

Toolkit:
Support and advice on
stalled spaces



Overview

Stalled Spaces Scotland is a Legacy 2014 programme commissioned by the Scottish Government and delivered by Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS) to facilitate the temporary use of under-used green spaces, stalled development sites or vacant and derelict land in town centres throughout Scotland.

To align with the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan and the Town Centre First Principle the programme will primarily look at stalled spaces located within town centres to empower people to bring these spaces back into positive use for the benefit for the whole community.

Through this programme A&DS is supporting seven local authorities to develop their own initiatives, using the knowledge and learning from the award winning Stalled Spaces initiative developed by Glasgow City Council.

The seven local authorities are:

Angus	Fife
Argyll & Bute	North Ayrshire
East Dunbartonshire	Renfrewshire
East Renfrewshire	

The Stalled Spaces Scotland Programme objectives are:

- To encourage and support local authorities and related organisations across Scotland to deliver a Stalled Space initiative in their area.
- To enable communities to transform disused spaces and communicate their aspirations to local authorities in their development.
- To create a learning resource through community involvement to ensure there is legacy in the skills developed.
- To increase skill sharing and provide opportunities for knowledge exchange with both local communities and professionals.

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What you will find in this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to provide support and help with all aspects of taking on a stalled space project. We have collated a list of useful online help, advice and contacts to provide inspiration and guidance. There is also information that helps to introduce and explain many of the behind-the-scenes issues and obstacles that you might encounter, from where to seek further funding for your project, identifying a site's owner, through to encouraging and managing volunteers.

A&DS accepts no responsibility for information provided on external website.

This toolkit is continually being updated and we take on your feedback and suggestions, if there is information you would like that is not yet covered here please contact us at stalledspacescotland@ads.org.uk



What can you do on a Stalled Space?

Food growing projects

A food growing project could be an activity for a community group, a school or perhaps a group of local restaurants wanting to grow their own produce.

Rain gardens

A rain garden is an environmentally friendly and attractive way to deal with rainwater runoff slowing down the process and filtering out pollutants. This can ease flooding and erosion whilst providing a habitat for wildlife.

Community gardens

A rain garden is an environmentally friendly and attractive way to deal with rainwater runoff slowing down the process and filtering out pollutants. This can ease flooding and erosion whilst providing a habitat for wildlife.

Market-places

A temporary market-place could include mobile market stalls to be used on a variety of occasions by members of the local community to sell produce, craft etc.

Solar farms

Solar farms can provide energy and income for a community and contribute to combating climate change.

Wildflower meadows

Wildflower meadows provide habitats for wildlife and access to nature in urban locations, they also improve the appearance of vacant land with very little outlay or impact on the site.

Performance spaces

A performance space could be a landscaped temporary amphitheatre or something even more informal to be used by theatre groups or for community events such as galas or outdoor ceilidhs.

Event spaces

An event space for temporary or pop up events run by the community such as bike maintenance workshops, book and toy swaps, or a local services road show.

Temporary public art

An event space for temporary or pop up events run by the community such as bike maintenance workshops, book and toy swaps, or a local services road show.

Outdoor gym

An outdoor gym can have a positive effect on the physical fitness of community members of all ages. Apparatus can be as low tech as necessary and made from natural materials to create less impact on the site.

Green gym

A green gym offers local people and opportunity to take part in outdoor physical activity whilst learning about environmental conservation and improving the local environment.

Natural play area

A natural play area for children to use can have a very positive effect on an area, encouraging physical activity, outdoor learning and providing social space. Natural materials, like timber logs, willow arches and grassy mounds can be relatively cheap to provide and easy to look after.

What is a Stalled Space?

Stalled Spaces can be land owned by developers where development has not yet started or has been delayed due to the recession, vacant and derelict land or unused open space with no function. These can be enclosed private areas of land, parts of land that are out of bounds to the public or rough wasteland that have a negative impact upon an area. More often than not, they tend to be eyesores that annoy people who pass them by every day.

There are 3 main types of Stalled Spaces:

- A piece of land where development has not started or is delayed due to recession
- An under used space that is unused or has no clear function
- A vacant* or derelict** piece of land that has been abandoned

All of this land may be privately owned or council owned, and with permission could be used as a Stalled Space Scotland project.

Changing these under utilised spaces can:

- Turn a problem into an opportunity.
- Have a positive impact on the appearance of the area, improve the use of facilities by local people
- Engages and involves people in making a difference in their neighbourhood

Definitions:

*Vacant Land is previously developed land, without physical constraint, which the planning authority has indicated is currently available for redevelopment. The land must not be in use or include a usable building.

