

ANNUAL REVIEW

2023 - 2024



& MEMBERS MAP



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Michael Roy
Chair of the Board

It is my pleasure to present the DTAS Annual Report for 2023-24. This year has truly showcased the resilience and dedication of our members and staff team. In these challenging times, our work remains crucial in fostering socio-economic benefits not only within our local areas but for the entirety of Scotland.

The impact of community-led and -owned organisations, working in all corners of island and mainland Scotland, is undeniable. It is local people taking action and succeeding, often where others have faltered. This annual report not only celebrates our achievements but also acknowledges the challenges we've faced, highlighting the invaluable support DTAS has provided and the action communities have taken to help their people and places thrive.

The increasing demand for communities to take on more responsibilities is both a testament to our accomplishments and a call for systemic improvements to ease this burden. As always, DTAS and our members are committed to supporting, challenging, and overcoming obstacles together.

Development Trust Support

This year saw the launch of our Crisis and Resilience Support Programme, which offers intensive assistance to help communities overcome challenges. This support has directly helped many overcome financial and governance issues and engaged the expertise of our facilities management and democratic finance teams and other external support agencies to provide a comprehensive recovery package for our members.



We've also launched our Workplace Wellbeing Support Service, providing practical, organisational support that promotes positive wellbeing ensuring development trusts are supporting their staff. Additionally launched this year was our Coaching Programme. This programme is specifically designed for individuals working within our member organisations and provides transformative changes in work and life approaches, such as adopting healthier work-life balances, pursuing ambitious goals, and prioritising self-care and personal wellbeing.

Strengthening Communities Programme (SCP)

This year, the Strengthening Communities program has supported 33 member organisations by awarding **over £1.1 million** in funding directly to communities.



This funding is helping members kickstart and sustain a variety of projects, including launching income-generating activities, developing community action plans and Local Place Plans, and securing land and buildings, whilst providing critical services essential to their future development.

Central Support Services

The Central Support Services team has evolved this year to meet the growing needs of the organisation. Highlights include our continued focus on wellbeing resulting in increased staff morale, the delivery of a successful conference and ongoing investment in internal systems and processes.



Research and Insights



Our Research and Insights Team have been producing a wealth of information, case studies and reports to support DTAS and our members highlight the impact and importance of community-led organisations. This evidence-based work is shared with a diverse range of stakeholders in government and the third sector to help communities thrive.

Since September 2023, the team have completed a number of different research projects for DTAS, at times in partnership with external organisations. Projects include:

- Investigation into the landscape of Community Benefit Funds from onshore wind developments, Community Lotteries, and Common Good Funds.
- DTAS 2023 Membership survey: a critical exercise to update information about the scale and scope of our movement across Scotland.
- Ongoing series of case studies highlighting the important work of DTAS Members!

Staff: New and Old

In the past year, we said goodbye to Toby Sandison. Thank you for all your hard work.



We had a number of staff moving internally into new roles. We also welcomed new staff members Felix Richardson (left) into the Research & Insights Team and Annie Etherington (right) into the Central Support Services Team.



Community Ownership Support Service

Development Trusts Association Scotland

The COSS Team supported **99 new enquires** from communities interested in taking on assets. The team supported a further **150 groups** progress their existing projects which included acquiring and developing community buildings, former churches, visitor centres and car parks.

The programme of Assets for People and Place workshops, Facilities Management courses and community ownership presentations reached over **850 participants**. The asset transfer CPD programme aimed at supporting local authorities continuing to be well received.

New resources created in collaboration the other organisations during the year were the Your Church Your Community publication and the SCVO Village and Community Halls Handbook.

Community Ownership Fund

DTAS continued its work on the COF support programme, providing one-to-one information, advice and in-depth support to over a hundred and fifty community organisations during 2023/24. **Over £14 million** has now been awarded to community projects in Scotland by COF. DTAS also started working with communities post-award, assisting them to draw-down funding, address any issues and deliver successful projects. We established a networking forum that helps communities address problems delivering capital projects from Scottish islands. **Our COF advice service has been rated very highly by participants in their feedback.**

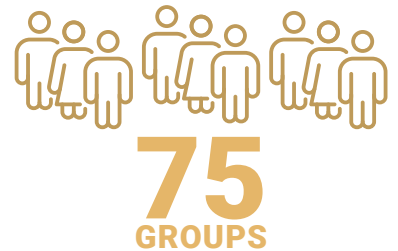


Clear and comprehensive advice, professional, friendly and approachable advisor, prompt response to initial enquiry.

Facilities Management

The Facilities Management advice service offers a resource library, peer support from a Facilities Management Network and one to one support from our Facilities Management Advisor.

Through this service



were supported throughout 2022/2024.



had pre-acquisition support and tended to have enquiries relating to community asset transfer, day-one checklists, insurance and staff resourcing.



had post-acquisition support and popular activities were general facilities management support areas, health and safety, utilities and energy efficiency.

DEMOCRATIC FINANCE SCOTLAND

Transforming community wealth

Our Democratic Finance programme has supported the launch of 11 democratic finance offers this year. Collectively these offers have raised over **£3 million** from over **1400 investors** and leveraged an additional approx. **£5 million** in funding into their community enterprises. These groups received support to develop documentation including business plans and financial projections, in addition to guidance on marketing and PR, community engagement and access to our microgrant fund.

The Democratic Finance team have also been undertaking research and developing new tools to unlock more local wealth and provide opportunities for people to both invest in and control community infrastructure and enterprises. We have explored other democratic sources of money for example community bonds, one off community lotteries and grassroots legacy giving and methods to ensure money within a community is managed, spent and distributed democratically. This has included harnessing community led opportunities from renewable energy developments - for example exploring community shared ownership and advocating for fairer and more effective use of Community Benefit Funds.



A SNAPSHOT OF OUR IMPACT



THE NETWORK HAS NOW GROWN TO

345

with **102** aspiring members.



FACILITATED OVER

2,000

interventions covering everything from general queries, telephone calls, and in person and virtual visits.



An update and extension of our member-only benefits resulted in **91 expert help** interventions in areas such as **HR, VAT, and legal advice**.



WITH

348

peer-to-peer support groups and regional events, members are forming valuable connections and a safe space to support each other and ensuring targeted help for our members.



19

NEW MEMBERS

joined the DTAS network this year!



FROM

2023-2024

we helped members with all sorts of queries from **HR and governance support to help with finances and crisis management**.



WE DISTRIBUTED

£122,508

in Green Shoots funding to our members, aiding various developments across the membership.



WE CIRCULATED

£1,547,753

of funding across our membership. This ranges from the **Strengthening Communities Fund** to the **Pockets & Prospects**.

Funding acknowledgement


DTAS would like to acknowledge the ongoing financial support received from Scottish Government from their Third Sector Unit, the Social Justice and Regeneration Division and the Land Reform Unit. This year we gratefully acknowledge support from Acorns 2 Trees as well as ongoing grant funding from the National Lottery Community Fund for the Community Shares Scotland programme and the William Grant Foundation for our facilities management pilot programme.




**Development
Trusts Association
Scotland**

A Thriving Community-led Network

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