



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

**Community Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1.30pm-2.30pm**  
**Estates Conference Room 2**

**Chair:**

Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability

**Attending:**

Sarah Anderson, Senior Community Engagement Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Ruthanne Baxter, Civic Engagement Manager, Heritage Collections

Bruce Crawford, EVOG

Patricia Erskine, Head of Stakeholder Relations, College Office (College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences)

Sarah Ford-Hutchinson, Head of SRS Communications

Akrit Ghimire, Edinburgh University Students' Association Vice President Community

Natalia Gibczynska, Business Services Manager, Estates Business Services

Gemma Gourlay, Head of Social Impact, Department of Social Responsibility & Sustainability

Suzanne Hermiston, Director of Open Studies, Centre for Open Learning

Anne-Sofie Laegran, Head of Research Impact, Edinburgh Research Office

Hazel Lambert, Head of Communications, Marketing & Engagement, College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine

Derek MacLeod, Head of Global Partnerships, Edinburgh Global

Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal Community Relations and Director of Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities

Lynn McMath, Deputy Director, Stakeholder Relations, Communications and Marketing

Beth Munro, Volunteering and Engagement Manager, Development & Alumni

Cameron Ritchie, Deputy Director and Head of Operations, University Sport and Exercise

Stuart Tooley, Head of Public Affairs, Communications and Marketing

Sarah Ward, Lecturer - Learning in Communities

**Apologies:**

Rachel Bowen, Head of Engagement, College of Science and Engineering

Natasha Collinson, Head of Engagement and Communications, Humanities and Social Science

Lesley Stokes, Widening Participation Manager

**In Attendance:**

Gordon Coutts, Head of Communications and Engagement, School of Social and Political Science

Sarah Matthews, Community Engagement Project Coordinator

## Agenda

	Time	Item	Paper/Presentation
1.	1.30pm	Welcome ( <b>Dave Gorman</b> ) (5mins)	
2.	1.35pm	Minutes from the last meeting ( <b>Dave Gorman</b> ) (5mins)	A
3.	1.40pm	EMS 300 Community Launch ( <b>Ruthanne Baxter</b> ) (30mins)	Presentation
4.	2.10pm	Community Team Update & Year 5 Report ( <b>Gemma Gourlay, Sarah Anderson, Sarah Ford-Hutchinson, &amp; Stuart Tooley</b> ) (20mins)	B & Presentation
5.	2.30pm	Edinburgh Global Action Plan ( <b>Derek Macleod</b> ) (25mins)	Presentation
6.	2.55pm	Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council (EVOC) Update ( <b>Bruce Crawford</b> ) (25mins)	Presentation
7.	3.20pm	AOB ( <b>Dave Gorman</b> ) (10mins)	
8.	3.30pm	Meeting close ( <b>Dave Gorman</b> )	

## UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

**MINUTE OF A MEETING** of the Community Board held in Argyle House Mtg Room 7, Floor E and via Teams on Thursday 11 December, 10pm-12pm

# A

- Present:** Akrit Ghimire (AG), Edinburgh University Students' Association Vice President Community  
Anne-Sofie Laegran (ASL), Head of Research Impact, Edinburgh Research Office  
Beth Munro (BM), Volunteering and Engagement Manager, Development & Alumni  
Cameron Ritchie (CR), Deputy Director and Head of Operations, University Sport and Exercise  
Dave Gorman (DG), Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability (Chair)  
Derek MacLeod (DM), Head of Global Partnerships, Edinburgh Global  
Gemma Gourlay (GG), Head of Social Impact, Department of Social Responsibility & Sustainability  
Hazel Lambert (HL), Head of Communications, Marketing & Engagement, College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine  
Lesley Stokes (LS), Widening Participation Manager  
Lesley McAra (LMcA), Assistant Principal Community Relations and Director of Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities  
Lynn McMath (LMcM), Deputy Director, Stakeholder Relations, Communications and Marketing  
Patricia Erskine (PE), Head of Stakeholder Relations, College Office (College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences)  
Sarah Anderson (SA), Senior Community Engagement Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability  
Sarah Ward (SW), Lecturer - Learning in Communities  
Suzanne Hermiston (SH), Director of Open Studies, Centre for Open Learning
- In attendance:** Isla Parker (IP), Gaelic and Community Relations Officer  
Sarah Matthews (SM), Community Engagement Project Coordinator  
Scott Davidson (SD), Deputy Director Social Responsibility & Sustainability & Head of Sustainability
- Apologies:** Bruce Crawford, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council (EVOC)  
Natalia Gibczynska, Business Services Manager, Estates Business Services  
Natasha Collinson, Head of Engagement and Communications, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science  
Rachel Bowen, Head of Engagement, College of Science and Engineering  
Ruthanne Baxter, Civic Engagement Manager, Heritage Collections  
Sarah Ford-Hutchinson, Head of Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS) Communications  
Stuart Tooley, Head of Public Affairs, Communications and Marketing

