



# Press Coverage

The Press and Journal

DIGIT

THE NATIONAL

THE COURIER

## Scotland Means Business

SME FOCUS  
SKILLSEEDER  
SKILLS APP

### How a new skills app is tackling a support gap in rural Scotland

BY EMER O'TOOLE

**SKILLSEEDER**, an app that gives users the chance to learn or pass on their skills, was set up last year to address gaps in support for Scotland's rural communities. The range of classes on offer include learning a new language, fitness, dry stone walling and operating farm machinery. The company was co-founded by four entrepreneurs: Kerry Cowan, Simon Ripden, David Ritchie and James Ritchie. Cowan hopes the app will expand to the rest of the UK and go global in the next 10 years.

**Name:** Kerry Cowan  
**Position:** Co-founder and marketing director

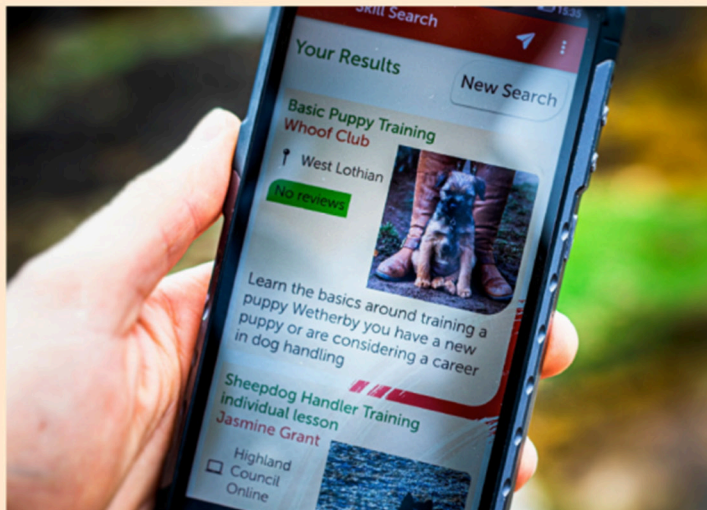
**WHAT IS THE BUSINESS CALLED?**  
SkillSeeder

**WHERE IS IT BASED?**  
Edinburgh

**WHY DID YOU SET UP THE BUSINESS?**  
It all happened in response to a tech initiative, CivTech 5 programme, by the Scottish Government to support learning in rural communities. There are four co-founders and we all came together to address the challenges of CivTech.

It has been difficult to run the business during the pandemic. Usually if you launch a business you would meet up daily as it's so fast-moving but we've had to adapt so all meetings are done virtually. However, the calls became very efficient as people from anywhere in the world could dial in. Before this I worked in various sectors like marketing mainly for the drinks industry and Rosburgh Estate. I started a consultancy business when my kids were young.

**WHAT IS YOUR TARGET MARKET?**  
It's all about rural Scotland – people might need to upskill but don't live near a training centre or college. It's not just rural skills. We provide training in everything from business to baking. Now more than ever before people are looking to diversify and look for a new income. There are lots of talented people out there. The pandemic has had a big impact on that. There's a skill gap in many sectors.



Our beta testers have been professionals, with many from parts of rural Scotland. They've helped to shape the app and we've tried to tailor it.

**HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM COMPETING BUSINESSES?**

THERE are a couple of businesses like us such as SkillShare which focuses on online learning and ClassBento which is a gifting experience – it was Australian but ventured into the UK. We're different as we do face-to-face learning as well as online. It depends on the person. Our service is tailored to the individual. We're a green, forward-thinking business. We started it during a time of change (the pandemic) so we could look at values and we offer flexible working, a working from home forever policy and unlimited holidays.

We are also planting 1200 trees

this year to offset each staff member's carbon footprint, and we are planting those ourselves.

**IS SCOTLAND A GOOD PLACE FOR THIS TYPE OF BUSINESS?**  
ABSOLUTELY. Technology is really important and a big focus in Scotland. It's a diverse place to have the company as there is no better place for an app.

**WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT RUNNING THE BUSINESS?**  
EVERY day is different. There are always new challenges and we have a really great team in SkillSeeder and the Scottish Government steering group. It's

pioneering and will make a difference.

**WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN RUNNING THE BUSINESS?**  
THE biggest challenge is getting the word out there and telling people what we do. We have to find ways to make it relevant and spread the word.

**WHERE DO YOU HOPE THE BUSINESS WILL BE IN 10 YEARS?**

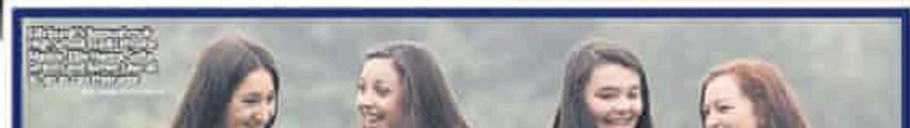
I WOULD love to expand to the rest of the UK and go international as well. It's a universal product with lots of scope and opportunity. It really could make a difference for many people around the world. It's Airbnb for skills.



Kerry Cowan says SkillSeeder offers skills from baking to business



How the day went across the country See Pages 4, 5, 6, 7



### Shear your skills on new app to promote learning

A NEW app aimed at improving access to learning will launch on Google Play and the App Store today featuring subjects such as falconry and sheep shearing.

SkillSeeder, which has Scottish government funding, aims to connect people willing to share a craft with those who'd like to learn something new. One of the app's creators, Kerry Cowan, said: 'We're calling for skill sharers in Scotland to register so as many skills as possible are listed – from cooking to horticulture.'

