Community Asset Transfer

A Toolkit to Support Community Groups

Culture and Community Services, Housing and Communities

PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL

Contents of the Toolkit

Introduction and Purpose

This Toolkit helps community groups and organisations consider the key issues they need to be aware of when considering a Community Asset Transfer (CAT). It supports your group to assess your current situation and determine whether or not you are ready to take on an asset. The Toolkit is best completed by several committee members before considering the ownership or leasing of any asset.

The Toolkit covers the following key issues around your group:

- Your Committee
- Composition and Legal status
- How it currently works and operates
- Your experience in managing finance and resources
- Your local community and how they benefit from your project

Each section of the Toolkit contains a series of questions and prompts which will help your group to better understand your current position, the extent to which you have the right skills and experience for taking on an asset, and the support or assistance you might need to progress.

What do we mean by taking on an asset?

Assets are land or buildings that are used to deliver a project or initiative that benefits your community.

There are two key considerations before taking on an asset:

1. Does your group have the right skills and experience to manage the asset?
2. Can your group generate enough money to continue to maintain and improve the asset over time?

There are different ways in which your group can take on an asset for example through a management agreement, a lease, or full ownership. Where an asset is currently owned by a public body, like the Council, there are processes in place that support community groups to get access to them. One of these processes is called a Community Asset Transfer.

Community Asset Transfer

Community Asset Transfer is one of the ways through which a community group or organisation can request greater control of a Council-owned asset. The level of control can vary from simple access rights, right up to full ownership.

CAT is a legal process which was introduced under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

If your group submits a full application for Community Asset Transfer (CAT) you will be expected to provide evidence, including:

- a business plan showing how the asset will be sustained;
- details of how the CAT will benefit the community;
- details of how you will manage and finance your plans;
- evidence of support for your ideas among your community; and
- confirmation that funding has been identified and is available.

Help and information on Community Asset Transfer is available from:

www.pkc.gov.uk/article/19819/Community-Asset-Transfer

and Perth and Kinross Community Planning Team

Tel 07835 224336
Email CommunityEmpowerment@pkc.gov.uk

1 Your Committee

This section of the Toolkit looks at your committee and how you work together. There is a downloadable **Community Asset Transfer Toolkit Section 2 (pkc.gov.uk)** for your use with a small checklist that will help you identify any gaps in knowledge or skills that you will need to address. If you find that you are unable to answer some questions positively, then this suggests that your Committee needs to do some additional work before you move forward with Community Asset Transfer.

You need to have a strong committee who work well together so that all the responsibility does not fall on one or two people. This is an important step to consider before thinking about a potential Community Asset Transfer. You will need to show that your organisation operates in an open and accountable manner. The questions on the form will give you a view of how well your committee is functioning and how involved your committee members are.

