



# OUR STRATEGY

2025-2028

# FOREWORD FROM CEO & CHAIR OF BOARD

At Circular Communities Scotland our vision is for a thriving Circular Economy with all the social, environmental and economic benefits which flow from this. In 2024 this vision seems both closer and further away than ever before.

It is closer because we now have a Circular Economy Act passed unanimously within the Scottish Parliament. We also have more members (262 at time of writing - a 128% increase on 5 years ago), delivering more impact than ever before.

In other ways it feels further away. In Scotland 2030 climate change targets were scrapped, funding for our sector has dried-up, whilst costs continue to rise.

To create a plan for these challenging times we consulted our membership, staff, board, funders, policymakers and wider stakeholders. A key question which emerged from this work was how can we have the greatest impact with finite resources?

We have set a bold ten-year goal for a thriving organisation supporting a thriving sector. We have identified three key pillars to drive us towards this goal during the period 2025-2028:

- **Building Capacity** through our **Member Services**.
- **Creating Opportunities** through our **Policy Work**.
- **Strengthening** our **Organisation**.

We look forward to working with you to deliver this plan.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Cook'.

**Michael Cook**

Chief Executive Officer



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Naomi Johnson'.

**Naomi Johnson**

Chair of the Board

# OUR VISION

Our vision is for a thriving circular economy in Scotland, with local communities benefiting from the social, environmental and economic outcomes.



# OUR VALUES

- Trust and Integrity
- Openness and Community
- Environmental and Social Justice

These inform everything we do.



# OUR ROLE

Circular Communities Scotland is a membership organisation for charities and social enterprises engaged in the circular economy.



Our core role as a network organisation is bi-directional:

- To support our membership, facilitating growth and greater impact in the sector. **Here our focus is Capacity Building.**
- To represent the sector to a wide range of policy stakeholders. **Here our focus is Opportunity Creation.**



# SUPPORTING SCOTLAND'S KEY PRIORITIES

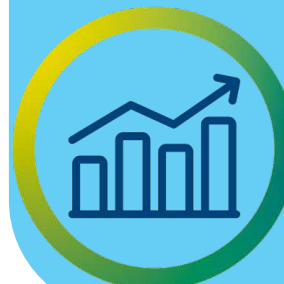
The work of our sector supports the four priorities for the Scottish Government, as highlighted by the First Minister in September 2024:

## 1. Eradicating Child Poverty



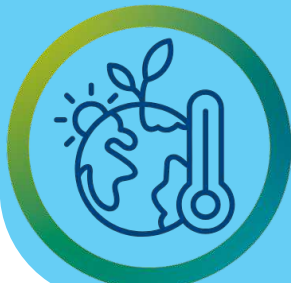
Our members support families suffering from extreme poverty and alleviate the cost-of-living crisis by selling quality essential goods at affordable prices. Our Reuse Consortium equips the homes of those who have recent lived experience of homelessness.

## 2. Growing the Economy



Our members create green jobs, develop green skills within local communities, and focus on overcoming employment barriers and creating pathways to employment for those far from work.

## 3. Tackling the Climate Emergency



Through their reuse, repair and sharing activities, our members make a significant contribution to combating climate change. 125 of our members deliver community education related to environmental issues, helping to accelerate behaviour change.

## 4. Ensuring High Quality & Sustainable Public Services



Our members are involved in recycling services and many work in partnership with Local Authority HWRCs, directly supporting the delivery of higher quality and more sustainable services. The future local authority partnership role will be able to significantly grow these impacts.

# OUR MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Our growing membership of over 260 members run a wide range of projects including furniture reuse, charity shops, bike projects, sharing libraries, environmental education, repair cafés, starter pack projects and much more.

