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PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH UNIT

Artists in Communities Programme:

Green Economy Iteration

October 2023 - March 2024

**Glasgow**life

Final Evaluation Report

June 2024

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## Executive Summary

Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities Green Iteration is a hyper-local programme of five art projects which aim to increase access to creative and cultural opportunities, improve wellbeing and develop socially engaged arts practice. In addition, these projects provided opportunities to engage in environmental justice campaigning, climate mitigation actions and improving the quality of human lives and planetary wellbeing in local areas.

From October 2023 to June 2024 twelve artists working on six projects partnered with third sector organisations, schools and other cross sector partners to engage 1,675 people in artistic and arts-based activities. Many of these took the form of weekly workshops that produced artworks, performances, participatory experiences and most importantly learning and actions supporting The Glasgow Green Deal and the transition to net zero. These experiences challenged, inspired, educated, empowered and skilled residents of all ages, including many residents without the means to access existing modes of creative expression. These projects enabled residents' cultural and environmental citizenship in a variety of forms, ranging from plays to tree planting and bike rides; increasing confidence in expressing themselves creatively in public. The key findings of the research are as follows:

### **Outcome One: Communities had increased access to creative and cultural opportunities in their local area.**

Increased access was achieved through:

- Local activities,
- Maintaining and initiating organisational partnerships,
- Effective interpersonal engagement and facilitation skills, and
- Subjects and skills of interest to participants.

For the five UK SPF funded projects there were:

- 111 events (Target: 50 events, 10 per project)
- 1,792 people engaged (Target: 200).

For the Gaelic Treehouse project (HSCP and GUIR funded):

- 11 events (Target: 10 per project)
- 197 people engaged

Total number of people engaged: 1,989 (Target: 200) in 122 events including:

- 1,085 active participants in project activities,
- 904 estimated audiences through private and public sharing events.

## **Outcome Two: : Participants and communities had improved wellbeing.**

The benefits to wellbeing in this programme stem from:

- Learning how to communicate effectively using creative skills.
- Campaigning that benefits others and the increase in civic agency this involves.
- At an individual level, enjoyment, improvements to concentration, creative competence and confidence, and pride (self-actualisation) in challenging creative achievements shared publicly through local events,
- Taking part in social events in green spaces,
- Taking on creative challenges together to create events for others to benefit from,
- Exploring nature together in an experiential way,
- Increasing residents' awareness of how flora and fauna can improve wellbeing, and hence contribute to an improved quality of life.

## **Outcome Three: Artists in Glasgow had increased opportunities to develop their socially engaged creative practice.**

Artists developed their social and collaborative artistic practices in ways determined by differing modes of practice and approaches to carrying out this work:

Engaging participants in understanding the green wellbeing economy, and creating an international partnership for future green economy work (*Our Green Home – Let it Breathe*)

Developing facilitation and communication skills with a wider range of people, and a new methodology for integrating citizen science learning and somatic movement exploration (*Sharing Cowls*)

Transforming the formal language and adult discourse of the Green Deal into multi-modal forms of participatory activity, encouraging ownership of a single high quality artwork through a high quality participation experience and representing each participants contribution (*In The Making*)

Facilitating participants to develop their own practices and to take the lead in organising bespoke green economy activities that cater to the needs and desires of the local community (*Repair and Swap*)

Using creative activity as a vehicle for change in Green Economy attitudes, and enabling collaboration between groups with different needs and of different ages (*In Our Hands*)

## **Green Deal Outcomes**

### **Increasing Knowledge of the Green Economy and the Glasgow Green Deal**

Artists incorporated environmental learning, and Green Deal related content into their projects in a variety of experiential, practical and imaginative ways. This included direct interactions with nature through art/walks and bike rides (*Our Green Home – Let it Breathe*), somatic-scientific experiences (*Sharing Cowls*), writing and signing for performance (*In Our Hands*), exploring colours and maps (*In the Making*) and learning how to repair and upcycle (*Repair and Swap*).

## **Building capacity to communicate or act in the transition towards net zero**

Some projects equipped participants with creative and practical skills that built capacity in effective communication (*In Our Hands, Our Green Home – Let it Breathe*). Communicating and acting to support pro-environmental behaviours took the forms of a play, bike rides and demonstrations at Glasgow City Chambers. *In the Making* involved child participants in existing local initiatives which contribute to net zero. Artists also initiated new partnerships between participant groups and local, national and international organisations committed to achieving green economy aims.

## **Using creative activity as a vehicle for positive environmental change**

Creative activity was used as a vehicle to change the built and natural environment. *Repair and Swap* contributed immediately to a more sustainable and affordable wellbeing economy by maintaining and upcycling clothing and other items. *Sharing Cowllairs* planted new trees, contributing to carbon capture, cleaner air and reaching net zero.

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## Introduction

The Glasgow Green Deal is a nine-year mission which intends to fundamentally reshape the city's economy. It is designed to bridge the gap between climate adaptation and justice aspirations and action and deliver equitable, Net Zero carbon, climate resilient living by 2030. The role that artistic and cultural participation can play in promoting an environmentally responsible wellbeing economy is a part of these efforts. As there is no baseline for Green Economy creative activity in Glasgow, this report provides a baseline for future activity.

This report presents the qualitative evaluation of the Artists in Communities Green Economy programme October 2023 to May 2024 (hereafter AiC), jointly funded by Creative Scotland and UK Shared Prosperity Fund through Glasgow City Council. The evaluation study draws on participant feedback, artists' observations, researcher observations and partner organisation interviews. In this report we draw together the research findings to document the programme's outcomes of increased accessibility, improved wellbeing, social arts practice development and increased knowledge and participation in pro-environmental behaviours (Green Deal outcomes).

The programme funded five projects using Glasgow City Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and an additional Gaelic Arts project was funded by the GUIR Gaelic Artist Programme and Glasgow City HSCP (Rebecca Fraser & Mairi Morrisons' *Gaelic Treehouse* project), for two days a week for six months.

## Structure of this report

Section One: Describes the programme aims, research design, and provides summaries of the Green Deal relevance of the projects.

Section Two: Summarises the key findings of the evaluation.

Section Three: Provides detailed reports of the extent to which each project met the programme aims.

Section Four: Summarises project learning and provides recommendations.

Section Five: Explains the contribution of the arts to the Green Deal.

Appendix: Contains descriptions of the commissioned artists' experience and practice.

## Section One: Programme Aims and Project summaries

Artists in Communities is designed to build on the successes of previous work to increase access to creative opportunities. One of Glasgow Life's strategic priorities is to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of local communities. It also aims to support, connect and develop the artists that work across the city. These aims provide three objectives or intended outcomes (conditions to meet the aims):

1. Communities have increased access to creative and cultural opportunities in their local area (content and activities reflect the unique culture within each area).
2. Participants and communities have improved wellbeing (including positive sense of self, sense of community connectedness, improved relationships, and engagement in the world).
3. Artists in Glasgow have increased opportunities to develop their socially engaged creative practice.

For this Green Economy iteration, eleven artists that were commissioned for Artists in Communities 2022-23 (working on six projects) were re-commissioned to achieve these objectives through artistic activities focussed on themes of environmental responsibility, climate mitigation and climate justice. A number of these artists were also involved in the COP26 Create4Glasgow programme (October 2021 to May 2022) when a cohort of Glasgow's young people selected twelve projects responding to the climate emergency, which were then developed through workshops. This new programme therefore provided an opportunity to extend and deepen existing relationships and activities, as well as engage new participants.

This work is informed and aligned with The Glasgow Green Deal, a nine-year mission for the city's economic transformation to a green, wellbeing economy. This is supported by an Action Plan and Framework for implementation, monitoring and scrutiny.

Relevant aims include:

- Climate justice and a fair and inclusive transition to net zero
- Developing a wellbeing economy, for example by focusing more on people's quality of life and the planetary wellbeing.

Further information is provided in Glasgow's Climate Plan<sup>1</sup> which will be reviewed and revised in 2024 to encompass the Climate Adaptation Plan. It was suggested to artists that projects could contribute to meeting Green Deal aims by:

- Exploring topics with communities to increase their knowledge of the Green Economy and understanding of how it relates to them.
- Building the capacity of communities in the city to take part in, and facilitate, the transition towards net zero, through increased access to creative and cultural opportunities in their local areas.
- Demonstrating how arts and cultural activity can be a vehicle for change which enables community participation in the public discourse of environmental change which they are historically excluded from.

The programme was funded by a portion of Glasgow City Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, managed by the Green Economy Unit (five projects), and the GUIR Gaelic Arts Programme and Glasgow City HSCP (Rebecca Fraser & Mairi Morrisons' *Gaelic Treehouse* project). The financial resource provided to achieve the work was a fee of £14,025, based on two days a week paid at £275 per day for 24 weeks, including £825 for collecting data for the evaluation; from October 2023 to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://glasgow.gov.uk/article/2389/Glasgow-s-Climate-Plan>

March 2024. The programme also provided a £3,500 production fee. Projects were able to run beyond the funded period, with some public sharing events occurring in April and May 2024.

### Artist Selection Process

The success of previous collaborative and social arts projects and the learning that this success is based on trusting relationships built over time informed the selection of artists. Therefore, this commission was offered to artists who took part in the Artists in Communities programme of 2022-23. The selection included the continuation of existing projects with new participants and the beginning of new projects with participants who had previous experience of working with the artists. All the commissioned artists had existing relationships with their organisational partners and also a substantial number of the project participants.

### Green Deal and UKSPF Scotland priorities: Identified Needs and Relevance

This section summarises the social and environmental justice rationales and community (geographical and/or of interest) foci of the six commissioned projects, provided by artists. Their proposals were assessed by the Glasgow Life Creative Communities team with input from the Green Economy Unit at Glasgow City Council. In summary, the projects provided opportunities to engage in raising environmental and social justice awareness, other climate adaptation actions and generally improving the quality of human lives and planetary wellbeing in local areas in different ways. Local initiatives that the projects supported included a Swap Shop, Repair Café, active travel routes, a new fresh produce market, greater use of local green spaces, developing local biodiversity, and raising awareness of a new, multipurpose HSCP hub. All of the projects meet the *UKSPF for Scotland* Intervention S5 requirements: Support for sport, arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities, projects and facilities and institutions, and the objective of “Strengthening our social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural and social ties and amenities, such as community infrastructure and local green space, and community-led projects” (UK Government, April 2022).