## **1 Welcome**

Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability (Chair), welcomed the Board. Departing member Sean Smith (Professor of Future Construction and Director of Centre for Future Infrastructure) was thanked for his involvement, along with Petra Renman (former Community Engagement Projects Coordinator) who was thanked for her contributions and support.

Sarah Ward (Lecturer - Learning in Communities) was welcomed to the Board as a new Member.

## **2 Approval of meeting minute of 11th September 2025**

The Community Board Minute of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025 was approved.

5 previous actions were noted as being completed -

1. Remove Assistant Principal Community Relations from the list of members and replace with the Convener of the SCR Committee in updated Board terms of reference
2. Board members to contact with requests for printed Community Plan
3. Write to the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead on behalf of the Community Board, seeking to clarify the Board's role and the status of recommendations with respect to the University's Race Review.
4. Determine if the groups involved in the Review are attending the upcoming Community Plan launch, to ensure their perspectives are included and acknowledged.
5. Connect Sean Smith (Professor of Future Construction and Director of Centre for Future Infrastructure) with the CEO of Social and Sustainable Capital's housing funds for potential collaborations.

## **3 Community Plan launch evaluation**

Gemma Gourlay, Head of Social Impact, reported that the Community Plan launch was a success, achieving all desired outcomes, including positive engagement and new connections with community partners. The event was attended by the Principal, highlighting the importance of this work. The Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) and Community Board Members who helped shape and launch the plan were also thanked for their significant contribution and support. Future plans include promoting the Community Plan to additional staff groups in 2026.

## **4 Doors Open Days and wider events plans**

Isla Parker, Gaelic and Community Relations Officer and Sarah Anderson, Senior Community Engagement Manager, presented a summary of events highlighting the uptake, developments and outcomes for Doors Open Day, Gaelic Week, EVOG Meet the Funders and the Meadows Festival.

Key points discussed-

- The Board discussed how to support and engage with the most marginalised members of local communities and have realistic expectations about what is achievable given dropping University staff headcount. The Centre for Homelessness and Inclusion Health is an example of how the University reaches marginalised groups; however, it is challenged by lack of administrative and communications support.
- EFI is also reviewing the effort/reward balance in relation to Door Open Day, and PE noted may not take part next year, especially given student recruitment open days and Edinburgh Medical School events in October. There may be student resources to draw on; however, the workload and resources needed should be clear. There is an October Alumni event at EFI, the contact for which is Julie Contreras (Programme Manager, Edinburgh Medical School 300).
- The Board discussed how important it is not to overcommit and reflected on how community work relies on little pockets of cash and resources across the University. How do we keep track of these? The University is running on goodwill, and this can mean support is at risk – scoping this would be beneficial. The picture is not black-and-white: for example, while some public engagement professional roles have been lost in Colleges, there has been some growth in Edinburgh Research Office staffing to partly offset this.
- Public event teams may be at risk and strategically may be an issue. However, it is also encouraging that there are collective efforts with these events, and any challenges should be discussed and worked through.

SW noted her team is doing deep relational work in marginalised communities – teaching students who are doing deep dive into community work and linking in small programs to the bigger picture.

