheets are collected and used to make an exhibition at the end of the event.

See this simple guide for more info on running a World Café event:
www.theworldcafe.com/pdfs/cafetogo.pdf

Larger consultation and planning meetings

There are different ways in which you can involve much larger numbers of people and make such events useful and meaningful.

One way of reaching a large audience is to incorporate your consultation into another community event such as a Family Fun Day which you expect a lot of local people will attend. For example, you might have a stall with information boards and interactive ways for people to respond to questions and share their views such as placing post-its on a feedback wall.

The methods for running planning meetings outlined below are highly participative and designed to give people ownership over the discussions, planning and implementation of action points which emerge. These are not prescriptive and elements of these methods can be used and adapted to suit your own needs and purposes.

(i) Future Search

Future Search is a planning meeting which can be used when you want to bring together large numbers of people (60-80 in one room) to engage in task-focused discussion. The purpose is to focus on a future position for the project or the organisation. Future Search and other visioning techniques should be managed by an experienced facilitator to ensure that the outcomes are achieved.

A topic or title for the session which focuses discussions is identified in advance. Participants meet for 16 hours spread across three days.

People tell stories about their past, present and desired future. Through dialogue they discover their common ground which leads them to make concrete action plans.

Objectives

- To bring people from all walks of life into the same conversation.
- To build capacity for action quickly.

Methods

The process outlined below usually involves four or five sessions each lasting half a day.

- People make timelines of key events in the world, their own lives, and in the history of the Future Search topic. Small groups tell stories about each timeline and the implications of their stories for the work they have come to do.
- The whole group makes a 'mind map' of trends affecting them now and identifies those trends most important for their topic.
- Groups describe what they are doing now about key trends and what they want to do in the future.
- Groups report what they are positive and negative about in the way they are dealing with the Future Search topic.
- Groups put themselves into the future and describe their preferred future as if it has already been accomplished.
- Groups post themes they believe are common ground for everyone and then the whole group discusses them.
- Volunteers sign up to implement action plans.

(ii) Planning for Real®

This technique uses 3D models as a focus for people to put forward and prioritise ideas on how their area, or a particular building/space, can be improved. It is a highly visual, hands-on community development tool which people of all abilities and backgrounds find easy and enjoyable to use. This particular approach would need to be facilitated by someone who has been trained in the use of the tool.

Objectives

- To generate enthusiasm and encourage people to engage creatively in the planning process.
- To inform the development of an action plan for a physical space.

Methods

- Large 3D models of an area or building are constructed. This could be done by local people with the trained worker's help if needed. These are deliberately not an architectural type model.
- The model can be used in pre-advertised sessions in different locations around the community.
- In the sessions, participants are given suggestion cards or post-it notes to write on, as well as cards with pre-written descriptions or pre-designed images. The cards are to help participants give their views.
- Participants can deal their hand of cards onto the model, indicating what they want to see happen and where. Models of buildings, cars, bus stops, schools etc. can also be used.
- Each suggestion is noted as the process develops. Taking photos of the model and suggestion gives a good visual aid to the process that can be used to give feedback to participants.
- Suggestions are prioritised by the community and with the involvement of key stakeholders; an Action Plan is formed which the community uses to develop future plans.

NB: Planning for Real® is a registered trademark and part of the Accord Group. Organisations wishing to run "Planning for Real"® events, provide "Planning for Real"® training or to describe themselves as users of a "Planning for Real"® approach should first contact "Planning for Real"® to discuss their requirements. www.planningforreal.org.uk.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP SUPPORT SERVICE
Development Trusts Association Scotland



INVOLVING YOUR COMMUNITY

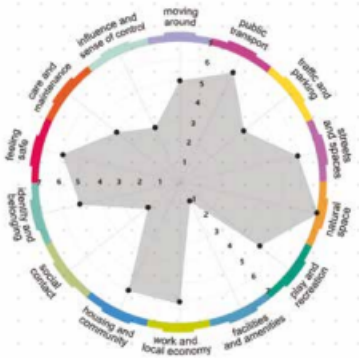
A practical guide to the benefits and techniques for involving and consulting local communities in community asset based projects.

www.dtascommunityownership.org.uk

APPENDICES

Place Standard Scotland

The Place Standard tool provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place. It allows you to think about the physical elements of a place (for example its buildings, spaces, and transport links) as well as the social aspects (for example whether people feel they have a say in decision making). https://placestandard.scot/



Using social media to consult

Although social media is largely used in terms of informing and engaging people it can also be used during the consultation process itself.

Objectives

- To encourage people who prefer communicating online to have a voice.
- To expand the reach of the consultation to people who may not have otherwise heard about the project.

