



SUPPORTING SCOTTISH COMMUNITIES DURING COVID-19

Working for a Fairer Scotland and a Greener World



We are Scotland's national reuse, repair and recycling charity

www.crns.org.uk

CRNS Beyond Covid-19

The impact of Covid-19 over the last year has brought a range of challenges, not least to the community resources sector which has seen increased demand for services while income streams have been cut. As ever, the sector has risen to the challenge and seized on the opportunities to build back a fairer and greener society. These values are also at the heart of the Scottish Government's approach to driving a green recovery, which includes a focus on resource use, the circular economy and green jobs. I welcome and appreciate the contribution of CRNS and its members in delivering change for both communities and the environment, not only over the past year but also as we build for the future.

Roseanna Cunningham MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform



Looking back, without doubt 2020 has been a tremendously difficult year for the community resources sector. Many organisations stopped trading overnight at the start of lockdown, resulting in a sudden and serious loss of income along with difficult decisions to furlough staff teams.

At the same time, the demand for many support services increased rapidly as communities faced the significant social issues associated with lockdown isolation, economic hardship and the threat of major job losses.

Our members rose admirably to these challenges, expanding existing services or pivoting to start new support offerings to help those in greatest need. Whether it be providing bikes for key workers, food for the disadvantaged, computers for the isolated or face masks for the vulnerable, across Scotland our members have been responding to the needs of their communities. This report has a number of inspirational case studies showing how our members operated these services and more during lockdown and beyond.

Throughout this period CRNS has signposted financial support for our sector and called for further support to be made available. We believe that this report shows an evidential need for continued and additional financial support for the community resources sector so they can continue to do great work for people and planet.

At CRNS we have continued to work hard to support our members by running fortnightly online Support Forums, sharing lockdown guidance and health and safety good practice and supporting our members to access wider funding and support. In recognition of the challenges our members have faced this year we also gave our members free membership during the lockdown and subsequently operated a "pay as you can afford" fee model.

Whilst 2020 has been one of the most challenging times our members have experienced, there have been some positive behavioural changes resulting from lockdown. A reduction in commuting and air travel, greater active travel, growth in local buying habits, shorter supply chains and a stronger sense of community are all

examples of this. A key challenge is to ensure that we lock in these improvements and indeed build on them going forward.

It says something about the scale of the Covid-19 crisis that the pandemic has largely pushed Brexit and Climate Emergency from the news headlines for much of this year. However, these three challenges collectively present tremendous economic, social and environmental challenges.

Looking forward, it is vital that our vision for a Fairer Scotland and a Greener World matches these challenges:

Economically, it is almost certain that unemployment will rise in the coming months as the economy takes time to recover from an unprecedented recession. Our sector is well placed to support a green recovery by continuing to overcome employment barriers, deliver new training opportunities and ultimately create green jobs.

Socially, significant social deprivation is likely to follow from economic recession. Our members provide invaluable support to the communities in which they are rooted, for example by providing food packages, starter packs, affordable clothes and furniture. It is likely that demand for these services will grow significantly in the months ahead.

Environmentally, the challenge of climate change remains stark, as the hosting of a delayed COP26 will highlight in November 2021. Our sector continues to move Scotland towards a more circular economy, saving valuable resources from landfill, preventing carbon emissions and educating the public to move to a more sustainable future.

