





## **VISION, MISSION AND VALUES:**

**THE VILLAGE STORYTELLING CENTRE'S VISION IS FOR A  
WORLD WHERE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES ARE INSPIRED,  
CONNECTED AND HEARD.**

**OUR MISSION IS TO IMPROVE AND ENRICH LIVES ACROSS  
SCOTLAND THROUGH THE POWER OF STORY.**

**OUR WORK IS UNDERPINNED BY THE FOLLOWING CORE  
VALUES STATEMENTS:**

- **PEOPLE ARE AT THE CENTRE OF EVERYTHING WE DO**
- **EVERYONE HAS STORIES WORTH SHARING**



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## INTRODUCTION FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The year from April 2020 to March 2021 was a year like no other. As with most other organisations we had to adapt quickly to ensure we were able to continue to support our community, meet funder requirements and to survive as an organisation. I am pleased to say that we did more than survive.

With a huge amount of hard work, determination and with sheer passion and commitment to our communities we have thrived in the face of the pandemic. Our programmes have been delivered through film, zoom/teams, phone calls, package delivery, outdoor sessions, even through email and Facebook! It has been a rollercoaster of a year for us all. Our staff have supported some of our participants through particularly challenging circumstances. We have heard stories of grief, worries about putting food on the table and listened as people shared their fears about declining mental and physical health. But, we have been proud to be part of a community where people worked hard together to ensure people got the help they needed and worked together with our partners from across G53 and beyond to provide support. And there have of course been Silver Linings. We have connected to people across the community in new ways, established new and built on existing partnerships, we have learned about our strength as an organisation and we have achieved things we didn't expect to achieve. Recognising this, we realised that others would feel exactly the same and so we began to gather stories of Silver Linings from across Greater Pollok to show the glimmers of happiness, hope, friendship and sense of community that helped people through this challenging time.

I wish to thank each and every one of our partners and funders for all of their support over the year. And I thank each of our wonderful staff members, associate artists and trustees for all the amazing work they have done over the year.

- Helen Mill, Executive Director



# OUR IMPACT



**7,002**

ENGAGEMENTS MADE  
THROUGH OUR VILLAGE  
STORIES @ HOME  
PROGRAMME OF VIDEOS AND  
PODCASTS SHARED VIA  
SOCIAL MEDIA.



**4,478**

VIEWS ACROSS  
YOUTUBE,  
SOUNDCLOUD,  
FACEBOOK AND  
TWITTER

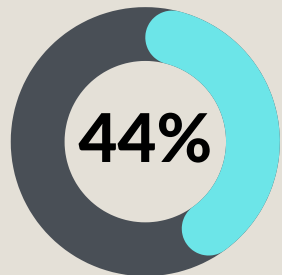


**2,524**

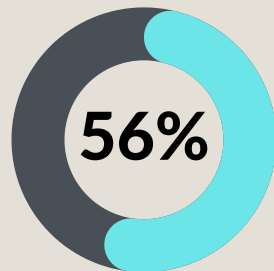
LIKES, SHARES AND  
COMMENTS ON  
FACEBOOK AND  
TWITTER

**1,784**

PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED IN  
OUR EVENTS, PERFORMANCES  
AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.

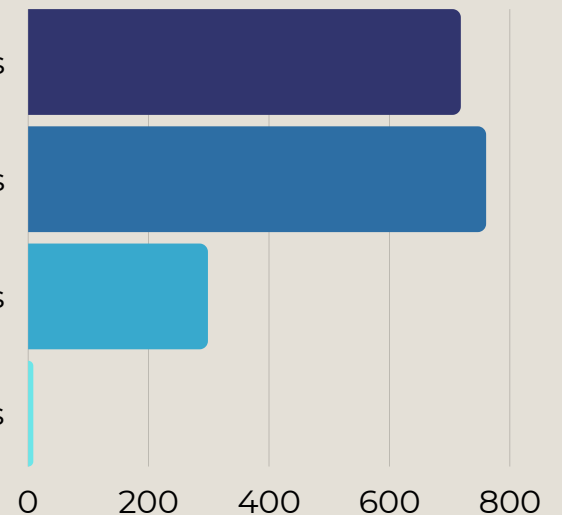


ADULTS



CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG  
PEOPLE  
AGED UNDER  
18 YEARS

