



SOCIAL
ENTERPRISE
SCOTLAND



ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Showing resilience and agility to support communities during a pandemic



FOREWORD

2020 has been a year like no other. Our sector has faced many challenges and many are still facing uncertainty.

Yet despite this we have seen many examples of such people and groups stepping up to offer support, adapting and changing their business model with speeds never envisaged before. Already there are those looking at the longer term and considering how best to offer support through a recovery phase. Indeed, we at Social Enterprise Scotland have also needed to make fast changes - balance support, encouragement, fear and optimism.

There are many topics now at the forefront of debate but I'm sure we all would agree we wish we hadn't needed a pandemic for issues of inequality and our approach to the economy to be the instigator for change. We're all hopeful that we can take some lessons from the recent situation to strengthen our communities, balance inequality and make positive change.

This document sets out to highlight the positive impacts social enterprises have made during the pandemic. The sector has shown its agility, demonstrated it can scale up as required and proved it can be trusted to do what's needed. At Social Enterprise Scotland we hope this will influence future commissioning of services and provide more opportunities to deliver positive social impacts while also contributing to the economy.

The time is now for social enterprise.

Chris Martin

CEO, Social Enterprise Scotland



COVID-19 AND THE IMPACT ON SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

As many used the word unprecedented to describe the year that was we've also come to understand pivot, furlough and uncertainty more than ever.

The impact of a global pandemic has had a devastating effect on people and the economy and the social enterprise sector has of course not been unaffected.

This brochure highlights some of these organisations and, while we know there are still many that face challenging times, we are aware of many more that have adapted or even pivoted their services. Some were quickly awarded finance to expand, some applied for finance to support different community needs, some pivoted their existing business model or were able to utilise funds in a different way.

We saw local authorities seek to work quickly with local infrastructure, in a way quite differently from usual procurement procedures, funders trusting organisations to simply to do what was right and Government reacted quickly to put finance in place to enable fast responses across a range of wellbeing and digital transformation needs.

The case studies seek to give an overview of social enterprise reactions from across Scotland. Food distribution, mental health and isolation support, PPE production and support to groups through lockdown and beyond all feature. Lastly, we finish with an overview looking at recovery and feature a social enterprise that started during Covid-19 with the aim of supporting economic recovery in the Islands.

Finally, we will continue to monitor, represent and support those organisations still facing challenges through this time. We hope this brochure will provide increased confidence in our sector as we move forwards and as such, these case studies will inspire social enterprises, funders, commissioners and other partners to work with our sector as we seek to support recovery moving forwards.



THE FOOD TRAIN

With its main base in Dumfries, The Food Train is an organisation that prior to the pandemic was already supporting the elderly and more vulnerable in the community with a shopping and befriending service.

Currently contracted by nine health and social care partnerships to provide food access to vulnerable people in these local authority regions, the work of The Food Train increased significantly as the pandemic hit. At the same time, many of its volunteers, themselves often retired and categorised as higher risk, were themselves subject to shielding. With many also facing isolation the need to increase the befriending service also became a critical service.

Prior to Covid-19 The Food Train was supporting 2,000 people with their weekly shopping delivery using a large volunteer group. As the pandemic hit, demand rose. 38,000 deliveries of fresh food and groceries were made, an additional 700 volunteers were recruited and 3,300 people have been supported to date.

One-to-one shopping services were introduced, connecting local volunteers with elderly people living nearby. To facilitate this The Food Train adopted its systems and platforms in a very short space of time.



TSUKURE HUB

With many arts venues remaining closed the pandemic is having a lasting effect on the arts and cultural sector. Established in Ayr in 2019 this community maker space hosts a gallery and cafe while its commercial arm offers 3-D print services including laser cutting, etching and engraving. During Covid, Tsukure produced and distributed over 18,000 items of PPE, helped repair 15 bikes for the local police service and continued to maintain their community cafe, providing take-out refreshments while many other places were closed.

THE FURNITURE PROJECT

The Furniture Project (FP) in Stranraer has a 20 year contract with Dumfries and Galloway Council to provide re-use services in Wigtownshire. Operating from its purpose-built 770 m² reuse shop, the centre provides affordable household goods to the general public. In addition, they also run the community cafe and active travel hub.

