COASTAL COMMUNITIES FUND

2025/2026

The closing date for applications is 24th May 2026.
Please note late applications will not be accepted

Please refer to the associated guidance when completing this application form.

All projects must be completed by Friday 13th November 2026.

This is an application form for the Coastal Communities Fund managed by South Ayrshire Council. Please complete all parts of the form. If you require any clarification or additional information, then please contact grants@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Amount of grant requested

Type of Grant	AMOUNT	PURPOSE
Development grant	Up to £15,000 **X**	The Development Grant will assist groups to plan & develop small scale projects that will link into one of the priorities of the Coastal Communities Grant Fund. Projects will essentially make communities a more attractive place to live & work.

Section 1: Organisation Details

Organisation Name	**Narture CIC**
Organisation Address	**34 Newmarket St Ayr KA7 1LP**
Type of organisation (voluntary organisation, charity, CIC, Ltd. by guarantee, SCIO, unincorporated association etc. or private sector)	**CIC**
If a charity or Limited Company, please include your number	SC665390

Does your group/organisation have a bank account?	Yes ☒ No ☐ In progress ☐

Section 2: Contact details

Contacts	Lead Contact
Name	Saskia Singer
Position in Organisation	Director & Co-founder

Section 3: Project Details

a. Project Title

The Auld Toyshop – Peoples Art School programme

b. About your project, what are you seeking funding for?

For large grant applicants only - what risks have you considered, and what steps will you take to keep the project sustainable over the long term?

The Auld Toy Shop – People's Art School Programme is a community-led cultural regeneration project based in a former toy shop in Ayr town centre that operated for over 35 years from the 1980s before becoming vacant and derelict in 2014. The building holds deep personal and collective memories for many people in Ayr, with generations of local families remembering it as a place of excitement, imagination and play during childhood. Although the building has sat empty for more than a decade, it remains an iconic and much-loved part of the town centre, recognised not only for the memories it holds for local people but also for its beautiful architectural features both inside and out.

In 2023, Narture CIC undertook an architectural feasibility study exploring how the building could be transformed into a People's Art School and long-term creative community hub that would breathe new life back into the space and return it to community use. However, despite significant early development work, contractual agreements being in place and strong community interest in the project, the building was sold to someone else before the plans could move forward and the previous owner pursued alternative use for the site.

The building has recently come under new ownership and we are now working closely with the new owner to revive and develop the original vision for the space. We currently have funding support through Creative Scotland's Culture Collective programme to deliver a year-long programme of cultural activity, community

engagement and creative consultation within the building. This programme will work directly with local residents to **explore what people in Ayr want from the future of this important town centre space** and how it can best serve the community long term.

We currently have programme funding secured from Creative Scotland for a year-long creative activity and community engagement programme within the building. However, this funding does not include the capital investment required to activate the space into a warm, welcoming and functional community venue. Funding is therefore being sought through the Coastal Communities Fund to support essential building activation and light fit-out works that will enable the People's Art School programme to take place. This includes basic internal improvements, utilities, workshop infrastructure and adaptable community-use facilities. Alongside this, we are actively developing additional match funding opportunities and wider partnerships to support the longer-term phased restoration and activation of the iconic building over time.

Proposed £15,000 budget

Budget item	Amount
Rent contribution	£3,000
Utilities contribution (electricity, water and heating costs)	£2,000
Basic internal renovation and decoration of public areas	£1,000
Bakery space enabling works — preparation, hygiene and workflow	£1,000
Electrical safety and lighting improvements	£1,000
Plumbing repairs and shared facilities	£750
Heating and ventilation improvements	£1,000
Toilet and accessibility improvements	£750
Workshop furniture — tables, chairs and flexible seating	£750
Storage, shelving and display systems	£750
Bakery equipment	£750
Fire safety equipment and emergency signage	£500
Total request	£15,000

These improvements will allow the building to reopen as an accessible and welcoming space for workshops, exhibitions, community meals, creative learning, cultural events and public conversations. As part of the project, we will host open and welcoming community consultations to meaningfully engage local people in shaping the future of the building and its programme. The aim is to co-develop and co-curate the space alongside the people of Ayr, ensuring it reflects the needs, ideas and aspirations of the wider community. We also hope to provide access to local community groups, creatives and organisations who need affordable and

flexible space for activity, learning and connection, allowing the building to evolve as a genuinely shared civic and cultural resource shaped by the people who use it.

The project directly responds to the difficult challenges facing Ayr as a coastal town, including high street vacancy, economic decline, social isolation and the lack of accessible creative infrastructure. Through extensive surveys and community consultation carried out by Narture CIC, local people overwhelmingly identified a lack of spaces where they can freely express themselves, develop creative skills and participate in cultural activity.

