

# THE VILLAGE STORYTELLING CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

WHAT'S  
YOUR  
STORY?

VILLAGESTORYTELLING.ORG.UK





Photo Credit: Greg McKinney

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.

### Strategic Aims

- To increase access to storytelling and creative opportunities for communities
- To provide platforms for people to share their voices
- To promote the artform of contemporary oral storytelling across Scotland and beyond

### Outcomes

- People will have improved mental health and wellbeing
- People will feel better connected to each other and their communities
- People will actively shape their communities and influence decision makers
- The diversity of voices in contemporary oral storytelling will be improved
- Audiences for contemporary oral storytelling will be increased and diversified



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Staff Team, Trustees,

Associate Artists,

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# INTRODUCTION

The year from April 2022 to March 2023 was an exciting period for The Village Storytelling Centre. Following two very challenging years marred by the Covid-19 pandemic, this was the first year in which we could deliver our activities fully in person and begin to deliver events again. We continued to develop our work in Greater Pollok and neighbouring ward of Newlands Auldburn through our Community Stories Programme and Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities residency. We have created new groups, further developed our existing projects and increased both our reach and impact. We are delighted to have forged deeper and more meaningful bonds with participants and partners across the board.

2022 was Scotland's Year of Stories, a perfect time to relaunch our biennial Village Storytelling Festival. This drew an international audience and provided a platform to showcase the amazing work created in collaboration with our local community and with partner organisations across Glasgow, alongside performances from internationally acclaimed storytellers. It also provided the perfect launchpad for the Aurus Project, a toolkit of applied storytelling developed in collaboration with European partners.

I wish to thank each and every one of our funders and partners for their wonderful support throughout this year. And I thank all our fantastic staff members, associate artists and trustees for all the amazing work they have achieved over the year. – Helen Mill, Executive Director

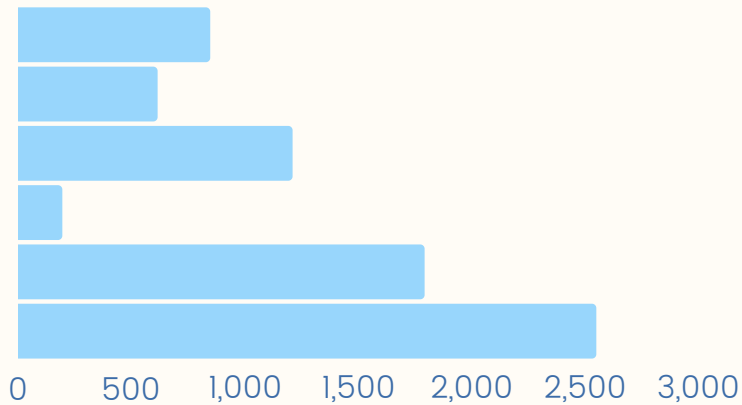
# OUR IMPACT



**7208**

People engaged in our events, performances and workshops

- Village Community Stories Programme
- Collaborative Projects
- School programmes and events
- Training
- Village Storytelling Festival
- Additional performances and events



**70**

new Instagram followers

**2869**

likes on Facebook posts

**174**

new Twitter followers

**251**

new Facebook followers

*In the morning I felt choppy, but now I feel sunny. I always cheer up knowing that I will come to the session.*



# COMMUNITY STORIES

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
- To ensure local people's voices shape community development

What did we achieve?

**310** workshops delivered

**377** adults engaged

**383** children & young people engaged





## COMMUNITY STORIES PROGRAMME

# Early Years, Children & Young People

The Early Years, Children and Young People's programme continued to thrive and evolve throughout 2022 - 2023. The Early Years programme delivered three main classes - Imagine Lab Goes Outdoors, Imagine Lab at The Village and Connecting Stories. These workshops were led by Sarah and Miriam and welcomed returning participants as well as new. Story Club continued at Gowanbank Primary and the Village with Storyteller Trinidad and Artist Greer. Story Makers and Young Storytellers were well attended and participants were supported to transition to their next levels in their Storytelling journey. We provided opportunities to work with industry professionals, attend theatre trips and learn new creative skills. Colin also cultivated a new relationship with the Mansewood Community and developed new Story Makers and Young Storytellers groups. 2022 also had a full summer programme where we created community zines and explored local points of interest, for example The GMRC, The Burrell Collection and Crookston Castle. Our groups also created work for and performed at The Village Storytelling Festival 2022.