**Action 1: All consider how do we reach out to those who are not engaged with the University of Edinburgh.**

**Action 2: ASL, HL, PE and SA to take to Public and Community Engagement Coordination Group Discuss Plans for 2026/2027 offline and how we can all engage one and another with this work.**

## 5 Regenerative Sustainability Strategy

B

Scott Davidson, Deputy Director of Social Responsibility & Sustainability & Head of Sustainability, presented Regenerative Sustainability Strategy. The Climate Strategy successor is framed as regenerative sustainability, to indicate that we are going beyond harm limitation. There are targets against Learning & Teaching, Operations, People & Culture, and Research & Innovation

Key points discussed -

- The Board offered to support and to promote where they can. Scott acknowledged that he has good support from the senior leadership team.
- There is a focus on learning and teaching as well as people and culture.
- Connections were formed between Derek MacLeod, Head of Global Partnerships, and SD who agreed to continue to discuss how to influence others and develop further thought leadership opportunities in this space.

## 6 **Edinburgh Poverty Commission - 5-year report**

C

Gemma Gourlay provided a summary update of the Poverty Commission paper following the publication of the interim report. It was noted that the last 5 years has been challenging with the experience of poverty becoming increasingly complex, this has been exacerbated by reduced funding, particularly in the third sector.

Key points for discussed-

- The Board took note of the update and suggested that if the University's Social and Civic Responsibility Delivery Plan is refreshed, it should focus on the youth workforce. This implies that the university is considering ways to address poverty and social issues, potentially through initiatives targeting young people and the workforce.
- LMCM noted that the Housing Committee (LMCM is the Chair), a subgroup of the Edinburgh Partnership Board, is looking at in-work poverty along with community safety with a focus on income maximisation. The University is not a public body in Edinburgh Partnership with official definitions and any response we provide is voluntary.
- LMCA asked the Board to consider the role of University. Can we help to evaluate the third sector to help highlight effectiveness and support areas of development? Cyrenians need a cost benefit analysis. Could we link in with EVOG evaluation service? SA suggested an opportunity for skills-based volunteering.

**Action 3: Community Team bring Poverty Commission back as future agenda item, working with Stakeholder Relations as needed.**

**Action 4: LMCA to join LMCM for a meeting with Council on evaluation not just in poverty space but on delivery of whole Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.**

## 7 **Community Team Update**

D

Sarah Anderson updated the group on staff changes, including Stuart Tooley, who is currently on shared parental leave. Community Grants had record demand in the autumn 2025 round with 117 applications received and 12 organisations funded. Community Access to Rooms is also busy with groups looking to make bookings for the semester 2. The increase in demand for both is thought to be due to Community Plan publicity and financial challenges facing third sector. Diversity travel and the Edinburgh Medical School 300 programme have made financial donations to the grant pot.

Key points discussed -

- Supporting the housing emergency and review action plan with city wide stakeholders including Social Security Scotland, Department of Work and Pensions, Cyrenians – ensuring value is added. Cala gave an insightful presentation on the issues industry faces, including the cost of land and slowdown in completions alongside an increase in expectations.
- RAG actions from Community Plan 2020-2025 have been reviewed with 2 being upgraded from red to amber.
- Noted that the SRS Communications team have reduced capacity for to reduction in staff from 5 to 2 over the last 6 months which will result in a reduced number of posts and a focus on more collaborative social media posts with key planned activity continuing.

## **8 The Work of Institute for Education, Culture and Society, specifically MA Learning in Communities**

Sarah Ward presented information on the MA Learning in Communities course and shared information with Board on the Community Education team.

Key discussion points -

- The Board acknowledged and appreciated the team's great work and inquired about potential ways to support and advocate for them.
  - The opportunity to match students and collaborate with SD and climate-related course was noted.
  - SA suggested working on a case study to present student stories.
  - DG made a connection between CLD work and communities engaged with race review and suggested possible follow up for Sarah Ward.

**Action 5: Circulate SW and SDs slides with draft minute.**

**Action 6: SD and SW ensure Callum McGregor is connected to Dave Reay.**

**Action 7: DG, GG, SA to make connection between SW and Race Review Response Group re. local minority ethnic groups.**

**Action 8: SA to bring possible SW and community education case study to Community Team comms meeting.**

## **9 AOB**

IP was thanked for her input and support to the committee and congratulated her on the new role.