Facebook

Facebook groups are a way for a select number of people to communicate with each other around a particular topic or topics. Facebook groups can be open (anyone can join), private (anyone can request to join, but a moderator decides whether to allow a person to join or not) or secret (both private and unknown to the outside world). With Facebook groups a moderator can decide in advance the themes or questions that will be the focus of discussion. For the consultation process these can mirror the themes and questions that are being used in other consultation methods, such as Questionnaires, Focus Groups, World Café etc. You can also consult with individuals in a light way on a Facebook page by using polls. Ask a question with a number of options for answers and invite individuals to 'vote'. This is not intended as a method to encourage individuals to get involved in lengthy discussions. Facebook groups are better placed for these types of discussions.

Twitter

Hosting a live Twitter discussion could add an interesting dimension to your consultation. Decide on a time, e.g. 1-2pm on a Wednesday, and inform people that during this time you will be asking and inviting questions on a particular topic. This requires good planning and fast typing skills!

YouTube

YouTube is a social media network which allows you to upload and share videos you've created. These can range from a simple video shot using a smartphone to more complex videos shot using sophisticated camera equipment. Videos are a great way to gather opinion, capture the essence of an event and involve the wider community in a new and exciting way.

Posting a video or writing a blog to stimulate the discussion, as well as moderating and responding to comments, is also another way of consulting with people using social media.

How can you involve your community?

- Create a ‘live’ **Community Engagement Plan**
  - Plan community engagement for each stage of the process.
- Regularly reflect and refine your plan
  - Things change throughout the process.
- Ensure community engagement is central to governance and internal processes.
  - Review governing documents to make sure that involving your community is at the heart of your organisation.
- Embed community engagement in any project briefs or tender documents.
  - Makes sure any external consultants also prioritise community engagement.
- Ensure all activities undertaken respond to identified community need/wishes
  - Firstly, find what the community needs, then continuously attempt to meet those needs through your project.
- Do your best to continuously uphold the 6 Key Principles, and make sure to communicate with, consult, and collaborate with your community.
- **MAINTAIN TWO-WAY FEEDBACK BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND ORGANISATION**

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APPENDIX 4 – Planning template for community consultation

The template detailed provides a guide on how you might structure a community consultation and identify the activities and resources required. This example has been based on an established organisation with a membership base and at least one paid member of staff. The project is one where a community is looking to take on an asset. It may well be the case that with new groups/organisations much of the activity will be delivered by volunteers. The costs have been deliberately left blank as there is likely to be a reasonably high degree of variation between the different communities – established membership base – size of the community etc.

Level	Objectives	Audience	Medium	Owner/Deliverer	Cost £	Frequency					
	What are the intended outcomes	Who will you communicate with?	How will you communicate?	Who is responsible for doing this?		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Informing	To provide people with information about the recent work of the organisation and new project information	• All members • Wider community	• Newsletter A4 x4 – distributed by email to membership base and other community organisations. Paper-based copies available in key locations – shops/ post office/library	Project Officer and Board – Communication sub group		X					
			• Establish website for the new project	Site built by volunteer member with content and updates provided by the Project Officer		X	X	X	X	X	X
			• Articles in local press highlighted new project	Chair of Board		X	X				
Consulting		• All members • Wider community • Other stakeholders identified	• Questionnaire distributed by email using Survey Monkey. Paper-based copies available through key local locations	Project Officer and Board Project Sub Group				X	X		
			• Host public meeting to discuss the questionnaire results in more detail and gain commitment to move the project forward	Organised by Project Officer and Board Project Sub Group External Facilitator						X	
			• Arrange interviews with key stakeholders to discuss initial community feedback and outline proposals	Project Officer						X	
Engaging	Establish a Community Advisory Panel to take project forward	• Interested individuals with a wide range of skills who have volunteered or been co-opted during the consulation process	• Meetings and email	Project Officer and Board Project Group							X

What does successful engagement look like?



What does successful engagement look like?

Success isn't necessarily about the number of participants – it's about the **depth, diversity** and **quality** of the engagement.

Is your engagement **effective, efficient, fair** and does it provide the foundation for **shared decision-making, shared action, support for community-led action**?

Useful indicators include **representation** in your organisation**, trust and influence** within and beyond your community**, collaboration** with a wide range of stakeholders, and **feedback loops**.

What does successful engagement look like?