Circular Communities Scotland offer a significant range of member services including:

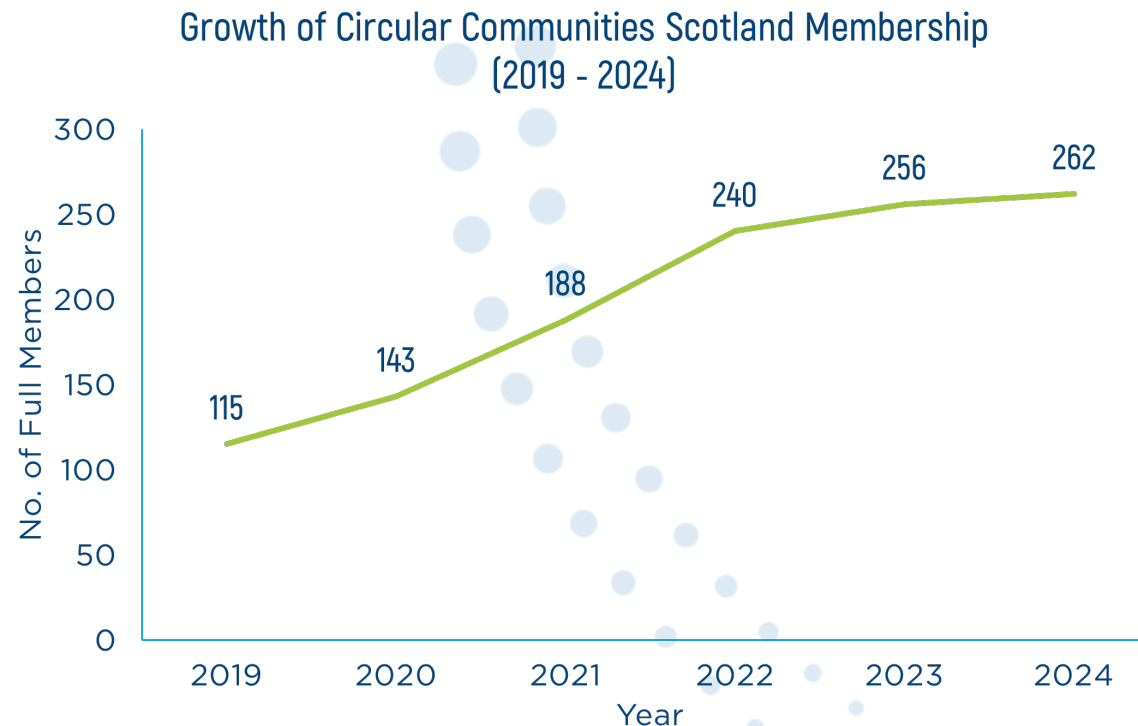
- **Direct member support:** emails, meetings, sign posting & member to member enquiries.
- **Communication:** enews, policy & funding updates, social media, news stories & website(s).
- **Events:** online & in-person seminars, forums & training and Annual Conference.
- **Sector representation.**
- **Delivery of defined projects.**
- **Policy representation and advocacy work.**



# OUR MEMBERSHIP

Our members collectively save thousands of tonnes of goods from landfill, bring over **£100 million** into our economy and save over **100,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>** across every local authority in Scotland, all whilst making an incredible social impact in their communities.

Today Circular Communities Scotland has 262 members, a network that has grown considerably over the last 5 years. This significant growth indicates the value of the work we deliver supporting our members.



# WHAT DO YOU MOST VALUE ABOUT CIRCULAR COMMUNITIES SCOTLAND MEMBERSHIP?

“ I value being part of a network that is connected to and influences wider policy discussions and supporting initiatives through a wealth of connections of folk doing similar work. Membership of Circular Communities Scotland has supported initiatives from initial idea to on the ground community-led activity. ”

Transition Black Isle

“ We greatly value the opportunities for networking and collaboration with like-minded organisations committed to sustainability and to tackling poverty. The access to up-to-date knowledge, training, and resources helps us stay informed on circular economy practices and enhances our ability to deliver effective services. We also appreciate the advocacy and representation provided at a national level, which supports our efforts to influence policy and drive change. ”

Furniture Plus

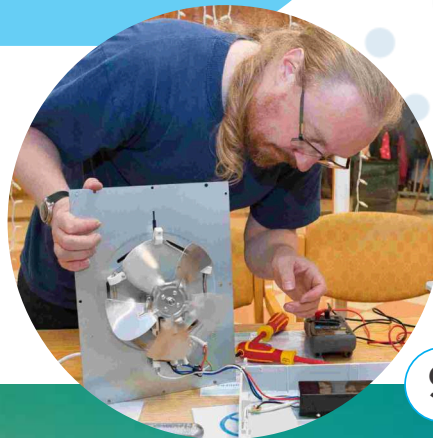


# OUR PROJECTS

The following are our projects as at January 2025.

