



## COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

### NORTH COAST & CUMBRAES LOCALITY PARTNERSHIP

#### The CIF will support proposals and projects that:

- Connect with:
  - The North Ayrshire [Fair for All Inequalities Strategy](#);
  - the [Community Planning Partnership](#) (CPP) and [Locality priorities](#); and
  - North Ayrshire Council's (NAC) values, priorities and business [objectives](#).
- Fulfil a compelling need and do not duplicate existing services or facilities.
- Provide long-term, sustainable, positive results for the greatest number of people possible.
- Exhibit project and/or organisational innovation in their approaches to their work in their way of addressing community challenges and in their request to Locality Partnerships and the Council.
- Come from (an) organisation(s) that is financially viable (can provide financial statements upon request) and efficiently and effectively managed. This can include an organisation to be created to deliver the project.
- Include options or potential for NAC and CPP employee engagement and volunteering where possible; and
- Include measurable outcomes and can report to NAC on outcomes on a regular basis.

#### When to apply and how?

- LPs should continue to engage with their communities and stimulate interest in the CIF. The Locality Partnership will then strategically assess the applications, make links and look at the funding 'in the round'.
- If the partnership supports a bid, then the group will be encouraged to submit a full application form (attached), which they will decide upon before making a proposal to Cabinet for final approval.
- The finalised proposal will go to the next suitable Cabinet for final approval.
- Forms should be returned to your Locality Officer, by email if possible:

**Louise Riddex**

**Locality Officer (Kilwinning & North Coast)**

Economy and Communities  
Community Development Team  
St John's Primary School  
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For more information see the guidance form here: <http://www.northayrshire.community/wp-content/uploads/sites/60/2018/06/community-investment-fund-guidance-notes-17-12-17.pdf>

#### 1. Details of your organisation



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Name of Organisation

Largs Thistle Community Football Club

Postal Address for Correspondence

Name of Contact Person: Tiffany Irvin

Position in Organisation: Communities Development Officer

Telephone Number

Email Address: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

## 2. Brief description of your organisation

Please include its legal status, aims and objectives, activities or services provided and how long it has been in existence.

The objects of the club is to compete in competitions organised under the auspices of the SFA / West of Scotland Football League (hereinafter referred to as the WoSFL) and the Scottish Junior Football Association (hereinafter referred to as the SJFA) and/or the associations under their jurisdiction in addition to such social and recreational activities as may be deemed desirable by the Committee. The Club may also be allowed to compete in other matches or competitions subject to approval from the SFA / WoSFL and or SJFA. b. The Club is committed to encouraging the highest ethical standards. All individuals involved in the Club should conduct themselves with integrity, transparency, accountability and in a fair and equitable manner. c. The Club and its members shall not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation. d. The Club is committed to the continuation and upkeep of Barrfields Park as a community asset for the benefit of the residents of the town and local organisations in addition to its use by LTFC for the purpose of playing football matches and training. The Club will make the facilities available (at reasonable charge) to any such individuals or groups for sporting, leisure or other sanctioned activities

This application is supported by

- Largs Academy – Mr John Doherty and Tony Gilhoolie
- Largs Primary – Kirsty Carson
- Douglas Park Nursey – Lyndsey Gray
- St Mary's Primary –
- West Kilbride Primary
- The Parent Councils of Largs Primary, Largs academy and St Mary's Primary,
- Largs Community Council



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- Largs Community Development Trust – all are constituted groups and the LCDT is registered as a charity with OSCR.



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#### **3. Title and summary of proposal**

Tell us about your idea. Please describe in as much detail as possible, what the funding will be used for.

Please include:

- where it will be held / delivered
- who is your target audience
- who will benefit from it and how
- any partners that are involved.

This proposal seeks a funding grant to purchase outright a mini-bus to be used by all educational establishments at the Largs Community Campus and Largs Thistle Youth teams. Where availability permits, it will be available through an online booking system for use by Largs Colts, Douglas Park Nursery and other constituted community groups.

