

**DEVELOPMENT TRUSTS
ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND**

Workshops and Study Visits Guide

DTAS Annual Conference 2025



**Development
Trusts Association
Scotland**

A Thriving Community-led Network

Workshops and Study Visits

See below for summaries of each workshop and study visit at this year's conference. All workshops are repeated twice unless otherwise stated.

Day One Study Visits (Tuesday 26th August)

Study Visit 1 - The Pyramid



Key topics: External-led, Churches, Community Ownership

Host: The Pyramid at Anderston

The Pyramid is a community space in the heart of Anderston, Glasgow. Ailsa MacKenzie, Chief Officer, and James Farlam, Head of Operations, were the first two staff appointed at The Pyramid back in August 2019. In 6 years, The Pyramid has transformed from a building in disrepair into a Community Anchor Organisation with the first phase of capital redevelopment completed, a staff team of 11, a wide range of community activities, support, events and programmes – and a promising future. Ailsa and James will share their knowledge of managing a community asset and all that goes alongside. There'll be a tour of the building and opportunities to ask questions.

Study Visit 2 - Community Central Hall



Key topics: External-led, Impact, Service delivery

Host: Community Central Hall

Join this study visit to one of Scotland's largest sustainable Development Trusts, with 50 years of services and growth – as it embarks on its next exciting chapter! The tour will include visits to the two anchor buildings where you will hear about the wide range of services and the journey from Urban project to sustainable social/community enterprise generating over £53m into the local community over the decades. Learn from our mistakes and tenacity to keep going despite the odds, and the challenge of delivering services over the long term!

Study Visit 3 - Strathblane Community Development Trust



Key topics: External-led, Community ownership, Council partnership, Net zero building

Host: Strathblane Community Development

Join this study visit to Strathblane Community Development Trust to learn how a 19th century chemist helped to deliver a 21st century community library. From a damp portacabin to a stunning zero carbon building in 3 years (and during a pandemic!), Strathblane Community Development Trust presents the first council-operated community owned library in Scotland. Join this study visit to find out how this was achieved, despite the concept being new to everyone involved. The fundraising, the highs and lows of negotiations, the value engineering to deliver the building within budget, the determination to succeed, how our whole community was involved and importantly what we have learned.

Day One Workshops (Tuesday 26th August)

Workshop 1 - Building connections - strengthening the social ties in your community



Key topics: DTAS-led, Member-led, Participatory, Trailblazers programme, Community engagement, Relationship building

Host: Development Trusts Association Scotland, Cranhill Development Trust, Cupar Development Trust, Dunoon Community Development Trust, Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust

Ensuring your organisation delivers for everyone in your community can be tricky. This workshop will provide ideas for developing better connections within your community and reaching those who you have not successfully engaged before. A new programme called Trailblazers is developing innovative ways of bringing your community together. Hear from the participants in this programme about the different ways they are strengthening relationships between diverse groups in their area and improving their ability to deliver for everyone.

Workshop 2 - Understanding your organisation's future: Using DTAS' Vision, Mission and Values Toolkit



Key topics: DTAS-led, Participatory, Values and Strategy

Host: Development Trusts Association Scotland

Feeling a bit directionless? Not sure where your organisation is heading (except maybe in circles)? This workshop is for you.

Join Errin and Amy as they show you how to use the DTAS Vision, Mission and Values Toolkit to get clearer on your future. They'll focus on the values part in particular – starting with your own values so you can see how the process works before taking it back to your board or team.

Workshop 3 - Stow Community Trust on nurturing the ambition of their community



Key topics: Member-led, Participatory, Stow Community Trust, Partnership

Host: Stow Community Trust

This workshop, delivered by Stow Community Trust, will outline their journey, what they've achieved by working together and nurturing the ambition of our community and gaining recognition inside and outside of our area. We'll be exploring how to harness local capacity to deliver and grow confidence for future activities.