## Scotland's future

**WITNESS** an attempt to gain relief and to commence this morning after yesterday's historic vote.

The campaign for many has been long, but since it was first, the efforts it would be to be pursued, led in the most it was conducted with a civility and modesty, often in

one of the representative character of some of our best government political representatives.

If less, however, fearfully demonstrated the need for a national conversation across place among all political shades.

For the time done to discuss the vast

possibility of people have become aware) involved in a political decision and that awareness, that engagement, should now be nurtured to allow us to move forward in a positive way.

Especially refreshing was the conduct, attention and wisdom of the young representatives of the generation who voted for the first time. You represented, you contributed your participation in a fashion which gives us much hope for the future, the nation how you voted. Many more will show, Scotland, in bringing positive news to the people.



SkillSeeder

NEWS

25th May

## SkillSeeder: How a new skills app is tackling a support gap in rural Scotland



By Emer O'Toole | [Twitter](#) EmerMOTOole  
Multimedia Journalist



Kerry Cowan is one of the four founders of the SkillSeeder app

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The range of classes on offer include learning a new language, fitness, dry stone walling and operating farm machinery. The company was co-founded by four entrepreneurs: Kerry Cowan, Simon Rigden, David Ritchie and James Ritchie. Cowan hopes the app will expand to the rest

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Retraining opportunity

## SkillSeeder app enables users to share knowledge

Terry Murden, Editor | May 13, 2021



Co-founders of the app that emerged from CivTech

An app that gives users the chance to learn or pass on their skills has been launched on the back of support for rural communities.



# SkillSeeder App to Improve Access to Learning Across Scotland

David Paul  
13 May 2021, 09.41am

DIGIT



**The app allows for knowledge exchange between sectors in Scotland to earn extra income and create training.**

The new [SkillSeeder](#) app has been launched today which allows for knowledge exchange to help people share and learn new skills from others.

Co-founded by four entrepreneurs, Kerry Cowan, Simon Rigden, David Ritchie and James Ritchie, SkillSeeder provides a solution for improving access to learning and upskilling.

SkillSeeder was initially created in response to the Scottish Government's CivTech 5 programme to support learning in rural communities and has now received funding from the Scottish Government and launches today (Thursday, May 13).

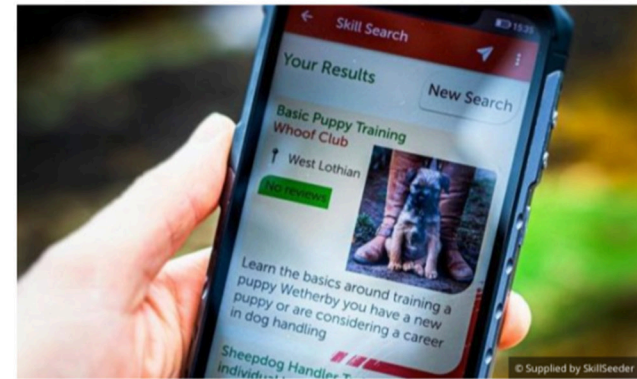
# The Press and Journal

BUSINESS / FARMING / FARMING NEWS

## Rural training on offer via new skills app

By Gemma Mackenzie

May 14 2021, 12.30pm



The app is free to download.

Sheep shearing and dry stone walling are among the training courses set to be offered on a new skills app.

The SkillSeeder app, which is backed by Scottish Government funding, aims to offer a platform for people to share their skills and knowledge with others in rural and remote locations.

SkillSeeder's founders are now calling on people to register their workshop or course – whether it be in-person workshops, online courses, or specialist one-to-one training – on the app.

Courses can be registered for free until November this year, and training providers will not be charged a fee when bookings are made through the app.

"We are keen to ensure that as many skills as possible are listed – from cooking to fitness, music to horticulture, whether it be for work or for leisure, we are excited to offer people in Scotland as much chance as possible to learn something new or



FEATURE

# Get the skills you'll need to fight climate change

7th March



BY GORDON DAVIDSON  
NEWS & ONLINE EDITOR

Share



THE TEAM behind the Skillseeder training app

PEOPLE WHO are part of, or wishing to enter a land or nature based industry, can now apply for funding support to gain practical skills required to respond to the climate change challenge.

THE SCOTTISH  
**Farmer**



**SkillSeeder**

# The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

## Creating opportunities for women in agriculture

More women and girls living and working in Scottish agriculture will be able to apply for funding for courses to help develop their skills. Eligible courses include support to get tractor and trailer driving certificates or help to train sheepdogs.

The Practical Training Fund, which was launched earlier this year and is administered by Lantra Scotland, has already supported more than 400 women and girls to undertake courses to develop their skillset or change careers.

From today, women and girls over the age of 13 can apply for up to £500, or more on a case by case basis, for the cost of a practical or technical training course through the fund, with the first batch of successful applicants being notified by the end of January 2022.

It has been supported by



Mairi Gougeon is encouraging more women to visit the Lantra Scotland website and apply for course funding.

another £75,000 of Scottish Government funding, with £20,000 of the funding ring-fenced for applicants living in island communities.

Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon said: "This year, we

have committed £300,000 to support women in agriculture, including the wider roll-out of the personal development training programme, Be Your Best Self; a project to test innovative solutions for childcare

in rural areas and the development of Skillseeder – a skills sharing app which provides an easy to use one-stop shop to find training and skills development opportunities across the country, particularly for those in rural and island areas.

"We want to see more women joining those who are already developing a career in Scottish agriculture – which is why it's important that women are given these opportunities in what has been a very male-dominated industry.

"Throughout this year, we've heard from women and girls who have undertaken courses through the Practical Training Fund and said that they have more confidence and are more knowledgeable, which is great to hear. I would encourage more women to visit the Lantra Scotland website and apply."



For further information please contact:  
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