

Seahouses Development Trust

Advancing the prosperity and social welfare of Seahouses and the surrounding area

Established in 1996, Seahouses Development Trust aims to promote, maintain, encourage and advance the development and improvement of Seahouses and the surrounding area. A registered charity with trading arms limited by guarantee, the Trust employs 12 staff and a volunteer force of 50 individuals.



Seahouses Development Trust offers a range of services that work towards its goal of community cohesion and wellbeing and the development of the local economy within Seahouses and the surrounding area.

Originally set up with grant funding, the majority of which was received from the local authority, Seahouses Development Trust now generates an impressive annual turnover of £500,000, helped by its trading arms, Seahouses Community Ventures and Seahouses Development Company. Like many third sector organisations, the Trust has seen grant funding decrease in recent years and now seeks to become self-sustainable and continue its community-based work through its social enterprise trading activities. Phil Davie from Seahouses Accountancy Service says, 'We must remember that the entity must operate in such a way that sufficient levels of

profit are achieved in order to sustain the objectives of supporting the community'.

The Trust currently has a number of social enterprise projects established in order to achieve the dual goal of creating profit whilst improving the wellbeing of the local community. One of the Trusts' trading arms Seahouses Development Company hosts and manages the www.seahouses.org community website - a portal offering information on the local community and area, details of the services that the Trust offers and tourist information. The website also acts as a means of generating revenue for the Trust through advertising.

Seahouses Development Company also operates another social enterprise, Seahouses Accountancy Service, which offers competitively priced financial advice, including start-up advice, a book-keeping service and tax returns, for local businesses and individuals, fellow social enterprises and charities and voluntary groups across Northumberland. The expertise of the staff and tailored, personal service offered are clearly valued by locals; 'You seem really interested in what I do, my old accountant did all the paperwork but I never saw him at all – I wish I had known about you earlier', said one client.

The Trust's second trading arm, Seahouses Community Ventures, currently has an exciting new social enterprise project under way - The Washing Line, a commercial laundry that aims to cater for local small businesses in the Seahouses area, such as B&B's, hotels and self-catering properties.



The Trust was able to purchase its current premises – the Community Resource Centre on Seahouses Main Street in 2002 a service particularly valued by the local community.

The Resource Centre was established with the aim of providing a comprehensive range of services to the community as a whole. Another of the Trust's projects is the Seahouses Youth Project. The Youth Project, supported by various funding streams including finance from the Big Lottery Fund, Greggs Trust and the J. Paul Getty Foundation, it

was established to provide a safe and secure environment for young people aged between 12 and 25 to meet and access support, guidance, information and advice on issues pertinent to them, The Youth Project currently works with Connexions to offer advice to young people aged 13 to 19 and operates the Open College Network, which offers accredited learning courses.

The Trust also operates the Seahouses Sports and Community Centre, an extensive recreation facility providing a small meeting room, kitchen and changing facilities, with a full sized indoor sports hall, two floodlit tennis courts and a bowling green.

Central to the Development Trust's goal of a cohesive and prosperous community in the Seahouses area is in its delivery of the annual Seahouses Festival. The Festival began in 1999 and now takes place every June. The Festival offers a wide-ranging programme of activities, entertainment and events, centring around music, food, dance, art and film, workshops and talks and children's activities, celebrating the culture and natural beauty of Seahouses and the surrounding area. The Seahouses Festival acts as not only a way to bring the local community together but also as a means of attracting tourism to the area.

The annual Seahouses Festival is complimented by the Trust's regular community newsletter, 'Village News', a bimonthly publication distributed throughout Seahouses, Beadnell and Bamburgh. The newsletter features contributions from regulars including Seahouses and District Rotary Club, Seahouses Hostel and Berwick Citizens Advice Bureau. Funded by advertising, the newsletter acts as a useful means of connecting with the local community and is regularly used by local businesses and groups who, by advertising in the newsletter help contribute to the overall sustainability of the Trust.

Yet despite its successes over the years and its ambitions towards becoming a sustainable entity, Seahouses Development Trust has learned that it is imperative to find the right people to work with, both within the organisation itself and in fostering partnerships – those who share the values and ethics of the Trust and are enthusiastic and motivated in working towards improving the Seahouses community while generating a profit.

The Trust, in its 14 years, has also learned that it takes time to develop projects, particularly trading projects, and that time must be taken to ensure that all ventures are thoroughly and carefully considered. With this in mind, Seahouses Development Trust aims to focus on its social enterprise trading arms both as a means of generating income and achieving its core goals. As Phil Davie notes, 'We hope our businesses continue to grow over the coming years to help support the social welfare and general wellbeing of the community of Seahouses and the surrounding areas'.

Showcase – Seahouses Development Trust

Contact

62/64 Main Street

Seahouses

Northumberland

NE68 7TP

All enquiries: 01665 721 868

www.seahouses.org/developmenttrust.php

www.seahouses.org

www.seahousesfestival.org

www.seahouses.org/seaaccounts.php

www.thewashingline.co.uk (under construction)