Community empowerment: the ideal scenario – what you might say about yourselves…

Our membership is representative of our community, we have an active Board with the skills, experience and capacity to manage the organisation, **we have a regular rotation of Board members drawn from our active community**, our community is supportive of ALL our projects and activities, **we get great feedback and supportive comments to our online posts**, our events have a healthy turnout with many residents from all demographics participating, **our projects are undertaken in response to community needs and wishes,** our two-tier governance structure is working well with regular engagement with our members, **we have resident members on our working subgroups**, our consultation processes are well responded to by all demographics, **we have effectively engaged with hard to reach groups and they are now active members,** we have great relations with local businesses and stakeholders, **local groups and businesses regularly reach out to us for collaboration on projects**, we have influence locally because we are respected, **the community trust us to do what is right for them**, we have an open membership and our community know that when they reach out to us we will meaningfully engage with them, **we attract investment because we can demonstrate community support and benefit**, local residents want to work and volunteer with us, **we have confidence in our approach and activities**, our Board is energised and feeling positive, **we are respected by key stakeholders and public sector bodies,** because of our positive relationship with the community and key stakeholders we are more financially viable.

What does successful engagement look like?



What does successful engagement look like?

See for yourself!

- **Learn from communities** who have been through similar experiences. Make use of the **Community Learning Exchange**
  - Claim back host fees, travel costs etc.
  - Visit any peer learning organisation across the UK
- **Liaise with your Churches Advisor** for any hints or advice on which community group you should speak to for help.
- In the meantime, we're going to hear from two speakers from groups who have done excellent examples of community engagement.

Development Trusts Association Scotland

A Thriving Community-led Network

Now we'll hear from two speakers:

Alan Jeans, The South Girvan

Dr Julian Grant, Leith St Andrews Trust



The South

Community Engagement

DTAS

Alan Jeans

www.thesouthgirvan.co.uk



The South

Multipurpose community venue and function space

Catering grade kitchen

30-bed Community Bunkhouse

www.thesouthgirvan.co.uk



Population 6000+

Ayr 21 miles

Stranraer 30 Miles

No town hall

Largest unrestricted venue has 100 capacity



Open Day

Residents of Girvan and surrounding villages

Community & faith groups

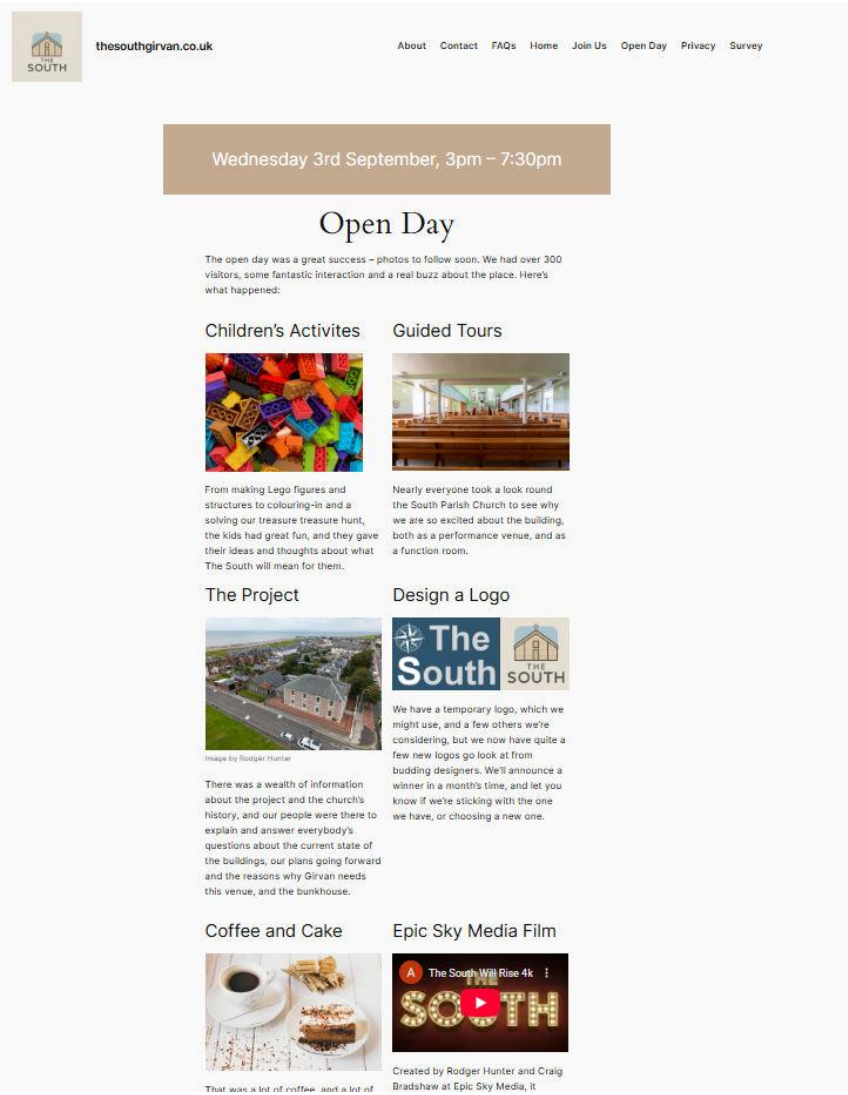
Councillors, Community Councillors

Neighbours

Former parishioners of South Parish

Parishioners of amalgamated church





Promotion

Social Media

Posters

Flyers

Website

Invitations



Planning

Venue – Church Hall with tours of church

All board members & volunteers briefed

Always 5 – 6 available to talk with visitors

Safe area for children

Insurance needed for event

We rotated roles, in the main

We counted visitors as they arrived



Informing

Storyboards in centre of hall

- History of South Parish Church
- Reasons the venue and bunkhouse needed
- Existing Plans
- Proposed changes



Informing

Film – The South rises



Informing

Associated organisations

- Biosphere Bikes
- Adventure Carrick





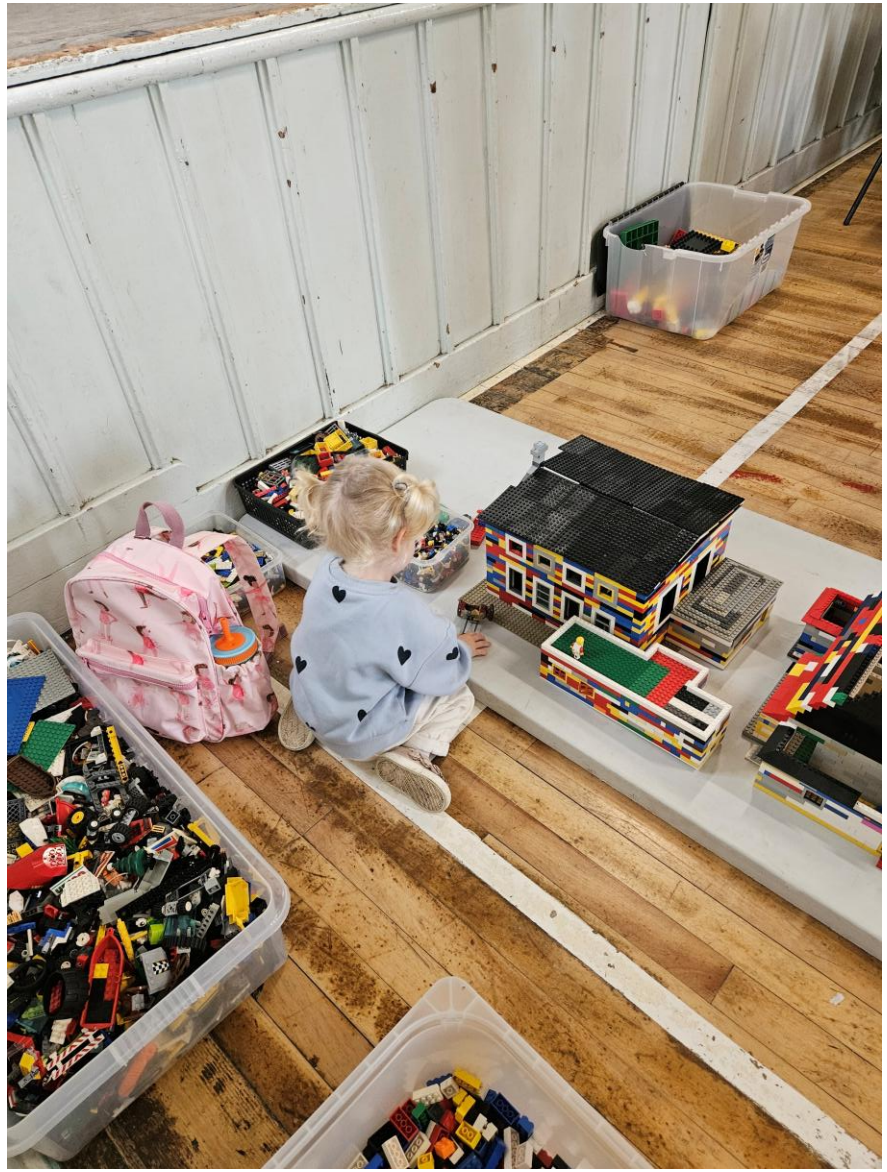
Gathering Information

Brainstorming board with post-it notes

Ideas sheets (plans & drawing)

Anonymous survey sheets (also online)

Supporter forms (also online)