Largs Thistle Youth has identified a need to have access to transportation to help its various youth teams as they grow and progress. Whilst training mainly occurs within the Barrfields and Bowencraigs pitches, throughout the year, all teams have fixtures which are across the region. Currently parents and guardians are required to transport players to venues, which is inefficient, but also prevents many children participating if a carer is unable to provide transport and remain available to return them.

Similarly, all three Parent Councils have identified that there is a gap in participation in extra-curricular activities due to the lack of suitable transportation to support these. Unlike most High Schools or Educational Campus's in North Ayrshire, Largs does not have access to a small minibus to allow students and groups to take part in out of school activities. Douglas Park Nursery have not been able to organise any trips out with Largs due to the lack of transportation facilities. Similarly, local groups, such as SWI, Dementia Friendly Largs and the Largs Naz Group, do not have readily available access to a suitable transport to ensure members of the community can live full and active lives.

This proposal, if accepted, would allow the purchase of a new mini bus, which can be driven by most adults (subject to specific conditions), and allow wheelchair users to also take part. The application will include an allowance to support the running costs for up to 3 years, with the exception of fuel, which would be met by each participating group.

This proposal will allow members of applicant groups, as well as community or educational groups, to access events, competitions, or other activities that they otherwise would be unlikely to be able to participate in.

If successful, this will not duplicate and existing facilities – all schools and youth football teams have indicated that participation in events or competitions is limited due to lack of suitable transportation. (Coach travel or alternative hire options are prohibitively expensive and also often logistically unsuitable).



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#### **4. What difference will this project make within the locality and to local services and programmes?**

Please include:

- The outcomes you aim to achieve
- How you will approach reducing inequality
- How this proposal fits with the Locality Partnership priorities of
  - 1. Improving access to financial services
  - 2. Increasing social inclusion
  - 3. Improving mental wellbeing
  - 4. Supporting skills and work opportunities

#### **Community Football Supporting Priorities 2, 3 and 4**

Largs Thistle FC has seen incredible growth in its youth development program, expanding from just 18 players to over 100 in the past year. This rapid progression highlights the increasing demand for accessible football opportunities in the community. With this expansion travel has become a greater challenge, particularly as our girls' teams now compete in the South West League with fixtures as far as Langholm, and our Under-15s play in the NASA League, traveling to distant locations like Girvan. For many families, the strain of arranging transport can be a barrier to participation. By introducing a Minibus, we can ensure that all young players, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to compete and develop their skills. Additionally, by working closely with Largs Colts, we can maximise the use of shared facilities benefiting hundreds of grassroots children. A minibus would not only support our players on match days but also strengthen our commitment to inclusion, teamwork, and the continued growth of youth football in Largs.

#### **Active Schools (Largs Cluster) – General**

#### **Supporting Priorities: 2, 3 and 4**

Access to a local community minibus for Active Schools Largs Cluster would be a transformative resource, directly addressing a pressing need for accessible, reliable transportation to support school's extra-curricular sports programs and participation in the North Ayrshire Sports Academy (NASA) Young Ambassador (YA) program Fit for Girls program.



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Currently, all Largs Academy students are required to travel independently to centralized training locations, creating logistical and financial barriers that prevent many from participating fully (2). This dependence on parents' availability and personal transport limits not only individual students but also the ability of the Active Schools program to deliver on its goals of inclusivity, skill development, and equal opportunity in sports (3 & 4).

For instance, while only Largs Primary currently manages to attend centrally run events like the sports hall athletics, a community minibus would empower all primary schools in the Largs cluster to engage in North Ayrshire-wide sports events and competitions (2). This change would foster a stronger, more united Largs school cluster by enabling equal participation, which is crucial for developing a sense of community pride and collective achievement in sports.

Key regional finals, like the North Ayrshire Netball and Football championships, are at risk due to the current lack of funding and transport options. Without access to a community minibus, Largs Academy and its surrounding schools face difficulties in attending these competitions, while other schools with minibus access can continue to participate and benefit from such experiences. Additionally, this lack of transport affects targeted student groups, who often miss key trips and activities, or experiences that can be fundamental in supporting their social inclusion, self-esteem, and overall development (2,3 &4). Other schools can continue these programs seamlessly due to their access to transportation, underscoring the need for similar resources for Largs.