“ Thank you to the @VillageStories for a lovely afternoon. The work you do in our community will never go unnoticed.

-Story Makers Parent, via Twitter, March 2023





## Imagine Lab & Connecting Stories

Our Early Years programme for pre-5s and their adults included outdoor and indoor provision of story-led activity and movement. Following the successful introduction of Imagine Lab Goes Outdoors, we have continued these sessions in a local community garden.

Connecting Stories continued following a successful pilot programme, delivered in 2021, for families with babies born during the pandemic. The project explored the challenges and positives of having a new baby during this unprecedented time. A film was created to share these stories and was presented at the Village Storytelling Festival in July 2022.

### Case Study

When J and his Mother first came to Connecting Stories he was only a few months old. He is now 1 and has shown great strides in development as he has grown but also we have seen his confidence and social skills increase. In the beginning he was very reluctant to join in and engage during the songs and stories but now he is more comfortable in the space, with staff and other participants. He smiles more and likes to share toys with staff and other children. His Mother, who was quite shy and reserved to begin with, has also immersed herself in the group more and is more open to being silly in activities and sharing her experiences. Through reengaging with The Village with her youngest she has enrolled her oldest child into Young Storytellers.

## Story Club, Story Squad & Young Storytellers

Our afterschool sessions for children and young people aged 5 to 17 continued throughout the year to great success. Sessions took place in our own venue as well as other local community spaces. Children and young people explored a variety of artforms and focused on well-being, nature and connection to the local community. Highlights include:

- The Young Storytellers developed Paper Rainbows, a storytelling and shadow puppetry performance for the Village Storytelling Festival, attracting a warm reception from an international audience.
- Story Clubs and Story Makers created performance and art work themed around Crookston Castle for a local sharing event in March.

### What our participants say:

"It's a comforting space, cos everyone is really nice, and they all generally get along quite well, and you can just speak your mind and grow and play and just have a good time." (Young Storytellers Participant)

"I love this club. It's very fun. There's lots of drama and also I get to meet new people" (P5 Participant)

"You guys do a fantastic job with the kids (and us mums) and I want to say thanks again for making our Friday mornings so lovely when we were at Connecting Stories." (Parent)



COMMUNITY STORIES PROGRAMME



Early Years, Children & Young People





# Oh, The Stories We Could Tell

Oh, The Stories We Could Tell is open to the adults in the communities of Greater Pollok and Newlands/Auldburn to engage in creative storytelling activities, arts and crafts and connect with other adults in the area.

The latter half of the year saw the development of a specialist group for women refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and members of the global majority. This brings our total community adult groups to three.



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Our Pollok group's performance as part of the Village Storytelling Festival in St James Church.
- The production of "Oh The Stories We Could Tell", a collation of stories, poems and artwork by the participants in each of the adult projects.



“

“The workshop has helped me with my confidence. I can speak out and not feel embarrassed”.

“Every time that I hear a story, I feel that I can take something from it to my life”.

“It has affected me in a positive way as I feel so much more confident when it comes to speaking with new people.”

“Through listening to everybody I found I have a voice, being strong, being honest.”

”







## COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

# Glasgow Life Artists in Communities

Stage 4 of the (formerly Creative Communities) programme began in November 2022 and ended in August 2023.