During Covid-19, retail premises were forced to close but FP utilised its staff and volunteers to help deliver over 14,000 hot meals to shielding over 65's and other vulnerable people in the community. Working in partnership with other local businesses and organisations, community spirit and relationships were strengthened.





EDINBURGH REMAKERY

For the Edinburgh Remakery, income generation stopped immediately with lockdown and the business pivoted to support local community needs. Furniture up-cycling was halted and focus was placed on a new business model – the Leith E-waste and education hub. This free IT disposal service provides refurbished computers, laptops and other electronic devices for the community. Over 530 units were collected since July, equal to saving 2.2 tonnes of electronic waste from landfill and consequently helping over 420 households have access to refurbished IT equipment.



LANARK COMMUNITY TRUST

Since 2012, Lanark Community Development Trust have been working to restore Castlebank Park in Lanark and establish Castlebank Horticultural Centre. The Horticultural Centre closed down completely in March 2020 with the national lockdown (no room hires, no visits, no courses, no volunteer sessions) yet the park became a vital greenspace lifeline for many locals. As an organisation Lanark Community Trust adapted greatly providing the local community with fun and educational activity, as well as generating any income where possible. Weekly veg boxes, online gardening classes, Easter packs and other family activities were also supported.

THORN ATHLETIC

Community football club, Thorn Athletic was already at the heart of its local area in Johnstone, Renfrewshire. With almost 300 members Thorn Athletic ran sports coaching, fitness classes and children's activities while leasing their facilities to other community groups to use, affecting the lives of 800 to 1000 people a week. Lockdown meant activity was curtailed but Thorn Athletic quickly considered how they could, in partnership with other local organisations, utilise their facility as a base to coordinate a community response to the pandemic. Soon the building became a space to coordinate and prepare food supplies, including butcher packs and fruit and veg parcels to the vulnerable members of the community.



FARESHARE GLASGOW AND THE WEST OF SCOTLAND (FSGWS)

Based in a 12,000 ft² depot in Glasgow, FSGWS works with the food industry to redistribute 'fit for purpose surplus food' to those in need through their Community Food Members. Covering 12 local authority areas, they also provide work experience and employment courses to almost 100 disadvantaged people per annum. During the pandemic there was a significant increase in demand for emergency food and FSGWS saw its Community Food Members grow from 90 to 260 organisations. Since lockdown they have provided food equivalent to 4 million meals, covering areas from Dumfries & Galloway, Glasgow, the West of Scotland and up to Mull.



LOCAVORE

Locavore is a social enterprise supermarket and associated cafe supporting local growers and in the south of Glasgow. Increased demand for local shopping saw cafe team members become involved as veg box administrators, farmers and online shop support. As an enterprise focused on local suppliers, Locavore also ensured they worked closely with those stakeholders hit hard by the hospitality crash. In addition, £5,000 of redistributed profits were given to Food for Good, Glasgow to support the surge in need for emergency food.

THE BIKE STATION

Throughout lockdown many of us would have taken part in weekly claps for the NHS. The Bike Station stepped in to provide support in a more practical way from their bases in Edinburgh and Perth. The Bike Station offers upcycled bikes at affordable prices and runs bike repair services. With Covid, public donations of bikes stopped and repair services were halted.

As The Bike Station reopened and a huge growth in demand for bikes occurred the team adapted their processes as they could. Keen to support key workers they launched 'hero bikes', providing free recycled bikes to offer safe, affordable travel to those working directly on the pandemic. The initiative saw 207 bikes were distributed between April and August across the Edinburgh and Perth regions.





PROJEKT 42

Projekt 42, a social enterprise gym in North Edinburgh, had been providing fitness and psychological well-being support through its classes and coaching. Its subscription model meaning that service were able to be offered for free and reduced costs for people on reduced incomes. Again, as with many sport organisations Covid-19 forced the closure of sports classes and gyms. Keen to continue supporting its local community, Projekt 42 quickly banded together to digitalise services to benefit the community. Within weeks, counselling sessions were provided as well as fitness classes moving online.