Community programmes and events  
Artistic and applied storytelling programmes  
School programmes and events  
Training courses

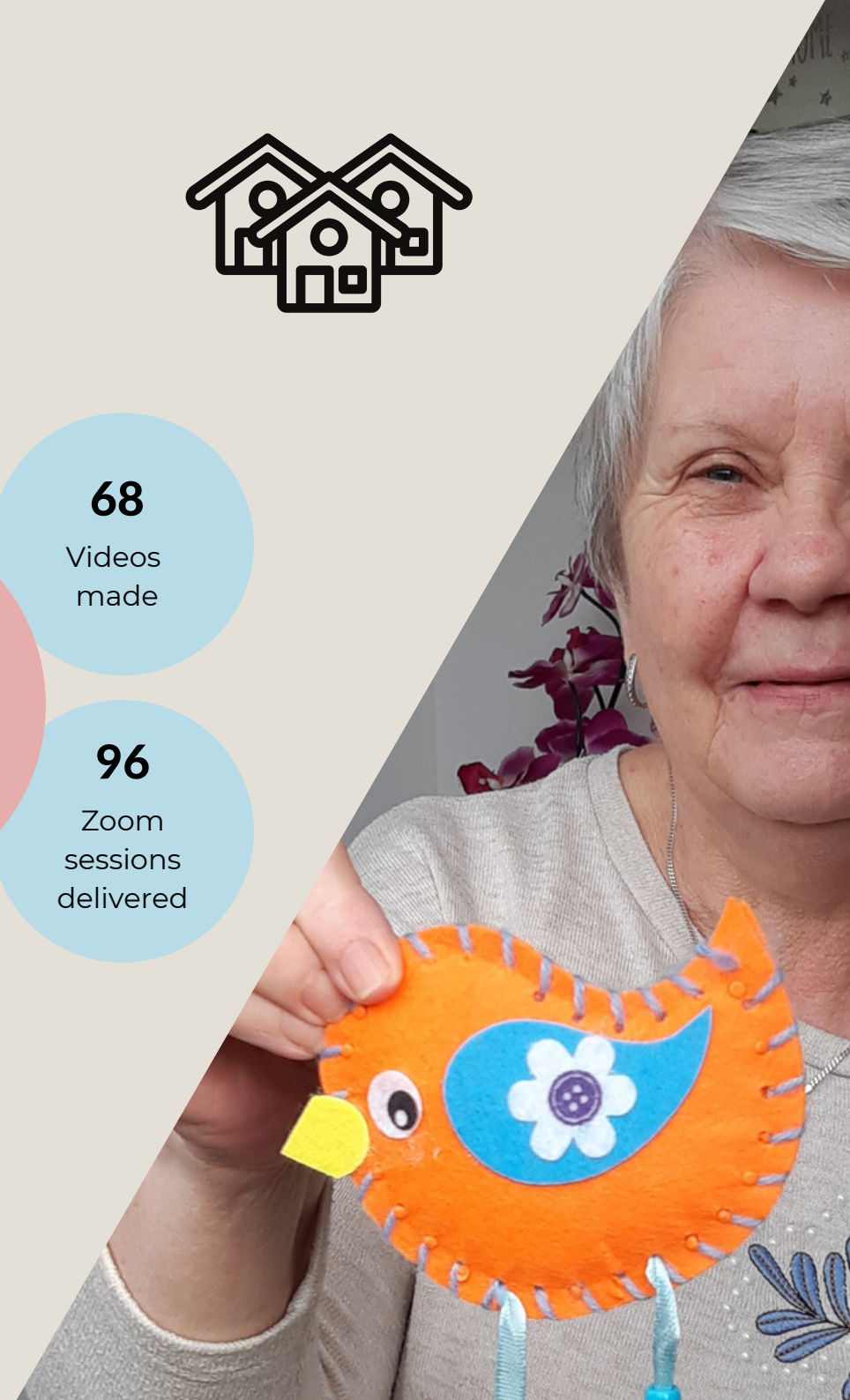


# THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY STORIES PROGRAMME

The Village Community Stories Programme is a story-led arts programme which has been designed to be accessible to people of all ages within the communities of Greater Pollok and Newlands Auldburn.

## OUR AIMS

- To reduce isolation
- To improve mental health and wellbeing.
- To build confidence and self-esteem
- To provide opportunities for social connection.