Whilst transport options are available, the rising cost of external transport providers threatens this sustainability. Several events were missed last summer alone due to limited bus availability, highlighting the critical need for a dedicated Largs community minibus. Having this consistent transport option would not only eliminate the ongoing funding challenges and scheduling conflicts but would also allow the Active Schools program to expand, offering more students opportunities that are not restricted by Largs' geographic constraints.

With access to a community minibus, Largs Academy students would experience numerous benefits, including improved mental and physical health from regular participation in sports and social activities. Reliable transport would give students consistent access to competitive sports events, training, and leadership programs like NASA and Young Ambassadors, regardless of parental availability or financial limitations. By removing these barriers, the school can combat isolation, enhance students' sense of belonging, and build stronger, healthier connections within North Ayrshire's broader sports and academic community. (2,3 &4)

#### **Opportunities:**

##### **Athletics**

Entering the Scottish Schools events at the Emirates and Grangemouth Track and Field has always been a desire. Due to the distance involved and expenditure this opportunity will not continue without a mini bus. This would provide an extension of our Athletics pathway and allow our excellent / elite performers an opportunity they would no longer be given. (3,4)



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#### **Mountain Biking**

An up-and-coming opportunity in our school is Mountain biking events. In September parents had to take any school entries to the national event that was a 3-hour drive away. We would like to grow a culture in the school for Mountain Biking and transporting the pupils as a school team would be a great addition to our offer.

#### **Coaching**

Within the curricular time there are three specific coaching groups. A mini bus will open up opportunities to make placement visits to a number of providers in this sector. Having flexible transport will allow the groups to help coach in other parts of our cluster - helping primary festivals, their school clubs and enhance their class time. This would make a big difference to how equitable our support is to our neighbouring primary schools. (4)

#### **Sporting inspire and motivate opportunities**

The school is offered numerous free opportunities at various sporting events / activities in Scotland, but with the cost of bus hire not included, generally these opportunities cannot be fulfilled.

For the school to attend the only way to do so would be to charge pupils to attend which would not be fair or equitable (2)

#### **Other Opportunities:**

Without wishing to raise hopes within the community, already various groups have put forward ideas on how a community minibus could be used. Showworks Theatre group have indicated they would be able to open up opportunities to take older groups to theatre and drama events further afield that currently is not possible today. The Largs Community Development Trust has engaged with other local groups (mentioned above), all of whom would greatly welcome access to a low-cost transport option such as a minibus, but do not have the funds to procure one or regularly hire.

#### **5. What engagement has taken place in relation to the project?**

Please include the number of people who have been engaged with or consulted as well as the range of people.

This proposal was first discussed formally at the Largs Primary Parent Council in 2023 and was raised by a member of the community at the Largs Community Council in summer 2024.

This resulted in engagement with all the Parent Council Chairs, as well as each school in the campus. The response was unanimously in favour of this, should fund be granted.



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Further engagement was undertaken with local groups to gauge whether a community minibus would open up new opportunities, and again the response was overwhelmingly positive.

Through this engagement, we have identified the following groups that could enhance their activities, and the work towards the Priorities:

- Scottish Women's Institute
- Largs Colts Football team
- Dementia Friendly Largs
- Clyde Coast and Cumbrae Men's Shed
- Showworks Drama Group
- Largs Church of the Nazarene
- Largs Green Futures
- Ages Concern
- Largs Museum
- Any other Constituted group within Largs

The proposal has the backing of 5 Community groups, namely the Largs Academy Parent Council, Largs Primary Parent Council, St Mary's Primary Parent Council, the Largs Community Council, West Kilbride Primary and the Largs Community Development Trust.

Advice has been sought from North Ayrshire Council Transportation Department, and guidance has been incorporated to the application and will be adopted should the bid be successful.





