



 **what if...**
GIRVAN a Firstport initiative

 **FIRSTPORT**

Firstport is Scotland's development agency for start-up social entrepreneurs and social enterprise. We provide people with seed funding, free business advice, practical tools and expert mentoring. Firstport has supported around 4000 budding social entrepreneurs and helps create two new social enterprises every week.

What if... is your chance to make a difference in the South Carrick area. This programme delivered by Firstport, is working with local people to inspire them to turn their ideas into businesses that transform their local area and benefit the wider community.

Girvan and the South Carrick villages are steeped in history and sit within beautiful countryside. Girvan is a historic seaside town in a beautiful natural setting; the memories of childhood holidays and ice creams by the beach hold a special place in many people's hearts. The area also faces challenges and like other seaside towns across Scotland and the UK, it is no longer a bustling tourist resort.

There are two things, however, that Girvan and the South Carrick villages have in abundance: beautiful places and a resilient spirit.

The area boasts Scotland's only UNESCO Biosphere and has a rich agricultural heritage; the new local swimming pool is open. There are new schools being built in Dailly and Girvan, and superfast broadband is widely available. The area is even richer when it comes to its people: an excellent Academy and a strong base of local organisations working together towards finding a new, fresh and vibrant identity that puts it firmly on the map!

So the time is right to start something good.

What if... aims to link in with this existing activity as we believe new social enterprise ideas can emerge by working alongside people already active in their community and encouraging those who want to be. Momentum is building. The area is changing. What if you could play a part in shaping this exciting future?

We want you to take on this exciting opportunity, to make the most of what you already have and start joining the dots! How? Respond to our call to action with an idea that can have a positive impact in your community and take the journey with us to develop this idea into a social enterprise.

The best ideas will be offered a place on What if...Girvan. This will give you access to one to one business training, mentoring from industry experts, peer support and up to £3000 in funding to test your idea.

The programme runs for three years and by the end of it we aim to see an area where community-led social enterprise activity is thriving; one where empty spaces have been given a new lease of life; where new enterprises are creating jobs that provide vital skills for local people; and one where built and natural assets are harnessed for the benefit of all.

[If you've got an idea for a social enterprise that can make a difference in the KA26 postcode area, we want to hear from you.](#)



What if...

there were new, exciting spaces for people in the Girvan area to meet?

the town had lots of new activities that would bring people into Girvan?

there were new businesses providing jobs and skills for young people?

YOU could play a part in making this happen?

The starting point

You and your community are best placed to make a positive change in the area. You know what the area has and what it needs and the things that could be better. So to get started, we met people from the community and asked them two simple questions:

what do you love about your area and what could the area be like in the future?

You said there is so much to offer...

the view is wow! • our rich natural environment
our young people • Ailsa Craig • the glorious wildlife
the new swimming pool & leisure centre
our rivers & our green spaces • **we want to see change**
people are working together • the railway lines
let's celebrate what we have • our castles
our churches & historic buildings • **a desire for change**
our enterprising farms & farmers • our innovative schools
the unique Unesco Biosphere • our camping & caravan parks
our beautiful villages • our festivals • our retired professionals
our older people • walking trails & cycle paths
we're doing it anyway • our many volunteers
the community gardens • our golf courses & putting greens
our beaches & shoreline • local businesses • our harbours
great local food • our forests & woodlands • our sports clubs
hills & hill walks • internationally trading businesses
our community groups creating change
an Ayrshire welcome • **activity tourism**
our football clubs • bird sanctuary
McKechnie Institute & art galleries

and what you'd like to create and do...

creating new jobs & businesses • art and creative activities • dancing
cycling • **generating ideas together across the generations**
going to the Girvan theatre • telling our stories • putting on fantastic festivals
looking forward with a positive outlook • celebrating our land & water
watching the senior citizen punk band • enjoying local food • meeting up at soup night
taking part in family centred outdoor activities • growing local shrubs & plants
working in the community café • **applauding local born assets** • recycling for profit
buying food at the market • starting a cooperative of young & older growers
renewing our imagination • using electric bikes • **creating a new identity**
taking the active bus service (there & back!) • watching films at the community cinema
enjoying traffic free zones • using bike trails • taking community transport
composting with wiggly worms at the community garden • our empty spaces thriving
programming & creating robotics • seeing social enterprises as the norm
being a dementia friendly community • getting stuff done without waiting
encouraging a vibrant progressive outlook
working together in partnership
spending an amazing day with grandchildren
getting all age groups involved





What if... you could do things differently?

