



## CAITHNESS VOLUNTARY GROUP NEWSLETTER

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JANUARY 2021

### **We're open for business**

Caithness Voluntary Group is open for business. We have been supporting community groups throughout 2020 and we look forward to working with you in 2021. We work with groups covering range of support including funding, policies and procedures, volunteering and governance Caithness Rural Transport and Befriending Caithness continue their services. To find out about Befriending Caithness please contact Angie House at [angie@cvg.org.uk](mailto:angie@cvg.org.uk) – 07592 493048.

Caithness Rural Transport has secured funding from Highland Council to provide free transport for over-70s and those with disabilities to get to their vaccine appointments if they have no other available transport.

This will be on a first come, first served basis. CRT has limited capacity so if people already have access to either their own transport or can get a lift from family or friends within their bubble then it is best that they do so. Bookings can be made by email at [coreen@cvg.org.uk](mailto:coreen@cvg.org.uk) or phone 07856 740649.



# Funding

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The Response, Recovery and Resilience Fund is open for applications up to £5,000 the fund is now focussing on recovery. As some lockdown restrictions are lifted this phase of funding will support organisations to continue their operations in the “new normal”, to re-establish or redesign their activities to comply with new regulations in addition to providing emergency support for those who need it most.

**<https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/programmes/community-response,-recovery-resilience-fund/>**

## **Community and Third Sector Programme**

**Adapt and Thrive** supports organisations to change and recover. Recovery for the third sector has not been straightforward, and lockdowns, changes to guidelines and the tier system will continue to be part of our daily lives in 2021. As a response, Adapt and Thrive has adapted and all eligible organisations can now access funding regardless of turnover size, while the top value of grants has increased to £75K.

Working with an adviser, organisations will be supported to develop a plan so they can adapt to the challenges presented by Covid-19, operate sustainably and continue to have a positive impact in their communities. This may mean developing new income streams, restructuring the organisation or changing how services are delivered. Funding to implement the plan is also available.

Adapt and Thrive offers tailored, specialist advice, as well as grants and loans. The advice is designed to help organisations to build recovery plans that are flexible, allowing them to stay open, respond or adapt quickly to any changes in guidelines or tiers. The funding is unrestricted so it can also adapt around the needs of the organisation.

**Communities Recovery Fund** supports the delivery of services in communities that were suspended or reduced because of Covid-19, or the creation of new services that tackle new challenges presented.

The fund offers grants so organisations can reintroduce the delivery of services and it supports the adaptation of existing services or the development of new ones to tackle new community needs resulting from Covid-19, or existing needs exacerbated by it.

For information on both funds go to [Community & Third Sector Recovery Programme – SCVO](#)

**The #ShiftThePower Coronavirus Response Fund** will help grassroots organisations in Scotland to support vulnerable individuals, families and communities, including responding to the impact of coronavirus.

The work to be supported needs to fit with one of the following four strategic themes:

- Children Survive and Thrive: early years development for children facing disadvantage, for work with children aged 0-5 years only.
- Gender Justice: contributing to gender equality by reducing violence and discrimination based on gender and sexuality.
- A Safe Place to Be: supporting people who have experienced homelessness or have been forced from their homes to live safely.
- Mental Health Matters: improving mental health provision and tackling stigma around mental health.

Registered charities and constituted voluntary or community organisations with governing documents can apply with a £250,000

Apply online. Full guidance available via the website.

- <https://www.corra.scot/grants/comic-relief-coronavirus/>

**Minimum:** £1,000. **Maximum:** £10,000

### **Fuel Support Fund**

Households in the Highland that are on low income and experiencing fuel insecurities as a result of Covid-19 can apply to the Fuel Support Fund from Highland Council. The £270,000 Fuel Support Fund has been set up by the council using Scottish Government funding which can be used flexibly to alleviate financial insecurities.

Low-income households within Highland experiencing fuel insecurities can apply for a non-repayable £60 grant. Full details including online application. Applications should be made as soon as possible <https://www.highland.gov.uk/fuelsupportfund>

### **Highland Council Community Resilience Grants**

This fund is to support Covid-19 related community resilience efforts.

