



## **Strategic Plan 2022-2025: Executive Summary**

Lanark Community Development Trust

July 2022 (version 1)

***Working to deliver a fair, prosperous and sustainable future  
for the people of Lanark***

# About Lanark Community Development Trust

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## Who we are

LCDT was created in 2009 by local people who wanted to improve the town of Lanark and surrounding areas. The Trust is an independent, member-led charity (reg. SC040584) working on projects that have a social, environmental and economic benefit to people in Lanark and surrounding villages.

Membership is open to all local residents aged 18 or over with Junior membership open to younger residents. We are governed by a voluntary [Board of Directors](#), elected from the membership on an annual basis. Members and non-members alike can get involved in LCDT projects as volunteers. To participate, visit: [Get Involved – Lanark Community Development Trust \(lanarktrust.co.uk\)](https://lanarktrust.co.uk)

Our work is currently funded through charitable trusts and the Scottish Government and enables us to employ two members of staff. We are a member of the Development Trusts Association Scotland, the representative body for regeneration organisations like ours.

## Our community

Lanark is one of the oldest royal burghs in Scotland and recognised as South Lanarkshire's county town. Set in the beautiful Clyde Valley, our rural community has a population of around 8,600 people within 4,000 households. We benefit from a wealth of natural, cultural and heritage assets including the UNESCO World Heritage Site at New Lanark near the Falls of Clyde.

The town has a traditional high street with independent outlets but many residents commute elsewhere for work including Edinburgh and Glasgow. Lanark serves as a rural transport and service hub, serving a number of outlying rural villages who would otherwise be cut off.

National deprivation data shows that Lanark performs relatively well but there are pockets of deprivation. This suggests a diverse experience of life in Lanark with some people experiencing much higher levels of need than others.

## What we are working towards

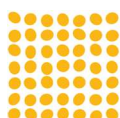
### Our purpose

The Trust's mission is:

**To develop a strong, sustainable community body that encourages local involvement and partnerships to deliver a fair, prosperous and sustainable future for our historic town.**

### Our way of working

LCDT operates as an 'anchor' in Lanark, bringing together charities, volunteers, voluntary groups and the public sector to co-ordinate a local response and channel support where it is needed. We are the only community led organisation to do this locally. Our remit is broad and we take a holistic, community wide approach to our work.



LCDT is committed to being:

- **Inclusive**
- **Open and accessible**
- **Representative and impactful**
- **Inspiring and ambitious**

### **Our successes to date**

- Redeveloped areas of the historic [Castlebank Park](#), a key local green space amenity: new garden areas, a horticultural growing space and repurposing of derelict buildings into a flexible and attractive community space.
- Protected and developed other historic assets including St Kentigern's Church, produced history booklets, restored trails and commissioned historic statues and sculptures in Lanark.
- Set up Lanark's BID (Business Improvement District) now called '[Discover Lanark](#)' and operating as an independent organisation. Secured funding and appointed the first manager.
- Established a calendar of regular events in the area, most notably Springfest and Winterfest for locals and visitors, now hosted by Discover Lanark and a series of smaller community events.
- Stimulated (and currently lead) a joint venture with South Lanarkshire Council, New Lanark Trust and the Scottish Wildlife Trust to develop '[A Vision for Lanark](#)' - an ambitious 10 year strategy to unlock future business and tourism opportunities.
- Lobbied for and secured regeneration funding for the 'Royal Oak problem' - an eyesore in town now being redeveloped.

## **Our 2022-2025 Strategy**

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### **Why a strategy?**

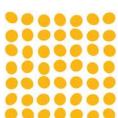
In 2019, we began work on a Vision for Lanark, bringing together partners to unlock future business and tourism development locally by using our assets to better advantage. This work was underpinned by public consultation and a preliminary strategy has now been launched. The work highlighted to us the need to take a more coordinated, inclusive approach across the organisation.

Building on this and past successes, we want to refresh our approach: new challenges (and ambitions) in our community mean we need to evolve. In the wider context, the Scottish and UK governments are increasingly supportive of community led regeneration, signalling new opportunities for organisations like LCDT. With a clear strategy in place to drive change, we can make the most of these opportunities.

### **What we did**

This strategy was developed in response to feedback from local residents. Our plans are rooted in a 2021 consultation with local residents in and around Lanark, board members, the wider membership, staff and strategic partners, stakeholders and professionals working in or for our community. We asked what was important to local people and where we should be focussing our efforts. We did this through:

- A public online survey (capturing the views of 470 people)
- Group sessions with older people, children and young people



- An open public event to discuss and debate Lanark's future
- One to one interviews with third sector groups and other stakeholders

We listened carefully to the views and ideas that were put forward, considered where we could make the most difference and developed our plan accordingly.

## What we learned

[Results of the consultation](#) found most people had a positive view of local life, rating it as a 'good' place: lots of great countryside, convenient and accessible, friendly and warm people, with a decent amount of local amenities and activities available and lots of history to be proud of.