## **10 Meeting Close**

## Summary of Actions

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
4	Consider how do we reach out to those who are not engaged with the University of Edinburgh	All
4	Take Public and Community Engagement Coordination Group Discuss Plans for 2026/2027 offline and how we can all engage one and another with this work.	ASL, HL, PE and SA
6	Bring Poverty Commission back as future agenda item, working with Stakeholder Relations as needed	Community Team
6	LMcA to join LMcM for a meeting with Council on evaluation not just in poverty space but on delivery of whole Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.	LMcA and LMcM
8	Circulate SW and SDs slides with draft minute	SM
8	Ensure Callum McGregor is connected to Dave Reay	SD and SW
8	Make connection between SW and Race Review Response Group re. local minority ethnic groups.	DG, GG and SA
8	Bring possible SW and community education case study to Community Team comms meeting.	SA

## COMMUNITY BOARD

24 February 2026

### Community Team and Communications update

#### Description of paper

1. This paper is a regular update on the activity of the Community Team since the last Board meeting on 11 December 2025.

#### Action requested/Recommendation

2. This paper is for information and discussion.

#### Background and context

3. The Community Team is a small group of staff who hold community-related roles in the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS) and Communications and Marketing (CaM). Team members are line-managed and their roles and operational budgets financed by their respective departments; most also work on areas other than community. The Community Team help to deliver the Community Plan, including a few deliverables where they have full responsibility.
4. Members of the Community Team who are members of the Community Board are Gemma Gourlay, Lynn McMath, Stuart Tooley and Sarah Anderson. Sarah Matthews from the Team is the Board's secretary. SRS Head of Communications Sarah Ford-Hutchinson is also a member.
5. The Community Team provide a short regular update to each Board meeting. It was agreed in September 2025 that, for the Community Plan 2025-30's implementation plan, updates would be given every six months on the 's RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status of deliverables. The first of these updates is included in this paper

#### Discussion

6. Stuart Tooley, Head of Public Affairs, has returned from Shared Parental Leave. Isla Parker left her role of Gaelic and Community Relations Officer at the end of January 2026 and the advertisement for a successor is currently live.
7. To date, for financial year 2025/2026, 11 microgrants have been awarded with £5,442 disbursed. Organisations recently funded include Coldingham Community Council, The Pars Foundation and Survivors of Human Trafficking in Scotland.

8. Round 18 of the Community Grant Scheme will open on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2026 with a closing date of 29 April. It will have a health and wellbeing theme as part of Edinburgh Medical School 300 anniversary celebrations. An additional £35,000 will be made available, which will all be disbursed as grants, with costs for engagement, promotion and events now covered from the SRS Social Impact Unit budget. A grant information session will be held at the Usher Institute on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March and will highlight partnership opportunities for potential grantees and University colleagues.
9. The University's third Community Plan launched on schedule on 8 October 2025. Launch communications and engagement activity will conclude in March 2026. Key Activity from and including December 2025 includes:
  - Presentation by University of Edinburgh Sport to community groups in Craigmillar and Niddrie (initiated by University of Edinburgh Sport and very much welcomed)
  - Presentations to the EVOC New Scots huddle, Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Third Sector Interface and Social Enterprise Network Forum, the Edinburgh Community Health Forum
  - Presentations at USG Leaders, Edinburgh Global all staff meeting, Student Recruitment & Admissions, ISG Leaders, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) Public Engagement and Communications Network,
  - [A blog for the Community Health Exchange \(CHEX\)](#)
  - Meeting with the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (Head and Deputy Head of College)
  - Publication of [Goodies video case study](#) as part of Student Volunteering Week, linking back to Community Plan 2025-30
  - Updating of actions in the University's Sustainability Framework
10. The University remains a key partner in [Gaelic Week Edinburgh](#), which this year runs from Monday 23 February to Sunday 1 March. Events cover music, storytelling, culture, community and conversation. The festival was established by the University in 2014. Other key partners now are the City of Edinburgh Council, Ionad Gàidhlig Dhùn Èideann and the National Library of Scotland. The University's Centre for Open Learning is offering one of the events.
11. Planning for Doors Open Day 2026 has begun. This year, the Edinburgh weekend coincides with the University's undergraduate open day, which presents a possible opportunity to include buildings that would not normally be made available. Pros and cons of this are being worked through. While there is currently no local central coordination for the King's Buildings campus as there has been in the past, this does not preclude individual buildings working directly with the Community Team to

be part of the programme. Once in post, the new Gaelic and Community Relations Officer will be the key Community Team contact; the wider Team are supporting meanwhile.