#### *Our Green Home – Let it Breathe*

(Zoe Walker and Neil Bromwich)

#### North East Ward and East End

The North East Ward has petrol and diesel engine vehicle pollution hot spots due to the proximity to the motorway that traverses across Glasgow. Active travel is supported by local groups who campaigned against air pollution and for cleaner air in 2023. This project brings a variety of groups together to connect and speak on this shared issue, along the underground river route of the hidden Molendinar Burn that the city of Glasgow was founded upon. By making this direct connection to the hidden natural geography and provenance of Glasgow, this project aimed to raise awareness of how people interact with and traverse this area.

### *Sharing Cowlairs*

(Saffy Setohy and Margaret Kerr)

Possilpark: All ages in the geographical area

This project responds to community use of 30 hectares of undeveloped, biodiverse land that represents a significant potential environmental, social and cultural asset for the community. Previous projects in the area revealed a strong interest in, and attachment to, the woodland ecology of this space. Possilpark was identified as a target neighbourhood by the Clyde Climate Forest, a strategic tree-planting project responding to Glasgow's climate targets and referenced in Glasgow's Climate Action Plan and the Green Deal. By focussing on trees and collaborating with the Clyde Climate Forest project, this project provides an opportunity to connect the needs and interests of the community to the wider climate strategy for Glasgow in a locally relevant way. The tree planting and new park objectives of the project are included in the UKSPF Interventions, Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs Table for Scotland, "Investment Priority Communities and Place, Intervention S3: Improvements to the natural environment and green and open space" (UK Govt, April 2022).

### *In The Making*

(Jennifer Olley and Lynsey Wells)

Thornwood/Whiteinch: Children's participation

This project supported three environmentally responsible local initiatives: a campaign for improvements to the Thornwood Roundabout, a Sustrans cycle route and a new local food market selling local, fresh produce. Awareness needs raising in the interest of safety to participate in local active travel (walking and cycling). Currently in the Whiteinch area there are no dedicated food shops. The local schools are situated close to main roads and motorways with two of them hemmed in by major roads in an environment where there is a lot of traffic pollution and a lack of green space. By equipping young people with the creative tools to visualise and imagine the very best city possible they are enabled to make a difference, be more invested and more able to encourage others. The artistic programme offered children a way to take part in these initiatives, so this concerns children's participation through cultural citizenship as well as specific initiatives that support climate justice and the wellbeing economy (Green Deal Action Plan Outcome 5: Mobilisation).

### *Repair and Swap*

(Deirdre Nelson)

Govanhill to Castlemilk: Young people's participation

Through previous projects in the area the artist identified a need for climate related activity relating to food, waste, repair and the exchange economy. The artist wanted to supplement existing

environmental activity by Cassiltoun and Ardenglen Housing associations and The Swap Club Glasgow by co-creating a Swap Clothing Swap and Repair Café (the artist is a volunteer for the existing Repair Café).

### *In Our Hands*

(John Binnie, Tina Freeland and Robin Mitchell)

North East and Castlemilk: Intergenerational participation

Each of the groups worked with in a previous project asked the artists to help them create an eco-play that is also about their lives. Many of these people are impoverished and discriminated against, and do not often get their voices heard, and have few opportunities to engage with the arts. Co-creating an eco-play provides a platform for climate justice cultural citizenship (Green Deal Action Plan Outcome 5: Mobilisation). In addition, Katherine Jones, Chair of Action for the Protection of Rural Scotland and Stuart Whittaker, Community Woodland Officer, at Cassiltoun Housing Trust; expressed a desire to collaborate with the groups to help them to become lobbyists for promoting a greener economy.

### *Taigh-craoibhe na Gaidhlig (The Gaelic Treehouse)*

(Rebecca Fraser and Màiri NicIleMhoire / Mairi Morrison)

Parkhead and Dalmarnock: Young families

Co-funded separately by GUIR Gaelic Arts Programme and Glasgow City HSCP.

Through previous work with residents in the area (2022-23) the artists discovered a lack of knowledge and access to local green spaces. This is supported by findings from The Neighbourhood Index and Understanding Glasgow Project which both state the disparity between the city's wider environmental statistics and the chosen areas of Parkhead and Dalmarnock (for example, 100% of residents live within 500 metres of derelict land, 66% higher than the city average.) The intention is to creatively seek out the positive opportunities the urban landscape and its culture has to offer, and empower residents to feel a sense of ownership in how they access and create these opportunities. Therefore, the artists want to foreground the connections between educating children and their families, the importance of preserving trees, the Green Action Trust's tree-planting initiative, the Gaelic language (the Gaelic Alphabet is based on names of trees), the Green Deal aim for net zero, closing the attainment gap in education, and the call for climate justice. In addition, the project coincides with the creation of a new Health and Social Care Partnership service hub in Parkhead, so the project would also raise awareness of this new resource to residents.

## Research

The success of this programme is evaluated against the targets and aims described above, and the quality and depth of participants' creative engagement in environmentally responsible and socially just activities in local areas.

The research and evaluation team was made up of the commissioned artists, Hugh Ortega Breton Ph.D. (University of Central Lancashire) and Beth Pearson Ph.D. (University of Glasgow). Data collection for the evaluation focussed on the three intended outcomes and how projects increased knowledge and participation in fairer and more inclusive pro-environmental activities. The research design for this evaluation was distinctive because artists were responsible for collecting data about their projects as well as delivering creative activities. In this respect it was a participatory research design that focused on collecting the views and experiences of participants. Artists took a variety of approaches based on their prior experience as well as making use of creative outputs as data when appropriate. To complement this an independent researcher visited each project to conduct observations.

### Strengths and limitations

- Artists collected the majority of the data, increasing the risk of bias. This was offset by requesting verbatim responses from participants, researchers, observing projects and interviewing partners.
- The focus on participant voice provides a varied picture of the experience of taking part in socially engaged projects. It also enables policy makers and funders to hear directly from citizens and make informed decisions about the value of future investment in socially engaged creative practice.
- Some artists provided more data than others which makes comparative analysis difficult and the evidence base for each project variable.
- The relationship-based methodology used by the evaluators allows for greater explanation of how aesthetical relational practices are effective, through a relational conceptualisation of experience, whilst appreciating the spontaneity of responsive delivery.
- All available measures for wellbeing were assessed and considered to be inappropriate for the settings, participants and the relational mode of engagement characterising this programme.

## Section Two: Programme Outcomes

This section presents a summary of how projects met the programme outcomes of increased accessibility, improved wellbeing, developing creative practice and outcomes supporting the Glasgow Green Deal. Each outcome section contains a project vignette as an illustration.

### 2.1 Outcome One: Communities have increased accessibility in their area

This section focuses on creative *participation* and provides evidence of the physical accessibility and resonance of programme activities. The evaluation of the previous Artists in Communities programme of 2022-23 identified four key features of providing access: location, partnerships, facilitation & practice style, and subject matter. Some projects also involved the public sharing of participants' artworks in exhibitions and experiential vents. These also increase access to cultural opportunities for other local residents, as audiences.

#### **Increased access was achieved through:**

- **Hyper-local activities,**
- **Maintaining and initiating organisational partnerships,**
- **Effective interpersonal engagement and facilitation skills,**
- **Subjects and skills of interest to participants.**

For the five UK SPF funded projects there were:

- 111 events (Target: 50 events, 10 per project)
- 1,792 people engaged (Target: 200).

For the Gaelic Treehouse project (HSCP and GUR funded):

- 11 events (Target: 10 per project)
- 197 people engaged

Total number of people engaged: 1,989 (Target: 200) in 122 events including:

- 1,085 active participants in project activities,
- 904 estimated audiences through private and public sharing events.

Whether this represents an improvement in engagement numbers (physical and digital) during the last 12 months is difficult to accurately assess as it requires a comparison with numbers engaged by the same artists working in the same area in the period April to September 2023. The previous Artists in Communities programme ran for nine months from December 2022 to August 2023 inclusive, with participation increasing accumulatively over a longer period of project activity. Such a comparison would also need to factor in seasonal differences in engagement levels which is a

contributory factor favouring projects that run outdoors during the summer, compared to the current Green Economy projects that ran predominantly in the autumn and winter.

### **Hyper-local activities**

Artists brought activities to nearby, indoor and outdoor locations; and in the majority of cases to existing groups (school classes, local activity groups).

*I felt it was very important that the project supported our young people to engage with their local area, to be proud of it and find the beauty in it.*

Adult participant *Sharing Cowls*

### **Maintaining and initiating organisational partnerships**

Partnerships with local organisations, particularly organisations working in the Green economy domain and primary schools, has been key to obtaining access to participants and increasing the scale of what participants are able to achieve. The programme has included both existing and new third sector, public, and voluntary partnerships. All of the organisational partners that the researcher spoke to were very clear about the benefits of working with artists.

*She [Deirdre Nelson] lets them lead, and listens to their ideas... Deirdre is engaging throughout Castlemilk, she uses the links and contacts we have well. It's very positive and of mutual benefit.*

Partner, *Repair and Swap*

*They [Walker & Bromwich] are very, very relaxed...they make ideas look so simple...We will keep working with On Bikes and the other partners that we've linked up with and we will probably do another protest right into the city centre. That's the legacy...and the teachers who have been on these rides along with them, there's now no fear... There's so many doors that they've opened up.*

Partner, *Our Green Home – Let it Breathe*

*A lot of people on the art strategy steering group and other groups that I sit on all saw the benefit of using this creative engagement approach to work with local people...It's the wealth and knowledge that she's [Rebecca Fraser] got of the area, the connection she's got with local people, you know, it would be silly not to keep that going as long as we can.*

Partner, *Gaelic Treehouse*

*Well it's a win-win situation, the staff absolutely love what they have to offer and the kids are so excited about having a specialist coming in. And what they can get out of them is something that we'd never be able to do. And the things that they end up making with them are beyond what we would even envisage.*

Partner, *In the Making*

## **Effective interpersonal engagement and facilitation skills**

Each artist team was able to make Green Economy subjects engaging through responding creatively to participants. This included two projects working with adults who expressed perceptual barriers to discussions about climate change.

