

**SOCIAL
BITE**

SOCIAL BITE VILLAGE FRANCHISE MODEL

An innovative approach to ending
homelessness in your local area



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THE PROPOSITION

A life-changing alternative to temporary accommodation

Social Bite Villages are an innovative, community-focused take on temporary accommodation, offering long-term benefits to vulnerable groups.

Every Social Bite Village will be a highly supportive community offering the right support, living environment and opportunities for people in a situation of homelessness to build an independent life, secure stable employment and sustain future tenancies.

Traditional forms of temporary accommodation such as homeless hostels and B&Bs, despite their high costs to local authorities, do not deliver positive, long-term solutions for people affected by homelessness and do little to prevent repeat homelessness. The Village model is a time-efficient and cost-effective solution, which assists people to break free from the cycle of homelessness.

Run with local partners, including charities and councils, they give people affected by homelessness an uplifting, supportive living environment. As a resident, you can come and go as you please, socialise, have a pet, and get comfortable running your own home, all with 24/7 support.

Surrounded by attractive landscaping, each village has 10–15 modern, sustainable homes, as well as a buzzing community hub for activities that range from counselling to baking, yoga and music.

Using locally sourced materials, all the buildings are prefabricated, made off-site in a factory. Each 'nest house' includes a bedroom, shower room, kitchen and living space, with a guaranteed lifespan of more than 50 years for each building.

A village's small footprint and quick construction time provide opportunities to regenerate and develop unused land, creating appealing surroundings with social benefits for the whole community.

A Social Bite Village can be adapted to the local need, ensuring it's a key part of a council's response to tackling homelessness. A village provides a beautiful living environment with intensive onsite support and a radically different alternative to temporary accommodations that form the status quo.



Partnership working: The Salvation Army's Karen Good, Social Bite Founder Josh Littlejohn and South Lanarkshire Council's Homelessness and Housing Support Manager, Jackie Fernie

Steps to get involved and run your own Social Bite Village

Social Bite is seeking partners to invest in our pioneering housing model, offering access to expertise in addressing homelessness, construction, procurement and engaging communities.

Initial expressions of interest are obligation-free, typically an informal chat between Social Bite's village team and housing officers.

If a local authority wants to proceed, Social Bite can support with reviewing suitable sites and consult on designing a village that meets the needs of the area and their preferred client group. This scoping would provide an estimate of costs and a timeline.

Following a formal agreement on investment from each party, the project will follow these steps:

1.	Expression of interest
2.	Project scoping
3.	Formal agreement to proceed
4.	Identifying a site
5.	Community engagement
6.	Planning application
7.	Placing the order for houses and community hub
8.	Modular construction and groundworks
9.	Hub and houses installed
10.	Launch events
11.	Residents move in

Subject to planning constraints and weather conditions affecting construction, a village can be built in as little as a year.



The community hub at the Social Bite Village in Rutherglen, South Lanarkshire

ABOUT SOCIAL BITE AND OUR VILLAGES

THE MOVEMENT TO END HOMELESSNESS

Social Bite is a leading homelessness charity and social enterprise driving change in Scotland and across the UK. We bring together an amazing network of volunteers, donors, fundraisers, and partner organisations, united by our goal of ending homelessness.

Social Bite was co-founded by Josh Littlejohn MBE and Alice Thompson in 2012, beginning life as a small coffee shop in Edinburgh. From the start, all profits went to good causes. Today, our work is part of a bigger movement, alongside other homelessness charities and organisations that help people in crisis.

We distribute more than 255,000 free meals a year to people who are homeless or vulnerable across the UK. We've helped over 130 people into meaningful, lasting employment through our Jobs First programme. And over 1,000 people have been housed in Scotland through our accommodation projects and partnerships, from launching Housing First to establishing the Social Bite Village model.



The original Social Bite Village in Edinburgh, 2018

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SOCIAL BITE VILLAGES

The idea for Social Bite Villages came out of conversations we had with people supported by and employed in our social enterprises, who had experience of living in temporary accommodation. They told us that often this type of accommodation didn't provide a suitable platform for people to escape from homelessness, so we acted.