12. Community access to rooms continues to see sustained interest with over 9,100 hours now provided through the scheme to over 215 local groups and organisations. This volume of room provision equates to an in-kind of value (based on University commercial hire rates) of over £640,000. A small-scale pilot in Edinburgh Futures Institute began in January 2026 and will run until May 2026.
13. We continue to provide twice-yearly community grant updates to Governance and Strategic Planning for the University's Strategic Performance Framework dashboard [indicator 14, social impact](#). The social impact working group is reviewing this indicator and considering what else might be considered as an indicator.
14. We are now seeing community benefits being widely embedded into our procurement processes across the University. For example, in 23/24, community benefits were embedded into 11 of our strategic procurements and this rose to 78 in 24/25. Several excellent examples of community benefits can be found in the University's [Annual Procurement Report](#). Furthermore, we are seeing sustained use, by suppliers, of the ESES Community Benefits Portal to source opportunities. Examples of delivery and impact can be found in our dedicated [case study page for University of Edinburgh suppliers](#).
15. In early February Scottish Parliament voted to approve the final stage of the Community Wealth Building (CWB) Bill, this will now be passed to the King for Royal Assent before being launched as an ACT at a timescale to be agreed. Universities are not named as statutory public organisations to comply with the bill however we will review further guidance when available as it is possible we may be asked by other organisations to support reporting, for example, Scottish Funding Council. The University committed to supporting CWB in early 2025 [ESES CWB Pledge](#).
16. The Strategic Housing Partnership, a subgroup of the Edinburgh Partnership Board, is chaired by the University's Deputy Director, Stakeholder Relations. It brings together key groups across the city working in housing and homelessness including the council, NHS Lothian, social rented sector landlords and third sector organisations. The Partnership is currently work planning to establish its top priorities and objectives for the next year. The next meeting will be on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026. A verbal update will be provided at the Board meeting.

17. Following a presentation to the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils in October 2025 about Community Plan 2025-30, two community councils have contacted the University for assistance with generating their new local place plans. Assisted by Sandra Mackenzie, Community Engagement Manager for Edinburgh Futures Institute, John Brennan, Professor of Sustainable Architecture in Edinburgh College of Art, will be providing input to Southside Community Council, possibly with student support. Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) has offered support for student engagement in the Plan's development. Four students are currently supporting Ratho and District Community Council's place plan development via a Case Studies in Sustainable Development project, focussing on the natural environment of the area.
1. EUSA's Festival Business Manager is starting to engage Southside Community Council about planning for August 2026's venue at the Pleasance. The hope is that this earlier engagement will prevent the type of community relations issues that arose in relation to impact felt by some Dumbiedykes residents in 2025.
19. Members of the Community Team have provided very light touch support to excellent community engagement being undertaken by University of Edinburgh Sport with Street Soccer Scotland and for Friday afternoon community use of Peffermill facilities by adjacent communities.
20. The [fifth and final public progress report](#) for Community Plan 2020-25 was published on Tuesday 3 February 2026 and shared with the Board by email on 4 February. A presentation summarising progress is covered as part of this agenda item.
21. The six month progress update of the Community Plan 2025-30 implementation tracker (accessible to Board members [here](#)) has been completed. This has been a light touch review, recognising time colleagues gave to creating tracker content in summer 2025. Confidence levels regarding each deliverables current status is indicated in column G. All staff implicated in the plan will be contacted by email in summer 2026 to inform a full-confidence update for end of year one. Insights from this review follow in paragraphs 21 and 22.

