

Information about communities

A GUIDE FOR LANDOWNERS

This guide is designed to support landowners and managers who are looking for information about their local community and organisations that support communities. Identifying and communicating with your community is the first step in building strong relationships. Sharing information about land ownership, use and management can empower people, giving them the opportunity to understand

more about the land around them and enabling more people to participate in engagement and decision-making processes. It can also help you to improve your public profile and relationships with the community, understand local needs and priorities, and identify options for lease and sale of land, as well as opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

Click through to website

Key contacts

Scottish Government

The Scottish Government Land Reform team works to improve Scotland's system of land ownership, use, rights and responsibilities, so that land can contribute to a fair and just society while balancing public and private interests. They provide detailed guidance on the legislation and application process for Community Rights to Buy and Asset Transfer.

They also provide guidance on Community Empowerment and Community Engagement in Decisions Relating to Land.

Other sections of the Scottish Government website also provide information and guidance on other relevant topics, including [community involvement in the planning process](#) and [community-led regeneration](#).

Register of Applications by Communities to Buy Land

The register contains two types of applications. The first is applications by community bodies to buy abandoned, neglected or detrimental land. The second is applications by community bodies to buy land to further sustainable development.

Community Councils

Community Councils are voluntary organisations, connected to local authorities and run by local residents, who are elected by those who live in the area.

They deal with local issues and can facilitate a wide range of activities to promote the wellbeing of their communities. Many Community Councils protect and promote the interests of their community, including advising, petitioning, and advocating on behalf of residents.

Community Councils tend to have regular meetings. You may be able to attend to find out more about what is going on where you live. There can be many Community Councils in areas with larger populations.

Local authorities

Scotland's 32 local authorities are responsible for providing a range of public services. This includes education, social care, roads and transport, economic development, housing and planning, environmental protection, waste management, cultural and leisure services.

Some local authorities make extensive use of Arm's Length External Organisations (ALEOs) to provide services. ALEOs are organisations established by local authorities to deliver specific services, such as sports and leisure or property maintenance.

Some local authorities have teams that work in community development or regeneration, who may be able to signpost you to relevant groups in the area.

Local representatives

Local councillors are generally well-connected within their wards and may be able to make introductions to local community organisations.

MPs and MSPs may receive correspondence from community bodies about particular issues so they may be able to suggest relevant groups to contact.



Informal and local contacts

Social media

Local groups may have Facebook or Twitter pages that they use to communicate with the local community. It may be helpful to search for local place names or to ask local contacts to find out if there are any relevant groups in your area.

Websites for local area

Some neighbourhoods, villages and localities have websites with information about the local area, which can include directories of local groups and services. These can be a helpful way of finding out what kind of groups are active in your local area and in some cases will give you contact details for relevant groups.

Local notice boards

There may be notice boards in your local shops, places of worship, community centre or other public facility that have posters, adverts or business cards for local organisations, including community groups. There may be details of events or meetings being held, which could provide opportunities to engage with the community.

Local newsletter or newspaper

Local newsletters and newspapers can contain helpful information about local groups and their activities. This can include adverts and contact details. Local newsletters and newspapers are also a useful way of sharing information about land use and management and any future plans with your community.



Membership organisations and networks

Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs)

TSIs provide a single point of access for support and advice for the third sector within local areas. There is a TSI in each local authority area in Scotland. TSIs take a strategic role in third sector involvement, in community planning and integration, and in responding to local needs and outcomes. They are well connected with local community groups and may be able to help you connect with them.

Scotland's Regeneration Forum (SURF)

SURF is a regeneration network. It acts as a channel for information, policy and consultations. The SURF network includes seminars, conferences, case studies and the annual SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration.

Scottish Land Matching Service (LMS)

The Scottish Land Matching Service aims to match new entrants and progressing farmers with well-established farmers, crofters, and landowners who may be looking to step back or explore new opportunities. The service supports individuals to find the right option for them, whether that is through tenancies, contract farming, joint ventures or share farming.

Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS)

DTAS is a membership organisation for community development trusts across Scotland. It uses its expertise to inform, support and represent this network, facilitating the sharing of knowledge and encouraging co-operation.

DTAS' website includes a list of members with information about what they do.

National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS)

NFUS represents 9,000 farmers, crofters, growers, and other supporters across Scotland, providing information and representation on key policy and legislative matters. It aims to achieve a sustainable and profitable future for Scottish Agriculture. It is organised into nine regions with 78 branches providing a focus for local activity.

Community Land Scotland (CLS)

CLS is a membership organisation for community landowners and aspiring community landowners. It supports and promotes community ownership and provides important opportunities for networking and knowledge sharing. A list of membership with contact details can be found on their website.

CLS and SLE have developed a [Protocol for Negotiated Sales](#) between landowners and communities.

Scottish Land and Estates (SLE)

SLE is a membership organisation for rural land-based businesses in Scotland. They represent members' views, identify opportunities and risks for land-based businesses, celebrate rural successes, provide a network for sharing knowledge and good practice, and provide support to those with a stake in land and property in rural Scotland.

Green Action Trust

The Green Action Trust works across Scotland and specialises in developing and delivering environmental improvement projects. They work with community groups, private landowners, local authorities and government agencies and offer a 'one-stop-shop', taking projects all the way from an initial idea through to seeing the work completed.

Public bodies

Registers of Scotland (RoS)

RoS are responsible for keeping public registers of land, property, and other legal documents in Scotland. This includes the Land Register of Scotland and the General Register of Sasines, as well as the Register of Community Interests in Land, the Crofting Register, and the Scottish Landlord Register.

They publish data and information about land and property, including house price information. They also offer services including conducting searches and providing documents about property, and services for the development industry such as development plan approval and plan assistance.

Scotland's Land Information Service (ScotLIS)

ScotLIS is an online searchable database maintained by RoS. It can be used to find property owners, search for property prices, buy property documents and check if properties are on the Land Register.

South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE)

SoSE is the economic and community development agency that covers Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders. They offer support, advice and funding to communities to help them to build capacity, to take on local assets, and to develop social enterprises or community businesses.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)

HIE offers a range of support services and funding for community organisations and social enterprises. They work with around 150 social enterprises in the region and support projects that promote inclusive and sustainable growth across a range of areas including community assets, crofting, energy, Gaelic and culture.



Practical tools and funding

Scottish Land Commission

The Scottish Land Commission has a range of practical tools available to help you improve your practices with regard to land rights and responsibilities. There are seven [Land Rights and Responsibilities Protocols](#) and a [Community Engagement Route Map](#).

Place Standard

The Place Standard tool offers a framework to structure conversations about place. The tool provides prompts for discussions, allowing you to consider the physical and social elements of a place as well as the assets of a place as well as areas for improvement.

Stalled Spaces Toolkit – Architecture & Design Scotland (ADS)

Stalled Spaces Scotland aims to encourage and support communities to bring stalled spaces or derelict and vacant land back into temporary use. ADS has produced various toolkits and case studies to help communities and local authorities to develop their own projects to bring life back into these sites.

Vacant and Derelict Land (VDL) funding options

The table provides a brief description of different funding sources available, highlighting the main limitations of each and indicating what type of activity the funding is most suitable for.