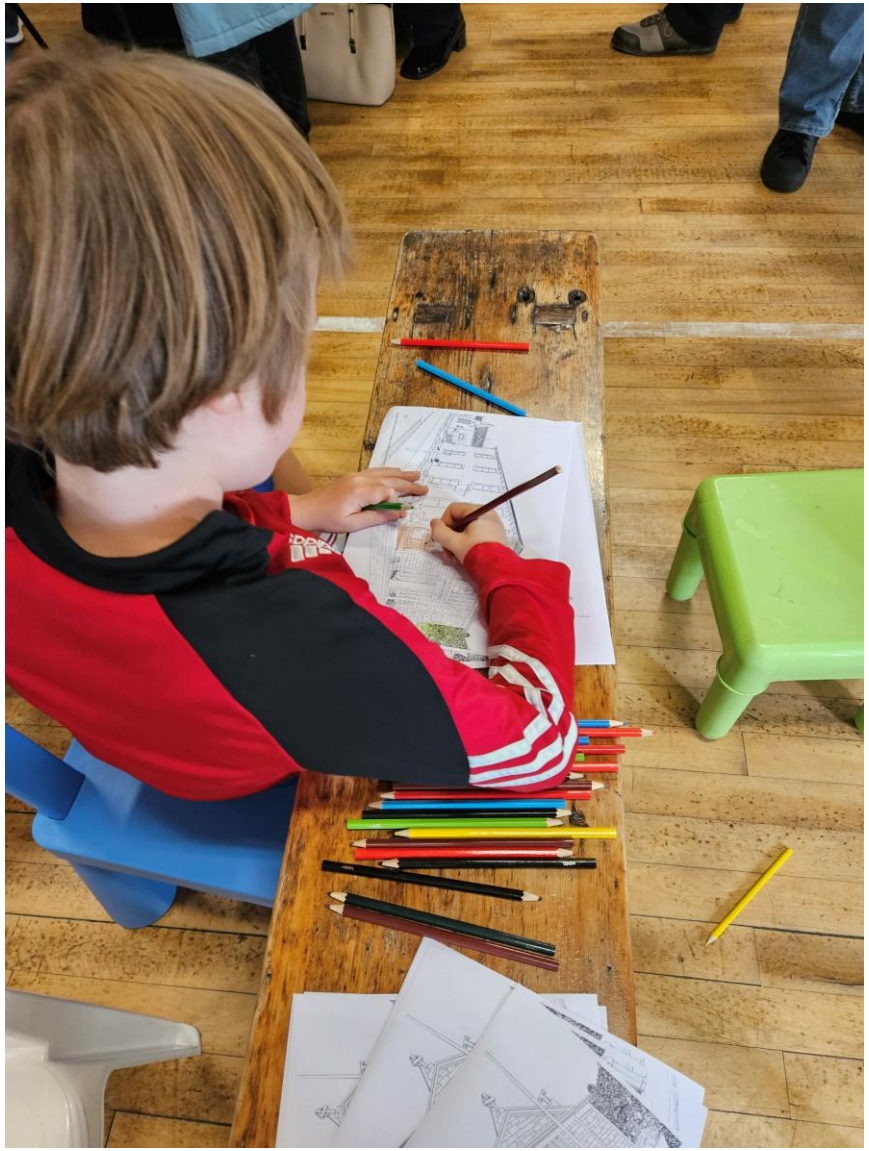
Kids’ stuff

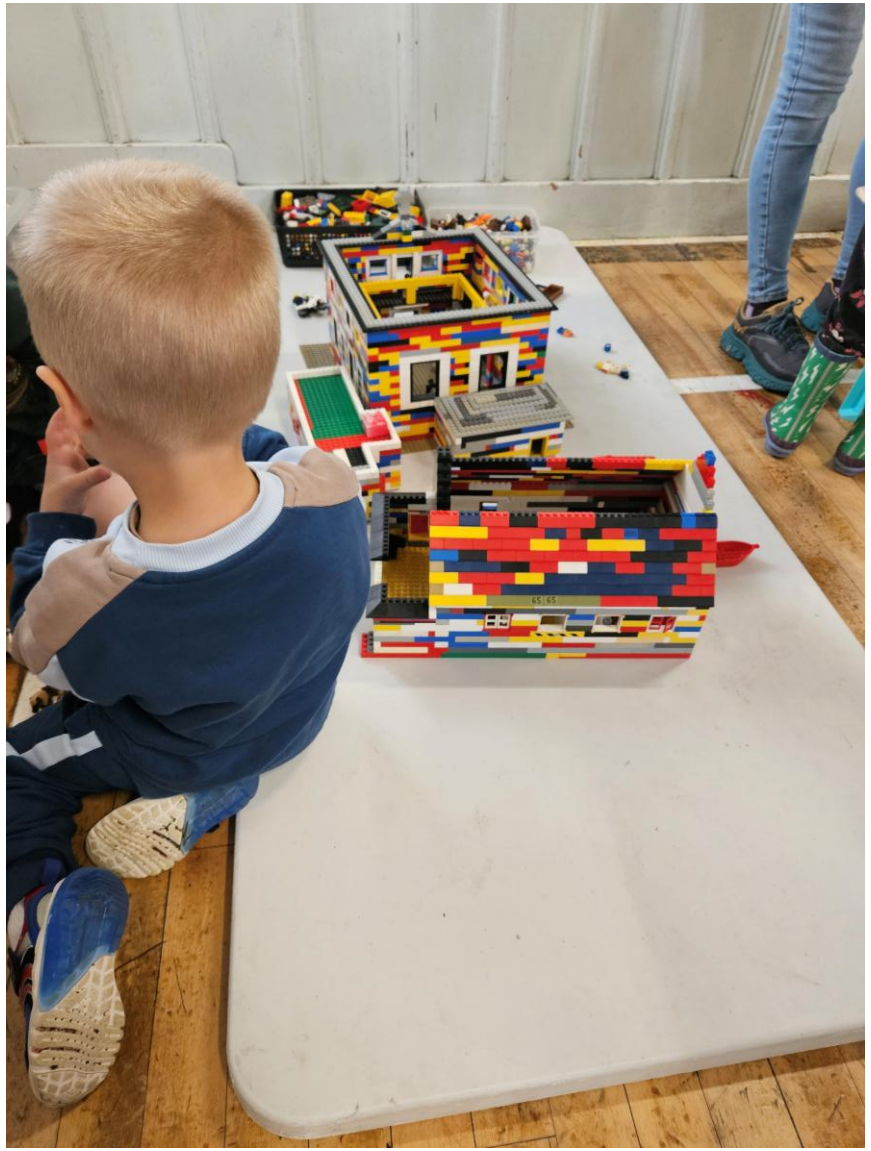
Play area with Lego & Duplo

Lego model of church & halls

Lego people for kids to use with model

Colouring-in sheets







Activities for Grown-ups

Design a Logo

Coffee, Tea & Cakes

Church Tours



Church Tours

More or less continuous throughout day

Accompanied by board member or volunteer

Crib sheet used if needed

Academy pupil (S4) involved



Successes

Good attendance: 300+ visitors

- Lots of neighbours attended
  - Voiced concerns re: noise and parking
  - These were largely addressed
  - Many of them joined as supporters

Many good suggestions, ideas and feedback

Most people strongly voiced support



Successes

People loved the film

Visitors really appreciated the tours

Cakes went down very well :)

Atmosphere was brilliant, with a real buzz

Councillors strongly supportive

Good response to supporter registrations

Lots of surveys filled in



Lessons Learned

We should have

- had a wider flyer campaign
- invited our local MP and MSP
- invited Local business owners



