

Symposium: Storytelling for Change

We are delighted to welcome you for a full day of keynote speeches, talks, workshops and discussions in which we explore Storytelling as a driver for change.

Discover how storytelling can be harnessed to affect real change: from the deeply personal to strategic change in communities, services and policy.

Explore the potential of Storytelling as a force for connection and understanding in an ever shifting political and social landscape. And consider the changes necessary for the storytelling sector to be inclusive, contemporary and reflective of our communities.

We will be joined by a range of exciting speakers, facilitators and presenters throughout the day. Each attendee will build their own programme by selecting a workshop, interactive presentation or roundtable discussion in both the morning and afternoon session.

Who is the symposium for:

- **Storytellers, artists, creative practitioners** and **heritage professionals** interested in deepening their practice or driving change and supporting inclusion within the arts and heritage.
- **Educators, Community Practitioners** and those in **Health & Social Care** interested in story-led approaches.
- **Funders, Public Sector workers** and **Third Sector leaders** interested in storytelling for strategic change.
- Anyone else with an **interest in Storytelling**, Inclusion and the Arts.



Schedule

10:00 - 10:30	Arrival, teas & coffees
10:30 - 11:30	Opening Plenary
11:30 - 13:00	Morning Session
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch
14:00 - 15:30	Afternoon Session
15:30 - 16:00	Closing Plenary

Opening Plenary

The day will begin with keynote speeches from:

Arjen Barel, founder and director of Amsterdam's Storytelling Centre, an internationally renowned training centre for applied storytelling. Arjen will introduce the work of his organisation, focusing on their use of storytelling as an intervention to reduce polarization. Their work is grounded in the idea that sharing personal stories can foster mutual understanding and strengthen human connection.

Caroline Currie, Learning and Access Curator at the Burrell Collection & St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life and Art/Provand's Lordship, three of Glasgow Life's highly respected museums. Caroline explains how embedding storytelling throughout the collections and events within the Burrell has helped to connect to a wider, more diverse range of visitors, highlighting that this approach often involves sharing difficult and uncomfortable truths, particularly those related to colonialism.



Morning Session:

Interactive Presentation (90 mins)

It's Like Listening to a Song: Multilingual Storytelling to Support Integration

This thematic presentation explores how community storytelling can support integration as a shared, multilingual process involving communities across Scotland.

The event draws on the work of community storytellers and researchers of language learning, integration and the arts. They will discuss how multilingual storytelling supports community integration, personal wellbeing and the sharing of voices from the local area and around the world.

The event will include a short drama, *It's like listening to song*, based on findings from Daniel's research. The drama features an adult community storytelling group who share stories from their lives in Arabic and Scots, listening to one another and finding ways to appreciate their stories, even when they don't understand the language spoken.

This interactive event will feature the following speakers:

- **Daiva Ivanauskaitė-Brown**, a community storyteller at the Village Storytelling Centre, will explore how the centre brings together multilingual groups of New Scots and locals in the community. She will discuss how creating inclusive spaces for sharing traditional and personal stories from life experiences in Glasgow to the memories from birth countries of the participants helps build deep social connections and improve mental well-being, while providing creative platforms for underrepresented voices.
- **Daniel Calvert**, a researcher at the University of Stirling, will discuss how integration is a shared, multilingual process that happens at a community level from the bottom up. Daniel's research in sociolinguistics shows how community groups in Scotland support grassroots integration by encouraging people to draw on all full language resources.
- **Lababa Naqvi**, a community artist and storyteller, will share her experiences of supporting Urdu speakers in the Village Storytelling Centre's projects, looking at the approaches that create a valuable participation across different language abilities for women whose lives have been affected by migration or displacement profoundly reshaping their physical and mental well-being, economic stability, and domestic safety.
- **Sawsan Abdelghany**, a researcher based in Edinburgh, will share her research showing that while ESOL is vital for integration, structural barriers limit access—especially for women—highlighting the need for more flexible, inclusive provision. It emphasises how art/storytelling, multilingual and place-based learning can foster belonging, confidence, and meaningful integration through shared, lived experiences.



Morning Session:

Workshop (90 mins)

Tell Me Your Life Story

Knowing yours...the impact on your identity and sense of belonging.

This participative, taster workshop will introduce some of the basic principles in Life Story work, some useful starter exercises and how it links to oral storytelling and explores practical methods of doing this work. The workshop is for people of all levels of experience but ideally suited to participants who have an interest in working with people. This approach can be applied to children or adults.

The workshop will be delivered by **Ruth Kirkpatrick**. Ruth has worked therapeutically with young people for 40 years, is a qualified Therapeutic Life Story practitioner (Rose), independent social worker and professional storyteller. Ruth's storytelling pack, *Stories Always*, will be for sale.

Roundtable (90 mins)

Fàilte (welcome): Fostering Diversity & Belonging within Scottish Storytelling

A roundtable conversation inviting participants to explore the landscape of diversity and inclusion in Scottish storytelling. As Scotland's cultural identity continues to evolve, how do we build a more representative future? This session will open up discussion around who is telling our stories, whose voices are being left out, and what meaningful inclusion looks like in practice.

We will explore:

Breaking Barriers: Challenging the underrepresentation of minoritised communities in oral storytelling.