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#### 6. How will the project be managed?

Please include:

- How the finances will be managed
- Does the proposed project contribute to volunteering or employment opportunities in North Coast? Please include the number of volunteering opportunities and employment opportunities
- If there are any staff requirements, please outline your HR plans

Financing Options

#### Capital purchase

At time of application, the cost of a new Minibus is as follows:

Citroen Enterprise Flexilite - Manual  
L4H2 (140) with Air Con & Sat Nav  
Colour: White  
17 seat 1 wheelchair  
Manual ramp  
Manual side step

£42,995.00 + vat + 1<sup>st</sup> reg £55 + RFL £165.

**Total cost for purchase: £51,814 including VAT**

Advantage:

- Brand new vehicle for the Community and Campus
- Vehicle will have zero miles and manufacturer warranty
- Maintenance costs will be minimal in the first three years due to newness of vehicle
- Vehicle meets the current and final Euro 6.3 emissions standards
- Vehicle will retain a high residual value after 3 and 5 years, allowing opportunity to fundraise for new vehicle or keep for longer.
- Grant value is retained and depreciates annually, ensuring the grant benefit period is not only at least 5 years but can be carried forward.

Disadvantage:

- Largs Thistle responsible for all maintenance and safety inspections

#### Leasing:

To lease the same vehicle (for 5 years) would cost as follows:



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60 months 25,000 miles, Payments 3+59, £695.00+ VAT per month

Total cost of lease: £51,708 including VAT.

#### Advantage:

- *Brand new vehicle*
- *Maintenance costs included*
- *MOT and servicing costs included*

#### Disadvantages:

- *After the term, the vehicle is handed back and a new vehicle will need to be funded – in effect, the Campus and Community will be without a minibus and require fundraising and apply for grant funding for the full value of a new vehicle.*
- *After 5 years, the grant value will be fully depleted*

#### Used vehicle purchase:

Enquiries were made to the possibility of purchasing an approved Used vehicle (through a reputable supplier of such vehicles).

£32,995+VAT + RFL

#### Advantage:

- Lower capital cost to purchase
- Marginally lower insurance premiums

#### Downsides:

- Vehicle already subjected to 'wear and tear'
- Additional expenditure will be required on maintenance
- Does not meet latest Euro Standards for emissions
- Residual values will be very low at end of 5-year term

**It is considered that outright purchase is the best option in the long term, as this allows a brand-new vehicle to be procured, whilst providing future value to allow a newer vehicle to be purchased should funding permit.** Whilst a lease appears attractive, it would consume the full grant amount in 5 years and have nothing left to show for it.

Currently, used vehicle process for this category of vehicle are relatively strong, and it is the view that in the long term 'saving' c£10k is not best value for money considering that after 5 years, the



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vehicle itself would be nearly or over 10 years old, and require increased maintenance, as well as having minimal residual value.

#### Maintenance

This application has included a request for funds to be set aside to support running costs for up to the first three years.

Indicatively these are estimated as follows:

Insurance –per annum for an ANY driver policy (over 25)	£2200
Road Fund License	£168
12-week safety inspections (5 per year) @ c£60 per check – with any work being ‘over and above	£300
Annual servicing –per year (to include fund to replaced tyres periodically)	£600
Non wear and tear costs fund	£1000
Fire extinguisher maintenance/ checks every 6 months	£100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£4368</b>

Largs Academy have pledged £5k per year to cover running costs of the mini bus, this will going to an account to cover any ongoing operations.

Largs Thistle, Largs Colts and the Parents Councils would look to fundraise and ensure funds are put aside each year to support the ongoing operation of the minibus. The additional grant fund money would allow the operation to get setup and running and time to adjust for Largs thistle, and other groups and also provide a better insight to the running costs.

Other sources of funding will be explored to ensure the future operational costs are met, such as donations for use. Initial conversations have been positive that yearly grant applications for c£3000 should be feasible, subject to other applications and the fund value.