Thanks

www.thesouthgirvan.co.uk



A moment of transition

Connecting communities through heritage with the Leith St. Andrew's Trust

Dr Julian Grant
Local historian and trustee, Leith St. Andrew's Trust

The Story So Far



Initial Formation

After hearing about Church of Scotland proposals to sell off the building, a group of local residents/charities/social enterprises came together to approach the Kirk Session and see if they would be interested in our proposals.

Leith Gala Day

With the Kirk Session's blessing, we set up a stall at the annual neighbourhood gala day in the local park. It was our first time introducing ourselves to the community and asking what they thought of our plans. We surveyed over 200 people!





Summer Open Day

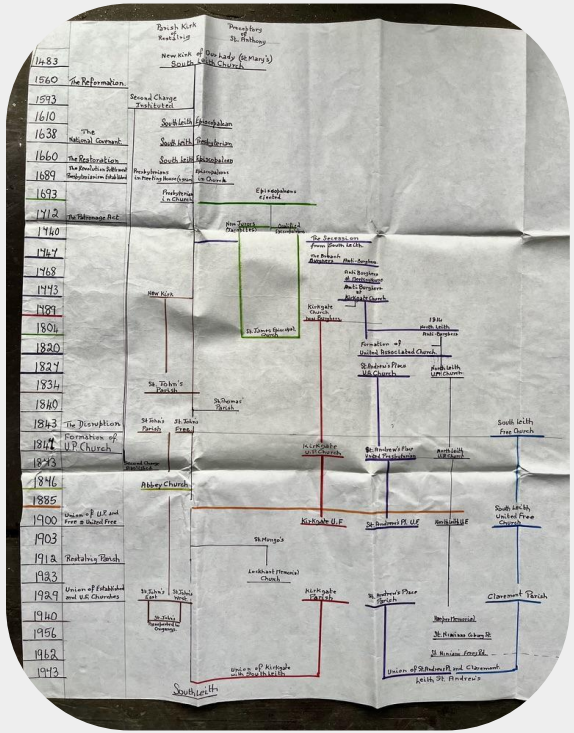
Our first event at the church itself saw current and potential future tenants come together to give a flavour of the activities and services that could be offered in the building. From brownies and music groups to parkour and circus. Some visitors had never been inside the building before.