Cultural Representation: Moving beyond tokenism to ensure stories reflect the full diversity of Scotland's communities.

Inclusive Heritage: Honouring traditional storytelling while creating space for new and contemporary perspectives.

Led by **Niall Moorjani**, this roundtable will gently hold space for dialogue for those of us committed to equity within Scotland's Storytelling sector.

Niall is an award winning and critically acclaimed Scottish-Indian, non-binary and neurodiverse writer, storyteller and theatre maker based between Edinburgh and London. They have performed all over the world, from Delhi to New York to old York. They create for both children and adults, dealing with themes queerness, anti-colonialism, myth and legend. At the core of all their work is hope, joy and kindness



Afternoon Session:

Interactive Presentation (90 mins)

Stories for Social Justice – The Practical Implementation of Storytelling with People Whose Voices Are Least Heard

A presentation with workshop elements; this session is designed to provide practical information around approaches to building a successful project with participants whose voices are not often heard. This workshop will profile a Village Storytelling Centre project which was commissioned by The Corra Foundation to share and platform stories from Birth Parents whose child(ren) had been permanently removed from their care.

We will share insights from both Creative Practitioner and Funders perspectives on the real world application of this work and the impact that it has had.

Participants will leave with ideas to build a toolkit of their own to plan, develop and implement projects such as this.

This event will be presented and facilitated by:

- **Elaine Wilson**, Head of Learning & Development at Corra Foundation, a Scottish grant-making charity that is about strengthening and amplifying people's voices and their power to make change. In 2022, the Scottish Government contracted Corra Foundation to run the 'Supporting Birth Parents Fund'. Since then, nearly £2 million has been distributed to organisations supporting birth parents who no longer have care of their children. Elaine will share Corra's approach to storytelling within their work.
- **Lauren Bianchi** is an Associate Storyteller with the Village Storytelling Centre and a practising Dramatherapist. A leading specialist in Applied Storytelling, Lauren will share her approach to ethically gathering, shaping and sharing the stories with the birth parents groups.
- **Rowan Anderson** leads Corra's work that is focussed on drugs, alcohol, and children and families. Rowan will share the impact of the storytelling work within the Supporting Birth Parents programme and how the outputs continue to be used in influencing policy and practice.



Afternoon Session:

Workshop (90 mins)

Telling Stories for Troubled Times

In times of ecological and social upheaval, how can traditional stories speak to the urgencies of today?

This workshop explores how folk tales and myth can be reimagined to draw out the social and environmental currents that feel alive and relevant to contemporary audiences. Through creative exercises and group reflection, we'll experiment with shaping traditional material, so it resonates with present-day concerns, while retaining its depth and integrity.

A space to question, play and make, this workshop invites you to tell stories that not only reflect the world as it is, but help to shape what it might become.

Delivered by Storyteller, **Corinne Harrigan**. Corinne works with story to hold spaces for connection. Grounded in myth and folktale, their performances amplify marginalised voices and restore hidden narratives to contemporary imaginations. Across corporate, education and arts sectors, Corinne trains professionals in embodied storytelling – coaching the discovery of voice and compelling presence in front of a live audience.

Roundtable (90 mins)

The Folklore of Home: The Role of Storytelling in the Construction of Nationhood and Its Contemporary Significance

This interactive roundtable discussion will explore how folklore and storytelling have contributed to nationhood, questioning their role in both nurturing community and reinforcing power.

Participants will be invited to examine tensions between preserving “national” stories and challenging fixed narratives through cross-cultural perspectives. Our moderators, Daniel and Daiva will draw on their experiences of working with communities at The Village Storytelling Centre as well as their own personal research, in Scotland and Lithuania. Together, participants will reflect on responsibility, inclusion, and possibilities for more ethical storytelling today across Glasgow and beyond.

- **Daniel Serridge** is a storyteller, community artist and facilitator who creates vibrant and exciting community projects for all ages and abilities. He tells stories and helps people to tell theirs, supporting everyone to see their experiences as pieces of artwork waiting to be told. Through a combination of the personal, mythic and folkloric Dan explores the power of metaphor and meaning that sharing stories can hold. Dan is now a fixture of the Glasgow, Scotland and UK storytelling scene and works for The Village Storytelling Centre as their Artform Development Lead.
- **Daiva Ivanauskaitė-Brown** is a Community Storyteller at the Village Storytelling Centre. Originally from Lithuania, Daiva's background is in History, Film and Education. She offers a vast repertoire of stories from her native land, Scotland and worldwide weaving them with story-based activities to create inspiring and safe spaces for groups to explore their identity, heritage and lived experiences. Daiva is a member of the Scottish Storytelling Forum and Scottish Storytelling Directory and creates original oral storytelling performances.

Closing Plenary

The Symposium will close with all attendees being brought together for some final reflections.

Please Note, shortly after the closing plenary we will hold a screening for the short films created in our collaboration with Corra discussed in the afternoon session, Stories for Social Justice. Supporting Birth Parents is a FREE event and we welcome you to attend. Please book this and any other of our events through the [main festival website](#).

Remember, you can purchase a Festival Pass with Symposium add on for only £110.

To book a festival or symposium pass, [please click here](#).

