COMMUNITY FINANCE IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Extraordinary impact for extraordinary communities



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community finance IRELAND



OUR VISION

We strive for a future where every community has equitable access to impactful social finance, enabling them to realise their own visions for a thriving, sustainable future.

OUR MISSION

To provide flexible loans through a responsible community-centric approach to all voluntary-led organisations delivering social impact.

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About Us

Where finance meets community.

Community Finance Ireland is an extraordinary lender. Powered by a singular purpose for almost 25 years, we are dedicated to providing loans with a people-focused approach. We help passionate and dedicated groups, clubs and organisations to elevate their communities and bring transformative change.

To us, impact means lives changed for the better. It's a new pitch, a better community centre, a green space for play, and so much more. It's a community's dream transformed into reality.

There is so much work still to do, and we look forward to working with communities across the island of Ireland to continue to deliver impact where it's needed most.



Chair's Statement

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Board and team of Community Finance Ireland, it is a privilege to present our 2025 Annual Report.

Over the past year, CFI has seen first-hand what is possible when ambition is matched by the courage to act. Our impact in 2025 reflects the unwavering commitment, curiosity and drive of our clients across the island of Ireland.

In the pages ahead, you'll have the opportunity to meet just some of these extraordinary groups, clubs and organisations who have realised extraordinary impact for their communities with the support of a loan from Community Finance Ireland.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend our clients for their courage in stepping up for their communities, and to warmly thank them for placing their trust in Community Finance Ireland.

Our role is to enable communities to make changes that improve lives. We are often the unseen partner – but always there – impact driven, and with the communities we serve at the heart of everything we do.

We are proud to say that Community Finance Ireland delivers £/€4.63 in social value for every £/€1 invested. This is the power of ethical, purpose-led finance at community level.

Our sincere gratitude to the organisations and government bodies with whom we partner, and who empower us with the support and capital we need to drive positive change.

The leadership of our voluntary Board combined with the expertise of our dedicated team creates a strong organisation that's uniquely positioned to deliver on our purpose. Thank you to each of them for bringing energy, passion and drive to their work for communities.

As we move ahead into our landmark 25th anniversary year in 2026, we look to the future with confidence and renewed purpose – committed to supporting communities to thrive and grow, tomorrow and into the future.



Catherine Blackbourne
UCIT Chairperson

CEO's Statement

Dear Colleagues,

As we take stock of the past year and what sets Community Finance Ireland apart, I am reminded that we are fundamentally built on relationships, not transactions. That means everything we do is centred on the people who matter most – our clients and the communities they serve.

We are driven by our vision to realise a future where communities have access to Social Finance when they need it, to make real change possible in their locality.

The work we do is made possible with the support of our partners in Social Finance Foundation and the Department for Communities. Our ties are more than just a working relationship – they are a shared ambition for empowering stronger communities, and I would like to warmly thank them for their continued trust.

In a landmark year of lending and repayments, we measure our true growth by the number of relationships we've nurtured and renewed, and the communities that we've had the privilege to engage and forge relationships with for the very first time.

I'd like to acknowledge the retirement of our former Chair Damian McAteer, who was instrumental in the establishment of the Financial Transactions Capital (FTC) Fund, and who gave his time and expertise so generously over the years. We are immensely grateful for Damian's work towards making CFI what it is today.

In 2025, our Networx25 Programme welcomed ten organisations from diverse communities north and south to avail of business support, cross-community facilitation and to generate fresh ideas and new collaborations.



This innovative programme is funded by the International Fund for Ireland through the Communities in Partnership Programme and delivered by CFI, with support from the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA). As the programme continues into 2026, we look forward to seeing their ideas and connections develop.

Last year saw the launch of disbursals through the third phase of the Northern Ireland Small Business Loan Fund (NISBLF III) supported by Invest Northern Ireland, and the completion of its predecessor NISBLF II, which supports SMEs on the margins in Northern Ireland, and offers loans as well as signposting and expertise.

The Hybrid Social Finance Loan continued to support social enterprises on a pilot basis in 2025. An initiative led by Rethink Ireland, Community Finance Ireland and part-funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development, it aims to support enterprises in building a credit record and enhance their financial sustainability.

Looking back on the year gone by, it's inspiring to see the scale of impact and growth across our activities and initiatives. At Community Finance Ireland, we are fortunate to witness the very best of human nature in action. And as we stand on the cusp of twenty-five years of working alongside local communities, I look forward to the relationships yet to be forged and the changes still to be made possible.



Dónal Traynor
CFI Group Chief Executive



"We are driven by our vision to realise a future where communities have access to Social Finance when they need it, to make real change possible in their locality.