## SHARE & REPAIR NETWORK

Our **Share & Repair Network** was founded 3 years ago and set out to support the establishment and growth of Sharing Libraries and Repair Projects across Scotland. The Network currently has 116 members, of which 84 are active. Going forward, our hope is to incorporate this into our core services.



## REUSE CONSORTIUM CIRCULAR COMMUNITIES SCOTLAND

Our **Reuse Consortium** brings nine of our members together to form a retail consortium for reuse furniture and white goods. Through our successful bid on Scotland Excel Reuse furniture lot, the Consortium members service six local authorities and one housing association, typically for welfare clients. The Consortium is supporting 24 jobs throughout our membership and helped 3,345 households last year by providing 6,200 items of reuse furniture.





Affordable  
Access to  
Bikes Project

The **Affordable Access to Bikes Project** is funded by Cycling Scotland and was set up 3 years ago to tackle barriers to bike reuse in Scotland. So far, the project has supported our bike reuse members by running networking and training events, conducting sector-specific research, and producing key publications, such as a guide for local authorities who want to partner with bike projects.



## The Carbon Project

Based on a feasibility study published by Circular Communities Scotland in 2023, we received funding in 2024 from Zero Waste Scotland to begin work on a Carbon Calculator Tool for the Reuse, Sharing and Repair Sectors in Scotland. The project is funded until March 2025, by which point we will have developed a prototype. We are seeking funding to further develop this tool over an additional 2 years.

## Share & Repair Tourism Fund

The Tourism Fund supports Share and Repair projects working in the tourism sector. This £135k grant fund originally came from Airbnb, from profit they made during COP26. We employ one part-time member of staff to coordinate the grant, which has been awarded to five member organisations. The project is due to conclude in June 2025.

# OUR STRATEGY

To create this strategic plan, we consulted widely among our membership, staff, board, funders, policymakers and wider stakeholders.

## Summary

We have set a bold ten-year goal for a thriving organisation supporting a thriving sector.

We have identified **three key pillars** to drive us towards this goal during the period 2025-228:

- **Building Capacity through our Member Services.**
- **Creating Opportunities through our Policy Work.**
- **Strengthening our Organisation.**



# BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH OUR MEMBER SERVICES



As we serve and support our members our primary focus will be on **capacity building**. Looking forward, we would rather grow our members, than grow our membership.

## Member Analysis & Strategy

To better understand the needs of our membership, we will conduct segmentation analysis, considering factors such as the materials they work with, the stage of organisational development and what their main needs are. We will create a Core Membership Strategy with a view to ensure our member services are:

- Meeting the needs of our different members.
- Clearly focused on building capacity in our sector.
- Are making the most efficient use of our limited resources.
- We are seeking funding to better understand and tackle the barriers to equity, diversity and inclusion in our sector.

## Events

Building on the Core Membership Strategy (left) we will review our Event Programme, with the view to ensure each of our events:

- Has a capacity building goal defined.
- Has a feedback and monitoring mechanism built into it.
- Makes the most efficient use of our own expertise but also that of partner organisations and our membership.



## Communications

We will create a new marketing strategy in line with this strategic plan, to ensure new strategic objectives are embedded into our marketing practice, including:

- Focus on our core messages.
- Identify our key audiences.
- Streamlining our communications.



# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH OUR POLICY WORK



The focus of our policy representation is to create the right conditions for our members to deliver a more circular economy. We want to see the **right policies** implemented, in the **right way** to deliver a growing circular economy.

We want to move from **representation** to **influence** and grow policy partnerships with our members and wider stakeholders.



## Manifesto

In Spring 2025, in consultation with our membership, we will launch a manifesto for the circular communities' sector in Scotland. This will contain our core policy priorities which:

- we believe will have the greatest impact in progressing to a circular economy.
- will create the greatest opportunities for our membership and the wider sector to grow.
- will deliver the greatest social and environmental benefits.