We opened the first Social Bite Village in Granton, Edinburgh in August 2018. It's an innovative, highly supported community, run day-to-day by Cyrenians, which has housed 100 people and counting. The purpose of the Village is to offer the right support, living environment and opportunities for up to 20 people affected by homelessness, to help them towards an independent life.

The second Social Bite Village, Harriet Gardens, opened in April 2026. Home to 16 people who have experienced repeat homelessness in and around Rutherglen, it's run in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council, with The Salvation Army responsible for day-to-day operations.

HOW THE MODEL ADDRESSES HOMELESSNESS

The villages deliver a supported, community-focused solution for people who have experienced homelessness but aren't ready to move directly into their own tenancy. Village life provides not only safety, shelter and amenities, but the friendly welcome of an understanding community of staff, volunteers and fellow residents. Working together, but tailored to individuals, there's an emphasis on actively building skills and confidence through communal activities, routine, and opportunities for education and employment.

Placing community at the heart of the model is in line with the Scottish Government's Housing to 2040. Providing a place to congregate, eat and socialise, alongside the comfort of your own home and private space, is a rare alternative to traditional temporary accommodation and a complementary addition to the current home and housing models found across the UK.



Inside a Social Bite Village house

VILLAGE DESIGN

The design of the village and its buildings are intended to address the issues with temporary accommodation that have been described to us by the people we support. The quality look and feel of residents' housing is a huge part of what makes the Social Bite Village model unique: residents are given a home, even if it's only temporary, which gives them a sense of dignity and self-worth. The design also enhances the local area, making the village a proud addition to the local landscape.

Each village will typically consist of 15 modern, sustainable modular 'nest houses', as well as a vibrant, community hub, all surrounded by beautiful landscaping, to create a compassionate community. Expert partners provide a skilled and experienced staff and volunteer team. This offers the right support, living environment and opportunities for someone from a situation of homelessness to build an independent life, secure stable employment and sustain future tenancies.

When residents are ready and able to move on, they are supported into permanent accommodation and support them to make this transition 'stick'. As each person moves on, a new community member will join to be supported and mentored by their fellow community members.

The single-occupancy nest houses exemplify Social Bite's dedication to dignified high-quality design and provide residents with a peaceful, private living space. We believe that providing a beautiful and extremely high-quality home for residents to live in while they are at the village can have a profoundly positive psychological impact. That's why we build from scratch with a bespoke design, rather than, for example, using shipping containers or other pre-fabrication models that lack in quality and homeliness. The Nest Houses look and feel like real homes, because that's exactly what they are.

The vibrant community hub is the welcoming heart of a Social Bite Village. Complete with a communal kitchen, recreational spaces, counselling rooms, outdoor decking and exercise facilities, the hub will host activities focused on personal development, training and recovery services. By gathering to share meals, socialise and access support under one roof, a culture of community and belonging will flourish.

Residents will be surrounded by people who understand their journey, providing a unifying foundation. Shared spaces will facilitate lasting relationships and a sense of purpose. By interweaving community and comprehensive support services into village life, residents receive the best chance to maintain their journey out of homelessness.

The houses are constructed from locally sourced timber and by using natural materials like timber, the homes have a low carbon footprint. Thanks to an innovative construction method, they can be disassembled and reused rather than ending up in landfill.

The houses are spaced out with accessible walkways and natural vegetation between, and we often work with a landscape architect to create a haven, a peaceful corner of nature, within the urban environment, incorporating elements such as bio-diverse wild meadows and vegetable gardens where possible.

Take a look around the houses and community hub at Harriet Gardens.





"It gave you that space to start rebuilding yourself. I called my little room my sanctuary, because that is how I felt."

Former village resident Mary
at the Social Bite Village, Edinburgh

AN ADAPTABLE AND SCALABLE MODEL TO ADDRESS THE GROWING HOMELESSNESS CRISIS

The Social Bite Village model is one of the most important steps we've taken to break the cycle of homelessness. There is a desperate need for high quality temporary accommodation that will provide intensive support on site to help vulnerable people find their feet.

Our Village in Edinburgh has been operating for eight years. It's moving a mile down the road to a long-term site in 2026. Following its success, we now have a scalable, community-based solution to deliver in other locations, one which puts support and the individual at the centre of the approach.