*They are so approachable (John Binnie, Tina Freeland and Robin Mitchell). It's the empathy, an understanding around mental health, that's the biggest thing, to have that understanding and be able to work with people that can be quite difficult sometimes...it's that encouragement that's given to help people be creative.*

Partner, *In Our Hands*

*You and Margaret have integrity, which helps the trust. You give confidence to participants to be tactile and creative, artistic and colourful.*

Partner, *Sharing Cowlairs*

## **Subjects and skills of interest to participants**

Please see the table below for a summary of the creative opportunities and Green Economy subject matter people found engaging and accessible.

*I really enjoyed doing music and writing. At first I was nervous but if you let yourself go, it's like discovering your inner child. You can play...This is part of my journey. It's a safe place to share.*

Participant, *In Our Hands*

*I come from the east end of Glasgow and wanted to hear its history as my husband spoke about playing in the Molendinar.*

Participant, *Our Green Home – Let it Breathe*

*He has hardly any English and I've never seen him the way he was last week, it was amazing to see, he just lit up.*

Teacher, observer; *In the Making*

*I loved learning how to stitch and patch clothes.*

Participant, *Repair and Swap*

### **Participants artworks engaging audiences**

*I loved seeing the photos of the people with their trees- they made me feel peaceful and I felt inspired to go and spend time with a tree near my home. I also loved spotting the wee creatures living in the colourful painted trees.*

Exhibition visitor, *Sharing Cowllairs*

### **Content provided by artists providing interest or behaviour change**

*I have never been here before, we normally walk the other way. I will come back with my mum now and show her the tree seeds.*

Child participant, *Sharing Cowllairs*

*I like upcycling now!*

Child participant, *Repair and Swap*

## What was accessible for whom and where

The table below provides a summary of the creative opportunities and green economy subject matter people found engaging and accessible.

What		Where	Who			
Subject matter	Art forms	Access partners by sector	Participants	Artists	Number of active participants	Audience figures
Fresh produce, trees, roads, city planning	Screen printing, drawing and painting	Primary schools.	Primary school children.	In The Making, Jenn Olley and Lynsey Wells	286	90
Active travel and rivers.	Drawing, painting, mapping, designing logos, making books, banners and flags, live art, sculpture techniques.	Community organisations, a church and a primary school.	Primary school children and adults.	Zoe Walker & Neil Bromwich	151	272
Water pollution, campaigning	Theatre, visual art, percussion, poetry and photography.	Housing association, community & social care organisations and primary schools.	Primary school children, older adults, service users.	John Binnie, Tina Freeland, Robin Mitchell	118	141
Gaelic, nature and trees	Visual art, singing	Glasgow City HSCP	All ages, family groups, diverse ethnic communities	Màiri NicilleMhoire/Màiri Morrison & Rebecca Fraser	197	0
Trees, ecology, history, Ogham alphabet <sup>2</sup> .	Dance, somatic movement, photography and painting	Community organisations and a primary school.	All ages	Saffy Setohy and Margaret Kerr	121	175+
Recycling, upcycling, exchange and repairing	Textile making, visual art	Housing association, community organisations and primary schools.	All ages	Deirdre Nelson	212	102+
<b>TOTAL</b>					1,085	780+

<sup>2</sup> An Early Medieval written language (4<sup>th</sup> century AD) used across the British Isles primarily to write the early Irish language, Old Welsh, Pictish, Latin and later the Old Irish language. The alphabet has 20 letters and 20 trees associated with it.

## Vignette: Increased Accessibility: *Taigh-craobhe na Gàidhlig / The Gaelic Treehouse*

*Who needs Soft Play when you can play like this outside?*

Tolcross and Easterhouse at The Charter, Platform, Tollcross Park, The Wash House Gardens, The Shettleston Growers, and Tollcross Allotments.

Rebecca Fraser and Màiri NicllleMhoire/Mairi Morrison: Visual art and Gaelic music and singing.

Partner: Jackie Shearer, Glasgow City HSCP, Parkhead.

The main indoor venue, The Charter, has a bus stop right outside linking it with Tollcross, Sandyhills, Shettleston and Parkhead. Opposite is the west entrance to Tollcross Park.

The artists provided a drop-in space with structured and unstructured creative activities and supported parents to access local outdoor green spaces. They offered two essential pillars of social prescribing, arts based and nature-based activities; some of which took place outdoors in spaces that families may have not accessed otherwise. So many families turned up for the first session that they set up a booking system for the remainder and found a system to make it as accessible as possible for everyone.

Most participants were not Gaelic speakers so Màiri introduced Gaelic through story and music, composing a new Gaelic song about trees which the families learned at all the sessions. Participants were all keen to learn. Many of the families spoke little English so the artists encouraged them to share their own languages. It then became a multi-lingual project, with seven languages spoken. The artists described elements of the natural world with both English and Gaelic translations so that children and their parents had the opportunity to learn Gaelic as they played, exploring the outdoors, and learning about nature and the importance of trees. Participants described *The Gaelic Treehouse* as,

*Very chilled and relaxing.*

*The only play group I can bring my son to because he has additional needs and other groups are too noisy and overwhelming. He listens, I noticed that he focuses because it's a different language.*

*A great space to engage and stimulate my 2.5-year-old whilst being a safe place to also bring my baby.  
So welcoming and fun for all 3 of us!*

Participants were taken to local green spaces and helped to make connections with local green groups:

*I signed my older kids up to the Smelly Welly Club at Shettleston Growers because it was signposted at The Gaelic Treehouse. I need free holiday activities this year because I'm out of work.*

*We went to the Wash House Gardens open day because of our visit there with The Gaelic Treehouse. With 4 kids I'm always trying to find age-appropriate groups in the East End so we'll keep coming back here because it's such a great space and has a calming atmosphere.*

A twice-weekly presence built trust and familiarity and allowed meaningful, creative expressions to develop. Rebecca facilitated the artworks made by the pre-school children for a new, botanical Gaelic Alphabet Book, to be given to each child that contributed to its creation.

*Will it be back at any point? We've absolutely loved coming and learning some Gaelic.*

## 2.2 Outcome Two: Participants and communities have improved wellbeing.

Wellbeing is a complex concept and has a variety of dimensions that are expressed through creative and social activities. It ranges from enjoying activities and happiness to a more profound sense of achievement (for example feeling proud about a publicly shared artwork) and feeling that one's actions are benefitting others and the planet. We know that time spent outdoors in green and blue spaces, and time spent working with other people in meaningful activities, also generates wellbeing. The benefits to wellbeing in this programme stem from:

- Learning how to communicate effectively using creative skills.
- Campaigning that benefits others and the increase in civic agency this involves.
- At an individual level, enjoyment, improvements to concentration, creative competence and confidence, and pride (self-actualisation) in challenging creative achievements shared publicly through local events,
- Taking part in social events in green spaces,
- Taking on creative challenges together to create events for others to benefit from,
- Exploring nature together in an experiential way,
- Increasing residents' awareness of how flora and fauna can improve wellbeing, and hence contribute to an improved quality of life.

The indicative responses below are organised by multi-domain themes, to show how wellbeing effects arising from relational arts practice extend to individuals and their group and social settings.

### A positive sense of self - Sharing artworks

*Deirdre [the artist] works closely with my pupils to build their confidence in a safe and supported environment. I enjoy watching them excitedly rifle through her resources as she assists them to realise their creations. The impact has benefited them beyond the classroom by assisting with their decision making skills, social interactions and self-regulation. The end of session showcase at their local park was a particular highlight.*

Teacher, observer; *Repair and Swap*

### Supported challenge - Self-actualisation

Child participants really enjoyed the creative activities provided by *In the Making*:

*This has been the best twenty minutes of my life!*

Child participant, *In the Making*

### Sharing artworks – Increased civic agency benefitting others

The visual language skills the children learnt during *Our Green Home – Let it Breathe* were applied in campaigning actions, increasing their civic agency. Actions that benefit others are known to increase wellbeing. One participant said,

*It's really absorbing and I feel like I could really make a difference through art.*

Child Participant, *Our Green Home – Let it Breathe*

### Interacting with nature

*The creative and outdoor parts of the project are good for the young people's mental health improvement.....digital technology and both parents working means many of them don't get outside...I like that they're looking at the beauty in their area. The project is helping to increase their sense of belonging and provide creative encouragement.*

Youth worker, observer; *Sharing Cowlairs*

Some wellbeing effects are short lived but as a whole the programme includes experiences of benefiting others, for example campaigning and running a swap shop; and exercising cultural citizenship through exhibiting artworks; that can produce longer term effects especially if these activities can be sustained.

## Vignette: Improved Wellbeing: *In Our Hands*

*I had no belief in myself. I was riddled with doubt. I feel so creative in the group.*

East End of Glasgow and Castlemilk. Artists: John Binnie, Tina Freeland, Robin Mitchell; East End.

Community partners: Lodging House Mission; Blue Vale Recovery Centre; NHS Restart; Singing for Fun; Cassiltoun Stables writing group; and Riverbank Primary School.