We will use this as a core campaigning document in the run up to the May 2026 elections at Holyrood.

## Membership Involvement

We want to support our members to be more active in the policy space. We want to equip them to strengthen relationships with local policymakers and elected representatives and progress local policies in their communities.

To do this we will deliver events that:

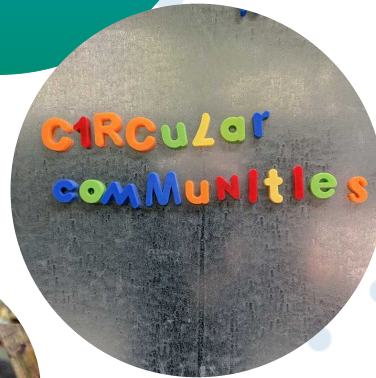
- Equip our members with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to engage within the policy sphere.
- Help them to build stronger relationships with different departments within their Local Authority, Elected Members and Local Press.
- Invite local policymakers to our regional based events to ensure greater relationship building and local policy conversations.

## Sector Impact

Over the last few years, we have made strong progress in demonstrating the impact of our sector – social, environmental and economic. Key to this is our Annual Impact Report.

We will take this further by:

- Implementing a Carbon Tool that our members will use for their own impact demonstration, and which can also feed the wider data included in our impact reporting and policy representation. We are seeking funding to deliver this.
- Demonstrating more clearly the Social Impact of our members work and how this saves the public sector money. This also requires funding.



# STRENGTHENING OUR ORGANISATION

Over the last few years, we have made strong progress in strengthening the core organisation. However, we want to continue to strengthen our organisation by taking the following actions:

## Partnership Working

We recognise that we are far from the only voice in our sector. We want to work with others where we share policy positions or have a shared membership.

This may be other intermediaries, environmental organisations, Local Authority networks, UK based organisations, Commercial organisations and Universities.

During this strategic period, we will actively seek to grow and strengthen partnerships and find ways we can work together to deliver capacity in our sector and more opportunities for our members to grow.



## Team & Diversity

We have an excellent staff and board team at Circular Communities Scotland. We also believe we are a positive employer offering a welcoming and supportive environment for all our staff to thrive, with a progressive approach to flexible working practices. However, we don't want to take this for granted and have identified actions to strengthen this:

- Continue our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training of staff and board. We want to see greater diversity and inclusion in our sector and see training our own team as a first step to take this forward externally in the future.
- Conduct an Annual Staff Survey to gather staff feedback.
- Implement Human Resources Support for the organisation.
  - Review Staff Handbook and Policies with new HR support partner to ensure they are as accessible and inclusive as possible.
  - Build on the accessibility of our recruitment process to ensure we make it possible for people from all backgrounds to work for us.

## Our Impact

Through our impact report and representation work we are good at representing the impact of the sector we support.

However, going forward, we recognise that Circular Communities Scotland needs to be better at demonstrating our own impact too.

- We need to be clear about the outcomes we are seeking to deliver through our work and how we measure and report on these.
- For each core activity and new project, we will define a clear process to define, measure, review and report our outcomes and impact.



## Income Generation

We will write an Income Generation / Funding Strategy including:

- Define our strategy for seeking future funding.
- Our strategy to apply for social impact related grants going forward.
- Ways to grow our trading income.
- Consideration of what additional resources or skills are needed in this area.

We will be much stronger if we can diversify our income. We don't want to be overly dependent on one funder and would like a healthy balance of Environmental, Social and Trading income.

We will also be preparing a Reuse Consortium Business Plan to set out the future strategy of the Consortium and how this can contribute to our future Income Generation Strategy.

# JOIN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY MOVEMENT TODAY

## Find out more about the Circular Economy and how it works

We believe we can help tackle the climate emergency and promote social and environmental justice for communities across Scotland, by supporting a shift from the linear economy to the circular economy.

## Become a Member of Circular Communities Scotland

Our members are charities or social enterprises that bring environmental and social benefits to their communities. They run projects across the country to reduce waste: from repurposing second hand furniture, growing local food, hosting repair projects or sharing libraries, supporting bike refurbishment and more.



## Contact Us

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