Section 3 of this Toolkit focuses on the legal status of your group and your eligibility to apply for a CAT.
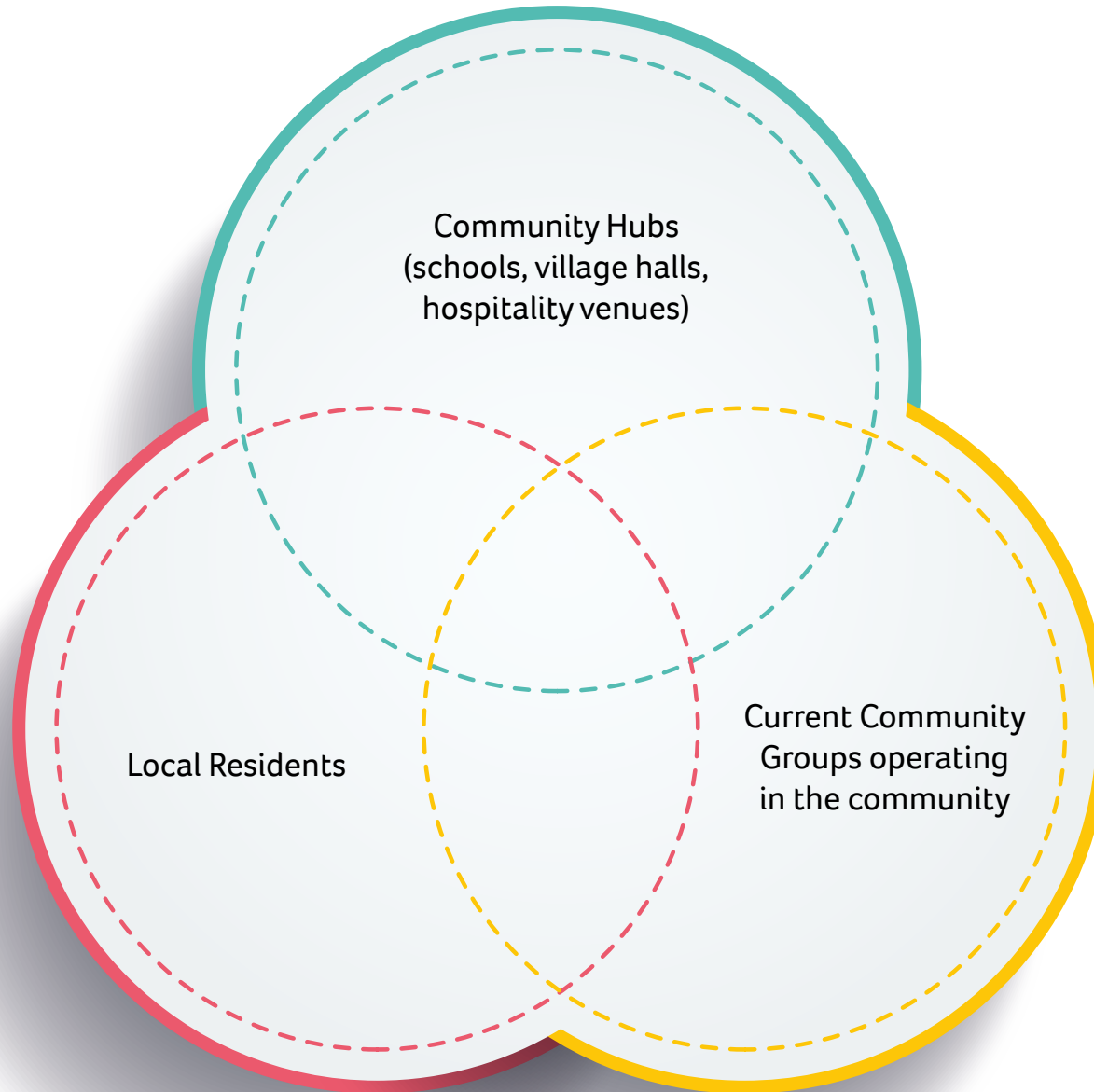
2 Your Community

This next section is about understanding your community. A successful CAT requires evidence of support for your project and this part of the Toolkit helps your committee to think about how your group engages and communicates with community members.Involving your community in planning your activities helps your group to:

- ensure that the project reflects local needs, has local support, and seeks to minimise any adverse unintended consequences;

- gain new ideas and different perspectives;

- identify new partners and supporters;

- find people who can bring new skills, knowledge, and experience to the project;

- demonstrate accountability to your community.

More information and ideas on how to engage your local community can be found in the Involving your Community resource which was completed by COSS (Community Ownership Support Service).

The following two diagrams help your group to think about how well you are currently engaging with your community and developing stronger links. The first diagram is for you to discuss and record what you know about the community you are in. This may include some statistical data, for example current employment opportunities, or local population statistics and demographics. By using this diagram as a mind-mapping exercise, it will help you to identify what you already know about your local community and areas where you need to develop further knowledge.

2

Community Hubs
(schools, village halls,
hospitality venues)

Local Residents

Current Community
Groups operating
in the community

2

Outreach

This diagram shows how your group is currently engaging with the wider community. If possible, use two different coloured pens to show what you are currently doing and any ideas of how these areas of your community could be more engaged in your project.

Doing this will give clarity as to how you are engaging the wider community and also identify areas for improvement. To have a successful CAT request one of the key areas on which you will be assessed is community engagement and support. Using this tool will help you to strengthen any future CAT request.