Workshop 4 - Community Climate Adaptation Routemap



Key topics: External-led, Participatory, Climate change, Resilience, Community enterprise

Host: Verture, Adaptation Scotland

The Community Climate Adaptation Routemap is a practical guide to help communities and local organisations adapt to climate change. This participatory session will:

- Provide an overview of the Routemap and examples of its use by communities.
- Explore actions you can take to build your community's climate resilience while addressing other local issues like housing, transportation and jobs.
- Take a deeper dive into how community-led enterprises can support local climate resilience.

The workshop will include a short presentation, but will be mainly focussed on exploring the Routemap together, so please come ready to share your thoughts and experience!

Day Two Workshops (Wednesday 27th August)

Workshop 1 - DTAS Manifesto Writing Workshop: Have Your Say



Key topics: DTAS-led, Participatory, DTAS manifesto

Host: Development Trusts Association Scotland

DTAS are currently writing our manifesto for the 2026 Parliamentary elections. The aim of this manifesto is to reflect the specific policy changes needed to support Development Trusts deliver essential projects and services in their communities. In this workshop you will have the opportunity to directly drive our key asks by joining participatory discussions around our 4 manifesto themes: 1) Local Democracy, 2) Inclusive Economy, 3) Land Reform and Community Ownership, and 4) Just Transition and Community Energy.

We will contact those who have signed up prior to the conference to confirm which themed discussion you would like to join.

Workshop 2 - Unlocking Impact: Measuring your Social Value



Key topics: External-led, Non-participatory, Social value, Impact and evaluation

Host: Social Value Engine

We all know the value development trusts bring to their communities, but having quantifiable data which backs-up, enhances or challenges those assumptions can be very powerful. It can give you a steer on which projects are most worthwhile pursuing and can demonstrate to funders & partners the full social value of your work. This workshop will feature a presentation from Social Value Engine (SVE), who will demonstrate software that helps assess the social return from projects, including calculating their value in financial terms. DTAS will be running a trial this year with SVE, giving members the opportunity to assess their work and gain a better understanding of its impact.

Workshop 3 - Co-create a Resilience Toolkit



Key topics: DTAS-led, Participatory, Resilience, Finance, Governance

Host: Development Trusts Association Scotland

Resilience is the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties and is vital for all Development Trusts. Join us to share learning on what makes a resilient Development Trust and help us co-create a Resilience Toolkit.

This workshop will explore what a resilient trust looks like and what you need to withstand or recover from difficulties. Mapping the DTAS resources, professional partners and other services in the support network, we will use these workshops to build up a snapshot of the membership's strengths and gaps to take a problem-prevention approach, considering how DTAS can pivot support to enhance your resilience.

Workshop 4 - PRESS PAUSE – do you feel tourism just happens to your community? Can tourism be a force for good?



Key topics: External-led, Social impact, Community tourism, Regenerative tourism, participatory

Host: SCOTO - Scottish Community Tourism Network CIC

SCOTO has now delivered 44 Press Pause initiatives across Scotland which are and is actively exploring exciting strategic approaches that bring communities together.

At the workshop you will learn more about community led tourism, what it is and examples of it in action across Scotland. You will learn about the SCOTO Press Pause programme, what it entails, how it is funded and what it is achieving within different participating communities. We will share a couple of case studies where community development trusts have benefited. We will finish with an open discussion and address any questions you may have.

Workshop 5 - The power and perils of great communication



Key topics: External-led, External-led, Participatory, Communication, Collaboration, Success

Host: Three Sides Mediation, Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust

Great communication builds trust, inspires action, and drives success—while poor communication can unravel even the best intentions. Turning our telescope inwards to look inside our Development Trusts, this participative workshop will explore what makes communication truly effective across all levels, from volunteers to boardrooms. Through real-world examples and interactive insights, you'll learn how to connect with clarity, avoid common pitfalls, and make every conversation count. Whether you're leading a team, volunteering or delivering services, the way you communicate matters much more than you think.

