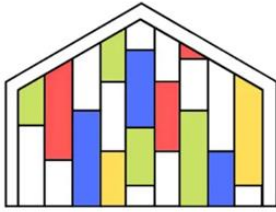


NEWMAINS COMMUNITY TRUST



Newmains Land Project: Community Greenspace, Growing and Wellbeing

Business Plan

April 2026 v1



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1. Executive Summary

Newmains Community Trust (NCT) seeks to acquire a parcel of land adjacent to its existing community hub through the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process. This business plan sets out a proportionate, evidence-led and financially sustainable proposal for community ownership and stewardship of the site, building on more than a decade of successful local delivery and responding directly to demonstrable need for protected green space, accessible outdoor activity, food growing and inclusive wellbeing provision in Newmains.

NCT already owns and operates the Newmains Community Trust Centre, developed through a £2.3 million investment from the Big Lottery “Our Place” programme. The Centre is now a recognised local anchor institution, delivering social, learning, health and wellbeing activity for residents across Newmains. The proposed land acquisition is therefore not a speculative venture but a natural and proportionate extension of established community provision, enabling NCT to link indoor and outdoor services and secure long-term public benefit through local ownership.

The land will be developed as a low-impact, flexible and largely reversible outdoor community asset. This approach reflects the strongest themes emerging from the feasibility work: residents support green, inclusive and multifunctional uses, while strongly opposing housing, permanent buildings, over-development and commercialisation. The project will support:

- community growing, food security and environmental learning
- allotments and accessible participation opportunities
- outdoor wellbeing, informal recreation and intergenerational activity
- small-scale events, workshops and social connection in a safe and inclusive setting

The feasibility study demonstrates that the proposal has a clear community mandate, strong strategic fit, manageable operating costs and credible prospects for capital funding. It also shows that community ownership represents the option most likely to secure long-term best value from the site by protecting it from inappropriate development, retaining control locally, and delivering a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits that would not be achieved through disposal for alternative use. Delivery will be phased to manage risk, respond to demand and ensure that development remains proportionate, affordable and consistent with community priorities.

2. Organisation Overview

Newmains Community Trust Ltd is a community-led charity (SC042980), established in 2011. The organisation was formed following investment from the Big Lottery “Our Place” programme, securing £2.3 million to develop the Newmains Community Trust Centre.

The Centre provides a vital community resource, offering:

- Social events and inclusive community gatherings
- Wellbeing and mental health initiatives
- Support services for carers
- Learning and development programmes
- Activities aimed at reducing social isolation

Through this work, NCT has established itself as a trusted community anchor organisation, with proven experience in managing assets, delivering programmes, and responding effectively to local need.

3. Project Overview

The proposed development will create a community-controlled outdoor space designed to be inclusive, accessible, and environmentally sustainable.

3.1 *Community Garden*

The garden will provide:

- Raised beds for food growing
- Sensory planting areas
- Outdoor learning opportunities
- Volunteer-led sessions

This space will support health, learning, and community interaction.

3.2 *Allotments and Men’s Shed*

The allotment provision will include:

- Individual plots for local residents
- Accessible plots for older people and those with disabilities
- Shared spaces for group activities and therapeutic horticulture

The Men’s Shed element will offer:

- Opportunities for peer support
- Skills development
- Reduced social isolation

3.3 Multi-Use Outdoor Space

The wider site will include:

- Informal play areas
- Seating and quiet spaces
- Opportunities for occasional events and activities

The overall design will be low-impact, flexible, and reversible, reflecting strong community preferences for maintaining green, open space.

4. Evidence of Need

The feasibility study provides a strong evidence base for the proposal and demonstrates that the project is rooted in identifiable local need rather than aspiration alone.

The research found that Newmains experiences high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, with pressures across income, health, education and access. It also identified a shortage of inclusive, accessible outdoor provision that can support wellbeing, informal recreation, food growing and intergenerational activity. Key points include:

- Newmains has a population of around 6,900 people and experiences significant deprivation across multiple indicators.
- A substantial proportion of residents live without access to private gardens or high-quality local outdoor space, increasing reliance on shared community greenspace.
- There is clear demand for low-cost, local activities that improve mental health, reduce isolation and support everyday quality of life.
- Residents strongly favour protected green space, community growing, accessible play and quiet seating areas over built or intensive development.
- Recent housing growth has increased pressure on remaining open land, strengthening the case for community control and long-term stewardship.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that the proposed transfer is not simply desirable but necessary to safeguard an important local asset, address identified gaps in provision and deliver measurable community benefit in a way that aligns with local priorities.

