



Lanarkshire Climate Conference

Summary

Introduction

On Wednesday 10 September 2025, community groups, third sector organisations, local authority officers and public bodies were brought together to learn, share and discuss priorities at Lanarkshire Climate Conference.

During the conference, we hosted workshops to explore some of the outcomes outlined in the Scottish Government Draft Environmental Strategy, which included: Building **nature rich** areas to live; Shifting towards sustainable, **healthy diets** and cutting **food waste**; Shifting from car use towards **active travel** and **public transport**, transition to **electric** vehicles; Shifting to **energy efficient** and clean **heating** systems and encouraging sustainable consumer behaviours, guided by the circular economy '**reduce, reuse, recycle**' hierarchy.

This report summarises the findings from the workshops and explores opportunities for possible next steps.

Table of Content

➤ Introduction	2
➤ Building nature rich areas to live	3-6
➤ Shifting towards sustainable, healthy diets and cutting food waste	7-10
➤ Shifting from car use towards active travel and public transport, transition to electric vehicles	11-14
➤ Shifting to energy efficient and clean heating systems	15-18
➤ Encouraging sustainable consumer behaviours, guided by the circular economy 'reduce, reuse, recycle' hierarchy	19-22
➤ Conclusion	23



Building nature rich areas to live

Issues

During discussions most issues identified were related to:

- Accessibility
- Awareness
- Maintenance and management
- Other priorities

Accessibility

Paths inaccessible due to lack of maintenance.

Lack of **benches** to rest

No or poor **bike storage**

Greenspace feeling **unsafe** to some community members

Awareness

Limited **signage**

Too few information **maps**

Lack of **promotion**

New towns **not used** to having greenspace as part of everyday life





Maintenance and management

Neglect including fly-tipping, littering and broken/missing items in play parks

Funding often provided for **establishment** of greenspace but not upkeep.

Lack of **volunteers** or **capacity** of community groups to look after greenspace

Confusion over **ownership** of the greenspace

Assumptions that greenspaces are maintained for free

Other priorities

Biodiversity and **wildlife** neglected and as a result are under pressure with risk of losing native species

New builds prioritised over greenspaces

Less greenspace in **household property gardens**

Potential future project

We also discussed potential projects that could address the issues and create thriving nature-rich places to live.

Accessing and using greenspace

- Create green corridors with signage supporting people to walk from one area to another.
- Support events and activities that encourage involvement such as health walks, school visits, company Volunteer Days, community litter picks etc.
- Improve signage, maps and information boards.
- More bins, benches and bike storage.



Skill sharing

- Learning exchanges to successful community projects.
- Run more green skills workshops to increase skills and build confidence for individuals.
- Internal trading scheme - skill bank - to share skill sets in the outdoors.



Supporting biodiversity and wildlife

- Through local mapping walks designate spaces for protection which can feed into Community Action and Local Place Plans.
- Make it a priority to protect and plant native species.
- Distribute free seeds or bulbs which support biodiversity.

Funding and ownership

- Clarify issues relating to land ownership to resolve confusion around responsibility to maintain areas.
- Split of funding to consider set up costs and ongoing maintenance.
- Community-led projects to look after derelict land – turn it into usable green or growing spaces.
- Support communities to manage spaces themselves.



Next steps

Long-term maintenance of growing and greenspaces was a recurring theme. Along with the need to address individual behaviour change to limit littering and vandalism. We will continue to raise these concerns and campaign for funding programmes that support ongoing as well as set-up costs. The Hub already has information on its [Greenspace](#) pages on the website, to support people to create nature rich greenspaces, and we can help to share this information through social media and by creating resources.

In addition the Hub is already providing support on the following:

- **Seed sharing.** The Hub has set up and funded [Lanarkshire Seed Savers Network](#) in collaboration with Grow73, Viewpark Conservation Group and Getting Better Together. Seeds were distributed at Viewpark Library, Rutherglen Library and Getting Better Together, Shotts. People are encouraged to take free packets of seeds, grow the plants and collect the seeds afterwards to share back with the network.
- **Learning exchanges.** The Hub organises learning exchanges for community groups to learn from one another. For example, we partnered with Organic Growers of Bothwell to host a learning exchange to visit their garden and share their experience.
- **Green skills workshops.** The Hub is providing workshops and learning opportunities. Most recently the Hub organised an online workshop with [TCV](#) on Trees for Climate, exploring the best native species for planting and local opportunities to get involved in tree planting.
- **Bulbs for Biodiversity.** At the [Lanarkshire Climate Action Festival](#), the Hub provided secondary schools packs of bulbs including bluebells, snowdrops, daffodils and wild tulips and an accompanying guide which explains how to plant them and the benefits of the spring-flowering wildflowers for biodiversity.





