



COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING AYRSHIRE

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**THREE**  
**YEARS**  
**THREE**  
**AYRSHIRES**  
**THREE**  
**MILLION**



Working with local enterprises – large, medium and small – has helped drive a CWB approach to local economic development across the Ayrshire region.



**1000**  
businesses  
assisted



**27**  
businesses now  
employee-owned  
or co-operative



**200**  
businesses received  
procurement assistance  
to apply for large public  
sector contracts



**270**  
firms  
supported  
to create  
a Fair  
Work Plan

**300**

firms have been  
given grants  
and support





## COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING AYRSHIRE

**The £3 million Community Wealth Building Business Fund was set up to enhance wealth, ensure fair and meaningful work and create successful places across Ayrshire.**

A key Ayrshire Growth Deal project, the Fund was established to coordinate this new, bold approach across the region to develop resilient, inclusive local economies, with more local employment and a larger and more diverse business base.

The £3m fund was shared equally across the three local authorities and three CWB officers were employed in each to develop the principles of CWB amongst local businesses.

A team comprising a Programme Manager and two Fair Work Officers was also created - engaging local employers to improve recruitment processes and provide Fair Work - another cornerstone of CWB.

The Fund has assisted over 1000 businesses and helped us help them in a variety of ways. We've supported over 200 businesses navigate the often-complex procurement process to enable them to apply for large public sector contracts. We've worked with 27 businesses to change their ownership structure and turn them into employee-owned or cooperative businesses. Nearly 300 firms have been given grants and support, while 270 firms have been supported to create a Fair Work Plan.

Our dedicated officers have also arranged numerous networking events and also worked to develop public land and assets which, in turn, can benefit the wider community and create wealth locally.

Working with local enterprises - large, medium and small - has helped drive a CWB approach to local economic development across the Ayrshire region.



## Ailsa Reliability Solutions

Ailsa Reliability Solutions are specialists in finding solutions to improve customers reliability and availability of their plant and assets, using the latest condition monitoring equipment and technology available on the market.

Our North Ayrshire CWB officer first engaged with Ailsa in June 2022 and supported them in a number of ways. The engineering firm received a CWB grant which helped them purchase new software, while they were assisted financially enabling them to join the Centre for Engineering, Education and Development pilot scheme.

A Fair Work Audit helped Ailsa change their salary structure to enable them to become living wage accredited and helped them become members of Salus – the NHS-based healthcare programme that provides occupational health services and return to work services across the public and private sectors.

In the last three years, the business has grown from four members of staff to 26 and continues to grow. Their collaborative approach and support to the principles of CWB continue to deliver regional economic and digital transformation.

***"The programme enabled strategic growth and positioned us for regional leadership in diagnostics and sustainability."***

Jamie Burns, Owner







## Aroha Scotland Limited.

The Stevenston-based business has evolved from specialising in domestic garden rooms and extensions to building a range of public sector and commercial modular buildings including school classrooms, offices and other commercial premises across Scotland. They have built a reputation for professionalism and the superior quality of their work.

Aroha was first supported in June 2022 when they were advised about how to register for public-sector contracts and guided through the process.

With our support, they gained confidence and experience in submitting bids via the Public Sector Contract system – and last year were rewarded when they were successful in their bid to build and install a new Weighbridge Office at South Ayrshire Council's Heathfield Waste Recycling Centre.

Due to the increase in workload, Aroha employed two additional joiners and now employs seven staff, five joiners and two office staff.

***"CWB helped us build the confidence and capacity to win public contracts—our business has never been stronger."***

Kris McLaughlin, Owner

**Aroha**Escapes®



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## First Saddlery

First Saddlery is a niche rural retailer based in East Ayrshire, specialising in equestrian safety gear and apparel. While the business had a strong physical presence within a well-known show centre, it struggled to grow online.

The CWB team provided a package of support including a CWB grant and digital consultancy to revamp its e-commerce site - that has taken the business to another level.

With a modern, user-friendly website the business saw a significant increase in online sales, expanded into international markets - including Germany and the United States- and improved its digital brand.

***"The new platform turned our business around and helped us reach markets we could never access before."***

Karene Wallace, Owner



**FIRST  
SADDLERY**  
Equestrian Clothing & Equipment

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## Curtainwise Ltd

Curtainwise Ltd is a long-established manufacturer based in East Ayrshire, employing over 40 people supplying window furnishings to clients across the UK.

Through East Ayrshire Council's CWB programme, they secured funding for a Vertical Height Measuring Machine, which increased output, enhanced consistency, and reduced production times.

Beyond operational efficiency, the firm also undertook a range of net zero and Fair Work improvements. These included an energy audit, adoption of a four-day working week, staff training, and the introduction of electric vehicles to the company fleet.

With a deepening commitment to sustainability and inclusive employment, Curtainwise also repurposed fabric offcuts for donation to local schools and sewing groups, demonstrating a circular economy approach.

***"Thanks to the CWB programme, we've modernised sustainably and built a resilient future for our team and customers."***

William McKenzie







## Newmarket Street Traders

Newmarket Street Traders is a cooperative formed by a group of independent retailers in Ayr town centre.

Facing challenges including falling footfall, reduced visibility, and limited resources for promotion, the traders chose to adopt a collaborative approach. With the guidance and funding support of the South Ayrshire CWB team, they formalised a consortium cooperative - a democratically owned group working toward shared goals.

The CWB Fund supported the development of branding, events, and joint marketing initiatives.

The cooperative now plays a vital role in Ayr's town centre strategy and serves as a model for place-based regeneration through plural ownership.

***"We moved from competition to collaboration  
- and saved our businesses in the process"***

Vanessa Good

**NMSt.**  
Old Soul.  
New Spirit.



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## Dundonald Castle

**Dundonald Castle is a valued community and cultural hub for South Ayrshire.**

Operated by the charity Friends of Dundonald Castle SCIO, the organisation has long supported heritage conservation, tourism, and educational outreach. However, the scale and scope of its community engagement activities had been limited by a lack of resources and infrastructure to deliver year-round programming.

In 2023, a Community Wealth Building grant enabled the group to purchase high-quality audiovisual and IT equipment, unlocking a transformative period of activity.

With this investment, the team launched a new public film and events programme, hosted in the site's refurbished visitor centre. The offer included heritage storytelling sessions, creative workshops, and digital film nights—all designed to attract local families, young people, and tourists alike.

The programme increased footfall, improved revenue from admissions and donations, and strengthened the group's long-term sustainability. It also contributed to South Ayrshire Council's place-based regeneration.

***This investment helped us become a hub of local culture, education and economic activity.***

Dr Kirsteen Croll,  
Friends of Dundonald Castle