As well as the Village in Edinburgh, the second Social Bite Village, Harriet Gardens, opened in Rutherglen, South Lanarkshire in 2026, following the model of the original village. In 2023 we began adapting the village model for people who are affected drug and alcohol addiction. The Bill Sword Social Bite Recovery Village would be a bespoke facility in Dundee. It's currently in the planning stages.

The core elements of the village model are the same for each village. What differs is the residents, their needs, and how the model is adapted to support them.

The village model works best at a scale of 10 to 15 homes – the size at which a real community forms. Residents get to know each other, look out for each other, and build the kind of relationships that support long-term recovery and independence.

The model works in urban and rural settings alike. What matters is that the location has good connections to education, employment, healthcare, and public transport, and that it offers a setting that feels calm and welcoming. A beautiful environment isn't a luxury; it's part of how the model works.

The village can play different roles depending on what a council needs. It can add capacity to existing temporary accommodation options, fill a gap where provision is scarce, or replace outdated housing stock that is no longer fit for purpose. If a council is finding it difficult to meet their statutory duty, or their current temporary accommodation offer is struggling to keep pace with demand, a Social Bite Village is a proven, state-of-the-art alternative. It can be adapted to meet the needs of a wide range of residents, including:

- **People experiencing repeat homelessness**, who need more than a roof – they need structured support and a stable community around them.
- **Prison leavers**, for whom a safe, supported landing place dramatically reduces the risk of reoffending and rough sleeping.
- **People in recovery from drug or alcohol addiction**, who benefit from a therapeutic community setting with on-site specialist support.
- **People with high support needs or mental health support needs**, who require more intensive care than traditional temporary accommodation can provide.
- **Young people**, who need a nurturing environment to build independence and life skills for the first time.
- **Families**, who need a safe, stable home while they get back on their feet.
- **People who struggle to maintain a tenancy long-term**, who need the bridge between supported accommodation and truly independent living.

RUNNING A SOCIAL BITE VILLAGE

VILLAGE RESIDENTS AND THEIR COMMUNITY

Residents are typically a mix of single men and women who require supported accommodation for a longer period before moving on to their own tenancy. The residents will be people who are currently living in mostly unsupported temporary accommodation like B&Bs and who might be facing additional barriers that prevent them from breaking the cycle of homelessness.

People will have to have been assessed as unintentionally homeless and therefore have an open case with the local authority where the Village operates. They will also be assessed as having support needs and likely to benefit from supported accommodation, as opposed to a temporary furnished property with outreach support. Residents will stay in the Village until they secure a private let or council tenancy.

To join a Social Bite Village, people must show a desire to make positive changes, like starting education or looking for work. Prospective residents should have a desire to engage with a support worker to work towards achieving personal goals and also want to make an active contribution towards the Social Bite Village community.

We anticipate residents will live at the Village for approximately 6–24 months, depending on their circumstances and the availability of housing stock in the local area. Over this time, people will contribute to the life of the community, learn a range of new skills and engage in work and voluntary placements.

REFERRALS

The Social Bite Village will take referrals for people who find themselves homeless or looking for an alternative to sofa surfing, bed and breakfast or other types of temporary accommodation.

Individuals, depending on agreements with local authorities, will be able to self-refer, be referred from other support services or the local authority might be responsible for the referrals.

Prior to the referral, the Village support provider will ensure that a homeless assessment has been completed with the local authority.





"I'll never forget this, it's completely changed my life around. Everybody together got me out of a bad place. I've got friends for life."

Former village resident Michael
at the Social Bite Village Edinburgh

SUPPORT PROVISION

Social Bite Villages are a form of supported temporary accommodation. They provide safe housing combined with on-site staff to help people experiencing homelessness. The Villages meet the need for safety while offering person-centred support to build independent living skills and prepare for permanent housing.

Support is an essential part of a Social Bite Village: we know that structured support to deal with underlying issues enables people to break the cycle of homelessness. Local charity partners specialising in supporting people in a situation of homelessness should be enlisted to provide support, which can be 9-to-5, or if required, 24/7.