## Early Years, Children & Young People

Since April 2020, the Early Years, Children's, and Young People's programmes have been responsive and resilient in the face of Covid-19. In order to connect with participants in a valuable way during the pandemic we engaged through YouTube Videos, Story Packs, Zoom Workshops and Face to Face Outdoor sessions.

Throughout the year staff had numerous reports from families that children & young people were struggling with their mental health and decreased confidence. Therefore, it was important that we offered a variety of ways to stay in touch and reduced barriers to accessing opportunities. We provided devices, where needed, to access online clubs and outdoor clothing to access our outdoor sessions.



“

*Thank you so much. Your energy, happiness and skills clearly keep the kids entertained and learning even via Zoom.*  
- Parent, Story Club Participant

”

**91**

Families  
engaged

## Imagine Lab

Our series of YouTube films for our families with pre-school children was a huge success and we started to reach families across the UK. To ensure that local families were benefiting we developed a subscription service which provided families in Greater Pollok a series of arts packages to coincide with our films. In November we were delighted to see our families again in a short series of outdoor workshops before a move to zoom delivery following more restrictions and then a new lockdown in January.

## Case Study

G is Mother to two children under 4years. They are a family of African heritage who have lived in the Pollok area for a few years. They said that when they got bored throughout lockdown they would visit new parks. They engaged with us for the first time during lockdown by signing up to our Story Post project. They received parcels and story videos. They would regularly email to say 'Thank you' and they were happy they had new activities to do indoors and outdoors to keep them entertained. When we were able to meet face to face outdoors for our story workshops the family attended and bonded instantly with staff. The children were always so happy to see us and would update staff on progress in their lives from going their first holiday to using the toilet for the first time. We were able to provide waterproof clothing and wellies for the family to access the outdoor workshops and use in their own time for outdoor adventures. G and her children would often stay after sessions, help tidy and have a chat. G said 'It's lovely to have a chat and the children love this so much. Thank you.' We believe these sessions have increased confidence, extended English vocabulary, dismantled some barriers and reduced isolation.

## Story Club & Story Squad

Provision for Story Club (children P1-3) and Story Squad (P4-7) mainly took place through film and the delivery of story & arts packages in the first half of the year. As with our Imagine Lab programme, we were able to provide outdoor sessions in November where we shared stories, played games and took part in activities on the theme of nature connection and wellbeing. We were strongly led by participants and supported the groups to create and explore their own stories and silver linings of lockdown.

When the second wave of Covid-19 came we moved online and focused on storytelling, fun games, art, imagination and wellbeing. Each participant received an art pack for the term and in each session we shared stories and responding creatively using the art supplies. We ended each session with a wellbeing activity such as meditation and hand massage aided by the soothing scents of Lavender and Tea Tree oil.

## Early Years, Children & Young People

### Case Study

One participant (6years) attended Story Club 80% of the time however her Mother said sometimes her mood was low so she didn't attend. She said 'She hasn't been herself more so since Xmas'. They had suffered a family bereavement among other difficulties. As the weeks progressed we provided the workshop as a consistent option in her life. Her Mother said her mood was positive after sessions. She attended on her birthday so we played birthday games and made her birthday cards. She is now signed up for future face to face sessions where we can continue to build confidence and increase positive mental health.

**100% of responses said 'Yes' when asked 'Has the project contributed to the positive mental health and wellbeing of your child?'**

*“ It has been a difficult year for everyone particularly younger children who missed their friends. Keeping in contact through zoom has helped towards positive mental well-being by maintaining these important relationships.*

## Young Storytellers

Our Young People's group took on the name 'Young Storytellers' as they continued on their Storytelling journey. The group chose to explore the art forms of Film and Podcasting to express ideas and amplify their voices. They had the opportunity to work with professional artists, film makers, performers and podcasters throughout the year and proudly created their own work based on issues they chose such as the Climate Crisis and Mental Health.

Staying connected online supported the group to invest energy in their passions, created positive routines and offered a platform to learn new skills. Their film 'The Council of the Earth' was researched and written during lockdown through online sessions. When lockdown eased they came together in small groups to make their costumes and props and film their piece. 'The Council of the Earth' can be viewed on YouTube and has been premiered online, at Strathclyde University and at Glasgow Centre for Population Health's COP26 seminars and exhibitions.