What if..Girvan is more than a programme, it is a call to action - now that you know what your area has and can offer, **will you play your part?**

To get you fired up and on the right track, we have created six calls to action, based on our community conversations.

We are looking for constructive ideas and practical solutions that respond to one or more of the calls to action, but we remain completely open about the end result – as long as you think it could make a real, long-lasting difference.

Celebrate your culture & heritage

Can your idea help people see how inspiring your area is? Whether it is through music, cinema, art, design or dance, what can you do to make Girvan and South Carrick a destination for creative and cultural activities?

Make the most of your place

Do you have an idea to help people be creative and innovative in the places and spaces around them? Your idea could focus on finding ways of conserving, using or regenerating existing natural assets and heritage, or creating new spaces for you and your community.

Produce & consume locally

You told us there is a real desire for food-related activities that bring the community together. We call on you to connect the dots and link the way the area produces, distributes, consumes and shouts about its local products and makers.

Be active & healthy

You have the most fantastic natural surroundings and a shiny new swimming pool, start thinking of exciting new ways of getting your community active and staying active.

Make connections

This is about you finding exciting new ways of connecting communities with existing and new activities. People in Girvan and the South Carrick villages feel there is a need for transport and connectivity to be more reliable, affordable and flexible. And beyond physical connectivity, can you think of ways of using technology to connect residents with each other and their spaces?

Recycle, Reduce, Reuse

You've told us about the great assets, people and skills in your community, can your idea bring these together to create something that reuses empty space, recycles products, makes use of, or reduces waste in an interesting way?

"I feel that the combination of constructive advice, practical and personal support encouraged me to believe not only that my idea was viable but that I was capable."

LYNN BELL
LOVE LEARNING
SCOTLAND





Social enterprise. What do you mean?

Social enterprises are businesses that trade to improve communities, people's lives or the environment. They can make the most of the good things in communities – trading local crafts, skills and produce. But they can also be uniquely placed to meet local needs - using empty shops, employing local people and delivering the services people want.

Intrigued? Check out what's already happening in Girvan and further afield.

ACE - ADVENTURE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

ACE is a social enterprise encouraging people to make the most of the natural assets in the area through a range of adventurous outdoor pursuits including forest schools, bushcraft, abseiling, mountain biking, hill walking, canyoning and sea kayaking. It specialises in harnessing the power and energy of adventure sports to broaden the visions and aspirations of local residents of Girvan and the surrounding areas.
www.adventurecentreforeducation.com

LOCAVORE

Locavore is a Glasgow-based social enterprise dedicated to local food and making our food system more sustainable. They run a shop, sell veg bags, teach cookery classes and deliver all sorts of projects which aim to help raise awareness of food issues and contribute to the creation of sustainable food systems which are better for the environment, the economy and our communities.
www.glasgowlocavore.org

If you need more inspiration, check the Firstport website, we have lots of case studies from across Scotland!
www.firstport.org.uk/case-studies



**"The time for action
is now, if you wait until
you are a professional at
everything you need to do
to run a business, then you
won't do anything!"**

DANNI TRUDEAU
TRIBE PORTY



Are you onboard? Here's what you need to know



Attend our idea generating workshops, meet our team and find out more.



Send us your application. Make sure you don't miss the deadline! Find these online.



Congratulations! Take your place on the programme with your fellow participants.



Start tapping into the support available and meet with people who can help you make the most of it.



Get funding. Apply for up to £3000 of start up funds.



Start testing your idea. The What if... team will be there to encourage and support you at every stage.



Time to fly solo. Your time in the programme comes to an end, but your journey as a social entrepreneur continues!

Important dates are on our website

www.firstport.org.uk/whatif

Sign up to our newsletter

I'm ready to play a part...

Great! Find everything you need to know, including application forms, guidelines and deadlines on our website www.firstport.org.uk/whatif

I'm curious but not sure if it is for me...

We still want to hear from you! We are often at the Town House and would love to hear your ideas even if you are not ready to take part just yet. What if...Girvan will run other intakes, so sign up to our newsletter and visit our website to find out more.



www.firstport.org.uk/whatif

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