



Funding Officers Network (FON)

Wednesday 13 May 2026

10am – 12pm

Hybrid: MS Teams and CVS Falkirk & District office

Present:

Euan Robertson (Chairperson)
Iain MacIntyre (Chairperson)
Laura Jamieson (Minute Taker)

CVS Falkirk & District
CVS Falkirk & District
CVS Falkirk & District

Alan Hutchison
Jackie Crombie
Sarah Kernahan
Stephen Sutton

Grangemouth Triathlon Club
Falkirk's Mental Health Association (FDAMH)
PLUS Forth Valley
Bailliefields Community Hub SCIO

Attended online via Teams:

Chris Gunn
Ken Greenshields
Kirstin Worsley

Falkirk Foundation
Link Living
The Breastfeeding Network Scotland (Forth Valley)

Laura Anderson
Safia Ali
Steve McQueen
William Shreenan

Transform Forth Valley
RISE Forth Valley
Sustainable Thinking Scotland CIC
Quiet Waters

Guest Speakers:

AnnMaree Fairbairn
Margaret Harkins
Rebecca Heggie

Falkirk Council
Falkirk Council
The National Lottery Community Fund Scotland

Apologies:

Beth Walsh
Derek Forrest
Kim Edgar
Kirsty Nicolson
Maria Ford
Stefanie Paterson
Suzanne Grant

SACRO
Airth & District Senior Members
Freedom of Mind Community Choir
Grangemouth Community Care SCIO
Bo'net / Bo'ness Car 4U
Falkirk Delivers
Long Covid Cuppa (C-19 Cafe) Central Scotland

1. Welcome and Introductions

Euan and Iain introduced themselves as the chairs of the forum, welcomed forum members present (both those joining online via Teams, and in person) and speakers, and advised the meeting was recorded for the purpose of the minute. Everyone in attendance had the opportunity to introduce themselves.

2. Review of Previous Minutes and Action Tracker

The minutes of the February 2026 meeting will be distributed, reviewed and approved by email.

3. “Introduction to Young Start”: Rebecca Heggie, The National Lottery Community Fund Scotland (TNLCFS)

Rebecca introduced herself as the funding officer for the Falkirk District, and gave a brief overview of the Young Start funding programme, which has recently been refreshed and relaunched after pausing in December 2025.

Young Start now awards across two programmes, [Main Grants](#) and [Small Grants](#) (both linked for your convenience). While the Main Grants are similar to the previous Young Start programme, the new Small Grants programme is a development programme of between £300 and £20,000 for organisations in Scotland who:

- work with children and young people aged 8 – 24 years old
- do not yet meaningfully involve children and young people in a project, or the wider organisation

The funding is to help organisations develop their ability to meaningfully involve children and young people; as Small Grants is a development programme, there are some additional requirements and restrictions. All projects funded must meet **both** the following outcomes:

- improving how the organisation works with children and young people
- involving children and young people in ways that benefit them

Rebecca noted that the [dedicated Small Grants page](#) has a number of good examples of what can and cannot be funded, but as this is a new programme, there are no case studies, and TNLCFS is keen to work with organisations to determine if the Small Grants or Main Grants suit them better.

Rebecca’s presentation is available to view or download via the [CVS Falkirk & District](#) website; groups looking to get in touch can reach her by email:

Rebecca.Heggie@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk

Questions:

- Can an organisation have multiple grants from TNLCFS at once?
 - Technically yes, as long as they are for different projects; however, they are unlikely to hold both Young Start programmes at the same time, due to the developmental nature of the Small Grants.
- Is there anything funds should be specifically spent on?
 - As Young Start is restricted funding, TNLCFS will need to know what the grant is spent on, but no specifications other than [what it cannot be spent on](#).
- How is “working with and involving young people” defined? Would football teams which work with young people, but do not necessarily involve them in the running of the organisation, be eligible for the Young Start Small Grants?
 - As the Small Grants programme is more about how organisations will involve children and young people in the future, and ensuring this continues into the



future, organisations like football teams or sports clubs are unlikely to be a fit for the Small Grants – unless they planned to involve young people as board members or coaches, and wanted to provide training, for example.

- Would the Main Grants cover improving how an organisation works with young people, if they already do and would like to take it to the next level?
 - It would be unlikely, as there would need to be an impact demonstrated, which can be difficult in this context.