The artists developed an intergenerational musical play titled *In Our Hands*, featuring writing by participants and performed by several community partners, which was performed in the sports hall at Riverbank Primary School. Many of the adults who attend the music, writing and drama groups as part of their attendance at mental health and recovery support groups attest to how the process of writing and sharing has positively changed their sense of self and autonomy, while opportunities to perform their writing have increased their confidence. Workers associate this with harm reduction. The unconditional support of the wider group is key to this, and some groups form WhatsApp group chats to check in on each other outwith session times. Participants and partners shared the following reflections:

*When I first came I wasn't functioning. I didn't have any confidence in my ability. I had no self-belief. You have helped me integrate and be part of something. I am so much more confident in my musical-abilities.*

*I can't believe how she has transformed. When she first came here, she was crying at the steps. Now she is standing up and reading a poem about well-being and feeling in charge of her mental health. Your writing and drama classes help transform lives. It is so powerful. NHS Restart Worker.*

*I will stand up and read my writing. It's because you have helped me on my road to recovery. Remember the first class I came to, I couldn't read out what I wrote. Now look at me singing in a band, writing all these poems, performing them. You have helped me achieve this. And you are kind.*

Participants from other community partner groups attended in the audience to support the performers. Reflecting the Green Economy theme, the play centred on ideas of time and change, and the passing on of responsibility for the environment from one generation to the next. A participant from the NHS Restart group commented how nice it was to be in a school again. In this way, the final event of the project brought disparate sections of the community together to engender a sense of belonging. It was also a rare opportunity for different generations to work together on a shared creative project. A participant from Cassiltoun Writers Group said,

*Young folk talk with us. On the day of rehearsals we made a memory for each of us. A good memory.*

## 2.3 Outcome Three: Artists have increased opportunities to Develop Practice

Artists developed their social and collaborative artistic practices in ways determined by differing modes of practice and approaches to carrying out this work. Some of these concerned working with Green Deal subject matter whilst others relate more to aspects of collaborative practice.

Engaging participants in understanding the green wellbeing economy, and creating an international partnership for future green economy work (*Our Green Home – Let it Breathe*)

Developing facilitation and communication skills with a wider range of people, and a new methodology for integrating citizen science learning and somatic movement exploration (*Sharing Cowls*)

Transforming the formal language and adult discourse of the Green Deal into multi-modal forms of participatory activity, encouraging ownership of a single high quality artwork through a high quality participation experience and representing each participants contribution (*In The Making*)

Facilitating participants to develop their own practices and to take the lead in organising bespoke green economy activities that cater to the needs and desires of the local community (*Repair and Swap*)

Using creative activity as a vehicle for change in Green Economy attitudes, and enabling collaboration between groups with different needs and of different ages (*In Our Hands*)

## Vignette: Socially Engaged Practice Development: *In the Making*

*I could see in their faces that they were seeing their world in a different way*

Whiteinch and Thornwood, West Glasgow: Jennifer Olley and Lynsey Wells.

Community partners: Whiteinch, St. Patrick's, St. Paul's and Thornwood Primary Schools; Whiteinch Food Market.

The artists wanted to enable primary school children to see how the built and natural environment changes, and that they can help shape this. Their wide-eyed 'wows' when they saw old maps of their local area and birds-eye views of their walks to school indicated that this is a mind-expanding realisation. The activities have enabled them to see their world anew. The artists developed this approach through re-interpreting the Green Deal:

*The specifics of the Glasgow Green Deal have been something that we have needed to unpack, digest and absorb into our work to be able to deliver...A lot of time was spent filtering it through the lens of our own practice to derive content that not only felt like our own and that we could deliver in our own 'voice' but that also would be interesting, relevant and relatable to the young participants.*

This resulted in an approach that localised the issues and encouraged the children to see themselves as agents of change, while incorporating fun and immersive activities.

*Children were challenged to mix as many shades of green as they could from scratch, using only the three primary colours plus white and black...This simple activity allowed us to explore the power of nature and green spaces and how they make us feel, the role of chlorophyll in producing oxygen and more, but also and perhaps most importantly gave a period of time to enjoy materials, focus, and enjoy calm.*

Informing participants about historical changes to the area through maps empowered them to embrace the possibility of positive future changes to their neighbourhood:

*Anything that has been made by people started as an idea. As we have a design background this has always been something we've been aware of, but this is the first time it has informed our work so directly. It became a central message to our work.*

A large number of participants were equally engaged by including all their artistic contributions into a single, final artwork:

*Creatively, we as lead artists needed to design a 'whole' that interweaves the ideas and desires of the children and the local community, our research and the many 'voices' through each child's artistic contribution – whilst cohesively telling the 'story' to people who may have not been part of its journey. This is a big promise, and has not been without it's nervous moments on our side.*

The new street mural under Thornwood roundabout represents the realisation of this approach (p.49).

## 2.4 Green Deal outcomes

### Increasing Knowledge of the Green Economy and the Glasgow Green Deal

Artists shared information about the natural environment, the Green Deal and net zero (*In the Making, Our Green Home – Let it Breathe, Sharing Cowlairs*); and learnt about participants' understanding of these issues by stimulating discussion (*In Our Hands*). Artists incorporated environmental learning, and Green Deal related content into their projects in a variety of experiential and imaginative ways, combining this with sharing information about natural life and environmental conditions, for example hidden rivers and tree ecosystems. This included direct interactions with nature through art/walks, bike rides (*Our Green Home – Let it Breathe*), and somatic-scientific experiences (*Sharing Cowlairs*).

### Responding creatively to barriers to Green economy discourse

This was not without its challenges as some of the language is complex and two projects encountered defensiveness and criticism towards either the discussion or the framing of this issue. Each of these projects responded to the needs of its participants by either reframing the Green Deal content or refraining from discussing it explicitly.

*In creating a play that was consciously entertaining, participants soon realised that green issues are about community, interactions, talking, being kind to each other and coming up with a strategy to make Glasgow a better place to live.*

John Binnie, Artist.

The artists' successful response was to put the issue into a wider, relational context valued by participants. This is a key aspect of social problem solving and so is part of bringing about positive change.

Child participants were much more willing to discuss it explicitly perhaps as a result of not feeling the burden of responsibility for negative climate change to the same extent, and being less pessimistic about their capacity to make a positive difference. One successful approach was to experientially connect people with the value of the 'green assets' (trees) in their area through somatic movement, walks and painting/drawing; and to involve environmental experts.

*We can now tell people how important the trees are...we have ideas now about making Cowlairs tree-ID sheets and QR codes to tell people about environmental features, species etc. in the area.*

Participant, Sharing Cowlairs

A very different but successful approach involved using visual props and creating imagined maps and patterns based on routes used in the neighbourhood:

*I could see in their faces that they were seeing their world in a different way.*

Teacher observer, *In the Making*

A third approach involved using physical examples to explain the concepts of balance and equilibrium, and sharing the history of less well known and hidden aspects of the natural environment in urban spaces.

## Building capacity to communicate or act in the transition towards net zero

Some projects equipped participants with creative and practical skills that either built capacity in effective communication (*In Our Hands, Our Green Home – Let it Breathe*) or actions that contribute to achieving net zero (for actions see the 'Using creative activity as a vehicle' section below). Communicating and acting to support pro-environmental behaviours took the forms of a play, bike rides and demonstrations at Glasgow City Chambers.

Artists also initiated new partnerships between participant groups and local, national and international organisations committed to achieving green economy aims.

## Using creative activity as a vehicle for positive environmental change

Creative activity was used as a vehicle to change the built and natural environment, either through supporting people to run clothing swap shops (*Repair and Swap*), creating street murals promoting environmental awareness in public spaces (Thornwood roundabout mural, *In the Making*) or planting trees (*Sharing Cowllairs*). Practical techniques such as sewing, crafting, and creating visually engaging artworks were used to encourage positive pro-environmental behaviour changes. *Repair and Swap* contributed immediately to a more sustainable and affordable wellbeing economy by maintaining and upcycling clothing and other items. *Sharing Cowllairs* planted new trees, contributing to carbon capture, cleaner air and reaching net zero. *In the Making* involved child participants creatively in existing local initiatives which contribute to net zero.

## Vignette: Green Economy: *Sharing Cowlairs*

*I've learned about trees, seeing them and feeling them made me happy.*

Cowlairs, Possilpark; North Glasgow: Saffy Setohy and Margaret Kerr.

The artists developed a range of creative and environmental activities focused on an area of abandoned land that is now effectively rewilding itself. The aim is for locals to reconnect with their local environment; but is also a way to think beyond the local community about city-wide green issues. Activities have included tree and bird identification walks, tree meditations and planting, and creating artworks for local exhibition. The artists mode of engagement is made of three elements: beginning with sharing scientific information, somatic experiences and ending with creating artworks. Sometimes these elements are combined, such as in somatic tree identification walks and portraiture photography with trees.

At the project celebration and tree planting event, participants commented on how much cleaner and safer the park feels now, so they visit more. Longtime residents share their memories from childhood. A local man said,

*It's great that the community is trying to keep this place, not just to let people know that there's potential, but also to acknowledge what already exists...There are skylarks here, queen bees, one morning a roe deer just walked out in front of me. It was derelict, but it's wild now.*

During the *Rooted* exhibition in Possilpark Library featuring artworks created by participants, one visitor comments,

*I'm not really a nature person but this is an eye-opener, to see what they've done. I'll bring my granddaughter.*

The librarians used the exhibition as an opportunity to create a display of environment-themed books on a nearby table, with a range of nature field guides, books about green issues and David Attenborough titles. Portraits of local people with individual trees on the land includes some older members of the community who remember the trees from their childhood; one asked to be photographed with the tree that was closest to his house. In the image, he appears entangled with it. The benefits of combining scientific information and creative methods are indicated by a parent visiting the exhibition with their child:

*This project is really cultivating his interest and improving his confidence. He will tell us what things are now, he sees that detail in the surroundings now and not just a grass park. He sees the wildlife and can identify the trees.*

This is further underlined by the participating school's headteacher:

*We value the importance of living the gospel values through contexts for learning including learning for sustainability, outdoor learning and STEAM. This way our pupils can see the importance of being stewards of the earth and use their knowledge of science, technology, art and engineering to make a positive difference in their local community. Incorporating Art, Expressive Movement and Digital technology promoted skills for life, learning and work for our pupils too.*

Headteacher, St. Teresa's Primary School

## Section Three: Project Reports

This section provides a detailed report of each project, focussing on the extent to which each project met the intended outcomes, based on participant and partner responses to the projects.

### *Our Green Home – Let it Breathe*

Northeast Glasgow: Craigend, Molendinar, Hogganfield, Blackhill, Dennistoun and Cranhill.