Examples of support to groups could include:

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- supporting local volunteer efforts and expenses
  - developing promotional materials
  - support for local volunteer telephone systems
  - making up food packs for vulnerable households
  - developing measures to address social isolation
  - providing a source of funding to enable groups to shop for individuals in the community where households no longer have cash available and they cannot source local deliveries
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Funding available:

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- Groups can apply for up to £1,500 at any one time.
  - Groups can reapply once initial funding is spent.
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Eligibility:

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The fund is open to all groups within a local area – both constituted and non-constituted. This recognises that there are a number of new groups that have emerged to support Covid-19 related resilience efforts. To find out more go to [https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory\\_record/1422811/supporting\\_community\\_resilience/category/155/grants\\_for\\_community\\_groups](https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1422811/supporting_community_resilience/category/155/grants_for_community_groups)

### **Paul Hamlyn Foundation**

Youth Fund Grants up to £90,000 are available for organisations whose main purpose is working with and for young people (aged 14-25) who face complex transitions to adulthood. Deadline ongoing.

<https://www.phf.org.uk/funds/youth-fund/>

### **Volunteer feedback survey**

We are very conscious that the volunteering across the world will be changing significantly as a result of the current pandemic. Highland Third Sector Interface is working with public sector colleagues within Highland and nationally to help understand how these changes are impacting on volunteering.

To start exploring these issues we have a very short survey which will take approximately two or three minutes to complete and will help us to understand where changes may be most pronounced and how we can investigate those further. The survey is completely anonymous and doesn't ask participants to provide either details on where they volunteer or personal contact information. The survey is open now and will close on 29<sup>th</sup> January.

Survey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HighVol21>

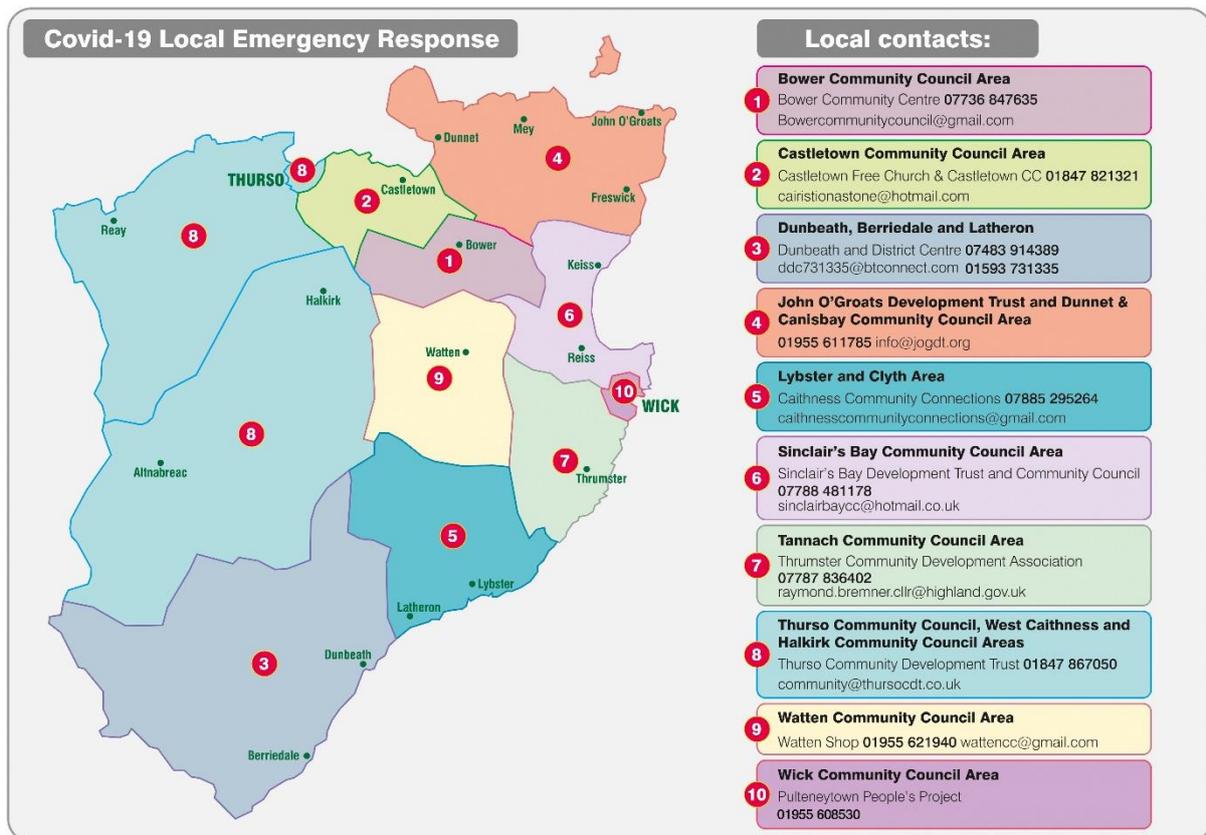
In towns and villages across Scotland, communities are fighting Covid-19. Scottish Community Development Centre provides advice on how to virus-proof the fantastic things you are doing and reduce the risk of indirect spread. Please read the advice carefully if you are starting to provide support or reviewing what you are doing already. Go to [Supporting Communities Safely | SCDC – We believe communities matter](#)