4. “Vacant Premises Improvement Grant for Third Sector, and Other Opportunities”: AnnMaree Fairbairn and Margaret Harkins, Falkirk Council

AnnMaree spoke about the [Vacant Premises Improvement Grant for Third Sector](#), which is a Pride in Place Impact Fund. Key points are noted below, with the presentation available on the [CVS Falkirk & District](#) website:

- This grant is separate from the newly announced [Braes Villages and Hallglen programme](#), which is still in development.
- The Pride in Place Impact Fund is wider than this grant, and covers improvements at Lock 16 and the Centre of Excellence, along with other regeneration projects.
- Regarding the third sector offer, the grant is targeted at organisations with under 250 employees, and prioritises those with incomes under £1 million (though those with higher incomes can apply).
- Applying organisations **must** be constituted.
- While the grant guidance mentions towns, AnnMaree advised attendees to think of it as “high street town centre units”, as outlying retail cluster areas will also be considered, in recognition of the fact that not every settlement in Falkirk District will have a traditional high street. As a result, this could mean the village main street, small precinct area, or row of shops.
- £2,000 – £25,000 grants are available (capital only), covering up to 75% of eligible capital project costs.
 - 25% match funding is required from applicants.
 - Match funding can be in-kind equivalent; AnnMaree gave examples including employee time, equipment purchases or donations.
- Key conditions:
 - The premises must have been vacant for at least one month.
 - There must be a minimum 12 month lease commitment (ie. no subletting).
 - No works can be procured or commenced prior to application.
- While the final deadline is February 2027, Falkirk Council anticipates the grant closing early due to demand.
- Process with the third sector:
 - The fund officers are keen to have a conversation with organisations **before** they commit time and effort to an application, in recognition of the pressures on the sector’s time.
 - They will then begin work on a project outline; during this stage, AnnMaree encouraged organisations to look into the statutory consents required.
 - Once the outline is completed, applicants will move on to the full online application.

Questions:

- Regarding pre-application planning permission, as this is sometime required, does this count as match funding (even though it would start before the project)?
 - Not really – however, Falkirk Council wants to be as flexible as possible. While they want to avoid organisations paying costs before they even get to the full application stage, as long as there is evidence that the organisation is engaging with the correct people within the council for the correct statutory consent, they will be happy to move forward.
- Does volunteering count as match funding?
 - As specific and specialised to the project, yes. Falkirk Council has avoided being too prescriptive in its definition and examples of match funding, as it knows the third sector can be incredibly innovative with match funding.
- Is this process for working with any landlord?
 - Yes, as long as there is a 12 month lease; the third sector organisation shouldn't own the premises.
 - If a private landlord wishes to go through this process, they will be directed through the grant's business stream. However, if a third sector organisation applies either as tenant or landlord, they will go through this stream.

Margaret then spoke briefly about the newly launched **Community Benefit Wish List**, along with a brief overview of **community benefit**, and examples of previous agreements (including when Falkirk Council was able to secure free WiFi for 10 third sector organisations with Virgin, which continues to this day).

The Wish List itself is new for the Falkirk District area, where third sector and community groups and organisations can list their “wishes”, things they need, and Falkirk Council can try to match with community benefit contracts. Groups can remain on the list for a full financial year; after this, if their wish has not been fulfilled, they can reapply to remain longer.

The Wish List has been designed to “*help [Falkirk Council] to meaningfully support communities through Council contracts*”, and help them know what the sector needs, or is looking for, instead of assuming. It can also include financial donations of up to £500 (assuming Falkirk Council has gathered this much; it is assumed that most amounts will be smaller). Unfortunately, Falkirk Council cannot guarantee that any “wishes” will be fulfilled.

A member asked if the sector see what contractors have contributed, or are due to? Margaret confirmed that not at the moment, as the list is so new.

They also briefly highlighted other funding opportunities through Falkirk Council:

- [Community Choices](#) (anticipated to run again next year with the same amount)
- [School Holidays Food and Activities Fund](#) (now open for summer holiday applications, closing again on Friday 22 May 2026).
- [Tenants Choice](#)

5. CVS Falkirk & District Updates

- Euan and Iain asked members if the hybrid format of today's meeting worked well for them; members agreed it was useful to have the meeting in person, but they liked having the option to attend online in case they couldn't make it in person. It was agreed that the next meeting will also be a hybrid meeting.
- **Health and Wellbeing Forum:** the next meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Forum will be held in partnership with Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), to support third sector partners to shape the HSCP Strategic Plan.

This 10 year plan will be informed by the insights and experiences of the sector, helping ensure its contribution is clearly reflected in future priorities and services. The session will begin with a presentation from Healthcare Improvement Scotland on the Scottish Approach to Change, followed by facilitated discussions to gather views.

The meeting takes place in-person on Wednesday 20 May 2026, 9:30am – 12:30pm, at Tamfourhill Community Hub. To book your place, please visit the [dedicated Eventbrite page](#), or for further information, visit the [web article](#).

- **Creating Hope in Polmont and the Braes:** this free workshop will take place on Wednesday 27 May 2026, 6pm – 9pm, at Polmont Community Hub. The workshop combines national informed level suicide prevention training, interactive group activities, insights from third sector organisations, and opportunities to connect with others who care about building a safer, more compassionate community.

No prior knowledge is required — just a willingness to engage, listen and help strengthen the wellbeing of the Polmont and Braes communities. Book your place today via the [Eventbrite](#).

6. Member Updates

- Bailliefields Community Hub has received funding to support its work with New Scots, and those already living in the area, helping them become more integrated in the local community.
- Grangemouth Triathlon Club has been shortlisted for the Aldi Scottish Sport Fund, and are through to the final stages of voting.

**Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 12 August 2026,
10am – 12pm,
hybrid via Microsoft Teams and at the CVS Falkirk & District office**

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