Support provision will be expected to meet the needs of people referred to the Village, which will also be in line with meeting local authority statutory accommodation and support duties for people in a situation of homelessness.

Support providers should adhere to the following standards:

- All checks in place for support work (i.e. PVG Scotland, DBS England)
- Have relevant bodies registration (i.e. visiting housing support)
- Incident reporting policies in place
- Complaint procedures in place
- Support policies and procedures in place including safeguarding
- Occupancy Agreement in place
- Clear referral route into the Village
- Clear assessment processes
- Clear support plan in place
- Clear risk assessment in place

The support provision will be offered as follows:

1. The referral stage
2. The move and live in stage
3. The move out stage

The referral stage will consist of:

- **Referral review**

All received referrals will be reviewed by support staff. People who are interested in living in the Social Bite Village will be contacted with the outcome of the referral review. If successful, they will be invited to an initial village visit. If, for any reason, their referral can't be processed, people will be offered signposting support.

- **Initial Village Visit**

After their referral form has been received the applicant will be invited along for an initial visit to the village, to have a look around, meet with staff and have a chat with residents to ask any questions.

- **Initial application commences**

Application and assessment discussion takes place. A support worker works with the applicant through the process, completing relevant paperwork to ascertain actions in preparation for the support work assessment. A request for two character references is made.

- **Support work assessment**

An appointment is made with a support worker to ask any further questions and reflect on initial application. A support plan and risk assessment is carried out with the resident. References are reviewed and discussion takes place about relevant referrals to other support referrals for the individual. The support worker will also assess a person's financial situation to make sure that all income is maximised and the individual knows their financial rights.

- **Community visit**

Further introductions are made to the Village community. Potential new members are invited for a community meal or event and a community assessment form is completed.

- **Application review**

The application is discussed with senior staff members taking into consideration compatibility, support needs, and risk support actions. When agreed, the referral form sent. A meeting time is arranged to complete the Occupancy Agreement, mandate for Housing Benefit, and an inventory form. A move in date is then arranged.



Inside the Community Hub at the Social Bite Village, Edinburgh

The move and live in stage:

Welcome to the Social Bite Village!

Staff members will make sure that people feel welcome and will provide a friendly and reassuring presence.

This is an initial stage of moving in. During that stage it's expected that people are introduced to the site and allocated their own house. This stage will include staff focusing on ensuring that people are aware of their responsibilities, house rules, health and safety requirements, and any other relevant information.

Support provision

Support is a crucial part of our village model. It focuses on the needs of residents and assists people with rediscovering and starting the journey to independence.

The main goals of the support are to assist people with improving and gaining living skills, and to create a safe and positive community.

The support consists of the following (but it not limited to):

Support work meetings

- › Support workers will organise weekly key-working meetings. The aim of these meetings is to provide 1-2-1 support for residents. Support workers will identify and assess with a person their support needs, assist them with settling into the village, help them to maximise their stay, and assist in tackling any difficulties that may have been identified. They will also assist in preparing the residents to source a home, then ensure they are settled. Detailed support and risk assessments for people living in the Village will be created with the individuals and those plans will be reviewed regularly. Support staff will work closely with local authorities and housing officers to develop housing plans for individuals.

Community meetings

- › Residents will be invited to attend weekly community meetings where various ideas for activities and communal issues will be discussed

and solutions agreed. The goal of those meetings is to teach people to take ownership of what they would like to gain from the Village. It's also part of building a community and ensuring that everyone is heard and encouraged to participate.

Service provider additional responsibilities:

- › Managing and monitoring the security of the buildings and community areas, including ensuring the project does not negatively impact on the wider local community through effective management and proactive engagement with the wider community to develop positive relationships.
- › Cleaning and resetting empty units for re-occupation within an agreed target timescale (48 – 72 hours). All units will require standard void checks within the turnaround period.
- › Develop positive working relationships with other services to provide effective integrated responses to vulnerable households.
- › Report outcomes on a regular basis to evidence the success of the service.
- › Regularly report on learnings and improvements from the support service provider, ensuring findings are used to enhance service delivery and outcomes for residents.
- › Regularly reviewing and reporting on the benefits of peer support or volunteering services delivered within the support provision.
- › There will be a requirement for this service to ensure a person-centred approach with trauma informed principles. This includes but is not limited to staff trained in trauma informed approaches, SSSC registration and services managed in such a way as to promote psychologically informed environments. It is expected that the service will be welcoming, inclusive and supportive.