**Derelict Land is previously developed land, which has a physical constraint caused by its previous use, which hampers its redevelopment or naturalisation. It must not be ready for new development without remediation.

Top image: © Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services



Scotland's Town Centres

Town centres are an important element of the economic and social fabric of Scotland. Town centres can be a central component of successful local economies, offering a base for small business and jobs and often being at the core of community life. The Stalled Spaces Scotland programme focuses on providing funding and opportunities to groups who hope to transform town centre spaces. It is one of a number of demonstration projects included in the Town Centre Action Plan.

The Town Centre Action Plan was published by the Scottish Government in 2013, setting out its vision for greater investment in town centres and identifying how public and private sectors could better work together to encourage the economic growth of Scotland's communities.

The Town Centre First Principle is a key part of the Action Plan, encouraging investment in town centres to help communities thrive.

The Town Centre Toolkit was developed by the Scottish Government to provide lots of useful ideas and advice for people and organisations on how to make their town centres more attractive, active and accessible. It is full of inspirational case studies and guides drawn from projects both in Scotland and worldwide.

Download the Town Centre Toolkit

**The Town Centre Action Plan
Demonstration Projects**



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[What is a Sensory Garden?](#)

[What is Public Art?](#)

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[How do you promote your project?](#)

[What is risk management?](#)



What is a: Community Garden?

A community garden is a garden shared by members of a community group who take responsibility for managing and maintaining the garden. Members can generally apply to take on a plot or container, usually smaller than an allotment, and grow whatever they like whether that's flowers or vegetables. If you would like to start a community garden here are a few tips.

- You should have a committee to be responsible for the management of the garden.
- Think about how you will secure the garden and how members will access it.
- You might want to have a shared supply of tools and somewhere secure to store them.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[Setting up your community garden group](#)

[How to set up a community garden](#)

[Accessing Land Process For Community Groups](#)

[Community Growing Resource Pack, Scotland](#)

[Landshare](#)

[Get Ready to Grow](#)

[Our Growing Community](#)

[Grow Your Own Scotland](#)

[Guide for Growing on Contaminated Land](#)

[Get Growing Guide](#)

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Image: © Blair Cunningham



What is: Container Gardening?

Container gardening is growing plants inside containers rather than directly in the soil. The containers can be anything that you can adapt by making drainage holes in the bottom. Barrels, tyres and buckets can all be used effectively. The advantages of container gardening are that it is small and manageable, portable and not affected by contaminated land. If you would like to do some container gardening here are a few tips.

- You must have drainage holes in the bottom of the container.
- Larger containers work better than small ones as the soil doesn't dry out so quickly.
- Make sure the type of plant you decide to grow has enough space for its root system.
- Be aware that a raised bed is not the same as a container.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[Organic Gardening](#)

[Container gardening for food](#)

[How to make a wooden planter](#)

[Container vegetable gardening](#)

[Gardening in containers - a quick course](#)

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Image: © Blair Cunningham



What is a: Pop-up Cinema?

A pop-up cinema event is a one-off screening of a film in a unique or unusual setting. You may have a film of your own to screen, or you may wish to show a classic film or take part in a nationwide premiere event. A pop-up cinema event can be a good opportunity to clear and renovate a derelict or unused site, opening opportunities for further temporary use in the future. If you would like to set up a pop-up cinema here are a few tips.

- An exciting or unusual setting can help to attract attendees.
- It is important to check if the film you want to screen requires a licence.
- Pop-up cinema events can be fun and social, so if you like, you can encourage talking and activity.
- If you don't have the budget to hire a screen to project on to, a painted wall or white sheets can be used instead.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[Pop-up cinemas: top 10 tips](#)

[Cinema for All resources](#)

[Set up a community cinema](#)

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Image: © Jenny Humberstone, [HERE](#) + [NOW](#)



What is a: Wildflower Garden?

A wildflower garden is an area planted with wildflower seeds and left to grow naturally. They can significantly improve the look of unused land and if you choose a perennial meadow it will grow flowers every year. A wildflower garden is low maintenance and can also be used as an educational resource. If you would like to create a wildflower meadow here are a few tips.

