

DEVELOPMENT TRUSTS
ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND

Workshops and Study Visits Guide

DTAS Annual Conference 2026



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 1st September)

Study Visit 1 - Tandlemuir, Church & Gardens: LCDT's Community-Led Regeneration in Action



Key topics: Community-led Regeneration / Asset Repurposing / Participatory Visit

Host: Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust

This study visit showcases how LCDT is transforming local assets through community-led regeneration. Participants will visit two of our three key sites: a repurposed church, Lochhead Gardens and hear about Tandlemuir, with short presentations on current projects, impact, and future activities. Learning outcomes include understanding practical challenges (funding, legal, operational), securing funding, and developing a Community Benefit Society. The visit concludes with a Q&A session.

Study Visit 2 - Ruchazie, Growing 21



Key topics: Community Development / Asset Transfer / Food Security

Host: Growing 21

Join Growing 21 for a tour of our community-led initiatives in Ruchazie, including the Pantry, Fireclay Café & Training Kitchen, and The Link growing space. Discover how local people have shaped services that tackle food insecurity, improve wellbeing, create volunteering and employability opportunities, and support community ownership. Delegates will meet staff and volunteers, hear about our journey towards community asset transfer, and explore how a place-based approach can create sustainable change. Learning outcomes include community engagement, asset development, social enterprise, and building resilient communities.

Day One Workshops (Tuesday 26th August)

The Hard Road Back - Deep Dive / Virtual Study Visit

This workshop will only run once



Key topics: Rebuilding / Overcoming Challenges / Managing Assets

Host: Comrie Development Trust

Room: Lecture Theatre

What do you do when your community falls out of love with their Trust? When your assets turn to liabilities? When it's hard to balance the opportunities against the risks?

Although CDT will be 20 next year, and we were one of the first community land buyouts, success has been elusive and it's only now, partly because we have the support of the Strengthening Communities Programme, that we feel like we're turning a corner.

We'll share our story and the hard learned lessons and maybe hear from you the challenges so many of us face.

Small island, big ambitions - Honest reflections on community development, resilience and rural realities - Deep Dive / Virtual Study Visit

This workshop will only run once



Key topics: Housing / Rural / Island

Host: Shapinsay Development Trust

Room: Lecture Theatre

From transport and housing to climate action and community cafe, Shapinsay Development Trust has spent 23 years responding to the changing needs of island life. This workshop explores how a small community has adapted, grown and built resilience over time. They share honest reflections, lessons learned and insights for other communities looking to shape their own future.

Managing Traditional Buildings



Key topics: Heritage Asset / Community Asset / Sustainability / Churches

Host: Historic Environment Scotland, Development Trusts Association
Scotland, COSS New Futures - Former Places of Worship
Room: W010A

This workshop will be delivered by the DTAS churches team and Historic Environment Scotland (HES). Although churches will be a theme, it will be relevant to any member looking to take on, or already managing, a traditional building. Hear from experts discussing their experiences and be able to ask a range of specialist panellists (including HES and DTAS's own Facilities Management Advisor) any question relating to all types of traditional buildings. The session will provide insight, guidance and practical tips on various aspects of their management to help support their long-term future as a community and heritage asset.

Figuratively Speaking – a deep-dive into finances.



Key topics: Finance / Resilience

Host: Development Trusts Association Scotland, PRESbiz, Inspiralba
Room: W001

What does financial resilience mean in your organisation? How do you work out your actual costs? How do you manage things and present the information for informed Board decision-making? Join DTAS and two sector-seasoned consultants, Pamela Redpath (charity finance specialist and author of DTAS' Management Accounts Toolkit) and Jo Slater (operational budgeting and financial recovery consultant) working to support our members, and others in the wider social enterprise network, to explore these vital financial resilience questions.

Game On - Grow your climate confidence with ClimatACTical



Key topics: Climate Action / Organisational Strategy / Development

Host: Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)

Room: W010B

Step into an interactive session that uses gameplay to explore real world climate decision making. In playing climatACTical, you'll discover how climate choices can shape organisational strategy and the future of community spaces and leave with greater confidence to support meaningful local action.

What You'll Gain

- Increased confidence to engage with climate action in your organisation
- A clearer understanding of how climate resilience connects to mission, finances and operations
- Practical ideas grounded in the everyday reality of third sector work
- One clear, realistic takeaway action to build on after the session

No prior climate knowledge or experience is required.