It must be highlighted that the mini bus will strictly not be available for ‘Hire or reward’, i.e. there would be no fee for use, other than maintenance and any damage incurred. This is part of the Permitting arrangement required, as well as to comply with insurance purposes.



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It is due to this that the request to support operating costs in the early years is requested as the use of the mini bus will not generate an income. Over time, as outlined, other funding options will be explored to ensure that the mini bus can continue to operate.

#### **Procurement and Operation**

- The minibus would be purchased outright from a specialist supplier by Largs Thistle Community Football Club (LTCFC)
- The LTCFC would have responsibility for the vehicle, including insurance, Road Fund, maintenance and managing bookings and will be supported by the Largs Community Council and Parent Councils
- The vehicle would generally be parked in the lit and secure Largs academy Car Park, or at Vikingar, however ad hoc overnight parking would be permitted where early starts or late returns were envisaged.
- The vehicle will be subject to regular and routine maintenance- carried out at Fit Quick Motors at a community discounted rate.
- By law, safety checks will be undertaken by a local garage every 13 weeks – NAC Transportation are keen to support with this and this offer will be explored fully to ensure a consistent and transparent maintenance regime. However we have confirmation that local garage Fit Quick Motors are willing to undertake this for us at a community discounted rate.
- The vehicle will be offered fully fuelled with condition of use that it is returned fully fuelled – generally a booking will be expected to last between 8am-6pm, which will allow it to be returned fuelled. Exceptions can be made by arrangement
- The LTCFC and the Largs Academy will be the Primary keyholders, however a key may be supplied to trusted persons within the school as required.
- Mini bus will be operated under a Section 19 permit
- The LTCFC would become members of the Community Transport Association (CTA) to ensure it keeps up to date with regulatory or legislative changes as well as news and updates concerning operating a community transport.

#### **Bookings**

- An online booking system will be made available. This may be through a standalone website, Largs Thistles Website or made available through the LCDT website using a 'plugin'.
- There is no fee for bookings, however for Community groups, a suggestion of a donation will be made, which can be fulfilled through an online payment system, such as PayPal.
- This will allow 'slots' to be made available.
- Priority will be given during term time to groups within the Campus.
- It is anticipated that it will be available to Largs Thistle Groups and other community groups where available.



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- Community bookings will only be to constituted groups from the North Coast area. It will NOT be made available for personal bookings or for any bookings that do not accord with the Locality Priorities.

#### **Driver Management and Training**

Being eligible to drive the vehicle proposed is bound by strict rules, and these are by DVSA, Insurance and the LTCFC.

#### **DVSA**

Vehicle will be operated strictly within the provisions of the following:

- you're 25 or older
- you've had your driving licence for at least 2 years
- you meet the ['Group 2' medical standards](#) if you're over 70 - check with your GP if you're not sure you meet the standards
- you're driving on a voluntary basis, and the minibus is used for social purposes by a non-commercial body
- [the 'maximum authorised mass' or MAM](#) of the minibus is not more than 3.5 tonnes – plus up to 750kg of equipment for disabled passengers, for example a wheelchair ramp
- you're not towing a trailer

#### **Insurance**

- Only drivers over 25 years old and
- Hold a valid driver's license and
- Medically fit to drive

#### **Largs Thistle Community Football Club**

- ALL drivers must complete the relevant Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) training. This has a small cost and can be delivered by North Ayrshire Council Transportation.
- The cost of this training for non-educational use (i.e. Community) is required to be borne by the group wishing to use the minibus.



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#### 7. Amount of funding being requested

Please supply details of funding being requested and any other funding you have had over the past 5 years, both financially and "in kind".

Amount of funding requested (£) **£63,000**

Please give a breakdown of cost and recent quotations where appropriate.

<b>Purchase of vehicle as per specification outlined above</b>	£51,814
Expected price increase in 2025	£1000
Funding to support up to three years' operating costs (excluding fuel)	£10,186
<b>TOTAL GRANT REQUEST</b>	<b>£63,000</b>

The LTCFC have not made any request to the North Coast Locality Partnership for funding.

