

Scottish Land Fund makes award to North Edinburgh Arts

North Edinburgh Arts has received £156,000 from the Scottish Land Fund to continue the regeneration of MacMillan Square.

This funding will allow the charity to buy the land and building in a Community Asset Transfer from The City of Edinburgh Council.

An additional plot of land to the north will also be purchased and the charity will work with the council to create a community and neighbourhood hub promoting culture, learning, work and wellbeing. The proposals also include a new early years centre, a new library, affordable home and an extension to the North Edinburgh Arts building.

This building and the organisation behind it allows residents a place to meet and have fun as well as a place to explore and learn. NEA is working with Edinburgh-based Richard Murphy Architects and Council colleagues to make sure the new hub is inspiring, inviting and innovative, and brings a high quality facility to the newly formed MacMillan Square.

During the pandemic the organisation was delivering food parcels to those in the community who needed help as well as sending out art packs and wellbeing packs.

Prior to this the creative workshops on offer each week included singing, circus skills, exhibitions and community theatre and film in the theatre which is part of the arts building. It is also home to Muirhouse Link Up, North

Edinburgh Drug and Alcohol Centre and the Tinderbox Orchestra all working to help disadvantaged people in the area.



Photo © North Edinburgh Arts

Chair of NEA, Lesley Hinds, said: “NEA has won five national awards in the last six years for place making and creative projects. This new capital project will allow the organisation to flourish, alongside Council provision. NEA is a special place for the community of North Edinburgh and has been a trusted community anchor providing emergency food, support, materials and online creative activities throughout the lockdown. Alongside our COVID activity of the last five months we have been working closely with partners to share and establish our vision of a welcoming and innovative creative hub for the next generation of North Edinburgh residents. The granting of the Scottish Land Fund is an important and welcome next step on this exciting journey.”

Director Kate Wimpres added: “The bright blue NEA building has been a beacon of hope for many throughout the lockdown, and an important part of the North Edinburgh landscape over the last decade. This endorsement from the Scottish Land Fund, following on from the Council’s agreement for this much loved and used asset to come fully into community ownership, takes NEA , and our community, another step closer to our vision becoming a reality. We are looking forward to building a first class facility fit for purpose for today, and for the years to come.”

City of Edinburgh Council Leader, Adam McVey, said: “We’ve been working with the local community to make neighbourhood improvements, build some of the best new housing in all of Edinburgh and create facilities which will benefit everyone who calls Pennywell home. It has been one of our most ambitious regeneration projects in Edinburgh for decades and one of Scotland’s largest too. Yet none of it would be possible without the input and support of the people and

organisations in the local area.

“North Edinburgh Arts is a great example of this and is so important for the cultural vibrancy of the area. We’re excited for our community asset transfer and to partner with them on this next stage of Pennywell’s regeneration. The funding boost is welcome news and the money will help us as we deliver a community and neighbourhood hub which promotes culture, learning, work and wellbeing. This will include a new early years centre and library, even more affordable homes plus improvements to the existing North Edinburgh Arts building to benefit everyone.”