

SHETLAND'S LOCAL PLACE PLANS

Leaflet 16 - A Meanwhile Use Perspective

Why should we think about meanwhile uses?

Meanwhile uses make temporary use of vacant land or buildings before long-term development happens. They can bring life to empty spaces, support local enterprise, and provide community benefits.

How do meanwhile uses affect land and buildings?

- Reduce dereliction and antisocial behaviour
 - Provide affordable space for start-ups, artists, or community groups
 - Test ideas before permanent investment
 - Improve the look and feel of an area
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Key concepts:

- **Temporary Use:** Short-term occupation of land or buildings
 - **Community Benefit:** Activities that meet local needs (e.g., pop-up shops, gardens)
 - **Flexibility:** Designs and agreements that allow easy setup and removal
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What does this look like in Shetland?

- Vacant shops or other premises used for pop-up retail, producer and consumer co-ops or exhibitions
 - Empty croft buildings adapted for seasonal craft workshops
 - Disused land in rural settlements used for community gardens or food growing
 - Temporary use of retail units, halls or sheds for local boot fairs or repair cafés
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Things to think about when planning land and buildings:

- Are there empty or underused buildings or sites that could be used temporarily?
 - What permissions or agreements are needed?
 - How can temporary uses support local priorities (e.g., jobs, culture, food)?
 - Can infrastructure (power, water, access) be provided easily?
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Examples:

- Pop-up café or gallery in an unused shop
 - Community allotments on land awaiting development
 - Seasonal markets in vacant car parks
 - Temporary co-working space in an empty or underused office
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For information and support:

- [Planning and Building – Shetland Islands Council](#)
- [Voluntary Action Shetland](#)
- [Making more of Scotland's land - Scottish Land Commission](#)
- [Meanwhile Use Toolkit](#)
- [Measuring the Impact of Meanwhile Use - Hammond Associates](#)
- [Meanwhile Use — New Practice](#)
- [What is Meanwhile Use - Temporary Housing Sites](#)