Day Two Workshops (Wednesday 2nd September)

Back to Basics - Community Shares & Crowdfunding



Key topics: Finance / Funding / Community Engagement

Host: Development Trusts Association Scotland, Democratic Finance, Action Party

Room: W002

An interactive, back to basics workshop which will explore if community shares and crowdfunding are right for funding your project.

We'll discuss the four key pillars of community share offers and delve into ideas for engaging your community.

Come along and learn from our case study then have a go at planning your own fundraising campaign in this participatory session.

You will leave with a better understanding of alternative democratic finance options & the practicalities involved in running your own campaign.

Getting Started with Local Legacy Giving



Key topics: Legacy Giving / Fundraising / Campaign

Host: Development Trusts Association Scotland, Democratic Finance, Eriskay Heritage

Room: W009

Want to explore legacy giving but have no idea where to start, or no time to figure it out?

This practical workshop is designed for development trusts who want a simple, realistic introduction to legacy giving.

We'll hear from a DTAS member who has launched a campaign and take you through the key stages of developing a legacy offer. From understanding what legacy giving is, to identifying supporters, shaping key messages, planning a simple launch, and keeping momentum going over time. The goal is to leave with:

- a clearer idea of what legacy giving could look like for your organisation
- some draft messaging and campaign ideas

Creating a Space Where Everyone Feels Like They Belong: How to Improve Diversity and Inclusion in Board Recruitment and Retention



Key topics: Diversity / Governance / Values

Host: Development Trusts Association Scotland, Member Support
Room: W010B

Diversity offers a range of experiences and perspectives which help a board to better represent their community. It helps to improve performance by bringing a wider range of insights to the table.

Through groupwork, collaborative conversations, and practical tips and tools, this workshop will give you some essentials to help you build an equal, diverse, and inclusive board. By the end of the workshop, you will:

1. Gain more awareness of the value of board diversity
2. Be able to identify any barriers to inclusion on your board.
3. Be able to have more confident conversations about board diversity.

Keeping Calm, Cool and Collected - Crisis Comms and Getting Your House in Order



Key topics: Communication / Handling a Crisis

Host: The Emerald Agency
Room: W001

Designed to give trusts a framework to get your communications house in order, this session combines a real-world case study of a Trust in crisis with practical tools to help manage communication. It will help you develop a framework and give practical tips for good communications, showing how these can help should crisis hit. It will include time to share what is causing you concern right now, and what you can do to manage this.

From Vision to Action: Building a Practical Strategy and Operational Plan



Key topics: Strategy / Purpose

Host: Development Trusts Association Scotland, Member Support, Killin and Ardeonaig Trust

Room: W007

Join us for a practical and interactive workshop designed to help turn ideas into action. Together, we'll explore how to create a clear vision, mission and values, set strategic aims, and map out activities, outcomes, and ways to measure success.

Using examples, group exercises, and shared discussion, we'll start building the foundations of an operational plan that works for development trusts. We'll also hear from a development trust about their own strategic journey, sharing lessons, challenges, and what worked for them.

Active Governance



Key topics: Governance / Resources

Host: Development Trusts Association Scotland, Member Support, Brodies
Room: W004

What is it? How to do it? And why it REALLY matters!

Join us for a delve into Active Governance and how it can benefit your development trust, ensuring it is fit for the 21st-century and beyond.

We will explore:

- making sure your governing document works for you,
- policies and procedures with real positive impact, and
- how good decision-making happens across your board, staff, members and the wider local community.

This session is packed with practical tips, resources and advice, plus an expert from Brodies on hand to answer any legal questions.

Facilities Management Fundamentals, Empowering Charities for Success



Key topics: Legal Compliance / Facilities Management / Responsibility

**Host: Development Trusts Association Scotland, Community Ownership Support Service
Room: W010A**

Facilities management is a wide ranging and detailed sector and can be an overwhelming experience for first time asset owners. In this session Andrew will cover the legal compliance issues in running a building, run through the basics of good Facilities Management practice and explore some of the challenges groups are facing in the running of their building and how to overcome these.

Multiple Assets Ownership – are your organisational structure and governance processes appropriate?



Key topics: Assets / Multiple Assets / Governance

**Host: Development Trusts Association Scotland, Community Ownership Support Service, Arisaig Community Trust, Beith Community Development Trust, Westray Development Trust
Room: W003**

Hear from three Development Trusts who manage multiple assets – hubs, churches, retail, housing, renewables etc – about how they have structured and manage their organisations to best take on a varied range of assets. This session will draw out key issues that groups should consider for optimising operational efficiency and manage risk. The session will include an overview of current practice from each Development Trust followed by a Q&A discussion.