- Choose a mixture of seeds suitable for your soil conditions.
- Choose seeds of British origin so you are not introducing something non native to an environmentally sensitive area.
- Sow your seeds in spring or autumn.
- You don't need fertiliser as soil that is too fertile encourages grasses which can swamp the flowers.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[Wildflower meadow quick facts](#)

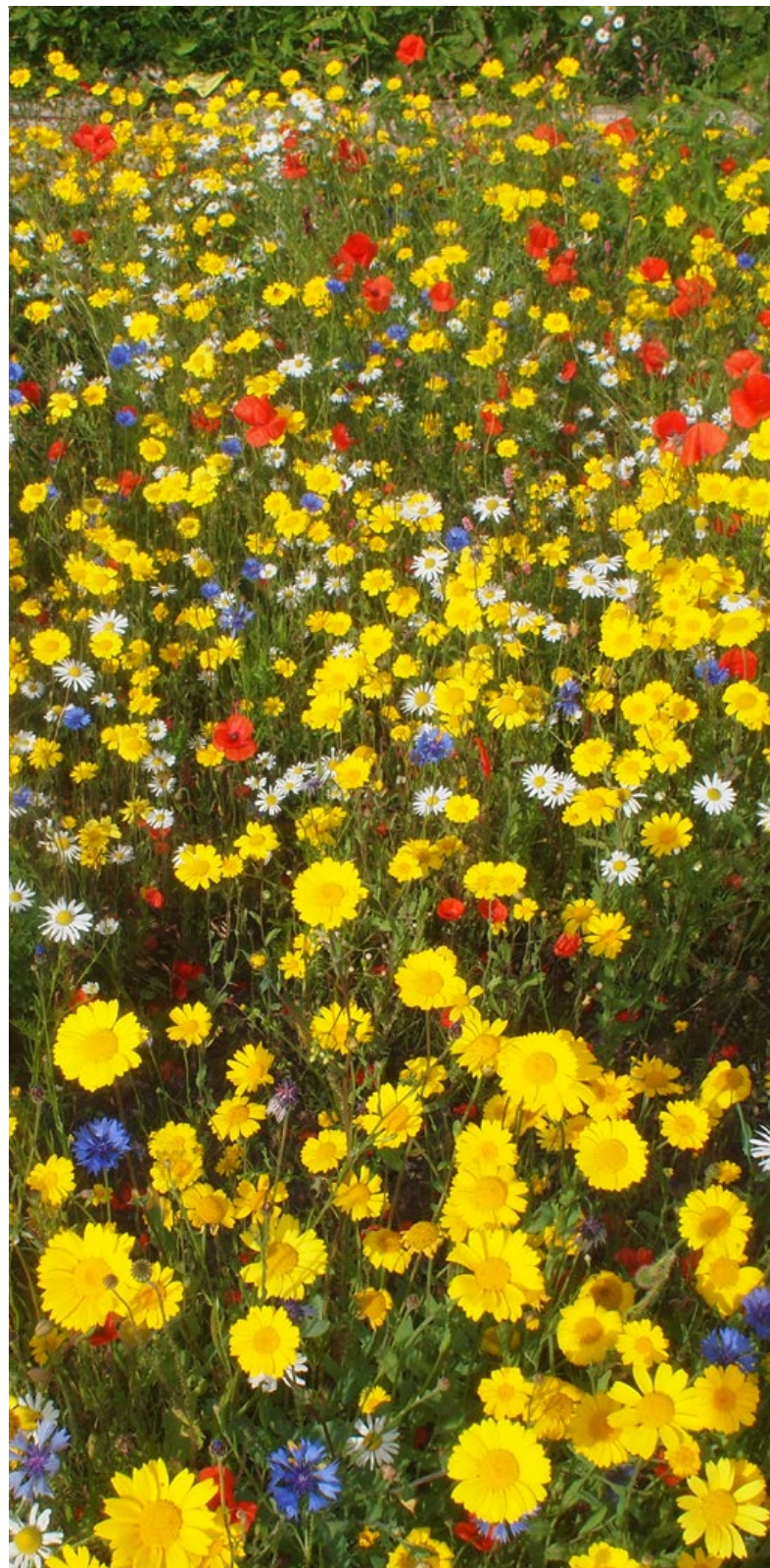
[Grow your own meadow](#)

[Mini meadows](#)

[Gardening guides](#)

[Fact sheet on meadows](#)

[Grow Wild](#)



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Image: © Bobby Niven, Walled Garden, The Bothy Project

What is a: Sensory Garden?