All Parent Councils actively participate in the Youth Participatory Budget process to raise funds for various projects within the school. There have been no requests of a similar nature to this application.

Quotations are included separately for:

- Purchase and Lease (see attached email).
- Insurance quotation (see attached file)

#### 8. Monitoring and evaluation process

Please include detail on the monitoring and evaluation processes planned or in place.

There will be various measures to assess the success and impact of this.

We will assess the utilisation of the minibus quarterly to ensure it is being used to its best potential. LTCFC will work with all four schools to set in advance a Use and Share scheme whereby each school has a notional allocation of 'days' they can book (Largs Academy will have a larger share). We can then work with the schools to proactively ensure they are using their allocation. This process has already started to encourage Head Teachers to think about activities not undertaken because of lack of suitable transport (e.g. field trips, competitions, sports events).



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Overall, there is unlikely to be significant conflict, as the Football events tend to be at weekends, however there is already, and will continue to be, close working between the Campus and Football clubs.

We will also seek to track how many young people have taken trips using the minibus. Whilst we do not capture information on YP, we hope each school can provide information on the ages, and any other Equality indicators to ensure that disadvantaged or other vulnerable groups are accessing it.

Furthermore, we will work with each school to further detail the activities the minibus has supported above what they are able today. We have engaged with Head Teachers, Parent Council and Active Schools and have identified a range of events and activities (outlined in this paper) that a minibus will enable that is difficult to participate in today. Reporting will be provided for each of these to demonstrate that the benefits claimed are being delivered.

Similarly, we will look to ensure that the minibus is available and used by community groups where there is availability and will work through the Community Council to encourage this, however it is expected that the utilisation between the football clubs and campus will be high.

We will provide an annual report to NAC and the LP on utilisation and outreach and demonstrate how we are supporting the three Priorities outlined in the application.



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Additional Requested information:

#### **Operational Plan – Community Minibus**

##### **1. Project Operation Overview:**

The community minibus will be operated by Largs Thistle and used during term time (Monday to Friday) by the Largs community campus, comprising St Mary's Primary, Largs Primary, Largs Academy. During weekends and school holidays, the vehicle will be made available to Largs Thistle Groups where available Largs Colts, and other local community groups.

Largs Thistles Committee in particular the Community Development Officer will oversee the running of the Mini Bus and ensure checks are carried out.

##### **2. Driver PVG and License Checks:**

All teachers and helpers using the minibus during school time are PVG checked through the school system.

- All football-related users—including coaches, secretaries, first aiders, and helpers—are PVG checked through the Scottish FA, SYFA, and SWF under the grassroots PVG system.
- Each grassroots volunteer has also supplied two references as part of their involvement requirements. Drivers will upload their driving licence and PVG number when submitting a booking request. Driving licences will be verified through the DVLA the link will be on the form to allow the user to share their licence information.
- PVG numbers for football users will be checked via the Comet system using name and date of birth. As CWPO for Largs Thistle can check these codes using SFA, SWFA and SYFA comet system as she has full access.

##### **3. Booking System:**

A digital Microsoft Form will be used to request minibus use. This will be available on the website. This form will include:

- Date and time of use
- Name of the driver
- Upload sections for driver's licence and PVG number
- Prompt with link to DVLA (<https://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence>) to share licence information.





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- Group name and contact details.
- Once a booking is confirmed, it will be added to a shared TeamUp calendar (<https://www.teamup.com>), which allows all admins to view current and upcoming bookings and ensures there is no overlap in usage.

#### **4. MOTs and Maintenance:**

- The minibus will undergo regular, scheduled MOTs, and all records will be logged and retained undertaken by Fit Quick Motors at a discounted rate.
- It will also undergo a 13-weekly safety check at a local garage – Fit Quick Motors who have already agreed to do this at a community discounted rate.
- A vehicle checklist will be completed before every use to ensure safety and operational condition.
- Largs Thistle will also schedule routine maintenance checks in addition to user checks.

This operational structure ensures that safety, accountability, and community benefit are prioritised.