Who we work with

Values-led lending for community impact.

Community Finance Ireland was proud to support communities across a range of sectors in 2025, from sport to faith, community to social enterprise, and more. We are immensely grateful to our capital providers and advocacy partners, with whom we work closely to benefit grassroots organisations across the island of Ireland. Our gratitude to Social Finance Foundation, the Department for Communities, Rethink Ireland, Enterprise NI, International Fund for Ireland and FEBEA.

Sectors we support:

SPORT	CHILDCARE	FAITH
COMMUNITY SERVICES	HOUSING	HEALTH & WELL-BEING
ENTERPRISE & WORKSPACE	EDUCATION & TRAINING	TOURISM
ARTS AND HERITAGE	ENVIRONMENT	YOUTH

We are committed to:

Delivering fair, fast and flexible finance to volunteer-led organisations across the island of Ireland, fostering genuine grassroots support through collaboration with like-minded partners.

Working together for local impact:

Social Finance Foundation

Department for Communities www.communities-ni.gov.uk

RETHINK IRELAND

Enterprise NORTHERN IRELAND

Invest Northern Ireland

CEB COUNCIL OF EUROPE DEVELOPMENT BANK BANQUE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

febea EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF ETHICAL AND ALTERNATIVE BANKS AND FINANCIERS

Meet our Dreamers

Community Finance Ireland is proud to work in partnership with communities north and south, providing ethical, impact-focused finance that strengthens local areas and enhances the environments in which people live and thrive. It was a privilege for our team to collaborate with inspiring communities across the country in 2025. As we approach our 25th year, we are excited to build on this momentum, expanding our reach, deepening our impact, and forging even stronger connections in the years ahead.



LEDCOM Business Park

Funds Disbursed
£109m/€131m
to **925 clients**

Kilcreggan Homes



Chloe & Co.



Shannon Football Club





LEDCOM – Bank Road Business Park

Supporting community wealth building in Northern Ireland.

Community Finance Ireland continued to provide financial support for community wealth building projects in Northern Ireland in 2025, including a loan for the Local Economic Development Company's (LEDCOM) newly refurbished Bank Road Business Park in Larne.

LEDCOM, whose core activities include business support services, managed workspace, conferencing facilities, and various community based economic initiatives received a financial package from CFI and other funding bodies totalling almost £1 million.

These funds have been transformational, allowing them to add facilities and a range of flexible work spaces for startups, growing enterprises and companies in the area.



Since our inception 40 years ago, our primary mission has been to support the local area through business start-up and development, with the accompanying training and employment opportunities. This project reflects our dedication to creating vibrant, sustainable spaces where businesses and can thrive. The improvements will benefit both our established and new tenants, reinforcing our role as a key driver of local enterprise and innovation.

Ken Nelson,
CEO, LEDCOM



Kilcreggan Homes

Supporting 160 people a week with social care support across Northern Ireland.

Kilcreggan Homes is expanding its accommodation and care offering with flexible loan support from Community Finance Ireland.

Kilcreggan Homes is an independent charity that provides housing, day and employment opportunities for adults with a diagnosed learning disability or autism who need support to live independently.

A range of services are delivered from their base in Carrickfergus including supported accommodation, urban farm & horticultural centre, and café. Additional services are delivered from new locations at Mid Ulster Sanctuary and Ballymoney Support Centre.



Our partnership with Community Finance Ireland has helped Kilcreggan Homes develop bespoke, person centred supported living options to adults who have learning a partner who is at the end of the phone, who are approachable & friendly, who listen and offer support that you know is designed to help us, creates an environment of mutual trust. We very much appreciate the support from Phelim and his highly experienced team throughout the process, along with their enthusiasm for our vision.

Damian Cassidy
Director, Kilcreggan Homes



Shannon Rugby Club

Empowering women and girls' participation in sport.

Shannon Rugby Club are leading the way in providing the services and facilities for women and girls in sport in their local community thanks to a social finance loan from Community Finance Ireland (CFI).

Using social finance loans from CFI to bridge the gap in grant funding, the group have installed new changing facilities and a dedicated new gym space for female players at their base in Coonagh, Co. Limerick. The new facilities have been transformational for the ladies' teams and has empowered them to strive towards their goal of reaching the Women's All Ireland League (AIL) in the coming season.

Located just north of Limerick City, the new facilities are a vote of confidence in the ladies' teams which have grown significantly in recent years, in part due to the investment in facilities like these.





Social lending from Community Finance Ireland is going to help us reach our goal of getting to the All-Ireland League. It not only helps us achieve our ambition on the field but also inspires our youth and underage to see there is a clear path for success: you play for your club; you play for your province and then you play for your national team.

