



Housing Co-operative
& Community Space
Annual Report 2026





CONTENTS

1. Message from the Secretary pg4
2. Introduction to Mara's Housing Co-operative pg5
3. Activities in our first year pg5
4. Property viability & scoping pg6
5. Review of performance indicators pg8
6. Finances (up to end of 2025) pg10
7. Annual General Meeting outcomes pg11



MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

We have had a busy and promising first year as an organisation, with fundraising starting to pick up toward the end of the year. However, we are a proudly progressive organisation, and like many of those striving for a genuinely better world - for everyone - the last year has been disheartening. Amidst the from the constant deluge of bad news and assaults on human rights internationally, our government completely fails to oppose the oligarchy profiting from and driving inequality and intolerance, continuing with the same tired politics that has already failed a generation.

Meanwhile the radical alternative exists in a state of precarity. For the most part, we are communities without assets. Many of us not only lack personal wealth (*and therefore rely on exploitative arrangements like landlordism for basic needs like housing*) but also are involved in exhausting struggles for progress as members of groups that don't own the places they gather and struggle to meet the costs of doing anything on an impactful scale. As I write this I have just heard that a local community orchard is being evicted - two hundred trees uprooted and a four year project destroyed on the whim of a landlord.

I don't think communities strong enough to fight for meaningful change can exist in precarity. We need assets. We need places that nurture communities and provide stability. We need places for hope to grow. I hope this report encourages the reader to support our attempt at creating such a place, or feels inspired to start their own.

In solidarity,

Samuel Revell

Secretary of Mara's Housing Co-operative.



INTRODUCTION TO MARA'S HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE

Mara Co-op is a collective of organisers for grassroots groups in Aberdeen. We have years of collective experience organising community groups. Between us, we have a diversity of professional, voluntary, and personal experience in worker's unions and co-operatives, food banks and cooking, conservation, health and safety, community support, and more.

We've created a co-operative to provide affordable housing, and accelerate positive social change by providing community groups with a free space to organise and access resources. Eventually, income from residents (*ourselves*) paying rent to the co-operative will generate a financial surplus which will allow us to further support the community and help other projects grow.

Find out more at maracoop.org.uk.



ACTIVITIES IN OUR FIRST YEAR

While doing a lot of work in the background to set ourselves up, explore options and plan the project, we...

- Formally registered as a fully mutual co-operative under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 in March.
- Wrote our own secondary rules, statement of values and aims, and safe spaces policy.
- Viewed properties for sale with a large enough ground floor space in Aberdeen city centre, finding several that fit our requirements.
- Produced flyers and booklets to advertise the project.
- Launched our website.
- Developed and published a business plan.
- Established social media presences on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- Started accepting loanstock and received our first applications.
- Ran a fundraising ceilidh with a hundred attendees.
- Two members attended a training on conflict resolution run by Tripod.
- Grew our community membership (for people who want to be involved in the co-operative in a non-resident capacity), including setting up a Discord server.
- Supported two events by other organisations.



REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

We have quantitative and qualitative indicators for our own performance and the project's viability in general (*see our Business Plan on our website for a full list*). Over our first year many of these are looking positive.

Properties

We viewed four properties valued at between £300,000 and £360,000 which would mostly suit our purposes. Some of these would require more modification than others to be useable as an accessible community space, but none had major problems. Prices have remained stable, with one property falling in price by 18% to £260,000, considerably below our financial forecasting for a £300,000 property. A couple of sellers have expressed enthusiasm for our project.

Community Engagement

We have supported two organisations (*the local SPSC group and the Granite Gays*) with large events. For our fundraising ceilidh we were supported by the Black Cat co-operative (*which runs Krakatoa, a bar in the city*). We are also affiliated with Aberdeen Social Centre (ASC), making four organisations we have good connections with. Our community membership is currently 11 and we plan to hold quarterly community meetings this year. We also launched our quarterly newsletter, which brings together updates on what we're planning, what we've been working on, and key information we want to share with our wider community.