Local Businesses

Local Residents

Your Project/ Group

Key Partner Organisations

Council, Health Board

Social Media use and other forms of communication

2

2.1 What to do when you have identified a local asset

If your group has an idea for improving your community that will require access to an asset you should have a look around your community to see what is available or check the asset register at:

www.pkc.gov.uk/article/19819/Community-Asset-Transfer

Once you have identified a building or land belonging to Perth and Kinross Council in which you are interested you will need to complete an Expression of Interest Form:

www.pkc.gov.uk/media/44400/Expression-of-Interest-Form/doc/2019_EoI_Form_new.doc?m=636954317519530000

Once the Council receives your Expression of Interest Form you will be invited to meet with representatives from the Council to discuss your interest in more detail. As part of this conversation, Council officers will work with you to try to identify the best way for your group to secure access to the asset. This may be through a Community Asset Transfer Request and all documentation is available on:

www.pkc.gov.uk/article/19819/Community-Asset-Transfer

2.2 Community Benefit

A key aspect of a CAT Request is the level of community benefit it will generate. This could be providing local employment and training opportunities, improving health and wellbeing, or offering a social space for the benefit of community members. The level of community benefit is a key source of justification for any discount your group may seek for a lease or purchase of the asset.

The diagram below shows your committee how to think about the different benefits that your project would bring to your local area. It also shows areas in which community benefit is assessed by the CAT team in the Council using a Scoring Matrix which is available for you to look at on the Council's website.

Economic Benefits

Community Benefit

Social Benefits

Public Health
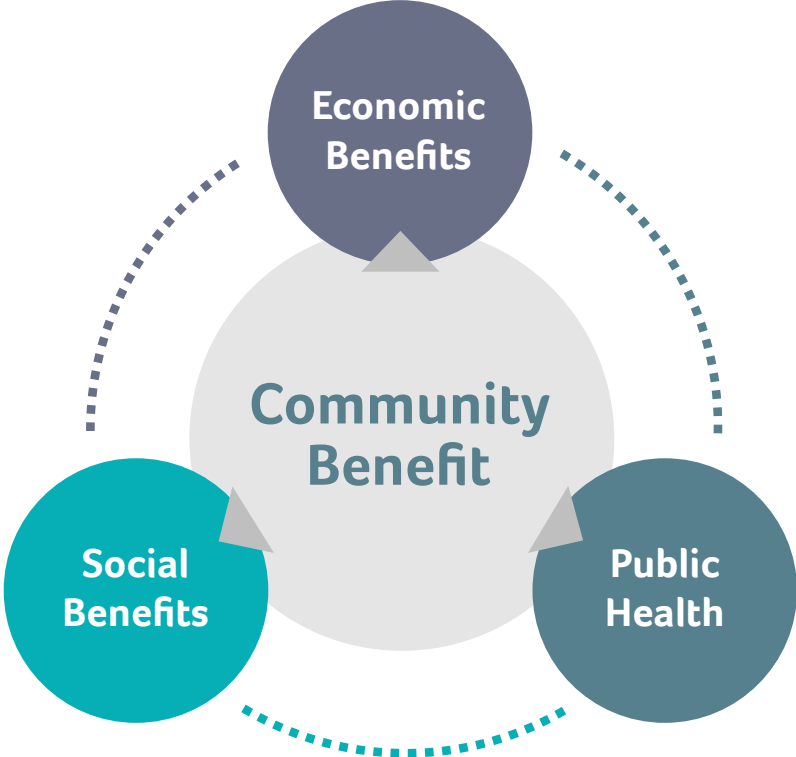
2 **2.3 Community Engagement**

Community support is essential in any successful Community Asset Transfer. Your local community will want to know about your plans, be able to contribute ideas, and may want to help in various other ways. Community engagement allows your group to get the views of local people, get different perspectives on your proposals, and ultimately gather evidence of community support for your plans for the asset. Evidence of community engagement and support is another aspect that the Council will assess as part of any CAT Request.

The National Standards for Community Engagement can be found at www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards/ and can be used to help your group plan and deliver effective community engagement activities.

