

Empowering Communities Through Volunteering with Ceangail CIC

Saturday 15 June, 2024

Ceangail CIC, a renowned social enterprise based in Stirling, has significantly transformed the local community through its diverse volunteer initiatives. By focusing on social impact and personal development, Ceangail benefits the region but also fosters growth and opportunity for young people through its Skills Connect vocational training programmes.

Community Empowerment Through Volunteering

Established in 2012, Ceangail's mission is to inspire young people into tourism through vocational training. It has been pivotal in encouraging volunteers from central Scotland to engage with its various community projects. The Skills Connect programmes they deliver range from its 3-day vocational training to informative sessions on improving mental health and wellbeing.

Its longest-running project combines a Skills Connect vocational training programme with the Stirling Highland Games event, held annually at Stirling Sports Village. Since 2014, this project has engaged with over 300 volunteers and supported 170 young people by helping them develop employability skills as part of their journey towards employment.

"Volunteering with Ceangail CIC has allowed me to connect with the Stirling community and the other 50-odd volunteers that support the Stirling Highland Games," says Una McLachlan, a longtime volunteer and committee member. "I've gained a deeper understanding of running events locally and feel more empowered to make a difference."

Impact on Young People

One of the core focuses of Ceangail CIC is to engage young people in meaningful activities that promote personal and professional growth. Through structured vocational training programmes, young people aged 16+ are given opportunities to develop valuable skills, build confidence, and gain practical experience in the tourism sector. These experiences can include building knowledge of running events, digital media, and being a heritage tour guide all of which help develop skills such as leadership, organising, and teamwork.

One of the local high school teachers shared her experience of seeing Ceangail work with their students first-hand: "All of our young people that Ceangail has worked with have enjoyed their programme. The educators listen to them, support them, challenge them and give them opportunities they potentially would not get. It's great to work with you again."

Creating Sustainable Social Impact

Ceangail's efforts extend beyond immediate volunteer activities. The organisation is dedicated to becoming a sustainable social enterprise that addresses long-term community needs. By developing initiatives that generate revenue and reinvest profits into the community work they provide, Ceangail looks for its impact to be both profound and lasting.

Ceangail has been in contact with the local authority since 2016 about how it can improve the land where it delivers the annual highland games event. If this vision is realised, the social enterprise can host more volunteer programmes, providing greater opportunities for Stirling-based residents to get involved. Its event delivery supports the local economic development strategy and fosters a sense of belonging and community spirit.

Looking Ahead

As Ceangail continues to push forward its vision, the organisation remains committed to encouraging more people to volunteer. Plans include delivery of 3 events each year, providing up to 150 volunteers with an opportunity for personal development, friendships and socialising.

"The Ceangail Board are excited about the possibilities of the social enterprise's future. The potential to have an even greater impact on supporting young people, volunteering and the local economy is encouraging but to become sustainable is a must for us," says Matt McGrandles, Executive Director at

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Ceangail CIC. "Our vision, which would bring an area of Stirling back to life, will create jobs, boost the local economy and offer young people real practical learning experiences. This will create a network of empowered individuals and a thriving community, all connected through the spirit of volunteering."

For more information about Ceangail CIC and how to volunteer, visit www.ceangail.org or contact office@ceangail.org

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