October 2023 – April 2024

Participants: 151: Primary school children, their parents, adults, older people, and adults with additional needs.

New partners: Alexandra Park Bike Hub, Cranhill Parish Church, Cycle Scotland, Free Wheel North, Avenues Project GCC, Rakarsa Arts Foundation, Bandung, Indonesia, and Mainstay Trust Ltd.

Existing partners: On-Bikes, Sunnyside Primary School of Conservation and Mainstay Trust Ltd

Artists: Zoe Walker, Neil Bromwich.

Artforms: Drawing, painting, mapping, designing logos, making books, making banners, making flags, live art, (art/cycling ride & art/walks) art/activism methods, and sculpture techniques.

Audience Engagement:

Walking the Hidden Molendinar, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024: 20

Parents for Future Scotland, Glasgow City Chambers, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024, Clean Air Campaign presentation: 219

Cycling the Hidden Molendinar to Glasgow Green, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024: 33

Walking and Wheeling Festival, Glasgow Green, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2024: unknown.

Total: 272

### Outcome Summaries

Outcome 1: Increasing Accessibility: A wider range of people were engaged by the project including walking groups of older men and women, and new organisational partners who can support existing and future participants to achieve their goals.

Outcome 2: Improving Wellbeing: Through campaigning that benefits others and increased agency through learning how to communicate publicly with the skills learnt. Children taking part at Sunnyside School noted they found the activities absorbing; for some of them concentration and confidence improved.

Outcome 3: Practice development: Engaging participants in understanding the green wellbeing economy, and creating an international arena for this work through kinship across continents (with Rakarsa Arts Foundation, Bandung, Indonesia).

### Project Aims

Continue to grow a successful local climate initiative around active transport, creativity and advocacy; whilst extending it to connect with other community groups in the East End of the city on the route of the hidden Molendinar Burn.

To amplify the voices of those affected by climate and social justice issues in order to give agency and create kinship between groups at a local (Glasgow's East End) and a global level.

## Process Description

This is a continuation of an existing project engaging both new and existing participants. Time was spent on the project approximately as follows:

Teaching or demonstrating a creative skill or technique	25%
Identifying and approaching new participants	20%
Supporting participants to create their own artworks	15%
Conversations about climate justice	15%
Organising, planning, prep, admin	15%
Co-creating artworks	10%

The engagement format took the form of structured activities which creatively support the existing activities of participants as well as introducing them to new ones that related to the geography and history of the locations they used. The participants were parents, P6 & P7 children of a primary school, staff of all the partner organisations, the Milnbank Housing Association Health Walks Group, the Carntyne Walking Group, Molendinar Community Centre Art Club and community litter pick group. Due to the long-routed structure of the walking groups artistic activities had to be an additional element of their usual day's activity.

The artists facilitated a number of mapping exercises and creative workshops intended to deepen understandings of place and visual language for campaigning as well as learning how to be expressive in making art to find your own voice. This work was profiled at the Parents for Futures Scotland event in April 2024 which gave the project a really wide public profile.

A Gaelic arts element involved working on Gaelic place names, nature and natural forms around the Molendinar Burn route and specific environments that deepen understanding of the ecology of the site. This was incorporated in to the art walk through performance.

The artists built kinship between communities in the North East of Glasgow and communities in Indonesia who are dealing with similar climate emergency and resilience issues. For example, Sunnyside School met with Vincent Rumahloine (artist) from Rakarsa Arts Foundation, Bandung; visiting through a British Council Funded extension to this project.

The project culminated in an organised bike ride with children from Sunnyside Primary School from Molendinar Community Centre to Glasgow Green, which included improving cycling skills and linking this to environmental issues.

## Outcome One: Communities have increased access to creative and cultural opportunities in their local area.

There are a number of physical and perceptive barriers to encouraging a transition to net zero through increasing active travel for short distances. Child participants described barriers to cycling to school including parents concerned about safety, the lack of cycle lanes, and the number of cars that are parked on the pavements during school run times. Walking group members mentioned safety in the park as a concern. An adult walking group participant mentioned the long wait for buses leading to them using a car. Discussing a

move towards net zero a member of the Carntyne Walking Group told the artists, “It will never happen....the Council are just saying they will do that”.

## Locations

Activities took place outdoors and indoors in local venues where existing groups met and where walking groups walked. The artists met with the walking groups after their walks in the parish church for coffee and mapping exercises. The artists also worked with Molendinar Community Centre, recently taken over by an existing partner, St Paul’s Youth Forum. The community centre is open to all and this has meant a very mixed age range of participants in the workshops.

## Initiating and maintaining partnerships

The artists connected with the Avenues+ project who are working on infrastructure transformation and climate adaptation in the city. This intersects with the artists’ work on the Molendinar Burn. The artists were able to bring this council department into workshops so participants could learn why this infrastructure change is happening and how it affects the area. Avenues+ staff took part in the guided walk of the Molendinar Burn in February 2024 and invited the artists and participants to take a leading part in Glasgow’s first Walking and Wheeling Festival (May 2024).

Working with organisations the artists have long-standing relationships with was important because the Green Economy concepts are complex and difficult to introduce to new groups, as trust has to be built first. For example, the artists continued work with Sunnyside Primary School of Conservation, bringing them together with Cycle Scotland to develop a strategy for campaigning for a safe cycle route to school. They also brought the school together with On-Bikes (a cycling charity) to participate in an experiential art/cycle ride.

## Skilled facilitation providing access to creativity and ecological learning

The following comments are made by people who took part in the Hidden Molendinar walk. The artists asked participants, ‘How did you find the art/walk of the hidden Molendinar?’

*The enthusiasm from the leaders of this work is infectious.*

*The whole morning and event were so well thought out and lots of work put into it, it’s been great.*

*It’s good to walk with people who can point out items of interest which can be missed and to animate them in such imaginative ways, it triggers your own imagination.*

*The art/walk animated a different layer of the city put forward in an informative and heart felt way.*

*I massively enjoyed this workshop/walk, there were such great speakers and interesting people. Neil & Zoe are fantastic at being creative and bringing people together.*

Walk participants

This feedback indicates that the art/walk was highly accessible to these participants through the enthusiasm of the artists, and imaginatively presenting points of interest.

Accessible content providing interest, including community-led subject matter

The following participant responses give an indication of the variety of accessible content provided to participants:

*I learnt about how to cut different ways and what colours look good together. I also learnt about the different ways to draw.*

*Today I done a drawing about how the planet should be clean and not dirty and how the earth should have clean air. I enjoyed doing the drawing.*

Sunnyside School participants

In the second half of the project the artists worked with Sunnyside Primary School of Conservation, a campaigning, environmental school. Therefore, they have an existing knowledge base about how the city is dealing with environmental issues. The children researched the possibility of campaigning for a cycle lane and discovered how long this would take to achieve. This meant having to find other ways to explain how the Glasgow Green Deal will affect them. Many of the older male walkers (Carntyne Church and Milnbank Housing Association groups) felt that art wasn't for them, and this had a negative effect on overall walking group participation.

*I don't really do art but I will help others and it gives me a chance to have a chat.*

Millbank Housing Association Health Walks Group

However, they enjoyed watching and took a lot of pride in telling the artists the local history and their personal connections to the place. The hidden Molendinar walk participants enjoyed learning about the history of the waterway, and also the variety of speakers included.

*I come from the east end of Glasgow and wanted to hear its history as my husband spoke about playing in the Molendinar.*

*This project has made me aware of a part of Glasgow's history and therefore my own which few folks are aware of because this history is not visible, considering Glasgow is built on the Molendinar people should know about this and about its importance in the future to our city's environment.*

*The Molendinar is a hidden history with such value as a resource for dealing with climate resilience.*

*It was an interesting walk because of the variety of speakers, learning new things about Glasgow past, present and future and about the Molendinar.*

*I really enjoyed coming on the artwalk there was lots of variety including singing, the poem, the message is clearly presented. It was very informative, lots of thoughtful ideas with a high level of participation from the guests and walkers.*

Walk participants

Initially, the artists also found it helpful to discuss the Avenues programme ('an integrated network of continuous pedestrian and cycle routes') that can be clearly equated to moving towards a greener city. Unfortunately, the avenue currently under construction on Sauchiehall Street is behind schedule due to the drainage issues they have encountered.

## Green Deal language accessibility

The concepts around the Green Economy are complex so artists found it difficult to explain them to children and to introduce them to new groups, who seemed very suspicious of this concept and why the artists might be asking them about it. Talking to other artists working on the programme helped the artists to devise ways to explain concepts to children. For example, using physical examples to explain the concepts of balance and equilibrium. The artists think that collaborating with knowledge experts skilled in public communication might be beneficial in future.

Some new groups were also unhappy with what they perceived as being used as a facility for consultancy, so the artists decided not to introduce questions about green economy related behaviours and views. In the case of new groups this is partly to do with the need to develop trust first, but could also express a discomfort with the responsibility that the voluntarism of the environmental movement encourages, and which some people find is misplaced, given that they have very little influence over large social systems such as transport infrastructure.

## Outcome Two: Participants and communities have improved wellbeing.

The comments and responses below serve to indicate the ways in which the project contributed to the improved wellbeing of participants. In this project, this is closely connected to the green economy subject matter and involves actions that benefit others.

### Supported challenge - Self-actualisation – Interacting with nature

Several children reported feeling more confident in bike riding. A mother reported that her daughter now travelled to school with more female friends on bikes rather than cycling alone and her friends taking the bus. They now travel through woodland with uphill and downhill sections that means they can continue to develop their cycling skills. Physical activity also generates wellbeing.

*Now they're all buzzing, feeling the freedom.*

Mother of child participant.

### Working together - Sharing artworks – Increased civic agency benefitting others

The visual language skills the children learnt were applied in campaigning actions, increasing their civic agency. Actions that benefits others are known to increase wellbeing. One participant said,

*It's really absorbing and I feel like I could really make a difference through art.*

Participant, Sunnyside School

For some of the children taking part at Sunnyside School their concentration and confidence improved.