The following bullet points summarise some of the key areas of community engagement that your group can consider:

- Can you define your community? This should be included in your constitution. If you cover a geographic community this could be an area defined by postcode, Community Council area, an electoral ward, a settlement, a locality, or some other clear definition. If your community is a community of interest this might include people who pursue the same hobby, play a sport, or have an interest in a subject.

- Make a list of the main community organisations in your area and contact them to tell them about your plans. You could contact them individually or invite them to an information event. You should record which organisations you have consulted and what their responses are. Record any negative responses as well as positive ones as this demonstrates transparency and realistic engagement.

- If you are a community of interest you should still contact the community groups in the local geographic area of the asset as you need to show community support. Some of them may wish to work with you or rent some of the space from you and it is always useful to have positive links with your neighbours!

- How can you inform the community of your plans? You need to find out their views as well as tell them about your plans:

    - Could you set up your own social media account, or start a regular newsletter?

    - Can you use an online survey or hand out paper copies to collect people's views?

    - Is there a community event, a gala day, or a community newsletter where you can share your ideas and ask other people for theirs?

    - Have you spoken to the Community Council, Parent Teacher Association, local health professionals, anyone who provides services in the community?

- You can also find lots of useful ideas in COSS Publication – Involving Your Community:

    https://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/sites/default/files/Involving%20Your%20Community%202020.pdf

In the **Community Asset Transfer Toolkit Section 2 (pkc.gov.uk)**, there is a space for you and your committee to look at some of these areas in your context and some key questions for you to access your groups' activities in this area.

3 Legal Structure and Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for any type of CAT your group must demonstrate that it is 'community-controlled'. This means that you must have a written constitution that:

(a) describes the community to which your group relates;

(b) confirms that most of the members of your group are members of your community;

(c) confirms that the members of your group control decision-making;

(d) confirms that members of your group are open to any member of your community;

(e) contains a statement of your aims including the promotion of community benefit;

(f) confirms that any surplus funds or assets are to be applied for the benefit of your community.

A community-controlled body which wants to make a CAT request for ownership must also be a 'community transfer body', meaning that it must have at least 20 members and be incorporated as:

- a company limited by guarantee;

- a two-tier SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) with members electing a committee or a BenCom (Community Benefit Company.

There is a downloadable **Community Asset Transfer Toolkit Section 2 (pkc.gov.uk)** for your use.

4   Finance and Business Planning

When submitting your CAT application, you will also be required to submit a business plan that shows your expected income and outgoing related to the asset. This can include expected income from rent, hospitality, or any other way in which you plan to bring in an income. While expected income can never be certain, by engaging with your community and by researching other rental facilities in the area or projects similar to yours in other parts of the country you should have an idea of feasibility.

Your committee may also need to secure funds to purchase/lease or obtain other rights for a property through Community Asset Transfer. The CAT legislation does allow you to offer a price less than the market value of the asset. However, in your application, you will have to show how any discount is justified by the level of community

benefit your project will generate. This is referred to as Best Value. Best Value is about ensuring that there are good governance and effective management of resources to deliver the best possible outcomes for the general public which applies to all public bodies in Scotland.

Money and Property

You will also need resources to cover things like insurance, ongoing running costs, repairs, and perhaps renovations/alterations to the property. COSS can provide advice and suggest potential funders. You can also sign up to receive funding alerts from PKC, by emailing:

CommunityPlanningPartnership@pkc.gov.uk

There is a downloadable **Community Asset Transfer Toolkit Section 2** for your use.

5 Learning from Others

You can learn a lot from community groups who have already gone through the CAT process.

COSS has supported lots of Community Groups through the Community Asset Transfer process and can suggest some which may have similar ideas to your own. It's always useful to visit or contact other groups to hear what went well, what was a challenge, and what they might do differently next time.