Michael Cook
Chief Executive Officer

Sam Mills
Chair of the Board

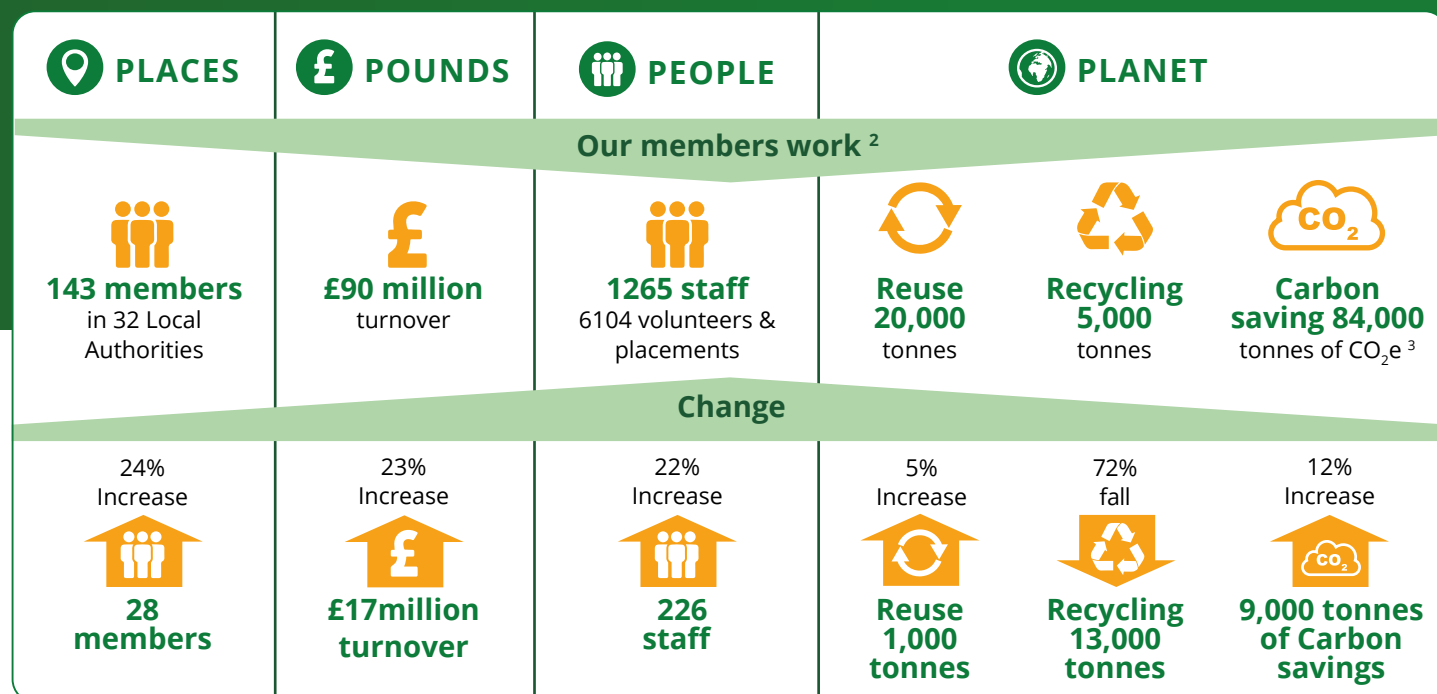
The impact of CRNS ¹

Our team	Our work	Our membership
5 staff	622 member interactions	143 full members
3.8 FTE	Such as meetings, visits, zoom meetings, phone calls etc	members
10 board members	458 attendees at 17 events	+22 (18%) increase
	21 publications and conference presentations	

CRNS is supported by:



The impact of our members



Since our members provided figures for their last financial year, these figures do not yet show any Covid-19 impact. We are pleased to see positive growth in most areas with membership, turnover, staff and reuse tonnage all showing increases. The reduction in recycling tonnage continues a trend over several years where community-based recycling has moved to more commercial organisations.

The impact of Covid-19

In September 2020 we surveyed our members about confidence post Covid-19. A summary of the responses received revealed the following:

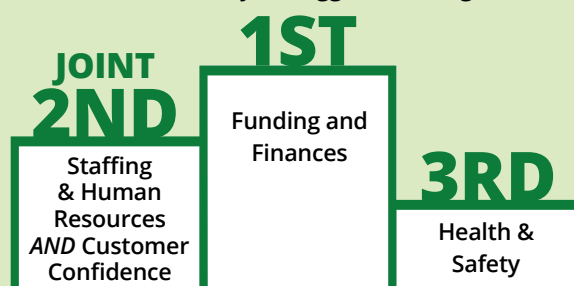
Confidence in the Future

We asked, "How confident are you that your organisation will recover in the next 12 months?"



The Top Challenges faced

We asked, "What are your biggest challenges?"



² Taken from CRNS Membership Survey, conducted September 2020.

³ Our survey data indicates that our members enabled the collective reuse of nearly 20,000 tonnes of reuse items and recycled more than 5,000 tonnes of other materials. We estimate that these activities helped save over 84,000 tonnes of CO₂e, or 3.4 tCO₂e for every tonnes of material processed.

Almost a quarter (23%) of our members told us they were not confident about their organisation's recovery from the Covid-19 crisis in the next 12 months. Our members also told us that funding and finance is the most significant challenge they now face. **CRNS are calling for greater financial support and investment in the community resources sector in Scotland going forward.**

WATCH AND LEARN!

We have also created video case studies to accompany this report. Visit www.crns.org.uk where you see this symbol.



A Fairer Scotland

Our members do not just work with products and material streams; they work with people's lives and livelihoods. They don't just recycle materials and repair products; they help people back into work and support some of the most vulnerable in our society.

Our Sector is creating green jobs and overcoming employment barriers



1,265 staff

6,104 volunteers and placements

Throughout the Covid-19 lockdown we heard so many inspiring stories about how our members have supported isolated and disadvantaged people. Providing meals, delivering food, making facemasks, providing bikes to essential workers, giving computers to the isolated so they can apply for jobs and access education. Here we share a few of these inspiring stories.