To watch the film, visit [https://youtu.be/NU\\_jzKno1uw](https://youtu.be/NU_jzKno1uw)  
or click the image above

## Sensate

Sensate is our group specifically for young people with autism and their families. This was the first project we moved online, ensuring there was no break in routine for the families we had been working with. In September 2020, we launched a new online subscription programme, encompassing monthly art parcels, weekly zoom sessions, parent/carer mindfulness activities and a private Facebook group where participants and their families could connect. We created a fun and safe space for participants to create and share and an opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals.

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### ***What our participants say...***

*"...I was unsure how the kids would go with this, it was great, that is the most M has interacted with anyone apart from myself in months, thank you. He really enjoyed it and said he was glad to meet new friends!! Looking forward to the rest..."*

*- Parent of participant*

*"That's really helped today, I was in low mood and also H like it she will try it too"*

*- Parent response to mindfulness activity*

### Case Study

M was very reserved when he first joined the group. He was often only half in shot and didn't engage in conversation beyond the odd word. In the penultimate week we asked him to share a story using an object from the room he was in. The creation was considered, skilful and confident, with the rest of us hooked on his tale of an octopus adventure. The week after his contribution was even more in depth, with the added skill of listening as we were taking in turns to tell different sections. It has been wonderful to see M grow in confidence through the weeks.

## Oh, The Stories We Could Tell

Oh, The Stories We Could Tell is our project for older adults or those who may be struggling with mental health or need support to connect to others. With the lockdown in March 2020, we were worried about many of our participants and others in the community experiencing isolation. At first we provided a series of podcasts but we quickly developed a phone befriending service for a small number of local people who were particularly isolated. This was developed in partnership with local housing associations.



These calls became an opportunity for us to exchange stories with local people who had so many rich and interesting things to say. They talked about their childhoods, family relationships, marriages that didn't work out, marriages that did. They shared their thoughts about politics and their interests in film, science and literature. Recipes began to be swapped and often, at the end of these calls, we were thanked profusely for providing a life-line, for being a friend. In truth that appreciation worked both ways for the Oh The Stories team. It was like gaining 20 odd grandparents and friends who'd laugh with you, scold you, need you and be vulnerable with you.

During some of these calls we recognised need for additional support and worked with our partners to provide food packages, identify specialist counselling and we even provided one participant training on how to use their tablet!

As the project developed and restrictions changed the phone calls were accompanied by arts packages or with other activities often created bespoke for our participants. The best part of the year was the doorstep visits we provided at Christmas time where we delivered presents and met some of our participants for the very first time.