Direct Outreach

As well as participating in local events, we made contact with other local venues, community groups, businesses and charities directly, setting up meetings, distributing flyers and discussing opportunities for collaboration.



Planning a local history project



Key points

- Opportunity for community engagement with Leith St. Andrew's Trust
- Heritage education and engagement on the history of the church and its wider community
- Tribute & celebration of the church's heritage ahead of any next phase of life



Leith St. Andrew's Trust



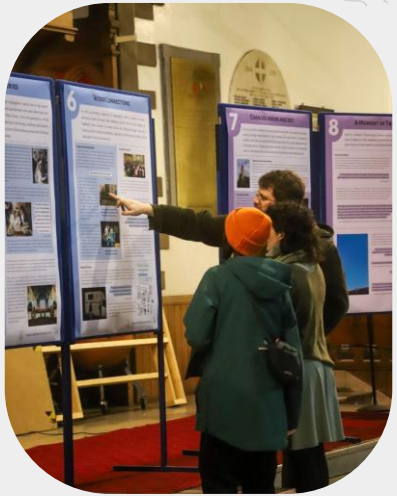
Phase One: Archival research

We worked with a rich set of archival sources to document the church's history. This gave a more detailed sense of the different congregations and denominations that have called the building home, important leaders and events, changes to the physical fabric of the building and activities over the years.

Phase Two: Oral history

Oral history interviews were carried out with a range of individuals reflecting different aspects of the life of the church. This offered a way for members of the community to participate directly in weaving the church's multi-layered past into a shared story.





Phase Three: Sharing with the community

We curated a public exhibition and held a series of events in the church. This provided an opportunity for local residents to learn about the church's history, to reflect on the role it has played locally, and to become involved in the Trust and its purchase campaign.



Project outcomes

- **Creating a historical record**
  Drawing from archival and oral sources to document the history of Leith St. Andrew's
- **Establishing a presence**
  Expanding and deepening social media content, demonstrating ability to deliver a project to future funders
- **Reaching new audiences**
  Drawing in people who had never been in the building before, connecting them with the building's past
- **Recruiting members and volunteers**
  Tripled our membership, 5 new expressions of interest in volunteering

What's next?



Recent bad news

Despite the full-throated support of the local Kirk Session and huge interest from our community, we got the sad news last week that we've been denied permission for an initial interim lease from the Property Committee of the local Presbytery.

But it may not be over yet!

We had expected to be starting a lease in the next few months, raising important capital from hall lets, strengthening our governance and raising the funds needed for purchase. The former may not be possible (although the Kirk Session has requested an appeal), but trustees will be reviewing whether we can still pursue our ultimate aim of a community purchase.







With special thanks to our funders:

National Heritage Lottery Fund, Architectural Heritage Fund & Scottish Land Fund

Development Trusts Association Scotland

A Thriving Community-led Network

Q&A – please raise your hand (virtually) to ask a question or pop it in the chat!

Next workshop: Mainstream Funders

Finance and Fundraising 1: Mainstream Funders

– Thursday 11th December 2025

Please sign up to hear from the key funders:

- Scottish Land Fund
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Architectural Heritage Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund