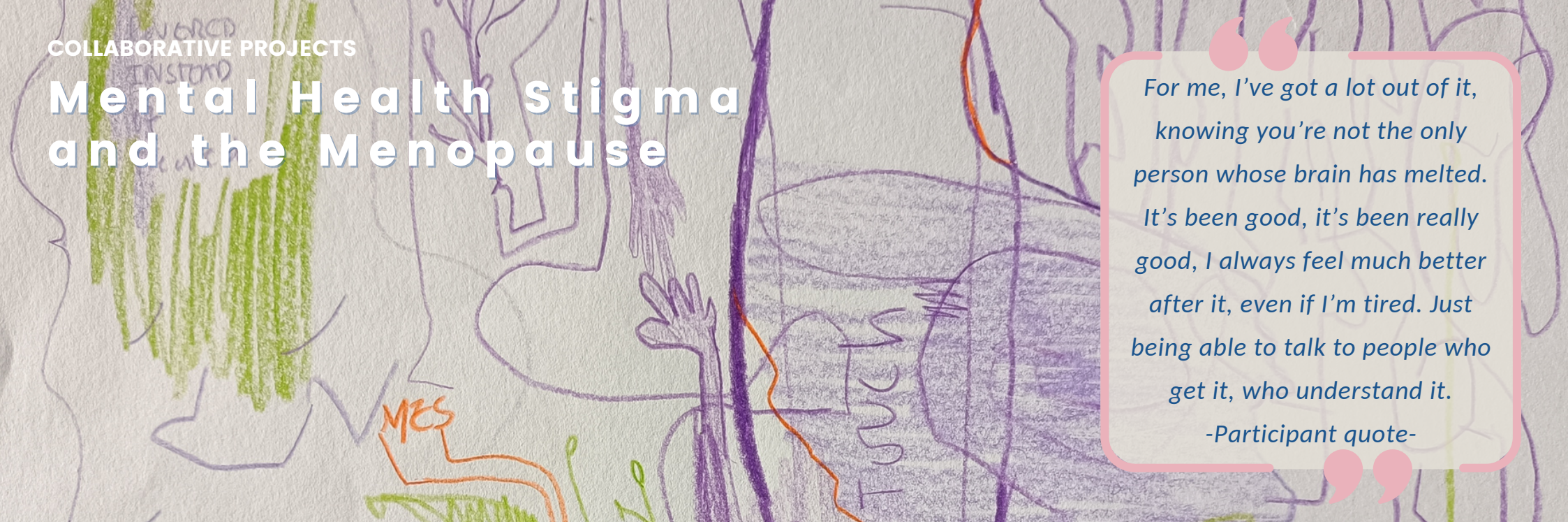
After a relaunch of the Creative Scotland and Glasgow City Council funded project, we were delighted to team up with Artists Hannah Brackston and Daniele Sambo to work across the South West in an exciting new collaborative project called The Movement.

We explored themes of Movement with some of our existing groups, as well as new groups across Greater Pollok & Newlands/Auldburn and worked towards events and artworks due which took place from April to August 2023. This included Pollok's first ever and hugely successful Kite Festival!





# Mental Health Stigma and the Menopause



*For me, I've got a lot out of it, knowing you're not the only person whose brain has melted. It's been good, it's been really good, I always feel much better after it, even if I'm tired. Just being able to talk to people who get it, who understand it.*

*-Participant quote-*

In 2022 we received funding from the NHSGCC Anti Stigma Fund to deliver Mental Health Stigma and the Menopause, a 6 month combined research and participatory arts project which investigated and documented the lived experiences of individuals who have suffered peri-menopause and menopause related mental health stigma.

From October 2022 we thoroughly researched the subject of perimenopausal and menopausal mental health via published literature, documentaries, online forums, events, talks, and personal meetings with health care practitioners, support group organisers, and individuals with lived experience. This was followed by the facilitation of an 8 week online drop-in participatory arts project in 2023, plus a number of one-off, in person workshops including with members of the Women's Creative Company and MILK Café in Govanhill.

