

Our Vision for Scotland



**scottish
community
alliance**

local people leading

Background:

In 2016, the Scottish Community Alliance (SCA) published its shared vision for more empowered local communities and a strong community sector. That vision was underpinned by the four core principles of subsidiarity; self-determination; local by default; and equality and fairness. It also recognised that achieving our vision required fundamental and systemic change across interdependent spheres of activity including local democracy, public services, and the community sector.

In 2023, the need for more empowered local communities and a stronger community sector has never been greater. The climate and nature emergencies demand significant structural and behavioural changes to decarbonise Scotland's economy and restore depleted biodiversity in ways that ensure a just transition to meeting these goals. The depopulation crisis facing many of our rural and islands communities, much of which is rooted in a shortage of affordable housing, inadequate infrastructure, and gaps in service provision, is an existential threat to their long-term futures. These same issues undermine the fabric and sustainability of our towns and cities to the detriment of the people who live in them, and that of the nation.

A common thread running through all of these issues is the need to devolve power, responsibility and budgets to much more localised levels of governance, with all the attendant benefits for local democracy that entails. Throughout Scotland, the community sector is well-placed to help tackle these profound 21st century challenges by taking a leading role as an engine for delivering a wellbeing economy within which community wealth building, local democracy and community empowerment are foundational principles.



Our four key principles :

subsidiarity

self-determination

local by default

equality and fairness



A Shared Vision:

Against that background, SCA has refreshed its original 2016 vision to better reflect the components that underpin the achievement of a genuinely sustainable Scotland. We aspire to Scotland becoming a country:

where **democracy** is thriving at a community level, decision-making is local by default and each tier of government is empowered from the bottom up.

in which access to environmental and planning **justice** is open to all, and community action to tackle the climate and nature emergencies is central to planning policy.

where the **land** market is strictly regulated in the public interest, patterns of land ownership are less concentrated, more diverse and reflect a presumption in favour of community ownership and land use decisions are driven by the interests of the common good.

which recognises all forms of artistic endeavour, **cultural** expression and local heritage as integral to community wellbeing and local resilience.

in which a sustainable post-growth **economy** prioritises wellbeing and happiness, mainstreams community wealth building, and pursues a circular model of remaking, recycling and reusing.

where all of Scotland's **people**, who are the key stakeholders and beneficiaries of an economy characterised by high skills, local control, and rewarding employment, are valued and invested in.



in which there is an abundance of small-scale local **food** growers and producers, where local food growing is evident everywhere and organic food production, sustainable fishing and ethically reared livestock become the norm.

where communities are the principal custodians of their natural and cultural heritage and the local **tourism** offering is a shared endeavour between community led initiatives and private businesses, the economic benefits from which drive local regeneration.

in which it is possible for all of its citizens to live and work anywhere in the country, including in our islands, and be supported by a fully accessible, integrated and sustainable transport **infrastructure**, superfast broadband and where community-based work-hubs are commonplace.

which places a premium on community led **health** provision, which prioritises preventative action and which recognises the upstream value of investing in community sports and social infrastructure in tackling the effects of poverty and endemic ill health.

in which the **energy** system is decentralised, district heating is commonplace and communities have a significant stake in energy generation, storage and supply.

which celebrates the rich **diversity** of Scotland's communities and which seeks to break down any barriers that might prevent any minority group, particularly ethnic minorities, from engaging fully with the life of their community.

Achieving our vision



Our vision is purposively broad, ambitious and focused on the long-term. It is a vision informed by the core proposition that communities throughout Scotland need to be front and centre in ensuring that it is realised in practice. That necessitates communities, incorporating both the third sector and other local entities including social enterprises, micro-businesses and sole traders, being enabled to play their full part in helping to deliver SCA's vision for a sustainable Scotland.

In SCA's view, achieving our vision also necessitates a shift from the type of siloed policy-making that inevitably affects all governments, to a policy approach characterised by more strategic co-ordination, both within and across Scottish Government portfolios, and between national and local government and governance structures. Devolution of decision making to communities has to be a core element of creating more coordinated and locally connected systems of governance.



Who are we?

The Scottish Community Alliance is a coalition of community based, national networks and intermediaries - each representing different aspects of Scotland's diverse community sector. While each is very different in terms of their interests and areas of specialist knowledge, they all share a commitment to the principles of community empowerment and the need for there to be a stronger and more resilient community sector in Scotland.



Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society



Rural and Islands

Arts and Culture

Food and Nature



Get Growing Scotland



Climate and Energy



Diversity and Access



Health and Wellbeing



Planning and Housing



Land and Sea

Enterprise and Assets



Coastal Communities Network Scotland





**“A stronger and more
resilient community sector
in Scotland.”**

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