When asked:
“Do you feel there are ample spaces nearby which can be accessed to freely express yourself and practise your creative skills?”

95.7% of 94 respondents said no.

Community feedback highlighted a strong desire for affordable and accessible creative facilities including printmaking, affordable studio space, woodworking, DIY and practical making skills, shared workshop facilities and opportunities to connect socially through creativity, food and learning.

It’s evident through our various surveys and the wider research we’ve carried out that a significant number of young creative people are leaving Ayr due to a lack of local opportunities, resources and spaces to develop their practice. As a result, we’re losing our valuable cultural capital to larger cities.

This reflects a wider national picture, where access to culture is increasingly recognised as essential to health, wellbeing and economic resilience. Westminster’s Cultural Strategy 2026–31, for example, highlights the importance of “unlocking the transformative power of creativity and culture” and ensuring everyone can share in its benefits. It sets out clear priorities around breaking down barriers to cultural participation, promoting creative health and wellbeing, growing creative skills and enterprise and embedding culture at the heart of place-making.

The People’s Art School aims to respond directly to these challenges by establishing an accessible creative foothold in the town centre. It will provide meaningful, paid opportunities for local creatives to share their skills and continue developing their own practice, while also creating a space where local people can learn, build confidence, and access new pathways without needing to leave the area. It is about strengthening connection, reducing isolation and building a more rooted and resilient creative ecosystem within the town.

The project is grounded in the belief that creativity, play and collective imagination are essential to healthy and thriving communities. As musician Brian Eno has suggested, “*children learn through play, adults play through art*” — a principle that underpins the way this project uses food, making and cultural participation as tools for regeneration, wellbeing and social connection.

By bringing a long-derelict and deeply loved building back into active community use, the project will create a visible and hopeful space within Ayr town centre. In

doing so, it aims to support local people, strengthen community connection, and contribute to the wider regeneration of Ayr as a coastal town with creativity at its heart.

We have identified a few key risks and built mitigation and sustainability measures into the design of the project from the outset.

A primary risk is financial sustainability beyond the initial grant period. The project requires upfront investment to support capital development, refurbishment of a long-derelict building and the establishment of the People's Art School programme. However, Narture operates a unique hybrid model that integrates food and hospitality with arts and creative programming, where each element actively supports the other- *baking real bread to earn the dough to fund arts projects*. This existing model already demonstrates how income generated through food can help sustain cultural activity, creating a circular system of value and resilience.

In the short to medium term, grant funding is essential to enable the initial growth and scaling phase. However, the long-term ambition is to significantly reduce reliance on grant income by expanding the organisation's food and hospitality arm. The proposed site at 21-25 Newmarket st would allow us to move and develop a larger, fit-for-purpose bakery space into the front section of the toy shop, increasing production capacity, strengthening wholesale supply and expanding retail activity. This would create additional jobs, increase earned income, and build a more stable financial base for the wider organisation. The back sections would remain for the creative, cultural and social programming.

This creates a circular economy model where food and arts are mutually reinforcing: the bakery generates income that helps fund creative and community programming, while the arts and participation offer bring people into the space, strengthening the food offer and increasing overall sustainability. This approach supports long-term community wealth building rooted in local employment, local supply chains and local spending, rather than external extraction.

Regular community consultation, open calls for participation, and partnerships with local organisations will ensure the offer remains responsive to local needs and shaped by local voices over time.

Another consideration is the long-term sustainability of the building itself, particularly given its derelict condition. A phased approach to refurbishment will be adopted where possible, alongside energy-efficient and adaptable design solutions. A portion of income and forward planning will be allocated to ongoing maintenance and lifecycle costs to ensure the building remains viable in the long term. Alongside this, we will actively develop wider long-term partnerships and funding relationships to support resilience, shared ownership, and sustained investment in the project over time.

Finally, wider economic uncertainty and pressures on the cultural sector present a systemic risk. In response, the project is intentionally designed not to rely solely on traditional arts funding models. By embedding food, enterprise, skills development and cultural activity within one integrated space, the People's Art School becomes

a civic and economic anchor within the town centre, rather than a time-limited cultural intervention.

Overall, sustainability is achieved through diversification of income, a phased approach to growth, deep community integration, and a circular model where food and culture actively sustain one another.

c. What community will this project be delivered to and what communities will benefit?

The project will be delivered primarily to the communities of Ayr and the wider South Ayrshire area, with a particular focus on young people, emerging creatives, and residents who currently face barriers to accessing cultural, creative and skills-based opportunities.