Move out stage:

This stage is related to a person moving out to their own accommodation. Support staff are expected to co-create a move-on plan and to assist and support the individual who is moving out to prepare their tenancy. They should link the individual within the local authority and provide ad hoc support for a period of at least three months.

On leaving the Village, individuals will be supported to make the successful transition into their own accommodation. Ongoing support is provided to link the former resident with the community

and local organisations in their new area. As the support in the current Social Bite Village is based on positive relationship-building, former residents participate in the life of the village by coming back, sharing their experience and maintaining friendships, which provides an additional support network to them.

The person moving out will be offered access to the hub and hub activities for a reasonable period once they've moved onto settled accommodation. A follow up phone call every six months for a period of 18 months after moving out from the Village is required to check how the person is doing and offer them opportunities to take part in promotional activities. (Consent for this follow up must be obtained before move out.)



Cyrenians' Adult Services Manager Andy Murdoch at the Social Bite Village Edinburgh

Additional considerations for support: volunteering

A live-in volunteering model offers invaluable support to people who stay in a Social Bite Village. A rota ensures there's always someone available to residents, and volunteers strengthen social relationships within the community by running more social aspects of the community.

Alongside helping with the day-to-day running of the hub, including cleaning and essential health and safety checks, the volunteers provide valuable services in organising activities both within and outside of the Village.

Through building rapport with community members, volunteers can tailor their support to meet the needs of the residents, which is especially important in following a trauma-informed approach. As well as supporting people who stay in the Village in this way, the volunteers also play a key role in encouraging people to explore new opportunities and experiences, further developing their health and social wellbeing.

The support model can therefore consist of people being supported by paid team members as well as live-in volunteers. Between the two, people can be themselves and live their lives, with support and a range of activities and social programmes to take part in.



Residential volunteer Amber and her dog Leo

Example of a weekly schedule

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	Community breakfast Planning community activities Volunteering	Cycling Walk and talk support meetings	Football Cycling Movie night
Tuesday	Key working meetings Volunteering at local projects	Community lunch	Game night Movie night
Wednesday	Community shopping Volunteering Agency visits to the SBV	Make your own pizza	Community Dinner
Thursday	Key working meetings	Community gardening Visiting local projects Cycling	Quiz night
Friday	Cleaning morning Laundry morning	Key working meetings	Fish and chips night
Saturday	All day trip		Movie night
Sunday		Lunch BBQ	Movie / game night



Cycling is a popular activity at the Social Bite Village Edinburgh

Typical village operators

We envision future villages will be commissioned by councils or local authorities who then tender for local support providers.

However, in our 14-year history of providing homes, jobs, food and support to people with a background of homelessness we have built a wide range of collaborative partnerships to create positive change. We are happy to make introductions in the homelessness sector, local authorities and housing associations and can support tender processes.

The partner organisations for each new Village should be sourced and engaged as appropriate throughout the project implementation, in line with the unique needs of each Village and its potential tenants. Here's how it works for each of our current Village projects:

- **Social Bite Village, Edinburgh**
Social Bite is the landlord and day-to-day operations are delivered by our partner and fellow homelessness charity, Cyrenians, who were chosen for their expertise in delivering community-lead services.
- **Harriet Gardens, Social Bite Village in South Lanarkshire**
Social Bite has funded the construction and build in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council. Following a tender process, Salvation Army were chosen as the operational partner for running the village day-to-day.
- **The Bill Sword Social Bite Recovery Village, Dundee**
We are in the planning process for a third village in Dundee. Unlike the other villages, the model has been adapted to provide recovery services to people with addiction issues in the area. Social Bite and the WM Sword Trust are funding the build and construction of the village and working closely with an expert support provider.