Reach

We have established presences on Instagram (*277 followers, 30 posts*), Facebook (*35 followers, 30 posts*) and LinkedIn (*22 followers, 981 impressions*). Successful posts on Instagram have had as many as 3,100 views and over one month we had 13,000 views. Some of our most shared and engaged posts in 2025 focused on how sharing resources helps combat fascism, and on challenging the narrative that blames migrants for the housing crisis. We have good connections with other local groups' social media presence and have shared each others' posts and done collaborative posts. Our members developed the Mara Co-op website from start to finish, with all content written, designed and produced in-house. The website sets out who we are, our vision, and our plans. It also acts as a hub for practical information, including details of upcoming events and how people can attend or support our work. We have had feedback that our website looks good and is a useful source of information about the project. We have printed flyers and booklets explaining the project which have been distributed at our events and at ASC. Our information booklet summarises our business plan and outlines ways to support Mara Co-op.

The activist community appears to be well informed about what we are aiming to do, and information tables at our ceilidh and ASC's activist fair reached a more diverse audience. We have been approached by multiple individuals who wanted to discuss the project further after hearing about it.

Fundraising

Since registering in March we have raised £2,774 in donations and £7,000 (*from two applications*) in loanstock, the majority being raised in the last quarter of 2025. We hope to continue this trajectory to reach our target of £50,000 - several individuals are in the process of offering loanstock but haven't made formal applications yet. Grants have not yet been a successful avenue of fundraising - our governance structure makes us ineligible for grants such as the Scottish Land Fund for example - but we continue to investigate potential grant funders.

Viability

We are judging viability by the number of endorsements received from organisations and individuals (*gauging community support for the project*) and financial information (*expenditure vs. income for example*). So far we have had many informal endorsements, but have taken a passive approach to getting them in writing by having a page on our website where endorsements can be submitted. We will be taking a more active approach to getting written endorsements from organisations, so that we can prove to potential supporters that we have the backing of a diverse range of groups in the city. Financially we are operating sustainably, with income exceeding outgoings. After an income of £2,784.30 our assets are currently £1,615.58.

Organisation

We have been operating well as an organisation, holding General Meetings regularly with good attendance. We have developed a comprehensive set of secondary rules. The members are optimistic about the project.



PROPERTY VIABILITY & SCOPING

In our search for a suitable building, we viewed four properties in 2025:

- Skala Guest House, viewed in June: 11-bedroom, 4-bathroom property located just off Crown St, near the city centre. It has a front and rear garden, and it appears suitable for low-cost alterations that would make the ground floor wheelchair accessible. Major benefits for this building include its ample garden space, large kitchen, and extra rooms for community space use. Our main concerns were a lack of a home report (*as it is currently registered as a commercial building*) and compliance documentation. The listed price at viewing was £315,000. At time of writing (*Feb 2026*), the property is still for sale and the price has been lowered to £260,000.
- Royal Crown Guest House, viewed in June: 11-bedroom, 5-bathroom property located on the north end of Crown St, near the city centre. It has a paved over rear garden, currently used as a small parking lot, with a 1-car garage situated alongside it, and no front garden. It is well-cared for and has all necessary compliance and home report documentation. It is still being used as a Guest House. Our main concerns were with the layout of the building – it is not easily segmented into communal use/private tenant use, plus it will not be easily made accessible. The listed price at viewing was £350,000. At time of writing (*Feb 2026*), the property is still for sale and the price has been lowered to £330,000.
- 398 Great Western Road, viewed in August: 11-bedroom, 9-bathroom property located on Great Western Road, near Anderson Drive. It has a large rear garden, a conservatory, and large kitchen. Major benefits included the fact that the rear entrance already is wheelchair accessible to the ground floor, and a ground floor bathroom could easily be made accessible. It is the largest building we have so far seen, by square metres. Major issues with the building was that it had not been occupied for over a year and had not been cared for in that period. It needed work on the chimney stack as it currently had a leak which caused moisture damage on the upper floor rooms and down the side of the building. Also, the listing was incorrect as there were only 9 bedrooms, and two would need to be converted into public use, leaving only 7 bedrooms for tenant occupancy. Plus, it's lack of proximity to the city centre did not make it desirable. After viewing, we expressed we were not interested in this property. The listed price at viewing was £375,000. The property was sold in November at a maximum of £345,000.



- 302 Great Western Road, viewed in August: 9-bedroom, 3-bathroom property located on the eastern side of Great Western Road, nearer the city centre. It has a front garden and an impressive rear garden with a summer house and large shed. Major benefits included that it was easily made accessible, with minimal stairs to the ground floor entrance and a large ground-floor bathroom. The kitchen is large and featured a separate large utility room and separate dining room. The ground floor appeared ready-made for use as a communal space. Our main concerns were that the rooms for tenants varied considerably in size and would be difficult to create an equitable living space for tenants. Plus, there were few bathrooms. It was on the market for rent, and the seller said we could make her an offer to buy when we are ready to. At time of viewing, it was listed for £2,000pcm. It was taken off the market since. We do plan on reaching out again when we're in the position to buy a property.