SPACE AND BROOMHOUSE

The Broomhouse Centre in south-west Edinburgh has been delivering targeted health and social care services to the most vulnerable in its community for over 29 years. Rebranding as Space and Broomhouse in 2019 as they opened a new purpose built centre. When the pandemic hit, the team worked quickly to identify the local needs of their community. They sought to maximise their resources as staff were redeployed to step up the food distribution offering and many services pivoted to support phone and online mental health support. These practical, direct services were delivered in partnership with other organisations across south-west Edinburgh as up to 5,000 meals were provided per week.



CYRENIANS

Cyrenians operate Community Cook Clubs, redistribute surplus food, run a farm enterprise in West Lothian and a community café in Falkirk. During lockdown, the Community Cook School and Community Café in Falkirk were transformed into food production kitchens. Redistributed food volumes increased four-fold as 610 tonnes (c1.4 Million meals) of food were shared during April to June while the food production kitchen made 4000 and 6000 meals per week using professional chefs on furlough; 80,000 meals were delivered to people's doors, community hubs, schools, hostels and to NHS staff in the ICU and Covid-19 wards in Edinburgh and Falkirk. In Falkirk over 3,700 meals and over 1,500 food bags per quarter were prepared and delivered. In addition to this funded work, Cyrenians also saw demand for farm veg bags sales double.

CFINE

CFINE (Community Food Initiatives North-East) improves health and well-being and the environment. As Covid-19 hit CFINE's enterprise trading – involving selling wholesale and retail fruit, vegetables and healthy snacks – literally stopped overnight. To ensure continued income they implemented a new concept – “Vegaroonitooon” (Veg around the Town) – a fruit and vegetable box delivery scheme. Vegaroonitooon ensures continued investment in charitable activities where four weekly orders of their large veg box covers costs of providing financial advice and six extra-large boxes supports emergency food to someone living in food poverty for up to 12 weeks. In May, 145 tonnes of food were distributed, over 345,000 meals and 8040 emergency parcels were prepared. In addition, 234 individuals were supported to navigate the welfare system.



FINDHORN BAY ARTS

Like everyone, Findhorn Bay Arts adapted to ensure that creativity still happened during Lockdown for its local community. While running existing programmes in a different way they also secured funding from the Youth Music Initiative during Covid-19 to deliver a new digital music making project. As many arts organisations faced significant challenges Findhorn Bay Arts showed resilience and ingenuity and in June, they also entered into a new partnership with The Bakehouse in Findhorn to open a POP-up shop selling local organic produce and freshly baked bread. This supported eight local growers and in addition, sold face masks made by two local makers from its shop base on the High Street.



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THE HAVEN

The Haven is a community wellbeing centre with yoga studio, mindfulness room and healing space based in Stonehaven. To support their community during Covid-19 the yoga studio was transformed by 50 active volunteers into a community food larder. Over 2,000 visitors used the Haven Community Food Larder, feeding on average 500 people in the community monthly. The Haven also empowered people to be able to make their own food choices at a time when they were disempowered in many ways. Operating a 'swap shop' system they enabled people shielding to exchange items more suitable to their needs from the larder.



POINT AND SANDWICK

Point and Sandwick Power is a 100% community owned commercial enterprise which built, operates and maintains the UK's largest community wind farm based on the Isle of Lewis.

The company exists to generate profit from renewable energy and reinvest this back into the community via its charitable sister organisation, Point and Sandwick Trust (PST). In March 2020, normal operations at Point and Sandwick Trust were suspended to direct all uncommitted income towards a newly created Pandemic Community Support Fund.

PST utilised the expertise of their local community consultants to look for ways to access additional funding to support plans to help the local population through the lockdown period and worked closely with local community councils and NHS Western Isles to identify what was needed to best support those locally affected by the impact of the pandemic.

Following these early meetings, PST donated £40,000 to NHS Western Isles in support of frontline staff and patients. In addition, PST worked together with Lews Castle College to instigate the local manufacture, and delivery of PPE to all NHS and care home staff across the Western Isles during a time of shortages.