Social Bite Village core principles, standards and values

Residents are at the heart of Social Bite Villages. Each Village must offer them:

- Community
- Choice
- Their own home
- Personalised support
- A managed transition into a long-term home
- A dignified place to live

To enable this, Villages should be designed to be sustainable and adaptable to the needs of its community and the local area.



DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Every Social Bite Village is built to the same standard: high-quality, sustainable, and designed to feel like a proper home. That's not a nice-to-have – it's central to how the model works. We know from experience that the environment people live in directly affects how they feel, and how they approach their next steps. It informs all aspects of the design, from selecting a site to construction to interior details.

A community hub under construction in the Ecosystems Technologies factory

Choosing a site

One of the first things a new village needs is the right piece of land. We've proven that vacant or disused sites, neglected green spaces and former industrial plots can be transformed into something genuinely valuable for the community. Land that has been forgotten or written off can become a place where lives are turned around.

Adopting unused land in an urban setting for a village sends a clear message: that people experiencing homelessness deserve to be at the heart of their community, not pushed to its edges. It's good use of public land, and it creates something the whole neighbourhood can take pride in.

When assessing a potential site, there must be enough space to arrange homes around a central hub, with green space in between; good connections to public transport and local services; and a setting that offers a degree of calm and privacy.

An important practical consideration is that the village operates under a caravan licence rather than requiring full planning permission. Because the Nest Houses are classified as moveable structures, there is significantly more flexibility around the type of land that can be used, including sites that might otherwise present development challenges. This presents the opportunity to unlock a broader range of suitable sites, making it considerably easier and faster to bring a new village into operation.

We work closely with the local council from the outset to identify suitable land within the local development plan, navigate planning requirements, and carry out meaningful community consultation. This partnership means the village becomes part of the neighbourhood, not something imposed on it.



Before the Social Bite Village



With the new Social Bite Village

Off-site manufacture

The Nest Houses are built by Ecosystems Technologies, an Invergordon-based company that has pioneered an innovative approach to modular construction.

Each home is built as a completed module in the factory, then delivered to site as a “plug and play” unit, meaning very little on-site work is required. The homes arrive ready to live in. Off-site construction cuts total build time down to just months, compared to the years a traditional build might take.

This approach has real advantages beyond speed. Ecosystems’ manufacturing model uses standardised components and sub-assemblies in a kit-of-parts system, allowing consistent factory quality while maintaining flexibility across different projects. Every home meets the same high standard because it’s built under controlled conditions.



Watch our video on how Social Bite villages are made.



The team at Ecosystems Technologies



A house arriving on site at the Social Bite Village in Rutherglen, South Lanarkshire

Sustainability

Sustainability is woven into every stage of how the villages are built. The houses have an estimated lifespan of 60 years and can be disassembled and reused elsewhere, rather than ending up in landfill.

The structural components are manufactured from mass timber products, with Scottish-grown cladding on the external facades, all using local supply chains and a local workforce. The timber itself is sourced from responsibly managed Scottish forests that actively remove carbon from the atmosphere. The result is a building that is net zero carbon.

We also choose to build the houses and hub from wood because it has biophilic properties – studies have shown that timber-rich environments can reduce blood pressure and stress levels.

Alongside the construction materials, we incorporate renewable energy sources and low-carbon technologies to power each village. Durable, sustainable materials are specified throughout, and the compact footprint of the modular design means minimal site disturbance during construction.

Supply chain and partners

A Social Bite Village is a team effort, and building one means bringing together a wide network of partners, from architects and landscape designers to manufacturers and material suppliers.

Our lead construction partner, Ecosystems Technologies, manages the manufacture of the Nest Houses. They complete as much of each home as possible before it leaves the factory.

Beyond the core build, we work with local and national specialists across every aspect of the village, including glazing and kitchen fitting, landscaping and interior design. Many of our partners contribute materials and expertise as gifts-in-kind or at cost price, because they believe in what we're building. That generosity strengthens relationships, creates genuine shared investment in each project, and helps keep costs down.

This approach supports local jobs and the wider UK economy, and we actively look to build local supply chains wherever a new village is developed. When a council partners with us, they're not just getting a village, they're getting a model that puts money back into the local area.