Workshop 6 - The Future of Community-led Housing in Scotland – doing things differently



Key topics: External-led, Member-led, Participatory, Community-led housing, Housing innovation

Host: South of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH)

Scotland has declared a Housing Emergency. Many Community Development Trusts are seeking to tackle the impacts of suitable housing supply, sustainability and repopulation via the delivery of community-led housing. In advance of the 2026 Scottish Parliamentary election, South of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH) and Communities Housing Trust (CHT) are working with a range of partners to develop a Community-led Housing Alliance. This initiative will seek to provide a cohesive voice around the community-led housing sector in Scotland.

This is an opportunity to contribute to the conversation around the future of Community-led Housing. SOSCH will host the workshop and we will hear from two Development Trusts from the South of Scotland who are working in partnership with SOSCH and SOSE to test new and innovative approaches to delivery. This session will be participative, focusing on solutions and proposals for an enabling policy framework.

Workshop 7 - Taking on the Church: Sharing learning to date and informing the future (morning only)



Key topics: External-led, DTAS-led, Participatory, Churches, Community Ownership

Host: Historic Environment Scotland, Community Ownership Support Service, New Future Programme Team

'The 'New Futures Programme – Former places of Worship in Scotland' is a new project dedicated to supporting churches into community ownership. Funded by Historic Environment Scotland (HES), The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS) this three year programme will provide dedicated support to community organisations considering taking on a former places of worship.

This interactive session, delivered by HES and the New Futures Programme Team, will provide members with an opportunity to hear from communities who have successfully acquired heritage assets and those still in the planning stages highlighting their challenges and achievements to date. There will also be an opportunity, through discussion, to inform future workstreams and highlight additional support needs both through the programme and more widely.

Workshop 8 - Accelerating community-owned energy (morning only)



Key topics: External-led, DTAS-led, Non-participatory, Community energy, Just transition

Host: Democratic Finance Scotland, Local Energy Scotland, Arran Community Renewables, Scottish Community Coalition on Energy

Scotland has immense potential to lead in community-owned renewable energy, with inspiring examples already transforming local areas through solar, wind, and hydro projects. This workshop will explore:

- Real-life case studies - from island wind to urban solar schemes - of communities reducing emissions and reinvesting profits locally.
- Current funding and support opportunities, such as CARES and DTAS Democratic Finance team.
- Bold policy asks to accelerate community energy generation, ensuring a just, green energy future powered by the people, for the people.

Workshop 9 - Effective community engagement – how to avoid breakdown in community relations (afternoon only)



Key topics: DTAS-led, Participatory, Community engagement, Resilience, Community relations

Host: Community Ownership Support Service

Are you experiencing issues with local politics? Is your membership representative? Are your engagement practices as effective as they could be? Do you worry about succession planning?

Join this participatory workshop to reinvigorate your 'living' community engagement practices. Together we will explore the pitfalls and long-lasting impacts of poor community engagement. We'll tackle how to avoid or respond to a breakdown in community relations. We'll explore effective approaches, and highlight dynamic and impactful ways to inform, consult and engage with the community you serve.

Communities are the beating heart of what we do – this workshop is about ensuring resilience by effectively engaging with our communities.

Workshop 10 - Local Legacy Giving - An untapped opportunity for Development Trusts? (afternoon only)



Key topics: DTAS-led, Non-participatory, Fundraising, Resilience

Host: Democratic Finance Scotland

Is your Development Trust looking for ways to become less grant dependant? Every year £90m is given to Scottish charities in legacy gifts, mostly benefitting a few large national charities. 42% of over-40s in Scotland say they would be happy to give in this way, but only 6% of people actually do. This workshop explores adding local legacy giving as part of your organisational fundraising strategy, drawing lessons from the Democratic Finance pilot.

Learning outcomes:

- Knowledge of legacy giving for DTs
- Awareness of resources available to run a legacy giving campaign
- Valuing the stories of what local legacies can achieve for communities