Rita Hehir
Under 18s Ladies' Coach



Chloe & Co. Save our Homeless Dundalk

A new heart-of-the-community social enterprise café for Dundalk.

The first of its kind in Co. Louth, Chloe & Co., has been dubbed a ‘café with a difference’ and transforms the former news and deli premises on Park Street into a community focused café that provides employment opportunities for people living with physical or intellectual disabilities while offering a safe haven for families. Chloe & Co. includes a sensory room that gives parents, caregivers and others a place to relax.

Save our Homeless Dundalk works closely with community nurses, Tusla and school liaison officers, as well as linking in with other local charities such as Cuidigh Linn, who refer people who need assistance as well as helping those who contact them directly.



Without Colm and his guidance, we would never have been in a position to open Chloe & Co... full of beans café, designed around disabilities this will give so many people a chance to shine, be independent and have a voice. Community Finance Ireland, you have taken us to the next level in charity. We have succeeded in making our vision possible where every other promise that was made to us failed. You helped us achieve our dreams and for that we at Save Our Homeless Dundalk will be eternally grateful.

Sonja Van Kalkeren
Founder, Save Our Homeless

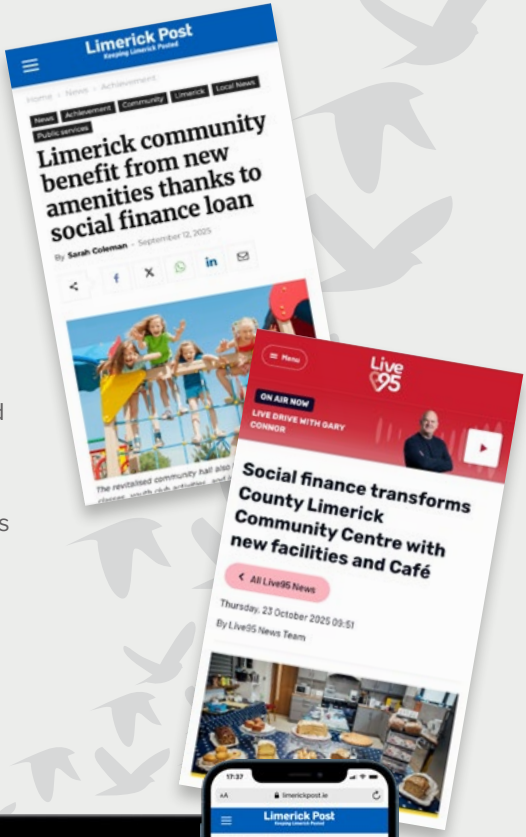
Highlights of the Year

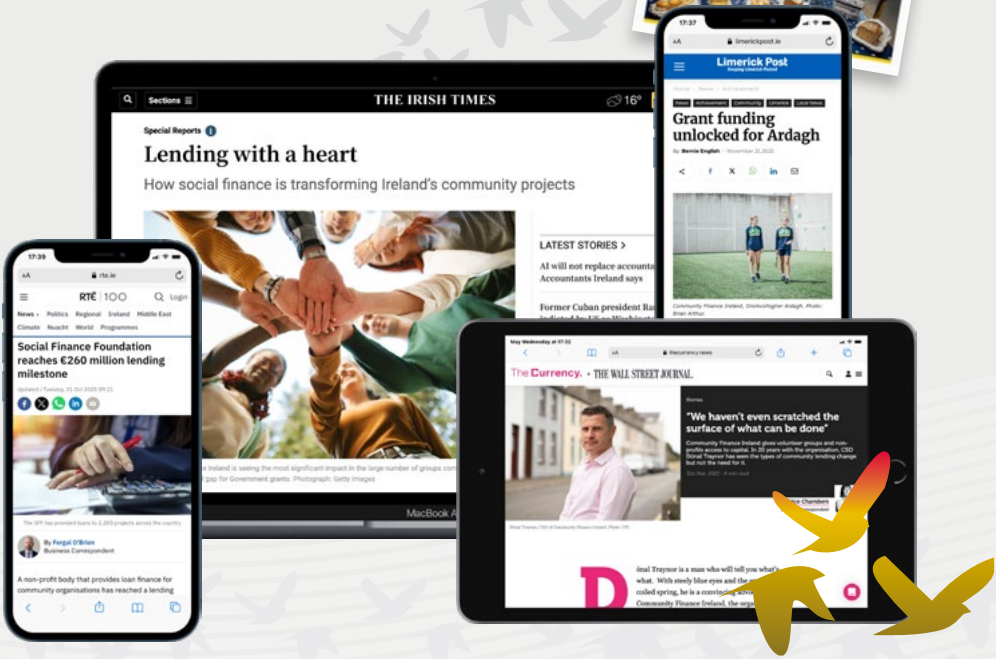
The heart of our work is getting building relationships with our clients across the island of Ireland, in every province.