A community hub under construction in the Ecosystems Technologies factory

Landscaping and greenspace

The space between the buildings matters just as much as the buildings themselves.

Each village is designed so the Nest Houses are arranged around a central community hub, connected by accessible green walkways. The layout gives residents privacy while keeping the community close. We work with landscape architects to create something that genuinely feels like a sanctuary.

Where the site allows, we incorporate biodiverse planting, wild meadow areas, and vegetable gardens. These aren't just decorative. Growing food, tending to plants, and spending time outdoors all have documented benefits for mental health and wellbeing.

Green infrastructure is also part of the wider sustainability picture: planting that supports biodiversity, manages water run-off, and creates a resilient, low-maintenance environment for years to come.



Greenery, plants and an outdoor gym space at the Social Bite Village in Rutherglen, South Lanarkshire

FINANCE AND FUNDING

Costs and financial models

All costs are indicative and will vary depending on site specifics. The community hub building will cost approximately £325,000, and around £82,000 for each house. This makes the cost very reasonable compared to purchasing a flat! Additional funding will be needed for external landscaping, storage, recreation areas and internal furnishings.

Local Authorities would need to provide site works and licenses, development costs, professional services, groundworks and infrastructure, consultancy, and contingency. This total will vary depending on the complexity of the site and ground conditions.

Throughout each resident's stay at the Village, their relevant housing benefit can be claimed and can contribute the majority of the running costs of the accommodation element of the Village. The Village's one bedroom house model can maximise occupancy.

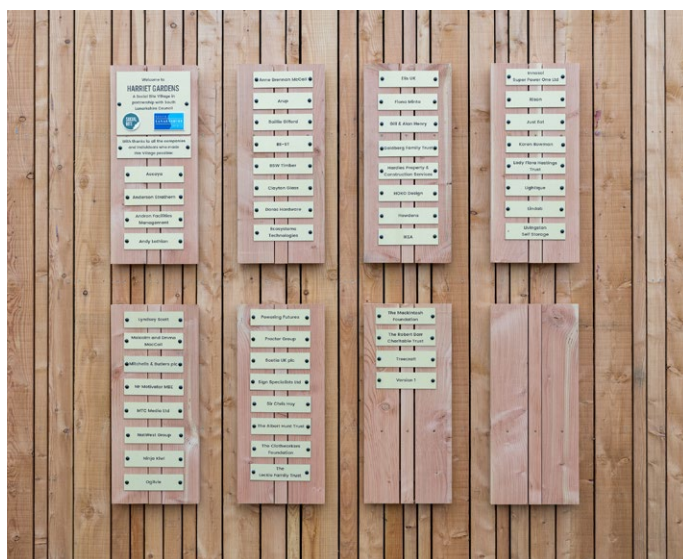
Co-investment and procurement from Social Bite

Social Bite is not looking to profit from the villages. Our priority is to work with councils and local authorities, alongside village operators, to provide safe and supportive places for people to live.

For the next select number of villages that we create in partnership with local authorities, Social Bite will invest (indicatively) up to 25% of the unit construction cost – subsidising the project for the partnering councils. Local authorities will need to provide a suitable site, including all professional design team services and groundworks, and identify a support provider for day-to-day running of the village.

Local authority will need to provide:

- Fully serviced site
- Groundworks package as required
- Final landscaping
- Commissioning of local partners for ongoing support services.



Plaques recognising partners and fundraisers at the Social Bite Village in Rutherglen, South Lanarkshire

Social Bite will act as a consultant to the village project, procuring the houses and hub buildings to guarantee standards and provide quality assurance. We will have them delivered to site, coordinating with your groundworks' contractor. If required, and following additional discussion, Social Bite can assist with recommendations on well-placed consultants and contractors to help with groundworks or site design at an additional cost.

MARKETING, MEDIA AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ministerial visits

The Social Bite Village in Edinburgh has welcomed many ministerial visits since opening in 2018, reflecting the growing political interest in the model. In 2024, Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner visited to see the village firsthand, and in 2025 both the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and the Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy were shown around the site.

Opportunities to talk with the support providers who are creating impact day-to-day, and to meet residents themselves, has a lasting impact on Ministers. This level of political engagement is a sign that the model is being taken seriously at the highest levels of government.

