

This update covers the period from 17th July 2023 to 12th October 2023.

Scottish Government, Parliament, the TSI landscape and policy activity

The TSI national network has finalised work on a response to the **cost-of-living crisis** and Argyll and Bute TSI CEO Takki Sulaiman is on a working group with the **SCVO** to embark on a joint campaign to highlight the importance of our sector and to advocate for **Fair Funding** for our sector. This campaign will launch shortly.

The Scottish Cabinet restarted their programme of travelling cabinets and they kicked off their first meeting in Inveraray which the CEO attended. The CEO had the opportunity to lobby the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care about the importance of working directly with third sector organisations as well as highlighting the success of the **Community Mental Health and Wellbeing (CMHWB) Fund** and the importance of three year funding and full cost recovery.



Figure 1 A photograph of the buildings at the front of Inveraray on a sunny day.

Local strategic partnerships

Given the recent flooding the TSI took part in **Resilience Partnership** planning meetings and we responded to calls over the weekend to place **volunteers** on standby as well as spread **core messages** to our sector.

As reported in July the TSI has commissioned research from the **Social Value Lab** into the health of social enterprises in Argyll and Bute which has not been done since 2017. This has been commissioned jointly with the Council and Inspiralba. The census data will help with our delivery of our duty to support the **social enterprise sector** and ties in nicely with the research on **Community Wealth Building**. We are considering next steps particularly as fewer social enterprises started up locally than was the case nationally.

NHS Highland Board recruitment

The CEO participated in the recruitment of up to three new NHS Highland Board members and our recommendations are now with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.

Climate Action Network application

Over the last four months the CEO has been working on an application to receive Scottish Government funding to establish and the **Argyll Climate Action Network**.

There are some time implications for the TSI in providing governance and communications support to this project but the **Argyll and Countryside Trust (ACT)** will be the lead partner so will host the proposed posts and will be responsible for reporting to the Scottish Government.



Figure 2 The logo for Act, Argyll and the isles coast and countryside trust. Contains circular rainbow coloured emblem.

Internal TSI matters, contracts and strategic action plan delivery

1. Inveraray Hub The upgraded Inveraray Hub is being well used and noted as a significant upgrade on previous facilities



Figure 3 Photograph of a group of people around a large boardroom style table within the TSI's Inveraray Hub. There are large screens on the wall showing remote attendees.

2. Technology to drive social change

TSI database officer, Phil Ashby, has built two new products which will help us deliver social change in Argyll and Bute more efficiently and effectively. The first is an **upgrade of the platform** built to administer and award funds for the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund and means that we can now offer fund management here in Argyll and Bute. It is economical and benefits from **local knowledge and automation**.

This is now being used for two funds in addition to the third year of the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. The largest is the **£100k Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Fund**.

3. Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund – Year three

As previously reported Scottish government funding for year 3 of the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund has been confirmed and will be the same as for year two i.e. £282,303.16. **Three workshops were held in September 2023 with 50 attendees** between them and participants were asked to comment on the proposed local priorities and process. There was overwhelming agreement for our proposals but it is notable that there was an increase in interest meaning this year's fund is likely to be even more over subscribed than last year. There have to date (17/10) been 9 Eols registered for the Cowal and Bute area.



Figure 4 TSI's logo for the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. A blue and white logo with artistic impressions of three faces, in profile, each emerging from the other and carrying varying expressions.

Application details can be found here:- <https://www.argylltsi.org/cmhwbfund.html>

Significant dates for the fund are:

29th Sept 2023: Opened for Expression of Interest (Eol) applications.
27th Oct 2023: Submission deadline for Eols.
24th Nov 2023: Submission deadline for full applications.
December 2023: TSSAs score the bids.
January 2024: Reference panel make decision.

4. Additional business opportunities – Windfarms

The TSI had submitted a bid to run the community engagement process for the community fund for a local Windfarm. We were unsuccessful but the feedback was very useful and we will use this to strengthen future bids.

5. Staffing



Figure 5 Photograph of new TSSA for Cowal and Bute Janis Marshall Reilly. Janis is a white female with blonde hair and glasses and sits cross legged, smiling.

Having started at the end of August, the new TSSA for Cowal and the Isle of Bute, Janis Marshall Reilly has been settling into post. Janis has so far been in-person meeting groups based in Cowal (where she also lives) and has attended various events locally and online. Janis intends to visit Bute in November but has also had good initial online and phone contact with groups on the island and is heartened to have already had a good number of enquiries and submissions for the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing fund from there as well as the Peninsula.

The TSSA for Helensburgh and Lomond moved on in September and her replacement, **Caryl McLean** (who also lives in the area) joined us on 1st October 2023.



Figure 6 Photograph of new TSSA for Helensburgh and Lomond Caryl McLean. Caryl is a white female with very light brown hair and glasses.

6. Board member recruitment

Unfortunately, after many years, the chair of our Board had to resign on 7th October 2023 for family reasons.

The CEO has proposed that we elect an interim chair and treasurer (the previous Treasurer sadly recently passed away) pending further discussion and a recruitment process.

7. Events

During the past quarter, the TSI has actively organised or participated in a total of 14 events, including our routine network meetings.

Noteworthy among these events were:

- **four in-person Community Wealth Building Workshops** held in various locations across Argyll during September. These workshops were financially supported by the TSI through our partnership with the **Community Planning Partnership**. We undertook the responsibility of promoting these events, which involved mailings to our entire mailing list and social media campaigns aimed at maximising attendance.
- **one on-line Community Wealth Building Workshop** which garnered 28 sign-ups.
- **four days of in-person Co-production Training** in Inveraray; another TSI-funded initiative with 17 individuals participating.

- **three online workshops** to gather **insights on local priorities** for the Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing fund. These workshops attracted a collective attendance of 42 participants and a further 3 are planned for October to provide information on the application and provide further guidance.
- **the first of two Volunteer Conferences**, held in Oban, leading to the participation of over 20 individuals.



Figure 7 This is a screenshot of the online CMHWP workshop. There are multiple people on screen listening and TSI CEO Takki is speaking.

8. Comms Update

Argyll and Bute TSI Social Media

The past quarter has seen an active and engaging presence across all 3 platforms. Notably, we maintained a robust Argyll and Bute TSI social media strategy, and, overall, the statistics we collect showed an encouraging performance in social media engagement over the period.

Cowal and Bute TSSA Social Media

In order to find (and be found by) as much of the local third sector as possible, the new TSSA for Cowal and the Isle of Bute, Janis Marshall Reilly, has set up a Facebook Page specific to her locality. Statistics have not yet been analysed but qualitative feedback (in terms of engagement and consequential new contact) has been positive.

Mailings: A total of 24 mailings were sent across out in the quarter to a mix of sector segments as well as full mailinglist mailings. We've observed a **noteworthy improvement in our mailing engagement**. Moving forward, we are taking proactive steps to **reach our intended audience** and further enhancing our open rates, thereby **strengthening our communication impact**. It will also allow us to break the mailing list down and target specific localities as well as network groups.