## Caithness Voluntary Group tips for applying for funding

There are lots of funders in the UK, and to ensure that you maximise your chances of securing funding it is important to identify those most likely to fund your project. Spending some time to research this is important this may involve looking at well-known large funders, smaller local and regional funders and issue-specific grants. There is quite a number of local community benefit wind farms in Caithness

- Check eligibility always read the eligibility criteria of the grant and check for any exclusions.
- Contact the funder if you have any questions about the grant or want to check eligibility. It is a good way of introducing the project to them, and to get some insights about how to write your application successfully. It is not always possible to contact the funder.
- Tailor your application, take time to prepare and write your application, and do not use unexplained jargon. Try to make your application clear and compelling so that it stands out to funders. Write in short and persuasive sentences. Use a storytelling approach (backed up with statistics if available and relevant) or case studies if possible. Highlight previous project successes and good practices to show the organisation is credible and capable of delivering the project. Mention any partnerships and include any referees. When describing your project remember to be clear about its aims, its reach, the outputs and outcomes you are trying to achieve, why the project is needed, how much funding is being requested, and who will benefit. Match the priorities of the funder to what you want to do. Read the values, and objectives of the funding body and tailor your application accordingly. Include a breakdown of all costs you are applying for, including full cost recovery where appropriate.
- Answer all the questions and include all required documents ensure you have provided all the necessary information, and that any requested up-to-date documents are included, and they are well-presented and readable. Failure to do this may jeopardise or slow your application. Get someone to review your draft application form before sending it away. This is a good idea as you know your project so well that you may think that what you have included is clear but often someone else checking it can highlight areas that need to be clarified. Caithness Voluntary Group can help with this process.
- Ensure you submit any reports requested. Following a successful award, send a thank-you to the funder and acknowledge them in any publicity. Ask for feedback if your application was unsuccessful and see if you can learn from this to improve any subsequent applications you write. Sometimes funds are simply oversubscribed and can be why applications are unsuccessful. Contact [yvonne@cvg.org.uk](mailto:yvonne@cvg.org.uk) for support and advice.

## Community resilience map



## Covid-19 Lockdown Community Response January 2021

Allan Tait, the senior development officer at Caithness Voluntary Group, who is helping to co-ordinate the community response, said: "The support provided by family, friends and neighbours has been outstanding and I am sure that will continue. In addition there is a network of community groups that can help anyone who is struggling.

"Currently areas only have the facilities to provide a prescription and shopping collection/delivery service. Unfortunately, they do not all have the means to offer a meal service. Please speak to your local community council or community group about this further if you are really struggling."

Contact details are in the attached graphic.

The **Highland Council Covid-19 Helpline** is a FREEPHONE number on 0300 303 1362. If the council team can't help then they will ask one of the local groups if they could provide support.

For a wide range of support, especially financial, **Caithness Citizens Advice Bureau** delivers free confidential, impartial and independent advice to the citizens of

Caithness and north Sutherland. Email: [ureau@caithnesscab.casonline.org.uk](mailto:ureau@caithnesscab.casonline.org.uk)  
Telephone: 01847 894243 Web: <https://www.cas.org.uk/campaigns>

### **Caithness Foodbank will continue to be open over the lockdown**

Hours will remain the same. Tuesdays and Fridays, noon to 2.30pm at the Wick and Thurso centres as a collection service. They cannot offer deliveries at the moment. People who feel that they are in financial difficulties can be referred through support organisations such as CAB, Pulteneytown People's Project, the Highland Council housing service, Home-Start, Thurso Community Development Trust, Ormlie Community Association, NHS mental health services and YPeople.