Social Bite is happy to facilitate visits from all levels of government to create opportunities for discussions on ending homelessness.



Former Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner talks to Cyrenians CEO Ewan Aitken and Social Bite Founder Josh Littlejohn at the Edinburgh Social Bite Village

Marketing and media opportunities

Operating a Social Bite Village is an opportunity to bring positive publicity to your local area. Investing in a village demonstrates interest in improving services and opportunities, which can generate good will in communities. It also suggests local authorities are willing to step up and seek innovative solutions to address homelessness in a lasting way.

Social Bite encourages all Village operators to participate in relevant local and national media opportunities. All self-directed marketing activity must be consistent with Social Bite's brand values and receive prior approval where required.

Journalists are typically interested in speaking with residents, as well as village staff. They may also be interested in the design of the buildings and their sustainability. Social Bite can provide comments or quotes for articles about the village and may be able to provide in-person support for TV coverage.

To support further fundraising for ongoing costs, Social Bite may also look to work with village operators and other partners involved in running the village to gain publicity for the village model and individual villages.

Working with the village operator and service manager, Social Bite may approach village residents for ambassadorial roles. This can be anonymous if residents would prefer and can involve providing quotes for fundraising materials or press releases, online video content or TV coverage, in-person speaking events and more. Some opportunities may be remunerated, and a service level agreement will be provided to manage expectations for all parties.

With appropriate credit, Social Bite is happy to share content it creates about the village for operators to use on their own website, social media, internal communications etc.

Using the Social Bite name and brand

Social Bite has developed valuable goodwill and brand recognition associated with its name, marks, mission, and operating model. Everything associated with the Social Bite brand – including our name, logo, materials and ways of working – remains part of Social Bite’s collective identity and intellectual property.

We invite village partners to use our name and branding thoughtfully and consistently as part of delivering a shared mission to end homelessness. We ask village operators to use our brand, in accordance with the brand standards, visual identity guidelines, tone of voice, and marketing policies we provide in a way that reflects our values, protects our reputation, and reinforces public confidence in the Social Bite Village model. By working together in this way, we can ensure that every Social Bite Village feels connected to the wider movement to end homelessness. If a partnership comes to an end, we ask that use of the Social Bite name, branding and materials is ended clearly and respectfully, to avoid confusion and maintain confidence among local communities.

Please contact Social Bite’s communications team for more information on use of our name and logo, including supply of logos.



Branding at a village

Naming your village

Villages may have their own designations – such as Harriet Gardens – but should be acknowledged as a Social Bite Village in official documents, press and media, and on building signage where appropriate. For example, “Harriet Gardens, a Social Bite Village in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council.”

Community consultation

A village can help to reduce stigma around homelessness by sparking conversation about what it means to be homeless, who is affected, and how to help them. Whilst initial proposals for a village can be met with negative attitudes from the local community, there is usually a shift in sentiment once construction begins and they open.

Social Bite can provide information about the success of existing village projects and a guest speaker for events (with sufficient notice) to support local councils and authorities in securing community buy-in. You will also have access to our research on the village model and its impacts that can be used to inform village proposals and community engagement.



Engaging with the local community

NEXT STEPS

Social Bite is on a mission to bring people together to build a collaborative movement to end homelessness. We're looking for partners in local authorities who are ready to innovate their homelessness support provision.

We want to speak to housing teams who are ready to make lasting changes, enabling some of the country's most vulnerable people to change their lives for the better.

The evidence is clear, the model is proven, and the need has never been greater. If you're looking for a high-quality, flexible solution to homelessness in your area – one that is cost-effective, community-focused, and genuinely changes lives – please get in touch.

To begin discussions about building a Social Bite Village in your area, please contact

Josh Littlejohn *Founder, Social Bite*
josh.littlejohn@social-bite.co.uk



South Lanarkshire Chief Executive Paul Manning and Head of Housing Services Sharon Egan with The Salvation Army's Contract Manager Karen Good and Social Bite Founder Josh Littlejohn



www.social-bite.co.uk



Social Bite Fund is a registered Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation with charity number SC045232