Shifting towards sustainable, healthy diets and cutting food waste

Issues

During discussions most issues identified were related to:

- Accessibility
- Awareness
- Food production
- Food waste

Accessibility

Opening hours of community fridges, food pantries etc.

Lack of space, knowledge, tools, materials and funding

Financial barriers to eating healthy, local produce rather than Ultra Processed Foods

Awareness

Understanding **seasonality**, where produce comes from and when it is in season

Lack of understanding of how food is **produced**





Food production

Suitability of land for food production

Sustainable food production practices can be **less financially** viable or **under-promoted**

Efficiency of production e.g. bakers oven with heat escaping etc.

Food waste

30% of food produced globally is wasted

Lack of **understanding** of 'best before' vs 'use by' dates - many throw out food that could have been eaten or frozen

Stigma of using community fridges

Large sizes of food packaging

Potential future project

During discussions we identified the following potential projects that could address the issues:

Education and knowledge

- Cooking workshops and classes using leftover food that would otherwise go to waste.
- Education focusing on the multiple benefits to eating and shopping sustainably e.g. health, environmental, supporting local farmers and businesses etc.
- Recipe cards utilising items in food bank/community fridges or volunteers to suggest recipes.
- Engage children on food issues from an early age to foster positive relationships and habits and encourage parents indirectly.



Food sharing

- Local project to support sharing of items when buying bulk.
- Promotion of food rescuing apps e.g. Too Good To Go or Olio.
- Supermarkets surplus food brought to a central warehouse for distribution like Fare Share
- Telephone boxes or similar used for community fridges to allow access around the clock.

Food production and community projects

- Networking opportunities to share resources, knowledge and best practice.
- Establish or enhance Community Food Partnerships.
- Creative, resourceful approaches to growing food including urban growing, vertical growing, community gardens and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiatives and enterprises.





Next steps

The Hub already has information in the [Food webpages](#) on the website to support people eating healthily, getting involved in local food growing – either on their own or as part of local growing group – and avoiding food waste. We will include on our website and social media details of apps that can help with reducing food waste such as:

- [Kitchen Pal](#): helps keep track of what's in your fridge and suggests recipes with the items you have.
- [Too Good To Go](#) and [Olio](#): businesses sell at significantly reduced fee or distribute food that would otherwise go to waste.

In addition the Hub is already providing support on the following:

- **Cooking demonstrations.** As part of Lanarkshire Climate Action Festival, [Community Links](#) used its grant from the Hub to host a climate-conscious cooking demonstration and to provide participants with all the fresh, local ingredients used in the demo to create dishes at home.
- **Engaging kids in food growing.** This year the Hub is running a Taste & Grow Grant which has connected six community gardens and primary schools that didn't already have a relationship and supported kids engagement in food growing.
- **Lanarkshire Seed Savers Network.** A [seed saving guide](#) has been produced with information on planting, seed saving and fermenting fruit and vegetable crops that are suitable for Lanarkshire's climate.





Shifting from car use towards active travel and public transport, transition to electric vehicles

Issues

During discussions most issues identified were related to:

- Accessibility and connections
- Costs
- Infrastructure and facilities

Accessibility and connections

Poor public transport connections within Lanarkshire. Often more convenient to drive.

Public transport not linked up requiring different tickets unlike the Oyster card in London

Rural areas have even fewer public transport options with reduced timetables during weekends.

Lack of **funding and capacity** for community transport projects

EVs lack **range**





Costs

Cost of public transport is high

EVs are still more expensive

Transport poverty causing people to be **unable to afford** a bike or equipment

Infrastructure and facilities

New towns designed around cars with car-centric infrastructure

Cycle lanes incomplete/not joined up or unsafe

Lack of **lighting**

Poor **road conditions**

Many properties can't access EV **charging points**

Negative **attitudes** towards new cycling infrastructure

Lack of **facilities** at workplaces for cyclists e.g. bike storage, showers etc.