In 2024, before we became a fully registered housing co-op, we viewed two properties. One on Wellington Road, and the other on Whinhill Road. The Wellington Road property has since been sold by auction, after having been on the market for nearly 2 years. The property on Whinhill Road was originally listed for sale at £380,000 but is still on the market and has since been lowered to £325,000.

Based on current market conditions, we anticipate Aberdeen housing market will continue to decline, especially in the demand for guest houses, which continues to stagnate. We want to obtain a property as soon as possible to take advantage of this buyers-market, and we hope that we reach a position to purchase a property within this sellers' slump.



FINANCES (UP TO END OF 2025)

Since our registration in March, our fundraising has mostly come from direct donations, given to us at events we have hosted and supported. In 2025, we received around 220 individual donations, at an average donation amount of around £12.65. We have agreed to loanstocks totaling £7,000 & are hearing from more interested parties regularly. We are in the process of pursuing grant opportunities; we haven't yet secured grant funding - although this is a work in progress. We have identified an number of lenders who we believe are important in helping us meet our aims in an affordable and responsible manner.

Our running costs are very low at the moment - with the majority of our spending going to community events which are in line with our stated aims. In 2025 we've made a surplus of £1,615.58, thanks to voluntary donations. Our most significant costs outside of this include domain hosting and e-mail services, which are around £15pcm.

For our first 9 months of operation, we are pleased with our progress overall. However, we understand that in order to be in the position where we are able to meet our stated aims, we need to have a mortgage agreement, loans, more loanstocks (*and potentially grants*) secured. Our 2026 Business Plan is in progress and within which we intend to lay out updates to our fundraising strategy in order to account for this.

Income

Digital	£2,524.00
Cash	£250.30
Other (<i>member shares</i>)	£10.00
TOTAL	£2,784.00

Expenses

Running Costs (<i>software, memberships, printing, etc.</i>)	£210.80
2025 Events (<i>venue hire, food, etc.</i>)	£957.92
TOTAL	£1,168.72

Assets

Current Account	£1,365.28
Cash	£250.30
TOTAL	£1,615.58

Finances

Loanstock	£7,000.00
Loans	£0.00
Grants	£0.00
Mortgages	£0.00



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OUTCOMES

We held our Annual General Meeting on 25 January 2026, in line with our Primary Rules. The meeting was a moment to pause and take a deep look at 2025. We reflected on our performance over the past year and reviewed our financial position.

It was noted that a tax filing will be required this year, though it is unlikely that any tax will be payable.

Delegate positions were reviewed. Currently we have delegates for Food Safety, Property Maintenance, Energy, IT and Tech Support, Data Protection, Loans, Grants and Community Outreach; while other positions remain unassigned as they will become more relevant once we have a property. Existing skills were noted within the co-operative but also areas where additional training or support may be useful.

Members re-elected our current officers for the year ahead, with Sam Revell continuing in the role of Secretary and David Parkes as Treasurer. In line with our Primary Rules, which limit individuals from holding an officer position for more than two consecutive years, a new Secretary and Treasurer will be elected at the next AGM so the current officers will share skills with other members over the year.

We reviewed our core governing documents. Some of them, including our Secondary Rules, our Statement of Values and Aims, and our Safer Spaces Policy, needed updating to reflect the changes we've been through. Other updates were more practical, such as clarifying definitions and rephrasing sections to make things clearer and easier to understand. Revised versions of our documents will be published shortly in our website.

We looked at our progress throughout 2025 against our performance indicators, including the number of events held, attendance, funds raised, and endorsements, identifying areas that need more work.

To close the meeting, we took time to celebrate what we achieved together during the year, while also reflecting honestly on the challenges we faced and the lessons that came with them.





Mara's Housing Co-operative Ltd is a not-for-profit fully-mutual housing co-operative registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act (2014) as a Co-operative Society.

Registration Number: RS005321

Registered Address: 22a Adelphi, Aberdeen, Scotland, AB11 5BL.

info@maracoop.org.uk.