



# **Social Investment**

What We Do



**Foundation  
Scotland**

# Social investment: a different approach to growing your enterprise

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**Social investment is a special type of funding designed to support social enterprises, community organisations and charities, and enable them to grow and deliver positive social impact.**

The social investment that Foundation Scotland provides is a unique form of blended grant and loan.

Like many businesses, social enterprises often need investment to start up and grow or develop and expand. Investment can help to buy equipment, purchase premises or employ staff. But how does it work?

Private businesses can sell shares to investors, who may then receive profits from their investments. Social enterprises cannot. But they **can** receive investment as a repayable loan without having to give away profits or ownership.

This is where the social investment options offered by Foundation Scotland can open doors, recognising the commercial and charitable sides of enterprises and offering finance that fits.

**Over the last ten years we've invested over £12 million to help social enterprises deliver pioneering and impactful business ideas that also look to address local issues and needs. But with Foundation Scotland, it's more than just money. We care about the future of the projects we support. From grant funding and repayable finance to expert guidance from our investment team - this is a partnership."**

Chris Holloway, Head of Social Investment at Foundation Scotland.



Our support creates unique value for social enterprises in Scotland by giving their owners the freedom to grow their businesses and be ambitious.

In this short publication, we feature three diverse and thriving social enterprises that Foundation Scotland has supported, each with different concepts and businesses, but each with ambition and vision.

**Could this be you? Are you ready for investment? Get in touch today.**

**[enquiries@foundationscotland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@foundationscotland.org.uk)**



## Pinkston Watersports



**Pinkston Watersports in Glasgow is one of the newest members of our Social Investment family, applying to Foundation Scotland late last year.**

Opened back in 2014, the centre is a thriving project allowing thousands of people every year to access paddlesports in the centre of Glasgow. The project provides a variety of water-based activities to people from all backgrounds and all abilities.

Pinkston is the only artificial white-water course in Scotland and is used by beginners as well as Scottish elite watersports athletes. It is proud to have “**clean water**” credentials which also enables open water swimmers to utilise the facilities.

The local community is at the heart of Pinkston and all that they do. They deliver significant social benefit in an area of Glasgow which faces multiple challenges, and they also deliver significant impacts to other local and national groups who may not otherwise be able to access facilities such as these, for example asylum seekers, young offenders, and those with additional support needs.

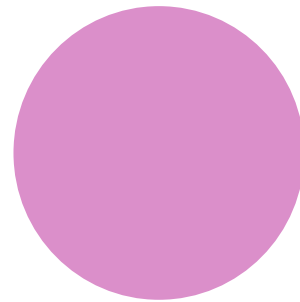
Pinkston is also home to 18 clubs and organisations who hire space in shipping container storage facilities.

These organisations range from paddlesports clubs, third sector organisations, rescue services, commercial outdoor operators and coaches, schools and local and national youth organisations.

Recently, it became clear that there were capacity constraints in terms of water time, storage containers for groups, and growth in popularity of resident groups.

Pinkston needed revenue to expand the site, upgrade the existing water pumps, which are critical for keeping the water clean, and a new pump.

They approached Foundation Scotland in November 2022, and were supported with **a blend of grant and loan funding of £250,000 over 10 years, and are already in early stages of redevelopment.**



# The GalGael Trust



**Going back to the very beginning, our very first social investment was made in 2014, working with a charity called the Gal Gael Trust. GalGael are a working community based in Govan in Glasgow.**

The Trust was founded by Colin and Gehan Macleod in 1997. As a young man, Colin had trained as a forester and spent time volunteering with Native Americans in the USA, where he was introduced to a movement that attempted to teach self-respect and awareness amongst young people by re-introducing them to their cultural roots.

When he returned to Glasgow, Colin became involved in environmental activism which eventually led to him, along with other local campaigners, setting up a project which gathered and used the discarded wood from the felling of trees to teach wood carving and other Gaelic arts, such as story-telling and music, to local young people.

They then took what they had learned and created a registered charity, which aimed to use these activities to teach transferable skills to the long-term unemployed, people experiencing addiction, low self-esteem, and a lack of connection. Above all, they wanted to provide a safe-haven and “anchor” for local people to feel part of their community, forge good life habits, healthy relationships and confidence. They wanted to give people purpose, skills support and compassion, so that they could reclaim their future.

When they applied to Foundation Scotland, GalGael Trust already owned timber-related machinery and equipment. They had some trained members of staff and also a yard at their disposal, but they also wanted to become self-sufficient so that they could expand their work and support more people locally. Their idea was to open a trading arm that sold timber. They approached Foundation Scotland with their idea and our very first social investment partnership began.

A subsidiary business called GalGael Enterprise was set up, with the aim of providing a source of earned income to improve their long-term viability, while still delivering positive social impact in the community.

Now, almost 10 years later, they have gone from strength to strength. They have worked hard to develop their space, the collective knowledge of their team and the individual knowledge of their volunteers, staff and participants. They offer boat building tutorship, multiple woodwork classes, open workshop nights and many other activities.

Over 950 people have worked with them, their woodwork program is equivalent to The National 4 Certificate Practical Woodworking SCQF level 4.... and they have also built twenty-one boats!

**Foundation Scotland supported GalGael with a blend of grant and loan funding of £148,000 over 10 years.**





## Showcase the Street

**Showcase the Street is based in Dundee and was established in 2003 to support young people – and the wider community – living in areas of deprivation or in rural areas, to access a variety of arts and sport. They provide classes in dance, vocal skills, audio work, animation and media.**

They work with around 3,000 young people each week across 15 towns in Scotland, providing community dance and football classes, as well as projects working with disengaged young people and employability programmes.

The Foundation Scotland relationship with Showcase the Street began in 2015. Having already developed two Dundee based warehouse units into dance studios, a learning centre, two indoor 3G pitches with offices and meeting rooms, Showcase wanted to develop an adjacent warehouse into a multi-purpose indoor sports centre, complete with a specialist floor.

This new sports centre would allow them to provide a much-needed community focus with a sustainable income stream.

In 2015, Foundation Scotland support contributed to the redevelopment of this warehouse, including the installation of a specialist multi-surface floor, and general improvements and renovations. One of the functions of this area is now a much-used Roller Hockey Rink.



Then, in 2018, Showcase approached Foundation Scotland for investment to develop a technology hub which would help people build their problem-solving skills and confidence, support education programmes and improve employability opportunities. They believed that technology and Virtual Reality experience had great potential for social impact, through educational games and specially developed apps and games that would allow young people from deprived areas to access situations and experiences that would otherwise not be available to them.

With multi-funding and loan support, Showcase developed this idea into a virtual reality (VR) hub and technology experience centre, with a focus on using VR, Robotics and Technology for entertainment and education.

Showcase continues to be a thriving social enterprise, providing dance classes, technology spaces and sports facilities accessible for everyone. They offer employability skills training courses to young people aged 15 – 24 who are looking to progress into employment, further education and training or volunteering opportunities. And they also hire their range of facilities at affordable prices, to welcome as wide a variety of community groups as possible.

**In 2015, Foundation Scotland supported Showcase the Street with a blend of grant and loan funding of £125,00 over 10 years.**

**In 2018, Foundation Scotland supported Showcase with a further £60,000 of grant/loan funding.**




## Contact us

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Scotland's Community Foundation