## Outcome Three: Socially Engaged Practice Development

The artists have developed their practice by working on a long term basis with East End Glasgow communities, building on their interests and needs together (active travel and clean air), and adapting ideas and approaches to making art and activism effective. For example, the artists focused on extending their capacity to engage

participants in understanding the green wellbeing economy. In doing so they aimed to extend their capacity to amplify the voices of marginalized communities in the East End of Glasgow. They also developed ways to create an international arena for this work through kinship across continents (Rakarsa Arts Foundation, Bandung, Indonesia).

## Green Deal Outcomes

As a continuation project focused on campaigning for clean air and active travel this project provides outcomes strongly aligning with the Green Deal by raising awareness of it, educating people about local environments and equipping people with arts to campaign effectively.

## Learning about the Green Deal

*Today I learned about how to help the planet and to keep the air clean.*

Child participant, Sunnyside School

*I learned so much about the history of the Molendinar and its importance today.*

*I did not know about the Green Deal, it will be a challenge going forward, but for future generations will be beneficial.*

*I am new to Glasgow but It's a great idea to move towards net zero by 2030 if it's possible, I did not know about this idea before coming on this walk.*

Adult participants

The artist learnt that it would have benefited the project if they had had a fuller understanding of the Avenues infrastructure project prior to delivery. In future this could be achieved by having a stronger relationship between artists and council employees working on infrastructure changes.

## Building capacity to communicate or act

Participants were involved in four public, campaigning events. The artists organised two public events as part of the project so that participants could apply the visual language skills they learnt. An experiential art/bike ride and an art/walk enabled a deep understanding of the environmental issues on the route and encouraged campaigning for clean air. These enabled participants to come together, share ideas, and experience live art. There were also wide passing audiences for both these events that provided visual communication of the ideas contained in the work. Child participants also took part in a Parents for Future Scotland campaign event at Glasgow City Chambers (24<sup>th</sup> April 2024), helping them to gain confidence in communicating publicly:

*We let people know there's a pollution problem; people stopped and asked 'What's going on?'*

*We're telling people to stop stuff; stop littering, stop hurting this world of ours.*

Sunnyside School participants.

Avenues+ (Glasgow City Council) invited the artists and participants to take a leading part in Glasgow's first Walking and Wheeling Festival (11<sup>th</sup> May 2024), leading the procession.

## Exploring together: Interacting with nature

The project encouraged a greater level of interaction with nature in urban parks. The Molendinar Burn art/walk and cycle rides encouraged interaction with green spaces, the air, leaves and the river.

*Going on the art walk exposed us to air pollution, you could smell and taste it, not to mention the obvious river pollution.*

Participant

## Legacy

Walker & Bromwich have co-created a project called *Under The Bridge - Water & Air* with Rakarsa Arts Foundation Bandung, and have been awarded British Council Funding. This will continue to develop international kinship around a just transition, climate justice and pollution. The children from Sunnyside School of Conservation are now exchanging postcards with the children from Pertiwi Elementary School, Bandung, sharing stories and images about their local environments containing river and motorway systems.

The Avenues programme team invited the artists and participants to take a leading part in Glasgow's first Walking and Wheeling Festival (11<sup>th</sup> May 2024), leading the procession. This project extension gained funding from Sustrans and Art Roots.

Sunnyside Primary School will also continue to work with other project partners and intend to campaign for active travel in the future:

*They [Walker & Bromwich] make ideas look so simple. Because of the cycling events they've brought into the school the last couple of years, we're now going to try and push to be a cycle-friendly school. So we will keep working with On Bikes and the other partners that we've linked up with and we will probably do another protest right into the city centre. That's the legacy, keeping that on and the teachers who have been on these rides along with them, there's now no fear.*

Principal Teacher, Sunnyside Primary School

## Sharing Cowlairs, Possilpark.

October 2023 to March 2024

Participants: 121 Adults including elders, and children aged 5-18 (mainly primary age children), including Young People's Futures, Chair yoga group, St. Teresa's Primary School,

New partners: Green Action Trust, Good Move Glasgow, TCV (The Climate Volunteers), Possilpark Parish Church and Boomerang Woodwork.

Existing partners: St Teresa's Primary School & parent Council, Hawthorn Housing, NG Homes, Possilpoint Community Centre, Possilpark Library, Young People's Futures, Clyde Bat Conservation, Canal Youth Forum, and St. Matthews Centre.

Artists: Saffy Setohy and Margaret Kerr

Supported by: Brian Hartley (photographer), Roisin Cross (project co-ordinator), Lucas Kao (film editor- festival film for website archive), and Cameron Newall (Forest School Leader)

Artforms: Somatic movement and visual art

Audience engagement:

*Rooted* Exhibition, Possilpark Library, 28<sup>th</sup> February -16<sup>th</sup> April: 150

Springboard local assembly, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024, Rockvilla, Glasgow<sup>3</sup>: unknown

Cowlairs Labyrinth Celebration and tree planting, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024: 25

Total: 175+

Since November 2021 council-owned land in Cowlairs, Possilpark (between Possilpark and Keppochhill Road), has been partly renovated and animated by participants of the *Sharing Cowlairs* project. Previous work revealed a strong interest in, and attachment to, the woodland ecology of Cowlairs. In addition, Possilpark is a target neighbourhood in the Clyde Climate Forest, a strategic tree-planting project responding to Glasgow's climate targets and referenced in Glasgow's Climate Action Plan and the Green Deal<sup>4</sup>. The artists' wanted to continue enhancing the quality of life in the area by assisting the community to plant trees, and learn more about local ecology through creative activities. Their practice is informed by an animist and somatic lens and includes movement and visual art.

### Project Aims

Project steering group long term aim: to secure the land for community use after decades of postponed development plans.

Artists: Engage a wider range of people, re-engage with original participant groups and support local residents to add new trees to an area of disused land which provides a safe route to school.

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<sup>3</sup> Springboard local assemblies are networking events for people and organisations from the same Scottish region, facilitating collaboration between culture and the climate sector, to bring about transformational change in Scotland and help build a net-zero, climate-ready world. <https://www.creativecarbonscotland.com/local-assemblies-the-story-so-far/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.clydeclimateforest.co.uk/projects/target-neighbourhood/glasgow/possilpark>

## Process Description

To the end of January 2024 project time was approximately spent on the following tasks:

Identifying and approaching new participants	5%
Co-creating artworks	20%
Conversations about the Green Deal	10%
Organising, planning, prep, admin	65%

Then from February to April 2024 less time was spent on administrative tasks, and more on co-creating artworks, facilitating creative experiences and supporting participants to create their own artworks.

The artists provided workshops to many different groups to involve a greater range of people, all of which would contribute to an exhibition in the library and planting trees in the area. The process of engaging residents varied with different age groups and abilities, but involved experientially connecting people with the value of the 'green assets' (trees) in their area through movement, role play, walks and painting/drawing. Environmental experts were also used to facilitate some activities, for example a Forest School leader supported a somatic tree identification walk. For all of the workshops (up to 1.5 hours long) the artists developed a collaborative methodology of crafting a journey that moves from receiving factual information, for example, tree biology; into movement or meditation, to tune into a felt sense of what is being learnt; and then supporting the emergence of visual art in different forms, colours or shapes. The intention is to integrate left and right brain activity. In one particular workshop, the feedback indicated that participants had experienced and imagined what it might be like to be something other than human. As well as engaging school children and community groups the artists also engaged individual residents. Using the Ogham<sup>5</sup> alphabet (based on trees) in activities prompted the artists to ask adults on Possilpark High Street about the word for tree in their language, which led to some beautiful conversations about people's relationship with nature.

## Outcome One: Communities have increased access to creative and cultural opportunities in their area.

The project takes place in a context where children and adults have generally little access to outdoor and environmental education, creative activities, and working with artists. The area has high levels of poverty, addiction and unemployment issues, and little access to green space.

### Locations

Activities took place outdoors whenever weather and clothing (donations sourced by the artists) permitted. In addition activities took place in community locations where groups already met, and the artists engaged people on the high street.

*I felt it was very important that the project supported our young people to engage with their local area, to be proud of it and find the beauty in it.*

Adult participant Sharing Cowlairst

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<sup>5</sup> An Early Medieval written language (4<sup>th</sup> century AD) used across the British Isles primarily to write the early Irish language, Old Welsh, Pictish, Latin and later the Old Irish language. The alphabet has 20 letters and 20 trees associated with it.

*Our staff and pupils want to do more outdoor learning, and the project makes that experience accessible right on their doorstep.*

Headteacher, St Teresa's Primary School

*I have never been here before, we normally walk the other way. I will come back with my mum now and show her the tree seeds.*

Child participant, Sharing Cowlairs

These responses demonstrate that the choice of outdoor locations, and appreciating green spaces was valued by participants and their peers.

### Initiating and maintaining partnerships

The artists renewed existing organisational relationships through previous work in the area, and worked with new community and regional groups to achieve the project aims and the programme's intended outcomes, including older participants attending a Chair Yoga session at the local church, and The Green Action Trust who enabled the planting of trees. Most notably for this phase of the project, the school has a Sustainability Committee including members of the Sharing Cowlairs Steering Group, facilitating connections between the school and the wider community.

### Skilled facilitation providing access to creativity and ecological learning

The researcher observed the artists working with P6/7 children at the primary school. Activities were varied and the artists demonstrated, participated and supported the children in the activities. Their facilitation style was effective and their workshop evaluation allowed the participants to share what they had learnt, how they felt about it and what they had learnt to do, which functioned as a way of consolidating the information, experience and creative aspects of the activity. One of the observing teachers added,

*You were great at working with our kids, many of them need to learn differently and are not very academic. The sensory, outdoor and experiential ways of working were very successful and inclusive.*

Teacher, Sharing Cowlairs

For some participants their engagement went beyond accessing creative opportunities and learning about the role of trees in capturing carbon and supporting ecosystems. For example, a teacher was surprised that the children did not ask for a visual online reference for their drawings, as usual, and the artists noticed that the patterns they produced on the trees (after taking part in an experiential/role play session) seemed to reflect different cultures and times, indicating that the activity encouraged free, creative expression. An adult participant from another workshop fed back that:

*People in our community need to feel safe. You and Margaret have integrity, which helps the trust. You give confidence to participants to be tactile and creative, artistic and colourful.*

Participant, Sharing Cowlairs.