By the end of the online project the group created a manifesto to be shared with key figures and organisations for the improvement of peri-menopausal and menopausal mental health care. We also hosted a final exhibition and event in GOMA library as an opportunity to unite all participants and raise awareness of our project and the subject of peri-menopausal and menopausal mental health.



# The Tall Ship Glenlee

In Autumn 2022 we collaborated with Glasgow's Tall Ship Glenlee to bring to life the story of 'Andy' a real-life apprentice on the ship, who kept a log of his travels in 1919. To mirror Andy's journey we engaged Ailsa Dixon, as our young Storytelling Apprentice, who received mentorship from Dan Serridge as she developed a performance based on the log entries written by Andy. This was a celebrated performance, shared with several school and public groups in November, with a special performance for Andy's family and the trustees of the Glenlee.



*There are over 100 children in Glasgow right now who carry a memory with them. A memory of a storyteller standing on the hatch of a Glasgow built tall ship beneath towering masts, swaying in the wind, shouting out a story to the sky. A story of a young lad just like them, an ordinary lad, who experienced extraordinary things.*

*-Ailsa Dixon, Storyteller-*



# Commissioned Work

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

Age  
Scotland -  
About  
Dementia

Simon  
Community  
Scotland

Scottish  
Storytelling  
Centre -  
People's  
Parish

Say Women

Outside The  
Box

Historic  
Environment  
Scotland

Acorn Shed  
Music /  
Caertas

No.1  
Befriending  
Agency

Glasgow  
Community  
Food  
Network

Maryhill  
Burgh Halls  
Trust

East  
Renfrewshire  
Libraries

The Burrell  
Collection



## Spotlight: Scottish Storytelling Centre – People's Parish

Continuing our work in the local neighbourhood of Dunterlie, we attempted to consolidate much of the development of the first year of the project. Our relationship with The Corra Foundation and the local community strengthened significantly in this time and we continued to make subtle but significant changes in the area.

We consolidated the Friday morning Creative Waiting room through the Warm Places funding stream which allowed us to provide a space for community members who are socially isolated, struggling financially and hit hard by the cost-of-living crisis. We provided a real space for story and music as well as food and warmth. This has now been adopted by community members and continues to advance. We also developed a growing network of local performers, storytellers and musicians to perform at the regular ceilidhs that are now an important part of the social calendar. First instigated by us in September 2022, we have shifted perceptions of evening events in the community. They aim to hold four a year going forward.

Our work in Dunterlie has also seen us facilitate a story gathering project around the impact that The Corra Foundation has had on the community centre and its people.





# ALL FUTURE IS FICTIONAL

TOOLKIT STORYTELLING  
AND VULNERABILITY

KEPES ALAPÍTVÁNY; MYTHOS;  
THE VILLAGE STORYTELLING; SETTLE STORIES;  
A STORYTELLING CENTRE AMSTERDAM



## 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 explored Applied Storytelling and its benefits when working with particularly marginalised and isolated people. This resulted in a toolkit which we were delighted to launch at the Village Storytelling Festival in 2022. We have subsequently provided several training sessions on how to use the toolkit with a range of storytellers and professionals from a range of backgrounds.



# Village Storytelling Festival 2022

After an unexpected hiatus due to the pandemic, we were finally able to relaunch our biennial festival in July 2022 at Glasgow's CCA.

The festival provided a platform for the voices of our own community groups, alongside internationally acclaimed storytellers. We commissioned and premiered new work in Scotland, including a programme of digital experiments and provided a range of workshops and talks on our festival theme of Re:Connection.

## What people said...

Informative, thoughtful, practical and so well delivered.

Dynamic, thought-provoking, brilliant

Inspiring! Fun! Fresh!