22. Progress since August 2026 has included:

Plan action	Deliverable	Progress
We will continue to partner with communities to undertake research on topics of mutual interest.	Binks Hub work to raise funds to secure future of hub, consolidate and maximise impact of projects to date, and tie together common threads	Progressing, with update forthcoming
	Edinburgh Medical School 300 (Edinburgh Medical School 300) researcher-community brokerage event ahead of themed round of Edinburgh Medical School 300 community grants	Planned for 31 March 2026
	Launch of Ethics Advisory Group for Engaged Research (EAGER)	First meeting 10 February 2026
We will further improve the ways we respond to opportunities to collaborate on research that matters to local residents, communities, third sector and civic partners, particularly where it could benefit underrepresented groups.	Raise awareness of Community Plan with internal stakeholders	Initial communications and engagement almost complete
	Initiation of work of new part-time ScotPEN (Scottish Public Engagement Network) role coordination role, based in Edinburgh Research Office on behalf of all universities in Scotland	Refresh of communications, etc. undertaken by Edinburgh Research Office
	Work to maintain current staff capacity supporting <a href="mailto:local@ed.ac.uk">local@ed.ac.uk</a>	Role of Gaelic and Community Relations Officer currently advertised
	Through Edinburgh Partnership Board sub-group, mobilisation of University ecosystem for impact and using our convening power to tackle the housing emergency	See paragraph 15
Ensuring mutual benefit, we will make it even easier for local community groups to partner with Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) Volunteering Services.	Student Volunteering Week 2026	Communications campaign underway at time of writing
	Internal review of Student Volunteering Service scope and remit	Undertaken
We aim to make in-person and online lifelong learning even more accessible for local residents.	Promotion of new University short courses platform to local audiences	E.g. circulation of discount code to community grantees

<b>Plan action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Continuation of research through the Centre for Homelessness and Inclusion Health which actively involves community partners in its design and delivery.	Usher events tied to research on poverty and health inequalities	Usher events for Challenge Poverty Week in November 2025
We will continue our teaching of inclusion health with reference to our local area, such as through our Centre for Homelessness and Inclusion Health.	Creation of first strategy for Centre for Homelessness and Inclusion Health	Complete
	Completed review of Centre for Homelessness and Inclusion Health	Complete
We are committed to our socially positive investments and will evaluate the impact of those we make.	Impact evaluation of current social investments	Published early February 2026
We will further promote physical health and wellbeing for local residents by continuing to offer access to our sport facilities and to our social and cultural activities.	Continue community use of University of Edinburgh Sport and Exercise facilities	Current work includes community engagement around Friday afternoon use of Peffermill by nearby children and young people. Now officially part of job title for a member of staff (Neil Rankin).
We will continue our Education Beyond Borders programme of funding, support, and collaborative and community-led initiatives, and maintain our University of Sanctuary status, ensure more New Scots can access the skills they need.	University of Sanctuary renewal	Reaccreditation announced January 2026
We will increase the use of our public outdoor spaces and heritage and cultural assets for health and wellbeing purposes, including our site at Rullion Green Wood in the Pentland Hills Regional Park.	Activity-based events, e.g. colour run.	Colour Run took place in October 2025 with 50 free community tickets for New Scots
We will maintain free-of-charge community use of our designated buildings.	Progression of inclusion of Edinburgh Futures Institute space in the scheme	See paragraph 12
	Analysis of qualitative feedback from rooms users	Complete

2. Deliverables in the year one implementation plan currently on amber or red are given in the following table. At this stage, many deliverables are in their early stages and an amber or red means, in many cases, only that the deliverable needs to be made more concrete in terms of ownership and/or timeline. A lack of change in since August also does not necessarily signify that no progress is being made. As stakeholders have not been re-contacted systematically, statuses are based on information the Community Team has in hand only. More robust data will be provided in the first Board meeting of the 26/27 academic year.

Plan action	Deliverable	Status of deliverable	Rationale for deliverable status
We will continue to partner with communities to undertake research on topics of mutual interest.	Collaboration between Edinburgh Research Office and Human Resources to create new safeguarding guidance for public engagement	Down from green	Unable to progress work on PVGs until another University department responds
Ensuring mutual benefit, we will make it even easier for local community groups to partner with Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) Volunteering Services.	Explore what non-cash University resources could be shared with student volunteers	No change	Owner of this work to be identified
We will build on current activities where students undertake work commissioned by and for the benefit of community partners.	Work with Estates to reduce time needed to arrange community partner use of 127 Nicolson St for partner purposes	No change	Feasibility of progress and work owner to be established
We aim to make in-person and online lifelong learning even more accessible for local residents.	Identify surplus-generating activity to enable 'community' elements to be funded	No change	Difficult to progress until University financial context improves
	Main Library Access sessions to support marginalised members of public in obtaining Library membership	No change	All stakeholders need to be content with balance of community versus other use
We will maintain teaching that can help prevent future health, social and economic challenges for local residents, such as the support our students offer to young people through our Centre for Psychological Therapies, and will ensure that fairness in	Progression of Challenge Courses and possibly enrichment pathways with social justice angle through new Learning and Teaching Strategy	No change	Challenge courses impacted by closure of Curriculum Transformation Programme, but included in new Learning and Teaching Strategy, and one theme is "(In)Equalities, Peace and Justice". Owner of course tagging work to be identified.