A community anchor organisation



Remake is a community reuse charity based in Crieff. Their purpose is to promote the reuse of materials for the benefit of their community. When the virus hit, they were asked by the National Lottery to become a community anchor organisation to support the Strathearn and Strathallan region. They have been able to distribute over £56k of funding to eight different community groups providing a range of services to combat loneliness, provide public radio announcements, deliver debt and bereavement counselling and run a community fridge.

They also mobilised volunteers who joined the national "For the Love of Scrubs" campaign to devote 1,200 hours to make 187 sets of scrubs and washbags. Remake's van was used to deliver more than 185 orders of food and other essential items to those who were self-isolating and vulnerable. Remake volunteers worked over 100 hours to create 200 activity packs for local children. The staff team also set up a "Couch to 5k" fundraising campaign to raise money for the Crieff Community Tool Library. Remake has been at the heart of a strong community response to the pandemic.



Transforming lives through training



Castle Furniture Project, based in Glenrothes and Cupar in Fife, provides training to improve the life chances, choices and opportunities of people with mental health illness, ex-offenders and other challenges to employment. During lockdown, Castle were able to use their trained staff resources to support isolated people in their communities, by delivering food and prescriptions and setting up an Elders' Helpline service.

Castle offer accredited training including City & Guilds in PAT Testing, SVQ's in Administration, Warehousing, Health & Safety and First Aid. All of the training is offered to all service users, the courses allow services users to take the course at a pace that is tailored to their personal development. One of the people who has benefited from this approach is a young man called Kibby, who was given the opportunity of a placement at Castle Furniture as part of his Through Care Programme within Glenochil HM Prison. He was given full training in repairing washing machines and cookers and has recently qualified in PAT testing.

"From day one, I loved it. I looked forward to going to work every day and within a few weeks I felt that I had found something I was really good at. I would really like to progress this as my career upon release. Castle are helping me with a business plan, and I am to get a driving licence upon liberation." Kibby





We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered resilient and safe

The Consortium so far ⁴



14,375
household
furniture and
white goods items



£1.32
million
income
generated



654
tonnes
diverted from
landfill



1,732
tonnes
CO₂e



6,325
households
assisted



15 jobs
created and
maintained

Furnishing temporary accommodation

During the pandemic, the CRNS Reuse Consortium was called on by Local Authorities to provide a vital service to households in greatest need, furnishing temporary accommodation and providing essential furnishings during lockdown. One example of this was Aberdeenshire Council who asked if we could help to furnish 10 properties urgently to enable 30 people to move out of shared accommodation to a safer environment during Covid-19. Working together, the Consortium members pulled out all the stops to respond to this request.



"The service provided to Aberdeenshire Council particularly in these challenging times where we had to urgently furnish over 10 properties was tremendous. We were not disappointed with the overall service and the quality of the items provided was to the highest of standard. All jobs were completed in a timely manner, and when needed the job would be done that day." Aberdeenshire Council

The Reuse Consortium is now its 4th year of trading and has provided a valuable source of income for Consortium members, while helping to divert quality reuse furniture and white goods from landfill, create and sustain local jobs, and enable Local Authorities to achieve their sustainable procurement goals and make considerable financial savings over purchasing new furniture.

Making face coverings

When Scotland faced a shortage of PPE many of our members responded. Transition Stirling took old PET plastic from drink bottles and used their 3D printer to make face visors. They also worked with volunteers to make over 300 cloth face coverings. Westhill Men's Shed, in Aberdeenshire, organised a team of shedders to make over 3000 visors for local care homes, key workers and local shops. Similarly, Something Old Something New, took old textile materials to make face coverings which were sold and also given free to those who needed them.



Protecting your own health and that of your loved ones is the most basic human need and our members have been helping in this practical way. By prioritising reuse materials over single use plastics and facilitating local sourcing these projects have also benefited the environment.



Westhill & District Men's Shed
Make friends, share interests and help our community



The Reuse Consortium is supported by:



EUROPE & SCOTLAND
European Regional Development Fund
Investing in a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Future



⁴ Consortium trading figures www.crnsconsortium.org.uk 1 November 2016 – 30 September 2020

A Greener World

Despite all the challenges associated with lockdown our members have continued to strive for a more circular economy in Scotland and a more sustainable planet.