Photo Credits (L-R, from top): Max Crawford, Tiu Makkonen, Greg McKinney, VSC, Max Crawford, Greg McKinney

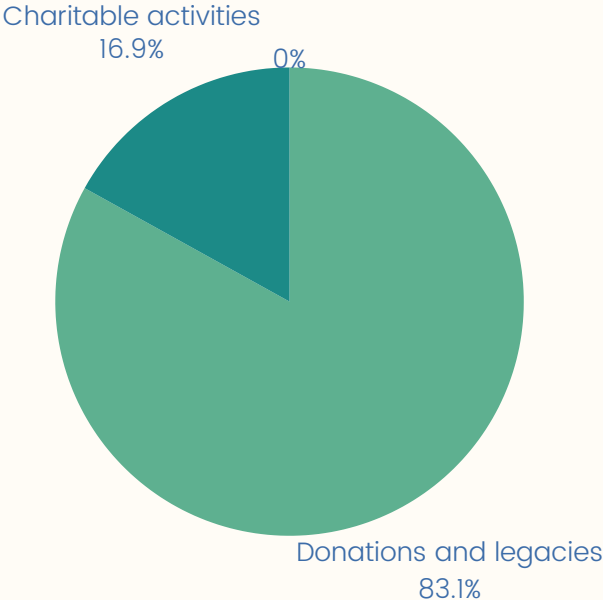




# Finances

**£354,380**

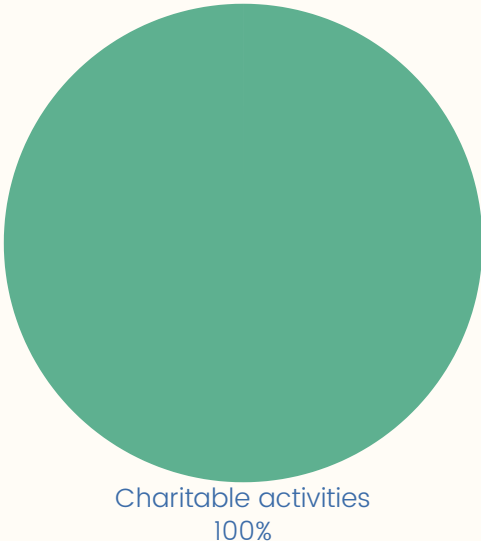
**Total income**



**Income sources**

**£358,392**

**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.



THE HUGH FRASER  
FOUNDATION



## staff

Helen Mill, Executive Director  
Alison White, Operations Manager  
Roselyn Smith, Resources Officer  
Sarah Rankin, Early Years Storyteller  
Lauren Bianchi, Storyteller  
Colin White, Storyteller  
Trinidad Cabezón Droguett, Storyteller  
Naomi O Kelly, Storyteller  
Dan Serridge, Storyteller  
Daiva Ivanauskaitė, Storyteller  
Miriam Doren, Storyteller  
Barbara Morrison, Cleaner  
Euan McGlynn, Digital Storyteller (kindly provided by our partners the Centre for Civic Innovation)

## trustees

Fiona Rich (Interim Chair)  
Michelle Drumm  
Claire Burgess  
June Couper  
Victoria Doig  
Phil Philpott (Treasurer)  
Elizabeth Morrison  
Alan Milson  
Dina Sidhva  
Cynthia Ciaramicoli  
Elizabeth Scott  
Gladys Dumashie

## associate artists & freelancers

Greer Pester  
Shona Cowie  
Lababa Naqvi  
Emma Greer  
Dawn Campbell  
Andy Gunn  
Debbie Montgomery  
Genna Allan  
Ailsa Dixon  
Hannah Brackston  
Daniele Sambo  
Emma Collins  
Gaynor Barradell  
Sam Rowe  
Sarah Wedderburn Ogilvy  
Jack Shaw  
Morven Williams  
Steve Byrne  
Donald Butler  
Nika Novich  
Sara Shaarawi  
Ursula Cheng  
Hannah Justad  
Steph Morris

Our thanks also go out to all of our wonderful VSF22 performers and volunteers!

## 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 & Freelancers

# 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 connection.

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.