However, people also felt that Lanark is in slow decline. Services are moving out, shops and businesses are closing and historic architecture left to decay. The high street is run down, stuck in the past and failing to tap into the visitor market. Community life is being eroded: many locals travel elsewhere for work and leisure and community groups don't work together effectively.

People want to feel proud of Lanark: they want to improve the look and feel of the town, enjoy better access to heritage and culture and better transport and traffic. They'd like a more vibrant high street, more amenities and services for young people and more activities for children and families.

An impressive range of project ideas, big and small, were put forward for consideration.

Feedback on LCDT specifically showed that people rated our work positively but that the organisation is not as well known as it could be. Better engagement, consultation and representation is needed and has been included in our strategy.

## What we will do

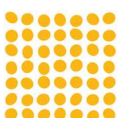
### Our strategic objectives

Based on that feedback, our key priorities for the next three years are:

- To stimulate community engagement and encourage participation
- To coordinate and lead on the joint overarching strategic Vision for Lanark
- To develop community activity and facilities where there are gaps
- To improve our local environment (green and built)
- To promote Lanark's heritage and other assets
- To make LCDT a resilient and enterprising organisation

### The difference we want to make

The work we do needs to deliver impact. Our initiatives and projects will contribute to the following:



Lanark has a more environmentally sustainable future

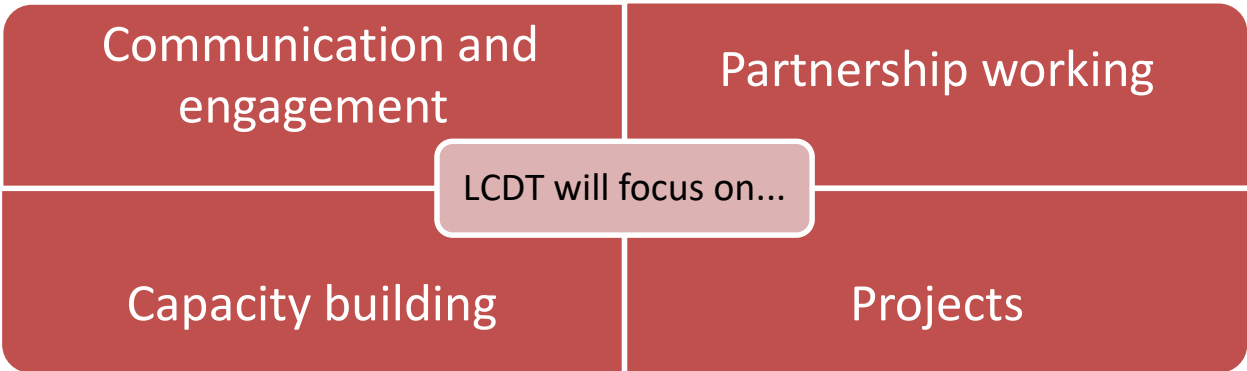
Young people in Lanark have a stronger voice and are able to develop skills and initiatives which matter to them

People are more connected and active and the community feels empowered, confident and resilient

Assets which matter to local people have been protected and developed

### How we will get there

To achieve our objectives and impact, we will focus on 4 main areas:



### 1. Communications and engagement

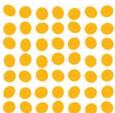
We will live up to the word ‘community’ in our name and our values of ‘inclusive’, ‘open’ and ‘accessible.’ We will take a more systematic and considered approach to what and how we communicate: from consultations to fun days, from newsletters to tweets. We will:

- improve our external communications to make sure we are promoting the Trust and its work widely. We will revamp our website and develop a communications plan which will include a digital strategy to make sure we are connecting with a diverse audience. A ‘comms’ working group will be set up to drive this forward.
- develop volunteering opportunities to convert latent interest into positive action. Volunteering will be suited to a range of interests and abilities, be formal and informal, short or long term.
- Develop membership services to increase participation

### 2. Partnership working

We have a strong track record of working in partnership with others but we need to go further to achieve our vision. We have good working relationships with South Lanarkshire Council, New Lanark Trust, Discover Lanark, the Community Council others but want to take a more coordinated and inclusive approach to this. We will build on our existing relationships but also extend this network. We will act as an anchor by coordinating and facilitating local activity. We will:

- Host a third sector forum event in Lanark exploring how community groups could work together better and avoid duplication and displacement.
- Develop a plan for joint working and monitor the scope and scale of partnership working across Lanark with the aim of growing these relationships.



### 3. Capacity building

We will need to grow our capacity to achieve our ambitions. We face a number of barriers including too few staff and volunteers, an overstretched Board and over-reliance on funding. We will need to dedicate time to building LCDT as a robust, resourced and effective organisation. We will;

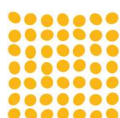
- invest in staff and board training
- develop our volunteer programme
- improve our information and management systems
- improve our monitoring and evaluation framework so we can demonstrate the difference the Trust is making
- reduce our reliance on funding by generating our own income through social enterprise

### 4. Projects

We have two long term projects in progress that we will continue to deliver: [Vision for Lanark](#) and [Castlebank Horticultural Centre](#). Both these projects deliver across our strategic objectives and deliver multiple outcomes.