A sensory garden is designed to provide a range of sensory experiences to visitors. These gardens can provide therapeutic activities for people with sensory impairments and a range of disabilities. They can also provide learning and educational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Sensory Gardens include features that appeal to all five senses, from colourful and fragrant flowers, to paving and stones that provide texture and noise. If you would like to create a sensory garden here are a few tips.

- In choosing materials, consider who will use the garden, and the experiences you want to share with them.
- Consider plants and materials that appeal to all five senses.
- Access, for visitors in wheelchairs or with mobility impairments, should be a key consideration in the layout and design of the garden.
- Shelters from both the rain and sun can help to provide a more comfortable experience.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[The Sensory Trust Guide](#)

[Plants for all five senses](#)

[How to build a sensory garden at your school](#)

[Plants for sensory gardens](#)

[A guide to designing a sensory garden](#)

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Image: Chenzw, "BCA Sensory Garden". Creative Commons Attribution



What is: Public Art?

Temporary public art can take a variety of forms, from one-off events to sculptures and installations, designed to make use of a site before a permanent use is found. The development of public art can be a great way to engage the creativity of local groups and people, offering opportunities for educational activities. If you would like to create public art here are a few tips.

- Local schools and community organisations can be involved in developing ideas and creating artwork.
- You may be able to make use of recycled or donated materials.
- Many local authorities have produced their own guidance on public art, advising on best practice and promoted approaches.
- A launch event or guided tour of your finished artwork can help to celebrate and promote your group's hard work.

Click on these links to find out more about:

Public Art Online Resources – Practical Advice

Creative Scotland – Open Project Funding

Voluntary Arts Scotland

Engaging with freelancers

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Image: © Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services



What is a: Wildlife Garden?

Wildlife gardens are designed to encourage animal species including birds, insects, amphibians, and mammals, attracting them with a variety of habitats. This environment can help these species to flourish, and can assist in helping threatened animals, like bumblebees, using plants that provide food for them and space to nest and reproduce. If you would like to create a wildlife garden here are a few tips.

- Choosing plants that bloom at different times can encourage animals throughout the year.
- Native plant species are the best for encouraging local wildlife.
- Weed killers and pesticides can have a harmful effect on wildlife and can be avoided with careful plant selection.
- Bird boxes and insect hotels are an effective and easy way to attract wildlife and can be easily made or purchased from garden centres.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[A to Z of a wildlife garden](#)

[Wildlife garden project](#)

[25 ways to get wildlife into your garden](#)

[Encouraging wildlife to your garden](#)

[Gardening for bumblebees](#)

[Bees: encouraging in to your garden](#)

[Gardening for life](#)

[Gardening for butterflies](#)

[Gardening for birds](#)

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Image: Mick Talbot, "British Birds - Goldfinch". Creative Commons Attribution



What is a: Pop-up Sports Area?

Stalled Spaces can make excellent venues for games and sporting activity. Spaces for sports can include facilities like goals or painted lines, or simply a large cleared space that allows children to use their imaginations. If you would like to create a pop-up sports area here are a few tips.

- Stalled Spaces where children already play can be cleared and made safer with dedicated facilities.
- Work with children to decide which games they would like to play in their neighbourhood.
- Sports day style events can be a great way to launch your space and keep it active.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[Making a Play Area for Children](#)
[Play Scotland](#)



What is a: Rain Garden?

Rain gardens are specifically designed to absorb rainfall and help reduce flooding. They are made by digging a shallow ditch in the ground surface and filling it with absorbent soil and planting with species that tolerate lots of water. Rain from hard surfaces, like pavements and roofs, flow in to the rain garden rather than into sewers. This helps to reduce flooding and improves the quality of groundwater. If you would like to create a rain garden here are a few tips.

- Rain gardens should be located where downpipes from roofs can run into them.
- Where fast running water enters the rain garden, pebbles and stones can help stop soil from washing away.
- Creating your rain garden on a slight slope can help any excess water to run away from buildings and towards a drain.
- Planting your rain garden with a variety of species helps to create a strong and stable root system and create an attractive garden.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[Rain gardens guide](#)

[WWT rain gardening guide](#)

[WWT video guides](#)

[Wet weather? Make a rain garden](#)

[Gardens: Water gardens](#)

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Image: extensionhorticulture, "MG Rain Garden 1". Creative Commons Attribution



What is a: Natural Play Area?