<b>Plan action</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Status of deliverable</b>	<b>Rationale for deliverable status</b>
society continues to feature in our curriculum.			
We will continue to support the local circular economy and digital inclusion by, for example, distributing our used computing equipment to local communities with support from our partner organisations.	Various	No change	Owner(s) of deliverables to be identified; IT re-use project paused
We will further promote physical health and wellbeing for local residents by continuing to offer access to our sport facilities and to our social and cultural activities.	Edinburgh Fringe community programme	No change	Unknown as yet if community interest will be higher in 2026
	New groups involved with local history month.	No change	Owner of deliverable to be confirmed
We will be involved with even more research that preserves and promotes local cultural heritage.	Continuing to develop Edinburgh Futures Institute Omeka platform <a href="https://omeka.org/">https://omeka.org/</a> for community archiving by Binks Hub	No change	Staff support was being sought at last update
	Secure room in Library or Edinburgh Futures Institute for participatory engagement activities overseen by Main Library Outwith team	No change	Competition for and limits on space
Through our curriculum, we will create more chances for experiential learning where students focus on local places and, where appropriate, involve residents directly.	Build new business cases for experiential learning as part of new Learning and Teaching and Strategy	No change	Assumed to be in Learning and Teaching Strategy supporting workplan, but status to be confirmed
We will continue our Education Beyond Borders programme of funding, support, and collaborative and community-led initiatives, and maintain our University of Sanctuary status, ensure more New Scots can access the skills they need.	Global Communities Fund	No change	Paused for 2026
	Al Muntada: The Arabic community forum in Scotland	No change	Ownership of work in transition at last update

Plan action	Deliverable	Status of deliverable	Rationale for deliverable status
We will provide greater support to community-driven events and will improve access for local residents to festival events in our buildings.	Support to community-driven events via staff and/or student presence, time behind the scenes and/or donation of cash or non-cash resource	No change	Staff capacity and cost vs. benefit being flagged as a challenge by some parts of the University, notably but not only in relation to Doors Open Day
We will maintain free-of-charge community use of our designated buildings.	Explore use of non-room facilities	No change	Viability of and plan to progress this deliverable still to be established

## Community Board Communications update December 2025 – February 2026

### 24. Community Plan launch campaign

Assets created or in preparation since December 2025 include a blog for CHEX on inclusion health in the Community Plan, a blog on employee volunteering (SRS' The Seed blog), creation and sharing of a video case study of volunteering opportunities provider Goodies, and creation of a video case study featuring community grantee Heavy Sound. The latter will be shared in late March 2026 as part of communications about the spring community grants round, linking back to Community Plan 2025-30. Two further case studies, on the Centre for Psychological Therapies and the community space in our McLeod Street student accommodation, are still in planning, supported by Communications and Marketing. Later on in 2026 is likely to be more advantageous in achieving good engagement with these stories.

- **Goodies case study response:** Partner post with main University accounts. 140 Instagram post likes, 14,000 views and 8,700 accounts reached. On Facebook, 32 Facebook post likes/loves and 2 Facebook comments (11-12 February). On University of Edinburgh LinkedIn, 18 engagements. Reel average watch time 5 seconds.
- A final report will be shared in the next Community Team update, when all launch actions are complete.

### 25. Community Plan year 5 and final report

The report went live on the web, in HTML format, on Tuesday 3 February 2026. A hard copy summary flier is being printed. All tasks in the communications and engagement campaign are underway or complete.