A key group is young creative people who are currently leaving the area due to a lack of affordable space, employment pathways, and opportunities to develop their practice locally. The project also supports unemployed or underemployed residents, people seeking new skills and those looking to build confidence, social connection and routes into creative or food-related work.

Alongside this, the space will be open and welcoming to the wider public through regular open days, exhibitions, community meals and cultural events. These open-access moments are designed to ensure that anyone in the town can engage with the building, take part in activities, and feel ownership of the space.

A significant part of the delivery model will also involve deeper, structured partnerships with local organisations supporting specific communities. This includes further developing our partnership work with Recovery Ayr, the 360 Charity, The Gaitey, The Iris, Broadway Cinema and organisations supporting neurodiverse and people with additional support needs, such as Konekt and local care homes and support services. These partnerships will enable tailored, appropriate programmes that respond to the needs of different groups, ensuring accessibility and meaningful participation.

We have experience of delivering targeted, supportive creative work with a range of communities, including creative projects with Recovery Ayr and activity programmes within care home settings. These projects have shown how creative participation can improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and build confidence in safe, supportive environments.

We work to nurture creativity, develop skills and connect people through workshops, exhibitions and shared cultural experiences. By engaging marginalised groups, we support wellbeing, encourage social connection and create opportunities for learning, while also generating local jobs and pathways into creative and practical skills development.

We have delivered a range of socially engaged projects in partnership with local and national organisations. With Recovery Ayr, alongside the National Galleries of Scotland and artist Ursula Cheng, we co-created workshops in response to Alberta Whittle's exhibition in Edinburgh. Exploring the theme of "creating dangerously", participants reflected on local history and lived experience, culminating in a public exhibition on Ayr High Street that provided a safe and expressive space for people in early recovery and those experiencing grief.

In collaboration with Glenfairn Care Home, we delivered "Follow the Thread", an embroidery exhibition celebrating the life and work of 93-year-old artist Liz Baird, who lived with dementia. A former president of the Embroiderers' Guild, the project honoured her lifelong contribution to teaching and creativity and created a meaningful platform for her work to be shared publicly.

We have also hosted international collaborative work, including the BLUM experience with Colombian artist Jenny Blum, inspired by Colombia's Festival of Light. Participants were invited into a shared creative space of storytelling, journalling and making, concluding with a collective candle-lighting ritual symbolising hope, connection and shared imagination.

Together, these projects demonstrate the role of creativity in strengthening wellbeing, reducing isolation and building more connected communities through inclusive cultural participation.

Building on this, we will continue to develop and strengthen these relationships so that the building becomes a shared civic resource used in multiple ways: from open public engagement to focused, supported sessions with specific community groups. This layered approach ensures that a wide range of people can benefit from the cultural, social and educational opportunities the project offers, while also allowing activity to be appropriately tailored to different levels of need and access.

d. Can your project demonstrate that your project/organisation needs have been identified through consultation?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, please include details of the consultation and a summary of the results.

Our project need has been clearly identified through ongoing consultation with the local community, delivered through both in-person engagement and online surveys.

We have carried out multiple community consultations and surveys over recent years, engaging a broad cross-section of Ayr residents, including young people, local creatives, families and community groups. Across this engagement, a consistent theme has emerged: there is a strong demand for more accessible arts and creative spaces, alongside opportunities to take part in meaningful cultural activity locally.

The findings show that many people feel there are limited places within Ayr town centre to freely explore creativity, develop skills and connect with others. In particular, young creative people highlighted a lack of local infrastructure and opportunities as a key reason for leaving the area.

Alongside this, there is clear interest from residents in having more regular workshops, community-led activity and spaces that support wellbeing, social connection and skill-building through creativity.

These insights directly inform the development of the People's Art School, ensuring the project is rooted in local need and shaped by the voices of the community it aims to serve.

Various community support evidence documents have been attached via email to SAC.

e. **Which of the following Council plan priorities most aligns with your proposed project:**

Priority 1 – Spaces & Places ☒
Priority 2 – Live, Work, learn ☒
Priority 3 – Civic & Community Pride ☒

If linking into a place plan or a community action plan, please detail which priority it will be achieving. See here for local plans.

This project aligns strongly with South Ayrshire Council's place planning approach, particularly the ambition to ensure that investment is shaped by local need, strengthens communities and makes best use of existing spaces.

It directly supports:

Priority 1 – Spaces & Places
The project brings a long-derelict town centre building back into active use, creating a welcoming, accessible and multi-functional space for creative activity, learning, food production and community events. It strengthens the quality, accessibility and vibrancy of civic space within Ayr town centre.

Priority 2 – Live, Work, Learn
The People's Art School provides opportunities for local people to live, work and learn within the creative and food sectors. This includes paid roles for local creatives, skills development pathways and accessible workshops for people of all ages and backgrounds, helping to retain talent and build local opportunity.