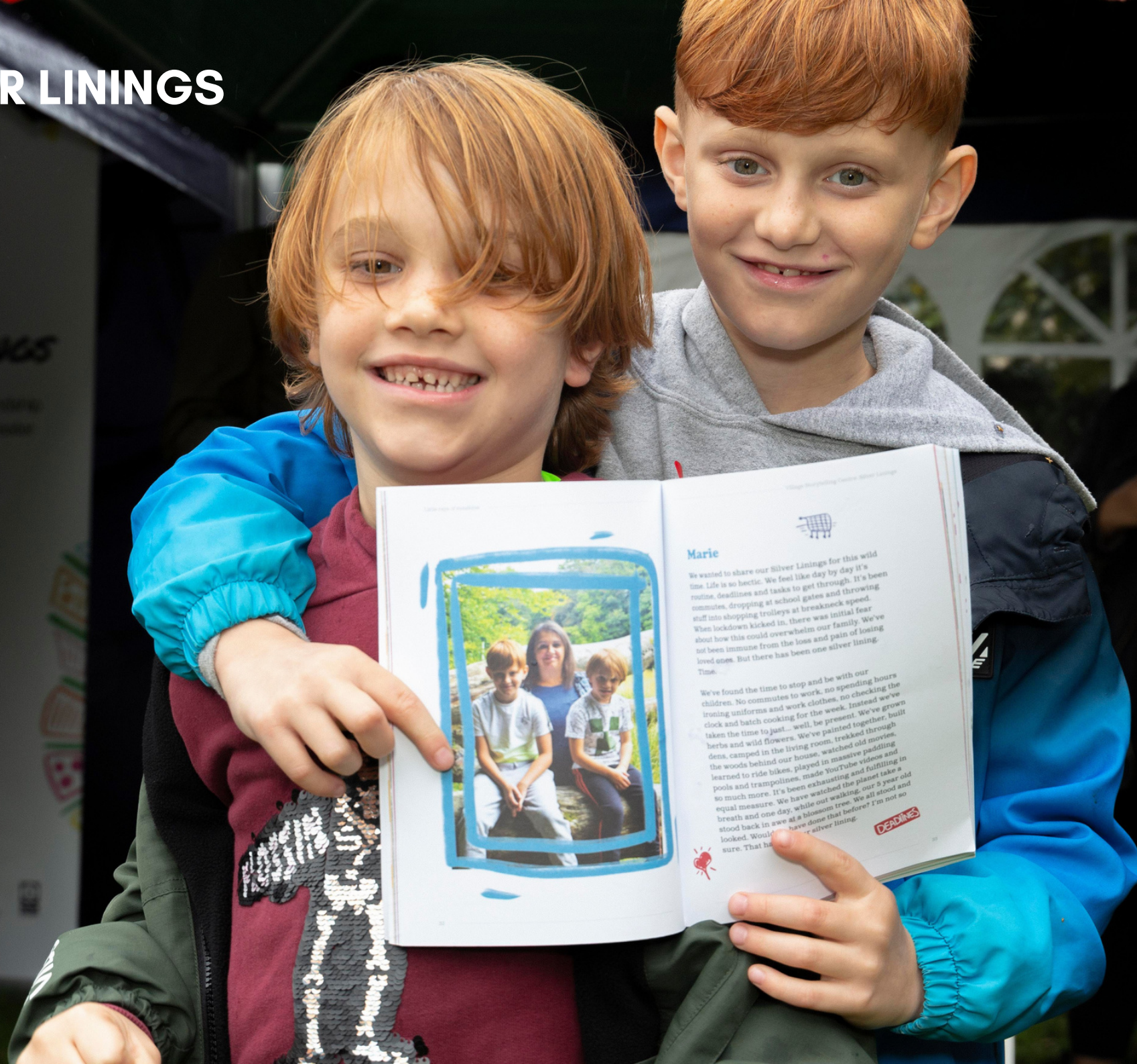
“ Participant quotes:

*Thank you for keeping me sane!*

*These calls are a life line – you are the only person I speak  
to each week*

”

# SILVER LININGS



# SILVER LININGS

Over the course of 2020-21 our team spent months gathering stories of happiness, hope, friendship and a sense of community in Greater Pollok to help counter balance the bad news and to bring the community together as they navigate the road to recovery. We did this through social media, workshops and phone calls and spoke to people from all walks of life across the G53 area. We heard stories from families who expressed how grateful they were to spend time with each other, from people who found out just how strong they were or who developed new skills, and lots of lovely stories from nursery children who were happy to tell the team how they passed the lockdowns at home. We also celebrated local volunteers who had stepped up to support the community when they needed it the most.

With support from the Glasgow Centre for Civic Innovation, we collated these into a wonderful book which was launched at our first in person event post-lockdown. It has been wonderful to work on 'Silver Linings', to hear from so many people across the Greater Pollok Community and to shine a spotlight on their amazing ability to find joy in the darkest of times.





IN OUR WORDS

# IN OUR WORDS

*During October - December 2020, 1 in 4 Young People were turned away from specialist mental health services. – Public Health Scotland*

It is widely acknowledged that young people's mental health and well-being has been adversely affected by COVID-19, the resulting lockdown measures and continued restrictions. Along with our partners at SWAMP (South West Arts and Media Project), we received funding from Youthlink Scotland's Youth Work Education Recovery Fund to provide a collaborative programme of applied storytelling, music and arts. The programme aimed to support young people to improve their own wellbeing, to share their stories and to create art, performance and resources which reached others across Glasgow. In early 2021 we began to work with 6 groups from Rosshall Academy, St Paul's High School, Hillpark Secondary School, St Marnock's Primary and SWAMP.

We started the programme in the middle of another lockdown which meant the project began online. This is not how we wished to deliver this very sensitive project but our wonderful team from both organisations ensured a safe, creative and welcoming space where Young People could speak freely without judgement, fostering peer support and friendship.

The project continued beyond the financial year into June 2021. Thankfully, we were able to deliver the sessions in person in the latter half of the project and the result was the development of wonderful, supportive friendships in each group, and fantastic artwork, stories, poems and song recordings.

