

Case Study:
Oban Communities Trust
Argyll and Bute



Oban Communities Trust was awarded Stalled Spaces Scotland funding by Argyll & Bute Council to create a temporary garden and seating in the centre of the town. This project was linked to a larger campaign to open a community venue in Oban known as The Rockfield Centre.

The organisation is community-owned, and it purchased the site - which consisted of two huts, a car park and a large former primary school building - in May 2015. The Rockfield Centre at the heart of a creative community is the overall vision; providing a cultural hub which doesn't currently exist in Oban. When the site was purchased, the huts were boarded up, the garden areas were overgrown and the main building was in danger of being destroyed by dry rot. The garden and seating funded by Stalled Spaces helped to highlight, to the local community, work already carried out by the trust to reopen the disused 1950s huts by making the exterior look more attractive, and providing an area people could use and enjoy.

The group received information about the Stalled Spaces Scotland fund from the council's funding circular. The application was completed by the project facilitator of Oban Communities Trust and £2,453.00 was awarded.

“The timing of this project was just perfect: we'd just got the keys and we wanted to do something with the outside, so I think that was probably why we went for Stalled Spaces funding.”

- Eleanor MacKinnon, Oban Communities Trust



Eventually, once the work on the old school building is complete, the huts will be removed and there will be the creation of a new garden; the tubs and seating will be relocated, and tools purchased with the grant will continue to be used as the area develops. The trust also received support from local businesses who provided items at cost as well as gardening support in kind.

One of the four core themes of The Rockfield Centre is Community Wellbeing, and this project helps meet this objective by providing activities people in which people can participate. Additional Health & Wellbeing funding enabled the group to achieve more than they had planned. All of the eight board members and fifteen volunteers were involved with the delivery of the project. The main contact for the group was one of the trustees who has a horticultural background; they understood the purchase requirements and also took the lead in organising the volunteers. The weather and timing of the project provided challenges, as there wasn't a great deal of time in which to grow plants, but winter vegetables were substituted for flowers in order to keep the tubs interesting throughout the growing season.

“It has been really successful in that the volunteers that we have for the garden have really taken ownership. They come in, and if they see tubs are needing done, they will do it.”

- Eleanor MacKinnon, Oban Communities Trust

The garden volunteers have continued to be active within the trust, and it was felt this project provided them with opportunities that might not previously have been available.

The group would consider applying for further stalled spaces type projects for another location, but they are now concentrating on raising the funds they need to redevelop the building, with the view to it becoming The Rockfield Centre.

Project Key Facts

£2,453

Stalled Spaces Scotland funding awarded to Oban Communities Trust

190

Approximate number of hours contributed by volunteers to the project

15

volunteers and 8 board members worked on the project

For further information

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