Scottish Land Fund
Ionmhas Fearainn Na H-Alba

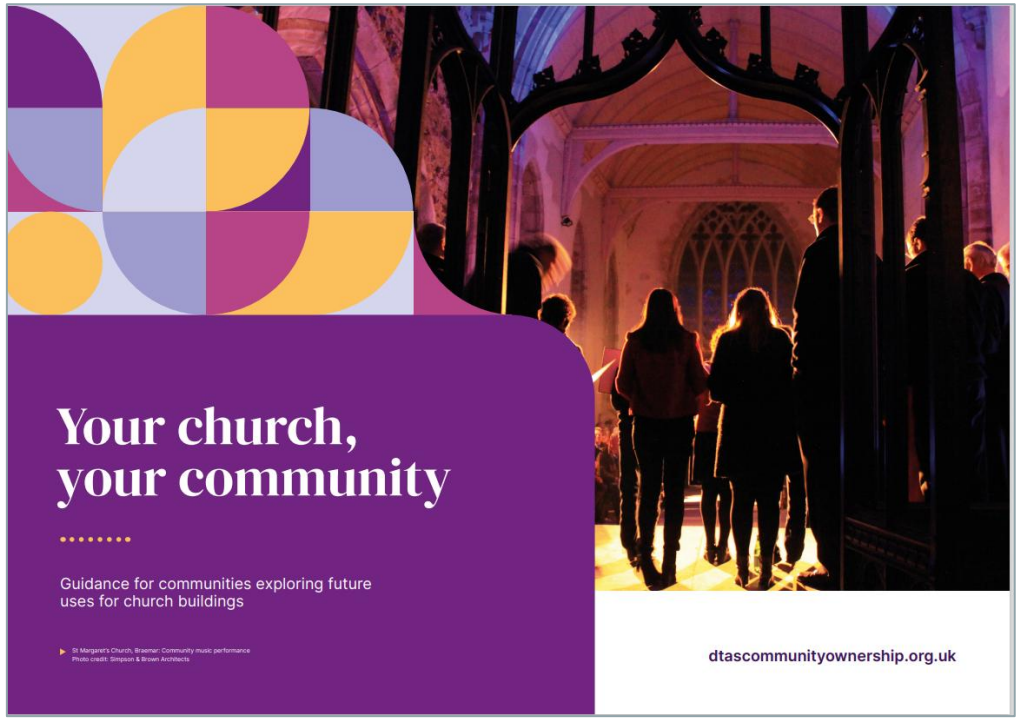
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND | ÀRAINNEACHD EACHDRAIDHEIL ALBA

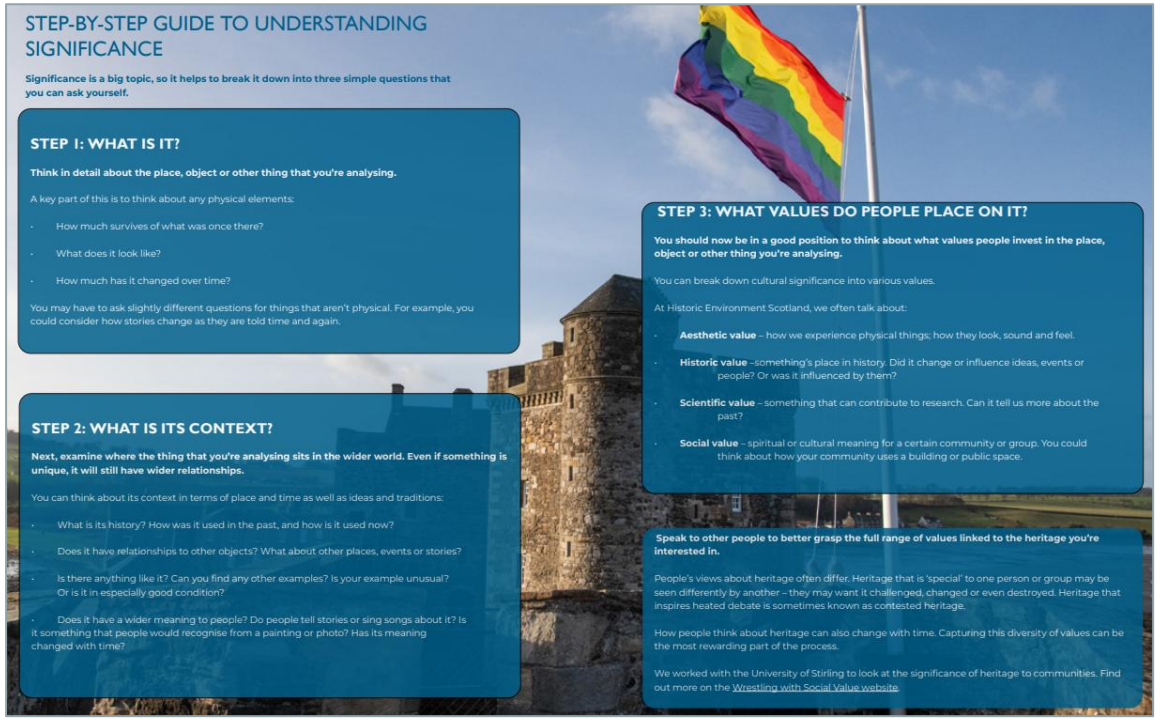
AHF Transforming Heritage
www.ahfund.org.uk

Heritage Fund

Resources

- Your Church Your Community
- Involving Your Community | DTAS Community Ownership Support Service
- Talking About Heritage (See the questions on page 21 in particular)





Contact details

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- Claire Martin, Churches Advisor (South and Central Scotland):
  clairem@dtascot.org.uk (note the 'm'!), 07903 059822
- Harry Whitmore, Churches Advisor (South and Central Scotland):
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- Louise Paterson, Churches Programme Officer:
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https://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/

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Browse our upcoming **events** and sign up HERE

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