**West Lothian Social Enterprise Forum**

**Wednesday 13th August 2025: 10am – 12noon at The Gateway in Bathgate**

**Present:** Raymond Branton and Victoria Isbister (VSGWL), Amanda Macdonald (Bridge), Declan Harrigan and Kerry Hutchison (Smile Counselling), Tracy Murdoch (Kidzeco), Jane Masters (Play Works), Jamie Lawson (Social Enterprise Scotland)

**Apologies:** Leigh Lauder (Winchburgh CDT), John McClay (Caledonian Credit Union), Struan Gard (Xcite), Angela Moohan (The Larder), Jane Deary (Almond Housing), Tracy Kerr (VSGWL), Martin Thomson (Business Gateway), Helen Davis (WLYAP)

1. Welcome, apologies and introductions

Raymond opened the meeting, and everyone did a quick round of introductions.

1. Guest Speaker: Jamie Lawon, Social Enterprise Scotland & ‘Buy Social’

Jamie gave an overview of SES and encouraged people to join up (membership is free if turnover less than £250k). He also explained the “Buy Social” branding and how this is supported and promoted by SES (Presentation attached).

He emphasised how this linked closely to the community wealth building agenda and how they are working with Local Authority procurement teams to encourage them to sign-up to a new dynamic purchasing system approach (Jamie to include The Gateway in discussions with West Lothian).

SES will also be updating their Buy Social Directory soon, so there are opportunities for WL organisations to be included.

Raymond spoke about some of the aims of SE Forum, and suggested an ongoing dialogue with SES would be useful.

We are also considering a possible Buy Social campaign with the public, if members feel this would be useful. Jamie stayed for the rest of the meeting.

1. Previous minutes and matters arising

Actions completed or ongoing.

1. Approval of revise Terms of Reference

Circulated, no further comments so approved. Review in 6 months.

1. WLSEN Update and resource allocation

Raymond is meeting with Judith from Community Enterprise to tidy up some admin this afternoon. Once this is completed The Gateway will receive resources for social enterprise support.

1. New Health Check tool

Raymond encouraged all members to use this useful self-assessment tool, which is on our website. [Health Check](https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/organisation-overview-health-check/)

1. Data Tracker

We have developed a local Third Sector Data Tracker, to complement SCVO’s national one. We are looking for volunteers to test this. **Action: please email Raymond if you can help with this.**

1. Planning themes and activities

**Consortia and partnerships training**: The Supplier Development Programme are

running a free session on *Preparing for Partnership on Sept 3rd 10.30-12*. [**Sign-up**](https://www.sdpscotland.co.uk/events/consortium-creation-and-planning-1923/) is

easy, and they do a wide range of useful training.

**Study visits** to successful consortia, were also discussed, where learning from experience can be shared. **Action: any suggestions for visits/venues to be sent to Raymond.**

Raymond is also exploring a possible meet the buyer event, to explore procurement opportunities with the NHS, Council, and College.

**Inter-trading**: The Chamber of Commerce have a business exhibition on Oct 23rd at the College (Gateway are attending to promote the Sector) [**Sign up here**](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/west-lothian-business-showcase-2025-tickets-1328136123899#:~:text=Eventbrite%20-%20West%20Lothian%20Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20presents,Livingston%2C%20West%20Lothian.%20Find%20event%20and%20ticket%20information.?msockid=1063122d492e66601d6b01fd489567c4)

**Supplier info**: There was a discussion around sharing recommendations for reliable suppliers. e.g. IT Support, printing, plumbers, joiners. The Gateway uses [Luma-IT](https://luma-it.com/contact/support/) who offer IT Support with rolling monthly agreements. Jamie spoke about a colleague who is looking at potentially a Facebook group.

It was agreed to re-share the link to our new SE Teams Channel, which can be used for this and general chat & questions: [**SE Forum**](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/channel/19%3ANhgpImntPCSuJEv3EvcUAfarYrQuyqeK38j5svw47J01%40thread.tacv2/SE%20Forum?groupId=d334c487-ad49-41cb-8a6f-63806fac523a&tenantId=be050862-75a4-4dfd-be60-e3f75dea411c) – chat & share away!

1. Members’ Catch up

SMILE Counselling are looking for larger premises: 7-10k ft2 Square feet needed: suggestions to Declan please.

Actions

* Study visits: Please email in with suggestions (All)
* Volunteers needed to test data tracker (All)
* Get in touch with any specific training requests (All)
* Issue teams channel invite in solo email for ease of reference (completed)
* Get in touch with any technical issues joining teams (All)
1. AOCB

None

**Next meeting on Wednesday September 24th 1-3pm @ Broxburn Utd**

**Guest speaker: Clare Stewart, Community Wealth Building Manager**