A natural play area is an area for children to play designed and built from natural materials. Children love to play outside and natural environments provide great play and learning opportunities. Natural play areas can connect children to nature, develop creativity, develop risk management skills and encourage independence. They are also more attractive than a standard playground. If you would like to create a natural play area here are a few tips.

- Use natural materials.
- A big mound is great fun for climbing, rolling, lying and hiding.
- Loose materials like sticks, logs and rocks are great for experimentation and building.
- A natural play area should encourage building, balancing, hiding, climbing and digging.
- It should also include seating, pathways, plants and hiding places.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[Grounds for learning](#)

[How to create a natural outdoor space](#)

[Making space for play](#)

[Theory of loose play](#)

[Nature play: Simple and fun ideas](#)

[Nature play fact sheet](#)

[A review of natural play](#)



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Image: Forestry Commission Scotland, photographer Becky Duncan

What is a: Constituted Group?

To qualify for many types of funding, including Stalled Spaces funding, you will need to apply as a constituted group. You may be able to work with an organisation such as a housing association which can act as a constituted group for you, however if you would like to form a constituted group here are a few tips.

- You need a Management Committee - this should include at least a Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer.
- You need a constitution – this is a written document stating your group's name, aims and how you will operate.
- You need a bank account – this is necessary to keep accounts and to apply for funding.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[Your community garden group](#)

[Ten steps to writing a constitution](#)

[What is a constitution](#)

[Voluntary association](#)

[Setting up a community organisation](#)



How do you: Find funding?

Whatever your plans for a Stalled Space it is likely you will need some money to realise them. There are a number of ways to raise money but one of the most common is to apply to a funding organisation for a grant. If you would like to apply for funding here are a few tips.

- Most funders will require you to apply as a constituted group.
- Call the funding organisation and ask questions before completing your application.
- Have a project plan that describes what you hope to achieve and how.
- Prepare a realistic budget.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[City farms and community gardens funding](#)

[Community Shares](#)

[Your community garden group](#)

[Funding sources for community groups](#)

[CSGN Community Projects Fund](#)

[Awards for All](#)

[Voluntary Action Fund](#)

[Foundation Scotland](#)

[Funding Sources](#)

[How to write a succesful trust letter](#)

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Image: Images Money, "£10 notes in a plant pot". Creative Commons Attribution



How do you: Create a Budget?

Creating a budget helps your group to understand how much your project will cost, the funding you need to raise, and help you to keep track of when payments need to be made. Costs for the purchase or rental of equipment and materials can be balanced against income from sources of funding. For temporary projects, you may be able to sell on some of the equipment you purchase, which can be factored into your budget. If you would like to create a budget here are a few tips.

- Writing a budget at the very start of the project helps to avoid any unexpected costs.
- The budget should be kept up to date with any changes to costs or sources of income.
- 'Hidden' costs, like travel expenses or refreshments should be included.
- In case of emergencies, you could include a small contingency fund within your budget. This is often set at 10% of the total budget.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[NCVO - Creating a budget](#)

[Budgets for community organisations](#)

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Image: Daniel Foster, "Taking notes". Creative Commons Attribution



How do you: Find out who owns the site?

If you don't know who owns the stalled space you hope to make use of, there are a number of ways to find out. Your council should be able to help identify the owner. Alternatively, the Registers of Scotland hold a land register for much of the country. A small fee applies for using this service to find out information about a property. If you would like to search for a landowner of a stalled space here are a few tips.

- Knowing who owns the land you wish to use is important, so you can ask permission.
- Your local council should be able to help identify an owner.
- The Registers of Scotland can use the site's address to search historical records.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[Registers of Scotland](#)

[Community Land Advisory Service](#)

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Image: © Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services



How do you: Create a Formal Agreement?

It is vital to get written permission from the landowner before you begin any work on your stalled space site. For temporary projects, this permission should take the form of an agreement that states exactly when your lease will begin and end. This document only needs to be a couple of pages long and there are templates you can download. If you would like to create a formal agreement here are a few tips.

- Be reasonable about what a landowner might agree to. Try to think about it from their perspective.
- A clearly stated date of when you will vacate the site helps to provide reassurance.
- The agreement should also state the length of notice period the landowner should give before you have to vacate the site.
- One of the conditions in the agreement may be that you cannot break the surface of the ground or fix anything to the ground. This is reassuring for a landowner as it emphasises the temporary nature of the project.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[Stalled Spaces Glasgow agreement template](#)

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Image: Sebastien Wiertz, "Signature". Creative Commons Attribution



What is: Planning Permission?