PST covers an area of 18 rural villages with an ageing population of approximately 3,000. Many are older and live alone with rural isolation, hardship and fuel poverty affecting many householders. Working with local community councils, PST co-ordinated three new schemes to respond quickly to this demand. In May, two temporary jobs were created to deliver a Local Shopping Delivery Scheme. Working to support the local shop, and businesses in nearby Stornoway, two drivers were employed to safely collect and deliver shopping to users in Point and Sandwick for free. The Community Wellbeing Service was introduced to ensure that individuals and families including those with health or underlying problems of illness, age, disability, mental health issues, mobility or financial hardship had free access to social support and good quality meals. The service encompassed two schemes to support the local population, a telephone befriending service to tackle social isolation and a freshly cooked meals delivery service to those in need. The Community Wellbeing Service created a temporary job for one full time coordinator who managed 11 befriending volunteers and 17 local volunteers to deliver over 6,000 freshly cooked meals to more than 70 households over a 5-month period.

THE ALICE PROJECT

ALICE Theatre Project is a social enterprise based in Shetland. Being a theatre company, they were directly hit by Covid-19.

Keen to see creativity continue in their community the 'ALICE At Home' activities were started as daily activities and were shared through Facebook providing much needed support and encouragement to families at home. Developing creative imagination has always run through all ALICE operations and the pandemic highlighted further the importance of nurturing imagination in all people building resilience and self-confidence. These activities will now be turning into a book that can be used within the community to stimulate the imagination and in doing so, to support mental health and the development of creative minds.



LIBERTIE

The Libertie Project Limited is a women led micro social enterprise in Inverness that uses technology and creativity to bring families and communities together improving life chances, to journey towards or into employment and reduce offending. They run

a prison based printing enterprise in HMP Inverness, a creative studio that produces ceramics, awards and trophies, a digital inclusion service that provides support and learning to reduce digital exclusion and a community urban garden with a surplus food fridge and pantry.

Unable to enter the prison and therefore generate an income, lockdown also closed all the public facilities meaning they couldn't run any of their usual digital support services, again resulting in a significant loss of income.

Undeterred, the team looked at what the local community needed at this time and what Libertie could do to help – digital services and mental health support were quickly identified. Since Covid-19 hit, they have supported 250 Highlands and Islands households to connect to the internet with their own device so they can access essential support, advice, shopping, connecting with families and friends, learning and finances. In addition, 833 households in the Highlands have been provided with creative structured activities to support mental wellbeing and family cohesion.

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ISLE DEVELOP CIC

There are few who may set out to start a new social enterprise during a pandemic but that was exactly what happened for Isle Develop CIC.

With her own new start enterprise on hold, digital consultant Rhoda saw that local economies on the islands would struggle as tourists stayed away and local businesses lost a key group of customers at the peak travel season.

In looking for a digital customer solution isle20.com was developed as a directory for island businesses. Further, noticing that there was a lack of marketing and ecommerce support for microbusinesses, as well as a massive lack of online confidence, a marketplace was added enabling product listings online.

In the six months since the pandemic took hold the isle20 and isleEats website have put £20k+ directly into the pockets of small island businesses by advertising, and selling their products. Businesses are now online who were not online before and almost half a million page views have been generated.



IN SUMMARY

The case studies highlighted have shown both agility and adaptability based on listening and understanding their local community needs.

While some have focused on emergency needs, others have started to take a longer-term view as we look towards building greater resilience in our communities and aiding recovery.

They have demonstrated how social enterprise can develop, grow and adapt to meet social need and have highlighted that they can be trusted to do what's needed. Moving forward we hope we can built on this trust, influence local commissioning and build partnerships for the future.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SCOTLAND AND COVID-19 SUPPORT

At Social Enterprise Scotland we are continuing to monitor the impacts of the pandemic on our sector and represent situations accordingly.

Having contacted all members in April we produced initial findings and a follow up report The State of the Sector was compiled building on OSCR survey data in August.

We will continue to monitor the situation moving forwards, ask for wider support as required, feed into discussions on economic recovery and the role of social enterprise and run what have now become our weekly Wednesday webinars (11.30-12.30) where groups can connect and keep up to date in addition to our regular newsletter and emails.

Finally, we have also launched the Buy Social Scotland campaign focused on encouraging consumers to support and buy from social enterprise in the future. For more information and to join or support the campaign please visit www.buysocialscotland.com





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