In 2025, our team was delighted to participate in a wide range of events, talks and visits, that have helped spread the word about access to social finance via a Community Finance Ireland loan.

Everything we do is built on relationships with our extraordinary clients and it's a privilege to listen to their stories, share our expertise and work together to enhance communities.

Read the **press articles** by clicking the images on this page.









Client Relationship Manager for Munster Nora Keogh with Elaine Kennedy, Enterprise Officer with North East and West Kerry Development, at their event in Killorglin.



Community Finance Ireland was proud to continue its Community Fit Giveaway draw in 2025, funding new kits and equipment for selected clubs, like Tulsk Camogie Club in Co. Roscommon and St. Genevieve's High School in Belfast.



Barry Symes attends the Connecting Communities Roadshow in spring 2025.



We were thrilled to have worked with the team at Pallasgreen/ Templebraden Community Council recently to bridge a local council grant that meant they could complete the work on their fantastic new community playground.

Networx25

Community Finance Ireland launched the brand-new Networx25 Programme in autumn 2025, with ten community organisations from north and south participating.

Now in its second consecutive year, The NetWorx25 Programme is a cross-border and cross-community project managed by Community Finance Ireland in partnership with the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), and funded by the International Fund for Ireland. It focuses on local development, mentorship and networking.
The programme is designed to support and strengthen social enterprises and community-focused organisations in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Participating organisations came together to explore opportunities around business support, social enterprise growth, financial sustainability, and meaningful partnership development. Over the course of the programme, organisations engage in a structured series of development sessions and workshops supported by experienced business mentors.

The programme will continue into 2026 with further opportunities for all ten organisations involved to network, collaborate and build the skillsets they need to grow alongside their ambitions.

NICVA

International Fund for Ireland





I'd like to pay tribute to everyone who helped make the Networx25 programme a huge success in particular, Programme Manager Michael Mullin. The feedback from our participants has been incredibly positive. It's inspiring to see impact and mission focused organisations like our participants come together with passion and openness to develop, grow and give their very best to the communities they serve.

Dónal Traynor, CFI Group Chief Executive





NI Small Business Loan Fund II & III

The Northern Ireland Small Business Loan Fund (NISBLF) II & III is administered by our fund management company, Ulster Community Finance Ltd., on behalf of Invest Northern Ireland.

NISBLF was set up to provide access to finance for small businesses, sole traders and partnerships who are keen to develop their business but may find it challenging to access funding through traditional sources.

Our team at Ulster Community Finance Ltd., was awarded the fund contract for NISBLF I and II, and we were delighted to launch NISBLF III in 2025. In the past twelve months, NISBLF has supported 43 SMEs in Northern Ireland with a value of £1.6 million.

Ulster Community Finance Ltd

Invest Northern Ireland

Enterprise NORTHERN IRELAND

Figures to 31 December 2025:

£18.5m
Total value of loans disbursed

701
Number of loans disbursed

£26,370
Average loan size



The diversity of small business who avail of NISBLF is as diverse as the opportunities spotted by those seeking to run a small business in Northern Ireland.

Here is a snapshot of testimonials from those who secured lending and are working towards the next phase of growth and opportunity:



Willowtree Glamping, Co. Down

Willowtree Glamping makes the most of our location and the demand for alternative experiences, and as we manufacture the accommodation units on-site, we can stand over their quality. The team recognised the appeal and our ambitions for the business and their loan supported the site preparation for two new units.

Ciara Tiernan



Tom & Ollie, Co. Antrim

The NISBLF team recognised our ambitions for the business and coupled with our previous success and robust business plan, could see how accessing working capital would support our growth. The finance helped allow us to realise those ambitions.

Fergal Green



New Generation Agriculture, Co. Antrim

As the demand for food from a growing global population increases, against the backdrop of diminishing available topsoil to support crop growth, our partnership with Nutri-Tech solutions has enabled us to bring their 'Nutrition Farming' approach to soil management and food production, to customers in the UK and Ireland.

Eugene Hackett



Building Futures Together

In 2026, Community Finance Ireland reaches a significant milestone in our history, as we celebrate our 25th anniversary. It's a moment to pause and look back, but also a call to action. For a quarter of a century, CFI has worked with communities on the ground, turning ambition into action and bringing impact that lasts.

Over that time, our impact has spread across every community in the country, investing in places, services and infrastructure that improve wellbeing, promote growth and build opportunities.