Contact **COSS Community Ownership Support Service** at:

> Email coss@dtascot.org.uk
> Tel 0131 225 2080

Community Land Scotland also supports Community Groups who own or would like to own land and/or buildings. They organise regular study visits where you can learn from other groups and share ideas. They can be contacted at:

> **Community Land Scotland**
> Email info@communitylandscotland.org.uk

6 Useful Links and Contacts

The following links will take you to some helpful websites where information, advice, and guidance on CAT is available:

Perth and Kinross Council, Introduction to CAT

www.pkc.gov.uk/media/44190/Introduction-to-Community-Asset-Transfer/pdf/Introduction_to_Community_Asset_Transfer.pdf?m=636911832197070000

Scottish Government Guidance for groups who are considering CAT

https://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/resources/getting-started/asset-transfer-guidance-community-transfer-bodies

Community Ownership Support Service (COSS) has experience in supporting community groups through the CAT process and have lots of useful information on their website:
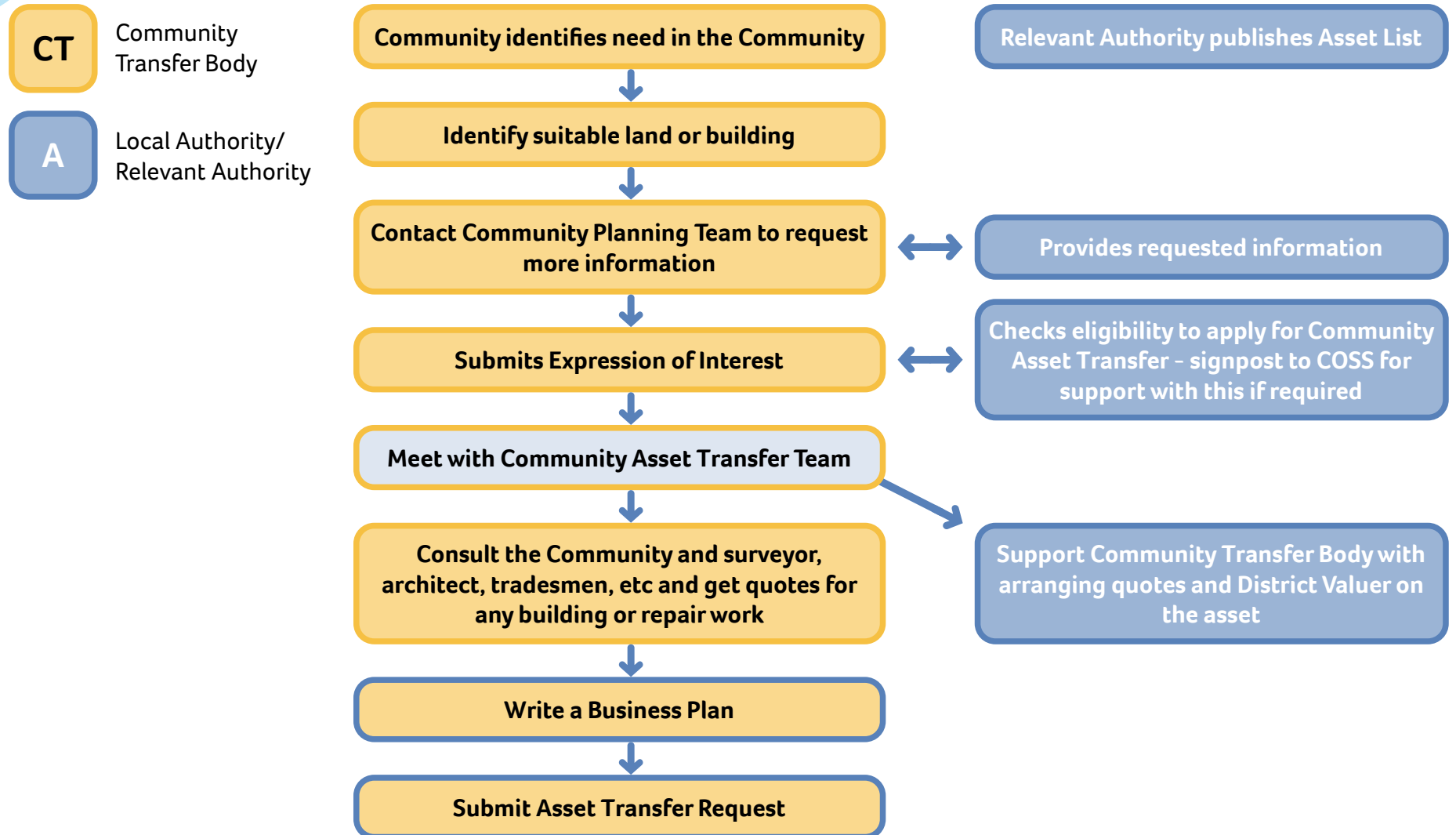
https://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/