Much of this was collated into a beautiful book, a visual representation of what was achieved by the young people.





## IN OUR WORDS - IMPACT

"This is the first time I have been open about this and not been scared I'd be judged."

–Participant, In Our Words

"I haven't been in school all term but I come in for this every week."

–Participant, In Our Words

"I've now got ways to meditate; it's made me feel more hopeful."

–Participant, In Our Words

"All the young people involved in the project are Nurture pupils who were selected due to their social and emotional needs. I have observed a significant change in their ability to engage in the activities...They are confident and mature in describing their feelings and emotions. They have described the environment as 'anxiety free', 'stress free', 'calming' and 'helpful'."

–Teacher of In Our Words participants



# CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

Following a delay due to Covid-19 we began Stage 2 of the Glasgow Life-led Creative Communities programme as Artists in Residence for Ward 2, Newlands Auldburn. Our storytellers worked alongside artists Lucas Chih-Peng Kao, Mona Kastell, Lababa Naqvi and Pearl Kinnear to deliver workshops exploring the theme of community as part of a Faery Trail completed in June 2021.

Throughout the residency we worked with St Vincent's Primary, the WIN Project, Glenoaks Housing Association, Ashpark Primary, Hillpark Secondary and Aberlour.



# COMMISSIONED WORK

In addition to our funded programmes, we were also commissioned to deliver projects in partnership with:

**Eco Drama**

**Simon  
Community  
Scotland**

**Refuweegee**

**Say Women**

**Croftcroighn  
Primary**

**Mental  
Health  
Foundation**

**Iriss**

**Outside  
The Box**

**Sharpen Her:  
African  
Women's  
Network**

**Life  
Changes  
Trust**

## SPOTLIGHT:



## LIFE CHANGES TRUST

Since November 2018, we have been collaborating with Life Changes Trust to deliver a number of workshops as part of their "Community and Dementia: Creating Better Lives" conference events to gain an insight into how people with dementia and their carers are engaged with, and affected by, services. Initially, these took place in person in each health board area and the pandemic led some of these conferences to be postponed.

The Life Changes Trust quickly moved the conferences online and invited us to adapt our approach to continue our involvement in this important partnership. In the coming months we explored a variety of ways of doing this and learned a huge amount about our practice. Despite our initial concerns about losing the warmth and connection that storytelling should bring we found that delivering this online meant that some barriers were actually removed and that our reach was wider. We, as Storytellers, always want to create a feeling of being around the kitchen table and now we found ourselves very much in the comfort of people's homes. This led to some very profound and deep conversations, all of which went on to help Life Changes Trust and their partners draw out priorities for each area.

## INTERNATIONAL PROJECT

In October 2020 we embarked on an international collaboration with the DW-RS Foundation (Amsterdam), Stichting VU (Free University Amsterdam), Képes Alapítvány (Budapest), MYTHOS (Athens), Settle Stories (North Yorkshire).

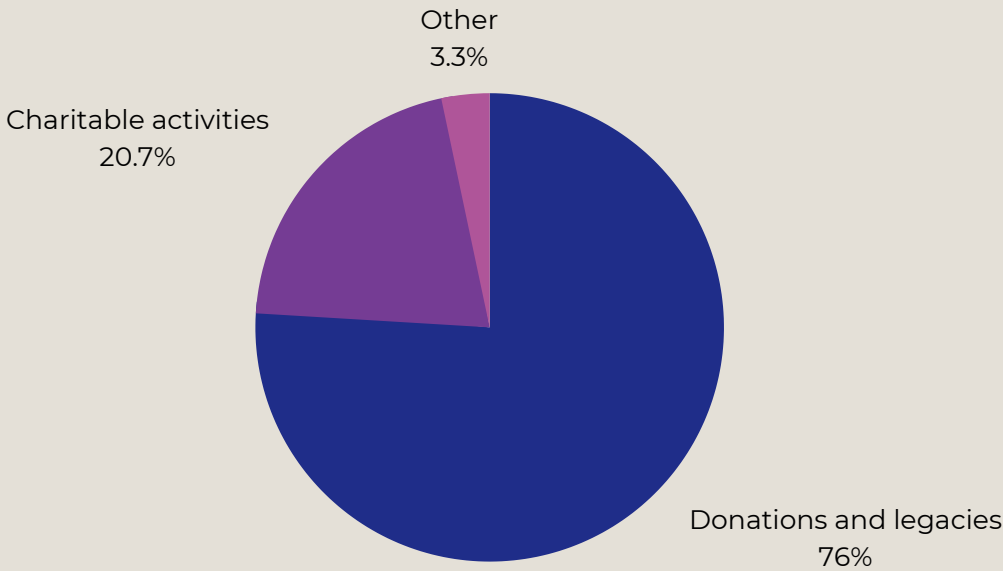
Funded by Erasmus + we are exploring applied Storytelling and it's benefits when working with particularly vulnerable and isolated people. We are developing a toolkit which will be launched in 2022.