Together our members have saved **84,000 tonnes**  of CO₂e, equivalent of taking **40,000 cars**  off the road for the whole year

Since our last membership survey we have seen a 5% growth in the tonnage of materials diverted from landfill by our members through reuse activities (from 19,000 to 20,000 tonnes). That said, we have seen a significant fall in recycling tonnage (from 20,000 to 5,000) mainly due to the continuing trend of recycling activity moving from the community sector to the commercial and public sectors. We estimate that these activities helped save over 84,000 tonnes of CO₂e.

Computers for the isolated

During the lockdown the Edinburgh Remakery



identified an urgent need whereby vulnerable individuals and groups were unable to access much needed information online. This resulted in them being cut off from online healthcare, employment opportunities, education and even the news.

Since they had been refurbishing IT equipment already, the Remakery were able to step up this area of work quickly bringing staff back from furlough. They delivered their stock out to those who needed it specifically targeting those who were socially isolated and suffering from digital poverty. They also took new donations from individuals and businesses to continue this work.

Diverting waste from landfill and preventing the resulting pollution is central to what the Remakery is all about. E-waste is very hazardous to the environment and a lot of rare metals are lost.

100 computers refurbished

20 charitable organisations received e-goods

£21,885 RRP value

818kg of e-waste diverted from landfill

The Edinburgh Remakery received funding from the Pockets and Prospects fund to support this project. A total of 4 organisations received funding through this fund which was managed as a partnership between CRNS and Scottish Community Alliance. Access to this fund is a core benefit for CRNS members.



We note that only 12 of our members provide reuse services at their local authority Household Waste Recycling Centre. **CRNS are calling for a strong set aside for reuse provision at every HWRC site in Scotland as part of a strong Scottish Circular Economy Bill.**

Our members continue to work with a very diverse range of materials and activities



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Reuse Furniture Retail



12

Reuse Service at Local Authority HWRC site



22

Bike Reuse Project



19

Clothes and Textiles



42

White Goods and WEEE



12

Starter Packs



42

Tool Library, Repair Café or Upcycling Projects



26

Recycling Service



28

Food Waste or Community Fridge

Bikes for key workers

When the Angus Cycle Hub started offering free bike servicing for key workers during the lockdown, they had 27 bookings in the first hour and have serviced over 400 bikes since. Just Cycle, located in the Scottish Borders town of Galashiels, created a free bike library which provided recycled bikes, fully serviced to key workers to use for as long as they needed. This included doctors working on the front line who commented that it had really helped their mental health by being able to cycle before and after a stressful day. The Bike Station created a Hero Bike scheme which provided over 200 bikes free of charge to key workers in Edinburgh and Perth. One recipient said that the scheme had "saved my life" – he could not have gotten to work and supported his family without it.

Transport emissions are proving to be one of the most difficult areas in which to find carbon savings. By reducing car use, these projects have all encouraged people to reduce their carbon footprint.



Angus Cycle Hub has diverted **16-17 tonnes of bikes** from landfill since the lockdown began.



Preventing food waste

Whilst Transition Stirling's main project has been a tool library, they also opened a small community fridge last year. When lockdown began, the tool library had to close as social distancing wasn't possible in their small premises, but demand for the community fridge grew rapidly.

reuse shop



In three months, Transition Stirling:

- redistributed food for **48,655 meals**
- from **10 food shops**
- to over **3,000 people**
- diverting **27 tonnes of food** from landfill.

The Reuse Shop in Stranraer normally deal in furniture but, when the lockdown began, they quickly pivoted in response to the needs of their community. Despite the retail team being furloughed they agreed to work with the local community cafe (Fed Up Cafe) to deliver hot meals and food parcels to people who were shielding. They also collected prescriptions and delivered food hampers to key workers and occasionally provided furniture too. During the lockdown they provided 13,989 hot meals which made a huge difference locally. As one recipient commented:

"Since I have been receiving meals delivered, I comment every day, to offer my grateful thanks and real amazement at the kindness. Not just for the food, but for a kindly, friendly face, and a human voice."



During lockdown the real benefit of being a member shone through. A bringing together of the members to share experiences and challenges, backed up by the expert guidance and research from the CRNS team. Thank you!

CRNS has provided excellent support this year, particularly in the early period of lockdown and in relation to the rates grant issue. So just keep on doing a great job!

Feels like we are part of something bigger than just our small organisation. Covid-19 updates and zoom meetings were very useful during lockdown.

The resource and information sharing during Covid times has been invaluable.

MEMBERSHIP

We asked our members to rate our member services



Events

rated Excellent or Good

100% Conference

95% Covid-19 Forums

94% Regional Forums

93% Thematic Seminars



Communications

rated Excellent or Good

96% Covid-19 Updates

92% Monthly eNews
Reuse Opportunities
Member to Member enquiries

88% Policy updates

To find out more about CRNS

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