## Subject matter, including community-led subject matter

As previously mentioned the project began prior to this commission and has a standing steering group of local residents who the artists collaborate with. The funder's focus for this commission fitted very well with the interests of the steering group, increasing its accessibility to participants through its local relevance.

*The project has brought together different people who might not normally meet, to care for this green space. The project has really come from the people and the place, not imposed.*

Resident, Sharing Cowlairs.

Using experts to help with the ecological subject matter (a Forest School leader and Green Action Trust/Clyde Climate Forest) supported the artists in bringing science and ecology learning into the project, alongside making use of freely accessible resources.

## Accessible content providing interest or behaviour change

The subject matter drew attention to the natural characteristics of Cowlairs through somatic movement and visual art in particular, but also photography for one group of participants. With support from photographer Brian Hartley, the artists worked with eight adult residents to create a portrait photography experience derived from somatic practice. These portraits with trees were exhibited as part of the *Rooted* exhibition held in Possilpark Library.

*When the photo was took I got good memories from my younger days, which felt nice.*

Adult participant, Sharing Cowlairs

The artists also provided an activity for the schoolchildren about the Ogham alphabet due to its connection to trees. The workshop included dance, history and visual art; and resulted in Ogham alphabet artworks that were displayed in the *Rooted* exhibition celebrating trees at the local library, as well as a specially designed resource pack of alphabet cards for the children to keep. Using a variety of creative forms and content [visual art, movement, ecology] engaged young participants:

*I enjoyed doing different things in one session*

Child participant, Sharing Cowlairs

*The range of artistic activity you offered helped to keep everyone's interests and enable learning across different curriculum areas.*

Teacher, Sharing Cowlairs

The tree-inspired somatic movement and painting workshop with older people had mindfulness aspects that complemented their existing yoga activity well.

*It was a good experience, I've not done painting since school days, I will practice more movement at home. I'm happy to be reminded of trees in the world and the connection between their breathing and ours.*

Adult Participant, chair Yoga Group, Sharing Cowlairs

## Increasing engagement through exhibition of participants' artworks

There were a very large number of positive comments made about the quality and content of the *Rooted* exhibition. Exhibiting participant artworks in the local area of the project increased engagement with it and also increased engagement with the local library, strengthening its relevance as a cultural hub for the local community.

*I loved seeing the photos of the people with their trees- they made me feel peaceful and I felt inspired to go and spend time with a tree near my home. I also loved spotting the wee creatures living in the colourful painted trees.*

*Stunning, impressive project. Moving to see the children's expressions of their feelings in the rainbow forest. Joyful to see the photographs, and overall peaceful and meditative experience to see this.*

Exhibition visitors, Sharing Cowlairs

## Outcome Two: Participants and communities have improved wellbeing.

The comments and responses below serve to indicate the varied ways in which the project contributed to the improved wellbeing of participants and audiences, organised into multi-domain themes:

### Working together - A positive sense of self - Engagement in the world

For some participants the creative and ecological activities evoked a range of positive emotions that contribute to improved wellbeing.

*I felt relaxed...excited...happy...concentrated...joyful...amazing...brilliant...better...different.*

Child Participant, Sharing Cowlairs

Other responses more clearly demonstrate the link between learning about the natural environment, increasing self-confidence and engaging with the world in a more appreciative way:

*This project is really cultivating his interest and improving his confidence. He will tell us what things are now, he sees that detail in the surroundings now and not just a grass park. He sees the wildlife and can identify the trees.*

Mother of child participant.

### Supported challenge - Self-actualisation - Sharing artworks -- Increased sense of civic agency

The wellbeing benefit of a creative challenge and sharing their artworks publicly (Possilpark Library), extends beyond participants to relatives and visitors, and is indicated in the following comments,

*I felt brave trying something new.*

Child Participant, Sharing Cowlairs

*Made me happy seeing my pictures on the wall!!*

*Its good to see my daughters pic on the wall in the local library, I feel proud.*

*I really enjoyed the photos with people's feelings about the trees- the meditation, the artwork.*

Exhibition visitors, Sharing Cowlairs

## Exploring together - Interacting with nature

Due to the somatic and experiential aspects of some activities, wellbeing was also intentionally derived from interactions with nature. A strongly felt sense of nature and their place in it is reflected in many of the participant's feedback comments. The first two comments are from participants who meditated on the trees:

*I felt confident when being with the trees.....I felt how the wood feels"*

Child Participants, Sharing Cowlairs

One partner organisation employer explained the benefits to young people:

*The creative and outdoor parts of the project are good for the young people's mental health improvement.....digital technology and both parents working means many of them don't get outside...I like that you're looking at the beauty in their area. The project is helping to increase their sense of belonging and provide creative encouragement.*

Youth Worker- Young People's Futures, Sharing Cowlairs

Similarly, adults experienced relaxation and positive feelings from interacting with trees:

*Enjoyed the relaxation and trees as inspiration for movement.*

*I'm happy to be reminded of trees in the world and the connection between their breathing and ours.*

*"I'm reminded of the energy that comes out of the trees (it's a good feeling)"*

Adult participants, Sharing Cowlairs

Lastly, the planting of 40 native trees at the Cowlairs Labyrinth Celebration held on 16<sup>th</sup> March will support improvements in health and wellbeing by improving air quality and enabling people to engage with nature locally and more regularly, obviating the need to travel longer distances to access green space. It also provided an opportunity to increase social connectedness:

*I attended the tree planting event, helped plant trees. It was a great day and I met some wonderful people as well.*

Adult participants, Sharing Cowlairs

The trees were planted on a small hillock between the Labyrinth site and the grounds of St. Teresa's School. Rain curtailed the event and probably discouraged wider attendance. 30 more trees will be planted to create an avenue along Stoneyhurst Street and Kinbuck Street leading from the primary school into Cowlairs Park.

In summary, a range of experiences contributed to participants' wellbeing in different ways: taking part in social events in green spaces, taking on creative challenges together, and exploring nature together in an experiential way. This may have been short lived due to the relatively short period of time some participants took part, but in providing an opportunity to experience a freely accessible local green space in an unusual way, the project increased residents' awareness of how flora and fauna can improve wellbeing, and hence contribute to an improved quality of life.

## Outcome Three: Socially Engaged Practice Development

The artists developed their practice in a number of different ways, in part due to the Green Deal requirements of the commission. Not for the first time they asked people to do something in and for the community that stretches them. However, in this commission this was done by incorporating scientific knowledge and approaches, and Green Deal related content into the project.

Having worked intermittently in the area since 2021 they have grown in confidence and as a result they were braver in foregrounding their approach by naming meditation and somatic practices.

They discovered that the introduction of the Gaelic Ogham alphabet in the school workshops opened up space for touching on different forms of knowledge with the children.

They were also proactive in meeting different parts of the adult community. Providing workshops for this broader range of adults and children developed their facilitation and communication skills, and their experience of how to 'hold' a space where people feel safe and congruent enough to try new things. Following on from this, they were reminded that giving participants a containing framework, for example the subject of trees, and specific, limited range of materials; help peoples to delve into re-enchantment with nature and creativity.

Lastly, artist Saffy Setohy found new practices and methodologies for integrating citizen science learning and somatic movement exploration, for example through collaboration with the Forest School leader Cameron Newall to craft the 'somatic tree ID walk' for Young People's Futures, by facilitating the primary school's Sustainability Committee through learning about tree biology, and in combining somatic outdoor experiences with learning about trees through the portrait photography collaboration with Brian Hartley.

## Green Deal Outcomes

### Increasing Knowledge

The project has resulted in Increased awareness about the trees in Cowlairs, and prompted discussion and reflection about the ecological importance and beauty of trees.

*We can now tell people how important the trees are...we have ideas now about making Cowlairs tree-ID sheets and QR codes to tell people about environmental features, species etc. in the area.*

St Teresa's School Sustainability committee

*We learnt that bats live in the trees in Cowlairs, which are an endangered species*

St Teresa's class

*We learnt about tree names and why trees are important...about which trees are in Cowlairs...diamond patterns belong to birch...thorns and berries belong to hawthorn...about carbon dioxide and oxygen...how to enjoy being in nature.*

Adult participant, Sharing Cowlairs

Learning also arose from shared peer learning in groups:

*I enjoyed learning different camera angles from each other.*

Adult Participant

The artists learnt that there is value in working with environmental and nature-based organisations and being able to refer to a regional climate strategy that is locally relevant (The Clyde Climate Forest Project).

### Building capacity to communicate or act

The learning that occurred through the project, including the creative skills;

*We value...learning for sustainability, outdoor learning and STEAM. This way our pupils can see the importance of being stewards of the earth and use their knowledge of science, technology, art and engineering to make a positive difference in their local community. Incorporating art, expressive movement and digital technology promoted skills for life, learning, and work for our pupils too.*

Headteacher, St. Teresa's Primary School, Sharing Cowllairs

### Using creative activity as a vehicle for positive change

Creative activity and actors are the means for cleaning, decorating and renovating the outdoor green space and enhancing the experience of using it. This contributed to valuing the Cowllairs green space and knowing the benefits of engaging with it. With the support of the Cowllairs Steering Group and Green Action Trust, the artists gained permission to plant new trees in the area, making a semi-permanent contribution to carbon capture and achieving net zero. By communicating and celebrating the green space, the public sharing events raised awareness and encouraged care of it. For example, local Hawthorn Housing and residents who did not participate commented they are seeing more young people using the space considerably, and the parent and toddler group are asking about the activities that are available through the project.