Potential future project

At the workshop, we identified the following future project opportunities:

Alternative schemes and service hubs

- More affordable service hubs for bike repairs and/or bike rental/loans.
- Pilot schemes for shared transport services creating Community Transport Hubs, where you can make use of a bus, hire a bike etc. all at same location.
- Work with primary schools to help pilot bike buses and encourage active travel to and from schools.
- Incentives to move to Electric Vehicles(EV) such as second-hand EV loan or trading schemes from petrol/diesel vehicle to EV.
- More community car sharing systems and electric buses.



Community engagement

- Better inclusion and consultation of community groups from council and developers when planning infrastructure and new builds.
- Education for motorists, especially in car-heavy towns like Coatbridge or East Kilbride.
- More community engagement with local residents to shape planning. Talk with residents about their needs, barriers and motivations to travel actively.

Improved infrastructure

- Connecting up existing cycling infrastructure and building new infrastructure linking up areas people travel between.
- Improve pavements, crossings and accessibility. Work in partnership with community groups, carry out surveys and relay issues back to the councils to take action.
- Better signage and storage for bikes.
- More EV charging stations that are fast to aid people who can't access a home charger.





Next steps

The Hub is engaging with both local authorities to ensure community voices are heard and considered, but we recognise that infrastructure projects often feel out of reach to community groups. We will work towards creating better connections to enable communities to be involved in the planning stages. The Hub will also explore how we can best tackle the negative attitudes towards cycling and educate motorists.

The Hub is already providing support on the following:

- **Engaging residents.** The Hub has run a number of community cycling days and supported six local communities with funding to explore how they can create active travel communities in their area. During events, we have engaged local residents learning about their barriers and motivations.
- **Affordable service hubs.** The Hub secured funding from SPT to enable bike repair schemes in areas where no services exist. Funding has been used to Velotech train community members and carry out bike repairs on disused bikes for gifting to community members.





Shifting to energy efficient and clean heating systems

Issues

During discussions most issues identified were related to:

- Costs and investments
- Knowledge and guidance
- Trust
- Old properties

Costs and investments

Funding available for communities to install renewables, but they must **match fund** a large percentage

High cost of **energy** and heating

Insufficient investment in smaller, local, and community-led projects

Community benefits from renewable energy e.g. windfarms dependent on location which creates **inequality** between communities

Installing renewables isn't always **feasible** or **affordable**





Knowledge and guidance

People **unaware** of help
e.g. Warmer Homes
Scotland and Home
Energy Scotland

Lack of
information on
new forms of
clean energy

Lack of **clear guidance** from
government and local authorities
on improvements recommended
and funding available

Trust

Misinformation of
renewable energy
created by bad press

Lack of trust between
communities and
major providers

Communities feel
excluded from
decision-making

Old properties

Old properties
not **fit for
purpose**

Many older buildings not considered
for improvements and councils too
quick to **sell off or demolish**
buildings rather than retrofit.

Potential future project

We explored the following future project opportunities:

Collaboration and knowledge-sharing

- Encourage collaboration between councils, residents, and energy providers. Promote the services that are currently available and work together more.
- Have a one stop shop to allow people and groups to talk to an expert (independent, knowledgeable and a location that can showcase what's available) in the Lanarkshire region.



- Project to provide accessible information to community on ways to save energy and the schemes available to retrofit – e.g. in local libraries.
- Platforms for sharing ideas locally e.g. a green energy forum for each community.

Schemes and pilot projects

- Pilot community-led projects, gather case studies and organise learning exchanges with other groups.
- Campaign for all new properties to have as many renewables installed as possible instead of the minimum required.
- Support small-scale renewable schemes tailored to local areas.
- Community-owned energy solutions such as turbines owned by the community and producing energy for local homes/community buildings.





Next steps

The Hub is working collaboratively with organisations such as Local Energy Scotland and Home Energy Scotland to support community groups to access information and funding to make community buildings and homes more sustainable and cheaper to run.

The Hub is already providing support on the following:

- **Learning exchanges.** We know how valuable it is to be able to ask questions and see first-hand how another community group has gone about making their building more energy-efficient. During the Lanarkshire Climate Action Festival, we organised a learning exchange to Focus Youth Project in Viewpark to learn about their solar panels, battery storage and air source heat pump.
- **Handholding service.** The Hub is here to support community groups in Lanarkshire to future-proof their buildings and make them more energy efficient. We know many groups lack the time or capacity to take this on alone, so our role is to provide the knowledge, guidance, and practical support you need through our handholding service.