- **Edinburgh Local Instagram post** (partner post with main University account): 179 likes, 26,400 views and 8,325 accounts reached 9-12 February inclusive. 99% of views by accounts that do not follow Edinburgh Local.
- **Edinburgh Local Instagram story:** 109 views of first page by 84 accounts, 99% of which by accounts following Edinburgh Local. 10 interactions with the entire story.
- **Edinburgh Local Facebook post:** 301 views, 4 engagements, 8 link clicks.
- **Social Responsibility and Sustainability LinkedIn:** 29 post engagements.
- **Internal corporate communications:** Went live on Staff News 12 February [here](#); 119 views and 4 engagements in first few hours. Students News and Bulletin to follow.
- **Targeted emails:** Individual emails to 279 University staff and students and 101 external stakeholders (people who contributed to development of the new Plan, year 5 reporting, or who are high interest and/or influence). Also sent to community grantee opt-in email list.

- Further data will be shared in the next Community Team update, when all actions are complete.
26. Social media: Social Impact Unit colleagues are managing Edinburgh Local social media from February to June 2026, to allow the SRS Communications team to focus on the Regenerative Sustainability Strategy launch.
- Instagram (2 Dec-11 Feb)
    - Total followers: 2,604, increase of 52 since 1 December 2025, mostly in January 2026
    - Total views (previously 'impressions'): 39,000, up from 15,400 last update
    - Total accounts reached: 8,727
    - Total interactions: 424, many likes, plus several saves of our reels. This appears to be far down on our last update (4,407 engagements, including many saves of Doors Open Day post)
    - Top performing posts: QS World Rankings (103,069 views, over 1,700 engagements); Community Plan 2025-30 launch (41,023 views, 689 engagements); year 5 report (26,467 views, 4 engagements)
  - Facebook (2 Dec-11 Feb):
    - Views up by 12% (598 in total)
    - Engagement up 900% (20 engagements)
    - Followers up 1% (900 total)
    - NB Edinburgh Local Facebook had been mothballed when we last reported.
  - LinkedIn (1 Nov to 12 Feb), Social Responsibility and Sustainability account:
    - Total followers: 4,819, up from 4,562 last update
    - Best performing posts: QS Rankings (2,027 likes), Community Plan video (129), Community Plan launch (111).
27. Edinburgh Local website stats for Q2 (1 Nov 2025 – 31 Jan 2026)
- Views: 7,111
    - 52% decrease from Q1 2025-26
    - 43% decrease from Q2 2024-25
    - Explained due to reduced web visits after Community Plan launch in Oct; 1 newsletter in this period rather than 2 in previous year; less social media web conversions.
  - Best performing pages:
    - Homepage (1,674 views)
    - Community Access to Rooms (569)
    - Community Plan 2025-30 (404)
    - Volunteering opportunities (340)
    - These correlate with the pages we've been encouraging our audiences to visit.

28. Social investments:

SRS Communications published the first [Social Investment Fund impact report](#) in early February 2026.

### **Resource implications**

29. No additional resource is being requested through this paper.

### **Risk Management**

30. Covered in paragraph 22.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

31. The work of the Community Team particularly contributes to the following Sustainable Development Goals:



### **Equality & Diversity**

32. Currently managed through equalities impact assessments for individual projects and the equalities impact assessment for Community Plan 2025-30.

### **Next steps/implications**

33. Action to mitigate risks as described by paragraph 22, supported by Community Team as appropriate.

### **Consultation**

34. This paper was written collectively by members the Community Team and the SRS Communications Team. The paper has been reviewed by the Head of Social Impact.

### **Further information**

#### Authors

**Sarah Anderson**

Senior Community Engagement Manager

Social Responsibility and Sustainability.

**Sarah Ford-Hutchinson**

Head of SRS Communications

Social Responsibility and Sustainability

**Gemma Gourlay**

Head of Social Impact

Social Responsibility and Sustainability

**Frances Johnson**

Stakeholder Relations Officer

Communications and Marketing

**Lynn McMath**

Deputy Director, Stakeholder Relations

Communications and Marketing

**Stuart Tooley**

Head of Public Affairs

Communications and Marketing

**Aidan Tracey**

Social Impact Manager

Social Responsibility and Sustainability

**Freedom of Information**

35. Open.