Perth and Kinross Council Community Planning Team

Email CommunityPlanningPartnership@pkc.gov.uk
Tel 01738 457000

7 CAT Flow Chart in PKC

CT — Community Transfer Body

A — Local Authority/ Relevant Authority

Community identifies need in the Community
↓
Identify suitable land or building
↓
Contact Community Planning Team to request more information ↔ Provides requested information
↓
Submits Expression of Interest ↔ Checks eligibility to apply for Community Asset Transfer – signpost to COSS for support with this if required
↓
Meet with Community Asset Transfer Team → Support Community Transfer Body with arranging quotes and District Valuer on the asset
↓
Consult the Community and surveyor, architect, tradesmen, etc and get quotes for any building or repair work
↓
Write a Business Plan
↓
Submit Asset Transfer Request

Relevant Authority publishes Asset List

7 Suggested Toolkit Breakdown Sessions

The three meeting planners below are a suggested way to break up the CAT Toolkit into themed sections. By following the guides below, they will guide your committee through the four main parts of the Toolkit. This will help your committee discuss all of the key areas to consider when embarking on a Community Asset Transfer.

Session 1

The Planner below is to look at the 'Your Committee' section of the Toolkit.

Time	Activity	Resources/Tools
5 mins	**Introduction** Introduce the toolkit to the Committee members and explain the purpose behind it. The purpose of the Toolkit is to assist the groups in the requirements in a Community Asset Transfer by allowing groups to self-assess how their organisation/group is functioning, and to identify any areas which may require some development.	CAT Toolkits for each committee member + one master copy for the notetaker
20 mins	**1.2 Current Understanding and Knowledge** All Community Group members are encouraged to complete their questionnaire. If committee members aren't sure of an answer at this stage, we would encourage members to go with 'gut instinct'. Once this has been individually completed it is then recommended the committee go through the questions reflecting what members have said. The master copy of the Toolkit is there for joint decisions to be recorded.	A Toolkit for each member of the committee Flipchart and pens
30 mins	**1.2.14 Skills Assessments and Subgroup Tasking for Policies** This next section of the Toolkit is designed to help your committee to think about the key skills and areas that you may wish to consider as you take the next step in Community Asset Transfer. In the Toolkit, some example areas may be relevant to your committee, organisation, and vision.	As above
5 mins	**Summarise Key Points** Summarise near the end of the meeting the key actions from this meeting. Key bulletin action points would be fine. This will be useful to refer to at the next meeting. Set a next date for looking at the CAT Toolkit. This doesn't need to be the next meeting, but would be advisable to set the date, no more than 8 weeks ahead so that the contents of your discussion today are still memorable.	Master Toolkit for recording committee's views from the flipchart
Total time: 60 mins	**End of Session 1**	Insert date of next meeting

Session 2

The Planner below is a suggested way to break up the 'Your Community' planning section of the Toolkit.