This impact is a testament to the courage and commitment of every one of these communities, and as leaders in ethical finance and community lending, CFI has proven that impact and purpose-driven finance can be effective and transformative.

Now, as we look ahead to the next twenty-five years, our sense of purpose and our ambition is renewed. Communities are growing and evolving, as are their needs, and we are committed to being there to support them face whatever challenges and opportunities that come.

These challenges and opportunities will require a community-centred approach, along with flexibility, courage and ethical stewardship – qualities that sit at the very core of our values.

We will continue our work to reach more communities, particularly those who are underserved. By doing so, we will continue to deepen the impact we deliver to those who need it most. This means focusing not just on growth, but on outcomes, which are inclusive and locally anchored.



Our Commitment to Excellence

Everything we do in Community Finance Ireland is built on trust. That's why it's so important to us to maintain the highest possible standards and ensure that we are living best practice. This means a commitment to excellence in governance, regulation and professional practice.

We take ownership of our actions and operate with transparency, and accountability at all times. We maintain a firm commitment to best practice within the community finance sector through robust oversight, effective risk management, and continual improvement.

This commitment underpins how we serve our borrowers, partners, funders, and communities, ensuring our work consistently delivers responsible lending and, lasting social and economic impact.

ISO 9001 Certification

Community Finance Ireland is proud to be ISO 9001 certified – an internationally recognised standard that reflects our commitment to high standards and continuous improvement in everything that we do.

This certification recognises our robust and transparent systems, and client-centred approach.

Maintaining ISO 9001 certification requires ongoing commitment. Through regular internal reviews and independent audits, we hold ourselves accountable in delivering excellence and ensuring integrity in our performance.

This certification is aligned with our values and is a vital foundation for building trust, strengthening resilience, and ensuring that we continue to deliver positive and sustainable impact for the communities we exist to serve.

Accounts
(2024–2025)

UCIT Group – Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 31 December 2025.

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Incoming resources	2,539	2,283
Charitable activities	(1,785)	(1,542)
Net operating income	754	741
Bad debts / recovered (provided)	(53)	(68)
Foreign exchange movement	138	(120)
Net movement in funds	839	553







UCIT Group – Consolidated Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2025.

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	734	771
Investments	57	37
	791	808
Current Assets		
Debtors: amounts falling due after more than one year	26,922	23,460
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	5,742	4,628
Cash at bank and in hand	9,596	7,595
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(4,470)	(3,278)
Net current assets	37,790	32,405
Total assets less current liabilities	38,581	33,213
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(17,969)	(13,441)
Net assets	20,612	19,772
Funds of the Charity		
Share capital	27	26
Unrestricted income funds	20,585	19,746
Total charity funds	20,612	19,772

ROI OFFICE

Unit 16,
Ardee Business Park
Hale Street, Ardee,
Co Louth, A92 XN79

T +353 41 6858 637

NI OFFICE

6th Floor,
Glengall Exchange,
3 Glengall St,
BT12 5AB

T +44 28 9031 5003

hello@communityfinanceireland.com

@ComFinanceIrl Community Finance Ireland

communityfinanceireland.com

Ulster Community Investment Trust Limited T/a Community Finance Ireland ("UCIT") (Company No. NP000374) is registered as a charity in Northern Ireland (Charity No. NIC100325). Ulster Community Investment Trust (Ireland) T/a Community Finance Ireland (Company No. 316496) is a designated activity company registered in Dublin, Republic of Ireland and registered as a charity in the Republic of Ireland (Registered Charity No. 20044619, Chy (Revenue) No. 13926) and its registered address is Unit 16, Ardee Business Park. Hale St.. Ardee, Co. Louth, A92 XN79.

NISBLF II LP (Company No. NL000690) is registered in Northern Ireland and is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA No. 825442). NISBLF III LP (Company No. NL000917) is registered in Northern Ireland and is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA No. 1040947).

Ulster Community Finance Ltd ("UCF") (Company No. NI030229) is a limited company registered in Northern Ireland and is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA No. 589719). The registered address of UCIT, UCF, NISBLF II LP and NISBLF III LP is 6th Floor Glengall Exchange, 3 Glengall Street, Belfast, BT12 5AB.

SCAN ME

COVER IMAGE: Shannon Rugby Football Club players and committee members with Community Finance Ireland's Nora Keogh. CFI has worked with Shannon RFC's team to provide a loan package that enabled them to develop ladies' changing facilities and a gym at their training grounds at Coonagh in the North of Limerick City.

Social Finance Foundation

febea
EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF ETHICAL AND ALTERNATIVE BANKS AND FINANCIERS