5. Community Engagement and Support

Community engagement has been a central part of project development. The feasibility work drew on a community survey, workshop input from staff and board members, and wider consultation activity linked to the CAT process.

The findings show both clear support and clear conditions that should shape delivery:

- Residents express strong emotional attachment to the land and broad support for it remaining in community control.
- The most strongly supported uses are community gardens, food growing, accessible allotments, informal play, landscaping, benches and quiet green areas.
- Support is conditional rather than unconditional: people want the land to remain green, safe, inclusive and free from over-development.
- There is clear opposition to housing, permanent buildings, commercial use and intensive infrastructure.
- Community involvement is likely to be broad but light-touch, with a smaller core of regular volunteers rather than a large number of people willing to take on formal governance roles.

This engagement provides a strong mandate for the project while also setting clear community red lines. NCT will continue to involve local residents throughout design and delivery so that the land remains responsive to community priorities over time.

5.1 Strategic Fit

The project aligns strongly with national and local priorities around community empowerment, place-based regeneration, wellbeing, climate resilience and tackling inequality. The feasibility study identified clear fit with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, community wealth building principles, North Lanarkshire's priorities for transforming places and sustainable futures, and the Newmains and District Community Action Plan. Crucially, the proposal also meets the core tests of a strong CAT case: it delivers wider public benefit, strengthens local participation in decision-making, protects a valued community asset from inappropriate future development, and offers a credible model of stewardship that is proportionate to the character and constraints of the site.

5.2 CAT Case: Public Benefit and Best Value

The proposal offers a compelling case for transfer when assessed against public benefit and best-value considerations. In contrast to alternative disposal routes, community ownership would retain the land for open, inclusive and locally accountable use, safeguard an important area of green space, and support outcomes in wellbeing, learning, volunteering, food growing, environmental improvement and social connection. The proposal is also financially proportionate: it does not depend on

intensive development or high commercial returns, but instead on a realistic blend of grant support, modest earned income and established organisational capacity. This represents a credible and sustainable use of the asset that is closely aligned with the wishes of the local community and the wider policy objectives of public authorities.

6. Operations and Delivery Plan

The land will be integrated into NCT's existing operational structure rather than managed as a stand-alone facility. This reduces overheads, builds on proven systems already in place at the Trust Centre, and improves long-term sustainability.

6.1 Management

- Strategic oversight by the Board of Directors
- Day-to-day responsibility led by the Senior Management Team
- Delivery supported by staff and volunteers

6.2 Service Delivery

The site will operate through a phased mixed-use model that balances open access with programmed activity. Early phases will focus on access, initial landscaping and community growing, with later phases adding allotments, learning activity and carefully managed events where resources and demand allow.

- Annual allotment lets
- Scheduled workshops and training sessions
- Open-access community use
- Occasional events and markets

6.3 Maintenance

A low-maintenance design approach will be adopted from the outset. This will include durable landscaping choices, limited permanent infrastructure, shared use of existing NCT systems, and a realistic mix of volunteer effort and contracted support where necessary.

- Volunteer involvement
- Existing NCT infrastructure
- External contractors where required

This approach is designed to minimise operational burden, avoid dependence on a small group of volunteers, and respond to identified risks such as long-term upkeep and any future change in grass-cutting arrangements by North Lanarkshire Council.

7. Governance and Management

NCT has a well-established governance structure, consisting of:

- A voluntary Board of Directors
- A Senior Management Team
- Robust policies and procedures

The Board will be responsible for:

- Strategic oversight
- Financial governance
- Risk management

The Senior Management Team will:

- Lead project delivery
- Manage operations, staff, and volunteers
- Ensure compliance and reporting

This structure provides strong organisational capacity and accountability.

8. Financial Plan

The financial section is based on indicative operating assumptions drawn from the feasibility study rather than a final approved site budget. Its purpose is to demonstrate that the proposed use of the land can be financially proportionate and potentially sustainable at an initial stage, not to present a fully costed delivery model for the whole site.