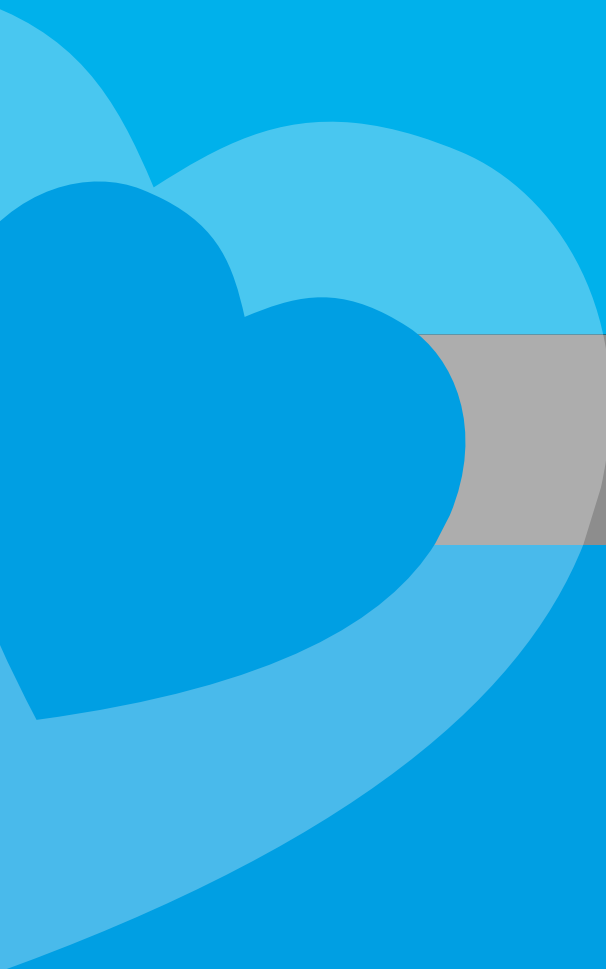| Time	Activity	Resources/Tools
5 mins	**Introduction** Welcome everyone to the meeting and refresh the last discussions, looking at your key actions agreed upon at the last meeting. This meeting will look at how the organisation is connected to its local community.	CAT Toolkits for each committee member + one master copy for the notetaker
25 mins	**2 Your Community** Work through diagram 1 which looks at what is in the community already, that you could link or share resources with to engage with more residents. This should be a 25-minute activity.	A Toolkit for each member of the committee Flipchart and pens
25 mins	After 25 minutes, move on to the next diagram which looks at outreach in the local community and what you see as to how your project and organisation can fit into this area. A revisit of your mission aims and objectives (if you have any) should help you with getting this conversation started. 💙 Who is already involved with our group? 💙 Who could be around the table with us?	As above
5 mins	**Summarise Key Points** Summarise any key actions from this meeting. Key bulletin action points would be fine. This will be useful to refer to at the next meeting. Set a next date for looking at the CAT Toolkit. This doesn't need to be the next meeting, but would be advisable to set the date, no more than 8 weeks ahead so that the contents of your discussion today are still memorable.	Master Toolkit for recording committee's views from the flipchart
Total time: 60 mins	**End of Session 2**	Insert date of next meeting

Session 3

The Planner below is a suggested way to break up the 'Legal Structure and Eligibility' and 'Finance and Business Planning' sections of the Toolkit.

Time	Activity	Resources/Tools
5 mins	**Introduction** Welcome everyone to the meeting and refresh the last discussions, looking at your key actions agreed upon at the last meeting. This meeting will look at your organisation's legal structure as well as finance and business planning.	CAT Toolkits for each committee member + one master copy for the notetaker
15 mins	**Legal Structure and Eligibility** The options listed in this section are legal structures which would be eligible for a Community Asset Transfer request. If you aren't currently set up in any of these structures, then advice and support can be provided to support your group to become an eligible group.	A Toolkit for each member of the committee
25 mins	**Finance and Business Planning** The questions provided in the Toolkit are designed to aid committee discussions around funding, planning, and identifying skills within the community.	A Toolkit for each member of the committee Flipchart and pens
5 mins	**Summarise Key Points** Summarise any key actions from this meeting. Key bulletin action points would be fine. This will be useful to refer to when completing your Expression of Interest form or Community Asset Transfer.	Master Toolkit for recording committee's views from the flipchart
Total time: 55 mins	**End of Session 3 and the Toolkit**	Insert date of next meeting

For any feedback regarding this Toolkit, contact the Community Empowerment Officer, by emailing CommunityEmpowerment@pkc.gov.uk

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

BSL users can contact us via Contact Scotland BSL, the online British Sign Language video relay interpreting service. Find out more on the Contact Scotland BSL website **https://contactscotland-bsl.org**

www.pkc.gov.uk (PKC Design Team - 2024009)