Encouraging sustainable consumer behaviours, guided by the circular economy 'reduce, reuse, recycle' hierarchy

Issues

During discussions most issues identified were related to:

- Culture and habits
- Access and knowledge

Culture and habits

Convenience **culture** is dominating

Stigma around second-hand and free items

People **bin as a default** rather than reusing or repurposing

Access and knowledge

Lack of **awareness** or use of groups such as a Brilliant Bartering, Shop for Nothing.

Lack of **skills** to mend and repair items

Limited **sharing schemes** available such as tool libraries





Potential future project

We discussed the following opportunities for future projects:

Awareness

- Increase awareness and use of websites and apps e.g. Gumtree, Vinted or [Circular Arts Network](#) to promote and encourage circular behaviours.
- Promote local opportunities to access repurposed/recycled materials – make the process easier so it is more appealing or less off-putting.
- Better understanding of the benefits of adapting a ‘reduce, reuse, recycle’ mindset such as financial and environmental.
- Increase knowledge of local Deposit Return Schemes – [Lidl scheme](#), [New College Lanarkshire](#), [Family Shopper Store](#), [Blantyre](#)
- Campaign to change attitudes and reduce shame associated with buying second hand items.

Swapping, sharing and recycling schemes

- More local Deposit Return Schemes. Financial incentives to encourage participation.
- Promote the tool library projects in Lanarkshire.
- Set up a pre-loved store using items collected at local recycling centres.
- Link bike organisations and recycling centres to rescue parts from going to waste.
- Clothes swap schemes at community centres and projects.



Skill sharing

- Linking schools with skilled community members in an intergenerational project to teach young people basic mend and repair techniques.
- Workshops to support community groups setting up circular projects such as repair cafes, swapping events or tool libraries.
- Workshops for members of the public to learn skills that support a circular lifestyle such as mend and repair, arts classes repurposing broken items etc.





Next steps

The Hub offers information on the Waste webpages of our website to encourage people to reduce, reuse and recycle. We will review and add any additional resources that can aid the transition.

The Hub is also providing support on the following:

- **Workshops.** During Lanarkshire Climate Action Festival we hosted an online workshop on how to set up a repair cafe in collaboration with Circular Communities Scotland. We commissioned local artist Emma Ferla to deliver creative workshops with young people in Wishaw on exploring the climate impact of fast fashion and how to repurpose unwanted t-shirts into a tote bag.
- **Youth Reuse and Sharing Grant.** Funding is available to groups working with young people between 16-25 years of age to explore a reuse project or scheme that enable young people to move away from a throwaway culture.
- **Sustainable Christmas campaign.** Last December, the Hub shared information on our social media sites with tips and advice on how to enjoy Christmas activities without impacting the climate.





Conclusion

It was clear from the workshops and discussions that there is a lot of appetite for taking and supporting more climate action in Lanarkshire. Community groups bring expertise of their local areas, a deep understanding of community issues and take a solution-driven approach to future projects.

A lack of capacity and funding continues to be one of the biggest hindrances to community groups taking further action. In response we have:

- Brought concerns of Lanarkshire communities to MSPs at Scotland's largest Climate Mass Lobby. Including highlighting the government's reliance on the third sector to deliver services and their challenges of having to operate using short term grant funding.
- Used workshop discussion points from this conference to inform a response to the Scottish Government Draft Environmental Strategy consultation.
- Provided input to the motion 'South Lanarkshire's Climate Emergency Declaration' brought forward by Councillor Kirsten Robb. The motion received additional provisions and was unanimously supported by South Lanarkshire Council .

We will continue to advocate for community needs and support connections between community groups, local authorities, public bodies and politicians to foster fruitful collaborations.

We want to thank everyone who took part in Lanarkshire Climate Conference for their contributions and insights. A special thank you to the speakers Kyle Kline, Climate & Energy Strategy Officer, North Lanarkshire Council; Adam Wallace, Sustainability Advisor - Economic Development, South Lanarkshire Council and Sarah Burgess, Green Health Officer, VASLAN.



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