

accelerate

Glenkens Community & Arts Trust

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The support through Accelerate allowed us to think more clearly about new ways of earning income for ourselves. The discussions were practical and tailored to our specific circumstances, and the advisors were keen to come up with workable solutions. Our earned income has definitely increased as a result of this support, which we are most grateful for.



Background

The Glenkens Community & Arts Trust (GCAT) based in New Galloway (Dumfries and Galloway), was formed in 2001. After a successful fundraising campaign to purchase and transform the former Primary school building in the village, the re-purposed building was launched in 2007 as Catstrand. This multi-purpose venue is a cultural hub for the surrounding area, providing a wide range of arts, community and training activities for residents and visitors. A second venue, the Smiddy at Balmaclellan, was opened in 2020, offering meeting and event room space.

Need for support

GCAT accessed Accelerate for support in exploring how to increase income through the development and promotion of its trading and enterprise activities. An initial 'ideas generation' session with staff considered a variety of possible ideas. Following market research, a further session was spent delving deeper into some of the ideas and prioritising the ideas that would be the focus of the follow-up support.

GCAT was also keen to get advice on the possible implications on the current legal structure of the charity in light of its intention to increase its trading income.

[You can watch a testimonial video here](#)

What we did

Currently, most of GCAT's income comes from grants which support its core costs and a range of project activities. However, it does generate 'unrestricted' earned income via its bar and café, advertising revenue and a modest amount of income from venue hire.

Accelerate's work with GCAT initially focused on the options for expanding their current trading activities and then considered additional possibilities. It also included ruling out development ideas that were considered a poor fit for the organisation in terms of capacity/resources and others where the additional income generated would have been marginal.

A series of recommendations emerged, with the main focus being on extending GCAT's 'anchor services' - the bar, café and venue hire. In particular, extending the opening hours and targeting the visitor market was seen as the most immediate and effective way of increasing its income – without impacting disproportionately on existing resources and capacity.

The second element of Accelerate's support was to assess the impact that increasing trading income would have on its status as a charity. GCAT has now been furnished with the key parameters to be considered by any charity as it increases its trading percentages.

Accelerate is continuing to support GCAT with the development of a digital marketing campaign and support to produce an e-brochure for its commercial venue hire to support longer term sustainability.

Dumfries & Galloway