Planning permission may be required even for temporary uses of a site. Your local council should be able to help you find out what sort of permission you need to apply for and guide you to the right documents. Permission may be required for things like fences, sheds or poly tunnels so it is important to check with the planning department. Keep in mind that anything you build on the site will need to be cleared or removed when you are required to vacate the space. If you would like to apply for planning permission here are a few tips.

- Speak to your local council's planning department to find out if you need planning permission.
- They should help you identify the right forms you need to fill out.
- You may need to provide drawings and plans of your project.
- A planning application fee must be paid.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[Planning Advisory Service](#)

[A guide to the planning system in Scotland](#)

[Do I need permission](#)



What is: Insurance?

Insurance covers your organisation against unforeseen costs, and even voluntary organisations must comply with national regulations on certain types of cover. There are various types of coverage and not all might be necessary for your organisation and should be considered based on what you hope to do. If you would like to insure your group or project here are a few tips.

- Voluntary organisations must have employers' liability insurance if they pay any full or part-time staff.
- Any vehicles used as part of your project may require extra cover for volunteer drivers.
- Public liability insurance covers claims made by members of the public taking part in events and activities.
- Insurance providers and brokers may offer free advice to help you decide on your coverage requirements.

Click on these links to find out more about:

SCVO advice

Insurance for voluntary arts groups

Voluntary organisations and insurance

Insurance and Risk Management

Insurance Services

Insuring your organisation

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Image: © Shettleston Community Growing Project



How do you: Manage volunteers?

Volunteers can provide an enormous amount of time and energy that is vital to helping a stalled space project to flourish. To get the best from everyone, it is important to ensure that volunteering is well managed. It is important to take into consideration time for training as well as travel time for those who want to take part. If you would like to involve volunteers in your project here are a few tips.

- It is important to make volunteers feel welcome and providing food and drink, if possible, is one way to do this.
- Creating a task list for volunteers helps to ensure everyone know what to do and who is responsible for different roles.
- Training is vital for volunteers, especially if they are expected to carry out challenging or technical tasks.
- Just like employees, volunteers should have points of contact to discuss challenges and offer support.

Click on these links to find out more about:

SCVO - Volunteers

Volunteer Scotland good practice guides

Volunteer Edinburgh good practice guides

Managing and retaining volunteers

Guide to recruiting volunteers

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Image: © Shettleston Community Growing Project



How do you: Promote your project?

Whether you want to create a community garden, a new piece of public art, or hold a pop-up market, promoting your stalled space project can help to build local community support and excitement about your plans. You may want to advertise a one off event, or offer regular updates as your project grows. If you would like to promote your project here are a few tips.

- You may want to appoint one person or a small team in your group to take responsibility for promotion.
- Local organisations and businesses may display posters and notices advertising your project at no charge.
- Digital social media like Facebook and Twitter can be a great, free way to spread the message.
- You can approach larger groups and organisations who may promote you through their networks, if your project is of interest to them.
- There are a number of free services that host websites and blogs that are easy to create and update.

Click on these links to find out more about:

NCVO – Marketing and communications

Voluntary Arts social media in policy and practice

Guide to social media and websites

Boosting online engagement

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What is: Risk Management?

Risk management involves looking at the work of your group or a particular project, understanding where different risks exist and putting in place steps to manage and avoid them. There are lots of different types of risk that a group of any size can face, from health and safety, to managing changes of membership or losing funding sources. A sensible risk management approach can help to make delivering your project easier when the unexpected happens. Identified risks can be listed in a risk assessment document, alongside details on how you plan to manage them. If you would like to carry out risk management here are a few tips:

- Discussing risks with all of your group's members and volunteers can help identify risks across your organisation.
- Risks can be prioritised, either by how likely they are to occur or how serious an impact they would have, and included in a risk assessment document.
- Higher priority risks will require greater planning.
- Some risks, such as health and safety, have specific legislation so it's important to understand what your responsibilities are.

Click on these links to find out more about:

[How to complete a risk assessment](#)

[Voluntary organisations - managing low risk](#)

[Not-for-Profit Risk Management Guide](#)

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For further information:

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architecture and planning.

To find out more or to speak to the team about
Stalled Spaces Scotland, visit our site at:

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is Scotland's champion for excellence in
placemaking, architecture and planning.
A&DS aims to support the creation of places
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choices and, are ultimately, places where
people want to be. We are an Executive Non
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