Priority 3 – Civic & Community Pride
By embedding co-design, community-led programming and partnerships with local organisations, the project strengthens civic participation and pride. It creates a visible, shared space where local people can contribute, gather and see their identities and creativity reflected in the heart of the town.

The project aligns with the principles of South Ayrshire's Community-led Action Planning approach, particularly the focus on local priorities, partnership working and ensuring communities help shape the future of their places. It also contributes to reducing consultation fatigue by creating a long-term, lived example of community-led delivery rather than one-off engagement.

Overall, the project supports the shared ambition of making Ayr a more connected, creative and resilient place to live, work and take part in community life.

f. Please select the grant you are applying for and the relevant priority (you can select more than one priority, if applicable).

For small grant only:

- To assist with barriers to sustain the group ☐
- To develop new projects/ideas ☐

For development grant only:

- Deliver improvements to public places that will increase the number of visitors ☒
- make coastal communities more attractive places to live and work ☒
- demonstrate a strong link to local strategies and local place plans ☒

Estimated start date:	**1st Dec 2026**
Estimated completion date: (must be by 13th November 2026)	**1st June 2027**

g. **If your project relates to a property or land, please confirm whether you own, or lease the property or land**

own ☐ lease ☒

If lease, an indication that the owner is supportive or aware that plans will be required. Please detail how you will provide evidence of support, ie long term lease.

If lease, then a copy of the lease needs to be provided.

h. Please tick/populate as appropriate:

Are you aware of the appropriate consents required for this project? Yes ☒ No ☐

Do you have:

- Statutory consents for your project in place ☐
- Planning, including listed building and conservation area consents ☐
- Building Warrants ☐
- Evidence of Pre application discussion ☐ Please include your reference number _____
- Not applicable ☒

Copies of any of the above need to be provided.

Section 4: Project Costs

How much funding are you requesting from the Coastal Communities Fund?
£
Are you applying for Revenue or Capital costs, or both?
Both

Please provide a full break down of costs for your project for your application to be considered.

If applying for both revenue and capital, then please detail costs separately.

Proposed £15,000 budget

Budget item	Amount
Rent contribution	£3,000
Utilities contribution (electricity, water and heating costs)	£2,000
Basic internal renovation and decoration of public areas	£1,000
Bakery space enabling works — preparation, hygiene and workflow	£1,000
Electrical safety and lighting improvements	£1,000
Plumbing repairs and shared facilities	£750
Heating and ventilation improvements	£1,000
Toilet and accessibility improvements	£750
Workshop furniture — tables, chairs and flexible seating	£750

Storage, shelving and display systems	£750
Shared creative and bakery equipment	£750
Fire safety equipment and emergency signage	£500
Total request	£15,000

For development grant only:
***3 quotes need to be provided for proposed works over £1000 (individual item), quotes need to be dated within last 6 months – <u>if relevant quotes are not provided when submitting application, it will not be considered.</u>**

Section 5: Checklist

Please confirm you have the following documents:

Constitution/Memorandum & Articles ☒
Audited or independently verified accounts ☒
Last 3 months bank statements ☒

Section 6: Declaration & Conditions

I, on behalf of, (organisation name):

- Certify that to the best of my knowledge the information contained in this application is true and accurate and will adhere to the following terms and conditions;
- Understand that making this application does not entitle the organisation to funding as a right;
- Will not commence or commit any expenditure before receiving approval of the funding;
- Confirm that the quotations are bona fide competitive quotes;
- Will provide the External Funding officer with digital colour photos of the work, both before and after the work has been completed. I understand that these images will be kept on record and used for future publicity;
- Understand that this funding award does not cover retrospective work;
- Understand that to make any misleading statement in relation to this application could make the application invalid, or may mean the organisation has to repay the funding;
- Understand that this application is subject to appropriate checks and meets appropriate conditions such as planning, procurement guidelines, and other statutory consents; and
- I Have read the associated guidance before completing and submitting this application form.
- Understands that if I do not provide satisfactory evidence of spend then the council may request I repay the grant

Failure to return or complete and return any evaluations requested then I may not receive any future funding from South Ayrshire Council. I may be asked to repay the funds if I cannot provide evidence that they were used for the purpose intended.

Name of Person Completing Application: Saskia Singer _____

On behalf of: (Organisation name) : Narture CIC_____

Date: 28/10/2026_____

Completed applications only should be saved as a PDF document and uploaded to

Your Area Your Voice Your Choice

Supporting documents should be e-mailed to grants@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

These include:

- Constitution
- Last 3 months bank statements
- Independently verified accounts
- Quotes (where required)