Local residents put forward a wide range of project suggestions during the consultation. These were carefully assessed and scored against criteria for example how achievable they were, their income generating potential, scope for partnership and volunteer development. Those scoring the highest have been selected for delivery. These have been grouped together by key outcome:

<b>Environmental</b> <i>OUTCOME: A 'greener' Lanark with a more environmentally sustainable future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivering Horticulture workshops</li><li>• Delivering Carbon Neutral workshops</li><li>• Extend and improve paths (eg New Lanark to Bonnington Power Trail)</li><li>• Extend and improve cycle routes</li><li>• Explore feasibility of community hydro scheme</li><li>• Establish trail information and signage</li></ul>
<b>Assets (green and built)</b> <i>OUTCOME: Assets which matter to local people have been protected and developed</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protect/ develop St Kentigerns church as a historic monument</li><li>• Asset transfer and /or development of Castlebank Park</li><li>• Asset transfer of Common Good property in the Racecourse area</li><li>• Establish Lanark Heritage and Civic Forum</li><li>• Develop Local Place Plan in partnership</li><li>• Engage in plan for Lanark Transport &amp; Welcome Hub</li><li>• Create more heritage interpretation in the town</li></ul>
<b>Connected and Active</b> <i>OUTCOME: People feel more connected and active and feel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish a forum for local groups to work together</li><li>• Establish Lanark Development Forum</li><li>• Improve communication channels and produce more information about what's happening locally</li><li>• Develop more volunteering opportunities through a programme of volunteer development</li></ul>



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*empowered, confident  
and resilient*

- Hold more regular community consultations on projects of significance but also to monitor progress of the Trust
- More family / group activities: pottery, cookery, gardening

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## Young People

*OUTCOME: Young people in Lanark have a stronger voice and are able to develop skills and initiatives which matter to them*

- Create an advisory / working group of young people to design and develop ideas
- Create youth led pump track / skate park / parkour / outdoor gym / bike park initiative

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## Measuring success

Understanding and communicating the impact we are making is crucial for buy-in and an area we are committed to improving in. We will develop an evaluation framework in year 1 setting out impacts, indicators and methods of measurement. Monitoring and evaluating practices will be embedded throughout all 4 work areas (communications and engagement / partnership working / capacity building and project delivery).

## Leadership

We aspire to be more than a 'well functioning' development Trust: we want to be visionary, ambitious and achieve high impact. This will require more of our team. The Board has worked well but there is a need to evolve to achieve the change we want.

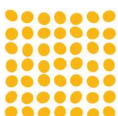
We have undertaken a skills audit of current Board members and reviewed our governance arrangements. We have agreed a range of actions to improve the expertise of trustees, the diversity on the Board and leadership practices. This includes recruiting on the basis of skills and commitment, establishing working groups to streamline board meetings and ring fencing time for development and strategy.

## Membership

Members are the foundation of any development trust and scaling up means that we will need to invigorate and extend our membership. This is a developmental priority for us, giving us better representation through consultation, a stronger voice for political lobbying, a crucial volunteer resource and a larger pool of candidates for board selection. It is crucial that members feel involved in the work of the Trust and get something positive out of their involvement with it. We will introduce a range of activity including holding more regular member events (and ones that target different demographics), consulting more with members on issues which matter, introducing member discounts and focussing on 'projects' rather than 'organisation' to capitalise on specific member interest. We will aim to double our membership numbers in yr 1 and by yr 3, have set a target of 250 members.

## Management and Staffing

To keep pace, we will need to increase staffing. An evolved staffing structure has been worked up: a new central role of Development Manager will be created to deliver this strategy and the post holder will





be responsible for all other staff. A Project Manager will also be recruited to drive forward our Vision for Lanark work and work on long term sustainability. Community engagement, communication and impact assessment will be written into job descriptions. The Board will continue to take overall responsibility for staff.

## **Costs and Funding**

Looking ahead, there will be the need to balance big ambition with achievability and much of our success will depend on the resources we can secure. With more staff, more community engagement and projects to launch, core costs will increase. Indicative figures have been calculated and annual costs are likely to be in the region of £105K in yr 1 to £125K in year 3.

Our approach is twofold:

1. develop our own income through community enterprise which will be explored over the next three years (a community energy/ hydro scheme, building on commercial activity at our horticultural centre and taking ownership of the wider Castlebank Park for business development)
2. Develop a detailed funding strategy. The funding landscape has changed significantly following Brexit and the pandemic. Funding is increasingly being routed through Local Authorities and we recognise the need to strengthen our relationship with the Council. A number of potential funding pots have already been identified as being of interest and these will be explored further.

## **Actions and Timeframes**

An action plan has been developed setting out the key actions over the next 1-3 years. Yr 1 will be heavily focussed on internal improvements but this will lessen in years 2 and 3 once good foundations in place. Years 2 and 3 will take an increasing external focus as we develop partnerships and projects. Progress against this action plan will be monitored by the Board on a regular basis.