8.1 Income

The feasibility study modelled indicative annual income of approximately £12,700. This figure should be understood as an early-stage planning assumption based on a modest level of community growing, participation and grant support, rather than as a confirmed operating forecast. The model assumes activity at a realistic but limited scale and is based on the following streams:

- allotment fees, providing a modest but dependable baseline income
- plant sales and seasonal growing activity
- workshops, short courses and community learning sessions
- occasional events and low-intensity space hire where appropriate
- grants, donations and fundraising to complement earned income

8.2 Expenditure

The feasibility study also modelled indicative annual expenditure of approximately £10,230. This figure is an initial estimate intended to test viability and affordability; it is not yet a final operational budget. It reflects a low-cost operating model built around phased delivery, shared infrastructure and careful control of overheads. Core costs are expected to include:

- grounds maintenance and routine upkeep
- growing inputs, including seeds, compost and tool repairs
- utilities associated with site operation
- insurance and compliance-related costs
- volunteer expenses and essential support costs

8.3 Financial Sustainability and Assumptions

On the feasibility study assumptions, the model produces an indicative annual surplus of approximately £2,470. This should not be treated as a guaranteed operating position or commercial return. Rather, it provides an early indication that the proposed use of the land could meet most of its direct running costs within a modest delivery model, subject to further refinement of scope, design, staffing and capital requirements.

These assumptions remain subject to further development. In particular, the final financial position will need to reflect the agreed scope of the transfer, any site-specific constraints, detailed design work, maintenance responsibilities, staffing implications and confirmed capital requirements. The current figures are therefore best understood as indicative first-year operating assumptions derived from the feasibility study.

Even at this indicative stage, the feasibility work suggests that a low-impact, phased model could be financially credible because it combines modest earned income with in-kind support from the Trust Centre, including staffing, systems, utilities and organisational infrastructure. Before submission as a final CAT business case, these assumptions should be reviewed and refined so that the financial model fully reflects the agreed project scope and delivery approach.

9. Funding Strategy

Capital costs could be met through external funding, including:

- Scottish Land Fund
- Scottish Landfill Communities Fund
- Charitable trusts and foundations

NCT will pursue a blended funding strategy. Grant funding is expected to be required for acquisition, design, enabling works and phased capital improvements, while modest earned income and organisational support are expected to contribute to ongoing operation. The exact balance between these elements will depend on the final scope,

costings and transfer terms. At this stage, the funding approach should therefore be read as a strategic direction informed by the feasibility study rather than a fully finalised financing package.

10. Risk Management

The feasibility study identified a number of strategic and operational risks that will require active management through the CAT process and beyond. These risks are understood, proportionate, and capable of mitigation.

- CAT valuation and timescales: managed through early engagement with North Lanarkshire Council, evidence-led negotiation, and clear communication with the community to maintain momentum.
- Site constraints, including contamination and historic mining issues: mitigated by limiting development to low impact uses, avoiding unnecessary intrusive works, and taking competent technical advice where required.
- Maintenance and running costs: mitigated through low maintenance design, phased delivery, realistic budgeting and modest income generation.
- Volunteer and governance capacity: mitigated through clear staff leadership, board oversight, shared responsibility and continued trustee development.
- Safety and antisocial behaviour: mitigated through inclusive design, visibility, active use of the site and ongoing community involvement.

11. Implementation Plan

The project will be delivered using a phased approach:

Phase 1

- Secure ownership through CAT
- Establish access and initial landscaping
- Begin community growing activity

Phase 2

- Expand allotments and facilities
- Increase programme delivery
- Introduce events and wider use

Phase 3

- Further enhancements based on demand and funding

This approach reduces risk and allows for learning and adaptation over time.

12. Social Impact and Outcomes

The project will deliver significant social, environmental, and economic benefits.

- Health and Wellbeing
- Reduced isolation
- Improved mental health
- Increased physical activity
- Community Cohesion
- Strengthened social networks
- Increased intergenerational engagement
- Greater community participation
- Skills and Learning
- Development of horticulture and practical skills
- Volunteer opportunities
- Pathways into learning and employment
- Environmental Impact
- Increased biodiversity
- Sustainable land use
- Support for climate awareness and education

These outcomes align strongly with local and national policy priorities.

12.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

NCT will monitor performance using a small set of practical indicators, including participation levels, volunteer involvement, allotment uptake, workshops delivered, community feedback, and evidence of wellbeing and social connection outcomes. This will allow the Trust to demonstrate impact to funders, inform future phases of development, and ensure that the land continues to reflect community priorities.

13. Conclusion

This business plan presents a credible, proportionate and deliverable case for the Community Asset Transfer of land to Newmains Community Trust.

The project:

- Responds directly to identified community need
- Demonstrates strong public support
- Is financially viable and low risk
- Builds on an established and successful organisation

Taken together, the evidence demonstrates that transfer to NCT would secure long-term public benefit, protect a valued local green space from inappropriate future use, and provide a model of stewardship that is financially responsible, strategically aligned and

rooted in community priorities. In best-value terms, community ownership offers a stronger and more enduring return than alternative disposal options by creating social, environmental and organisational value that will benefit current and future generations.