# FINANCES

**£285,511**

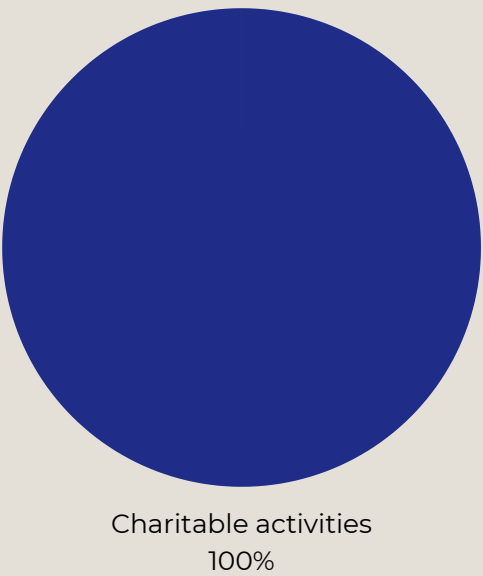
TOTAL INCOME



**Income sources**

**£234,960**

TOTAL EXPENDITURE



**Expenditure**

# FUNDERS

We are grateful to every one of our Funders, Partners and Supporters who enable us to deliver and expand our services. Thank you for your support.

## Prince of Wales Charitable Trust



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

## Maple Trust



## Sylvia Aitken Charitable Trust



## Endrick Trust



## STAFF

Helen Mill, Executive Director  
Alison White, Operations Manager  
Roselyn Smith, Facilities Officer  
Sarah Rankin, Early Years Storyteller  
Lauren Bianchi, Storyteller  
Colin White, Storyteller  
Shona Cowie, Storyteller  
Trinidad Cabezón Droguett, Storyteller  
Naomi O Kelly, Storyteller  
Steph Morris, Storyteller  
Wendy Woolfson, Storyteller  
Dan Serridge, Storyteller  
Daiva Ivanauskaitė, Storyteller  
Barbara Morrison, Cleaner  
Shuhan Wang, Placement Student

## TRUSTEES

Michelle Drumm (Chair)  
Claire Burgess  
June Couper  
Matthew Sime  
Victoria Doig  
Graeme McKerracher  
Alison McGinley  
Maria Cairnie  
Elizabeth Morrison  
Fiona Rich  
Alan Milson  
Dina Sidhva  
Phil Philpott (Treasurer)

## ASSOCIATE ARTISTS

Greer Pester  
Pearl Kinnear  
Lucas Chih-Peng Kao  
Mona Kastell  
Lababa Naqvi  
Emma Greer  
Ben Mali Macfadyen  
Darren Osborne  
Allison Galbraith  
Sònia Gardés  
Maria Barros  
Dawn Campbell  
Giulia Candussi  
Andy Gunn  
Kirsty Forsyth  
Gabriella Sloss  
Rachel Gwilym

## PARTNERS

We would like to express our thanks to all the partner organisations we work with from third and private sectors and to our amazing local community. We couldn't run our amazing projects without you!

# STAFF TEAM

# TRUSTEES

# ASSOCIATE ARTISTS

# PARTNERS





# THE VILLAGE STORYTELLING CENTRE

[www.villagestorytelling.org.uk](http://www.villagestorytelling.org.uk)



At The Village Storytelling Centre, we use the power of storytelling to bring people together and to provide a space for creativity and relaxation.

We use storytelling to support people to increase their confidence and self-esteem by fostering the belief that each of us has stories to tell and that they are worth hearing. We offer people the opportunity to look at their lives differently, to understand that the stories we have always told ourselves or been told about ourselves aren't set in stone – we can change and shape them.