**Caithness Mental Health Support Group** runs two support centres and while they are currently closed the telephone lines are still open so please call for advice and support. The Haven Wick, 01955 605264. Stepping Stones Thurso, 01847 892177. Web: [www.cmhsg.org](http://www.cmhsg.org)

**Help with shopping:** Both the Thurso and Wick Co-op stores now offer a click and collect service. This can be found at the following website:

<https://shop.coop.co.uk/>

The Co-op are also doing electronic gift cards that do away with cash handling for volunteers. Again see the link below

[Get support - Co-operate](#)

### **OSCR guidance on the impact of Covid-19 on your ability to hold an AGM**

For many charities it is a requirement in the governing document to hold an AGM, and often the **governing document** will set out how you need to do this. There are a number of options available to charities, some of which may depend on your **legal form**.

#### **1. Hold a virtual AGM**

Meeting face-to-face is not going to be possible at the moment so holding meetings virtually will be a good option. Some charities have specific provisions in their governing documents to allow AGMs to take place using digital solutions such as phone or online. If you do not, you may be able to amend your governing document to change how or when your AGM is held. If you cannot make these changes, OSCR is happy that charities hold their AGMs in this way even if the governing document doesn't say anything about this. This will allow charities to have important discussions and to take decisions at this difficult time. Where you decide to hold your AGM virtually, you should record this decision, including any voting mechanisms, to demonstrate the good governance of your charity.

#### **2. AGMs and accounts**

The pandemic may have had an impact on your ability to hold your AGM. This might make it difficult for you to finalise your annual report and accounts. Wherever

possible, OSCR would ask you to try to get these in on time. All you need to do is log on to OSCR online as usual and scan your report and accounts. However, they understand that it might be difficult for some to finalise their annual report and accounts; they will take an understanding and proportionate approach to this and no charity in this situation will be penalised for being late. See the **Reporting to OSCR** section of the guidance for more on accounts.

### 3. Postpone your AGM and other meetings

You might decide that, as a result of Covid-19 and the official health advice, the best option is postponing your AGM or other meetings until restrictions are lifted or meetings can be held observing physical distancing rules. It may be that by postponing these meetings you are not fulfilling what it says in your governing document or you will not be able to finalise your annual report and accounts. Where you decide it is necessary to postpone you should record this decision, demonstrating good governance of your charity. OSCR will be understanding and proportionate should any concerns be raised with it about the postponement of AGMs or other meetings.

If you want help updating your governing document or organising a meeting on line then please contact [yvonne@cvg.org.uk](mailto:yvonne@cvg.org.uk) or [allan@cvg.org.uk](mailto:allan@cvg.org.uk)  
<https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/covid-19-guidance-for-charities/>

**Small lotteries guidance confirms** that **virtual** tickets can be sold – Lotteries may involve the issuing of physical or virtual tickets to participants (a virtual ticket being non-physical, for example in the form of an email or text message). The purchaser of a small society lottery ticket must receive a document which identifies:

- the name of the promoting society
- the price of the ticket (must be the same for all tickets)
- the name and address of the member of the society who is designated as having responsibility at the society for promoting small lotteries, or (if there is one) the external lottery manager
- Either the date of the draw, or enables the date to be determined.

The guidance above speaks about email or text message; we would safely assume that a Facebook message would also be fine. You will still need a licence that CVG can provide if you are selling tickets before the event. For further info on when a lotteries licence is required see below. We hope this helps but please get in touch if there are any questions: [allan@cvg.org.uk](mailto:allan@cvg.org.uk) or [helen@cvg.org.uk](mailto:helen@cvg.org.uk)

*Anyone who would like to contribute information about their community group or events planned, or would like to find out more about anything in this newsletter, can contact CVG on **01955 609960**, email [Yvonne@cvg.org.uk](mailto:Yvonne@cvg.org.uk) or pop in to the Caithness Voluntary Group office at Telford House, Williamson Street, Wick.*

Caithness Voluntary Group is a company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland no SC150015, recognised as a charity in Scotland no SC002484, registered office Telford House, Williamson Street, Wick, Caithness KW1 5ES.