Despite the indirect relationship between the commissioned artists and their funding provided by Glasgow City Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, achieving the net zero objective of planting trees in the area was extremely challenging, even with the support of the Clyde Climate Forest tree planting project, approved by Glasgow's council leaders. It took much longer to gain permission than anticipated and is probably in part due to the status of the land, from a council perspective, of being disused and awaiting development. Gaining this permission used a disproportionate amount of energy and resource, so its achievement cannot be overestimated. This experience tells us that even when one is acting in the interests of the Glasgow Green Deal and is commissioned by an arms-length organisation that works for the city council, using creative activity as a vehicle for positive change still faces barriers.

### Conclusion

This project successfully increased participation in a project that aligns with the Glasgow Green Deal through a range of activities which engaged a wider range of people in the local community than before. In addition, it also increased use of the Possilpark Library. More specifically, in the words of a resident and visitor to the tree planting celebration:

*It's great that the community is trying to keep this place, not just to let people know that there's potential, but also to acknowledge what already exists...It was derelict, but it's wild now.*

## *In The Making, Whiteinch and Thornwood*

November 2023 – April 2024

Participants: 286 schoolchildren aged 5-11.

New partners: Community Payback, Councillor Lana Reid McConnell, Whiteinch Food Market (David Cairns, local resident) and St. Paul's Primary School.

Existing partners: Whiteinch, Thornwood, and St Patricks Primary Schools

Artists: Jennifer Olley and Lynsey Wells

Audience engagement: Whiteinch Food Market: 90.

### Project Aims

- Design workshops for schools that result in improvements to the immediate physical environment where children live and play, with semi-permanent public artworks in two sites (Whiteinch Food Market, Thornwood roundabout), using looking and drawing techniques that pay attention to overlooked details of the environment.
- Equip children (8-11) with the skills and vision to campaign for a better future
- Introduce the idea that there are future careers for our young people in design and innovation that may help build our world's resilience to climate change.

### Process Description

Project time was approximately spent on the following tasks:

Organising, planning, prep, admin	50%
Supporting participants to create their own artworks	20%
Identifying and approaching new participants	10%
Teaching or demonstrating a creative skill or technique	10%
Conversations about climate justice and Green Deal (Creative Communities meetings and presentations, Science Centre, Glasgow School of Art, meetings with local community members)	10%

This is a continuation project including schools the artists have worked with previously, but with additional new schools and links to local organisations. Structured creative activities (30% of time spent) involved screen printing as a group, with each child making a paper letter stencil to spell out group messages, studying maps and creating imagined maps and patterns based on routes used in the neighbourhood, studying local plants and wildlife and exploring a variety of drawing techniques, and creating colour mixing palettes using paint; and using these colours to add leaves to tree pictures. Children and teachers from St Patrick's Primary reported that the children felt enthusiastic, creative, excited; happy and satisfied when taking part in these activities; and especially enjoyed making their own tones of green.

*I think the pupils were very motivated and found the tasks very engaging. Jen and Lynsey brought a nice energy into the classroom which helped to build enthusiasm amongst the pupils.*

Teacher, St. Patrick's Primary

The artists used metaphor to explore feelings and ideas. For example, explaining maps as bird's eye views, making birds and asking the children, 'What would you like future birds to see when they look down on our world?' This made the subject matter accessible to children as young as five years old.

### **Ensuring young people had the opportunity to have their say**

Sessions included times for reflection, asking children to quietly write down their thoughts and ideas as messages to the adults in charge, as well as working together in groups to come up with slogans that they wanted to screen print on posters to display around the neighbourhood.

The process of making posters to promote the new Whiteinch Food Market (fresh, locally accessible vegetable and fruit produce) appeared to have been very successful. One P6 participant punched the air when he saw the posters and the whole class at St Paul's gave multiple rounds of applause when seeing their artworks.

### **Outcome One: Communities have increased access to creative and cultural opportunities in their local area.**

All the workshops that created the artworks took place in schools so all the participants were well used to the physical setting and access requirements had already been considered by the school staff. The artists chose creative activities that complemented the attention to plants, trees and foods featuring in the artworks. Pupils learnt how to create art using different methods that are not used in the classroom, for example:

*when you start with one colour of green and you make it into different colours of green every time it makes a different colour and it's a bit like when a tree grows and every time a new branch comes it separates.*

Child participant

These and other art activities were able to engage some children more fully than normal, as one teacher explained to an artist:

*He has hardly any English and I've never seen him the way he was last week, it was amazing to see, he just lit up.*

Teacher

Not only was this and other activities accessible to the children, they also attracted the interest of teachers:

*Well it's a win win situation, the staff absolutely love what they have to offer and the kids are so excited about having a specialist coming in. And what they can get out of them is something that we'd never be able to do. And the things that they end up making with them are beyond what we would even envisage.*

Headteacher 1

*We've just loved working with you, the children but also the staff, they're just so impressed. It's such a wonderful experience and the results you get are always so amazing.*

Headteacher 2

Children were also asked to create slogans for posters, which included *Let's take care of Glasgow, Be a hero, make net zero!*, *Trees are heroes!*, *More trees, less roads!*, and *For the bees, we need more trees!* On observing this activity one of the artists commented,

*When they worked as a team to come up with their slogans that showed real harmony, real engagement in the task they were being asked to do, and also real understanding about what the message was going to be, there was a real clarity in the message*

Artist's observation

When recalling what they had made two weeks previously children were able to describe their artworks in detail, including the vegetables used for every facial feature in their posters. Similarly, in St Paul's, almost every child could pick out their letters on the combined artwork and were eager to tell the artists which was theirs when it was presented to them.

*I felt like an artist but I was using sticks so it was weird.*

Participant

### Making Green Deal themes and timescale accessible

The artists knew that for child participants to find the content accessible and for their voices to be felt within the artworks they had to enjoy the experience. They would need to explore climate change and net zero but as these are complicated and difficult concepts to grasp, the artists did not want to overload the workshops with information. So they created visual props, for example, a cardboard extending tree that unfolds in stages to reach 3 metres. The idea was that an oak tree grows on average 50cm per year, so a tree planted today would reach 3 metres in 6 years in 2030, the Glasgow Green Deal promise date. This was successful in helping make the 2030 date relatable and bringing the power of planting trees, the concept of time passing and the way the world can change, to life.

The project also involved the public sharing of participants' artworks through a mural and posters, increasing access to art for other local residents; as audiences. The mural consists of two main walls, on opposite sides beneath the A814 flyover and some of the pillars. The West (Whiteinch side) depicts a map of the River Clyde from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century when Whiteinch was an island (before being reshaped to allow bigger boats to travel through). The river is surrounded by plants and birds and represents the past (no road traffic). This map of the Clyde was used as a discussion point in classrooms as a way to demonstrate the way humans have changed the environment, so is familiar to the children. The East side (Thornwood) depicts the trees created by children from the roads on local maps, surrounded by plants and birds (see photo below).

### Outcome Two: Participants have improved wellbeing

The following selection of comments supporting wellbeing indicate how the project encouraged an enjoyable experience and a broader consideration of the wellbeing of their community and the wider world. Wellbeing arising from the social arts practice relationship extends outwards into the individual and the wider group and social setting. There were many statements of pleasure and enjoyment made by participants, with the following comment being a superlative highlight:

*This has been the best twenty minutes of my life!*

Child participant

## Supported challenge - A positive sense of self - Engagement in the world

*Are we going to be on the roundabout? Wait, are our names going to be on it? Yeeeeeeesssssssssss!!*

Child participant

*We will take the children to put the finished [fresh food market] posters around the community. This is wonderful for our community connection!*

Headteacher, Whiteinch Primary

*I feel I wonder what people will think after they see the work*

Child participant

In summary the statements demonstrate enjoyment and engagement with the wider world. The artists found creative ways for the children to participate in adult-led initiatives geared towards improving the quality of life in the area through environmentally responsible actions, for example the Whiteinch Food Market.

### Outcome Three: Socially Engaged Practice Development

The artists developed their practice by transforming the formal language and adult discourse of the Green Deal into multi-modal forms of participatory activity:

*The specifics of the Glasgow Green Deal have been something that we have needed to unpack, digest and absorb into our work to be able to deliver...the Green Deal has been written by GCC and therefore feels like their agenda. A lot of time was spent filtering it through the lens of our own practice to derive workshop content that not only felt like our own and that we could deliver in our own 'voice' but that also would be interesting, relevant and relatable to the young participants.*

In The Making artists

As with all socially engaged or participatory art projects, meaningful outcomes required a balance between the quality of the finished project, the sense of ownership the young people felt over it, and the quality of the participation experience. The artists reflected on these throughout the project and explored how they responded to the following three criteria with activities that would encourage ownership of a high quality creative project.

1. Young people should have a positive experience of taking part

For the young people to feel fully connected (Criteria 3, below) to the project they need to have an enjoyable, memorable experience. This includes having a good time as well as taking something for themselves from the experience. Therefore there were opportunities to make artwork to take home, as well as contribute to co-created public artworks. The artists built in soothing and immersive experiences so that the young people could 'get lost' in the pure joy of making, without fear of the outcome. For example, 'Blow for it' trees (blowing coffee ink through straws to replicate the way branches grow upwards from trees), to produce artwork that participants felt proud of and had a 'magic moment' of achievement. This gave the kids an unexpected and fun process that produced satisfying realistic images of trees that they loved.

*The pupils enjoyed making art using unconventional methods such as blowing coffee, using natural materials and seeing how screen prints were created. They were extremely proud of their work and they enjoyed the discussions about the environment.*

Teacher, St. Patrick's Primary

*They were absolutely wowed by the Blow For It activity, they all thought it was really cool, they were all like, "WOAH" and I think got the idea that we are trying to make Whiteinch a nicer place to live.*

Artist's observation

2. Each young person should be represented (inclusivity)

Each child created artwork that the artists included in a single, cohesive artwork (for example the mural). The lead artists design the 'whole' that interweaves the ideas and desires of the children and the local community, whilst coherently telling the story to people who may have not been part of its journey.

3. Participating children and the local community should feel connected to the finished product (ownership)

Key to this was that the children felt proud of their artistic achievements and that the activities were relevant to them. For example, looking at the design of the city and unpacking the idea that the built environment, though familiar, hasn't always looked the same and has been changed by humans. The artists, with a design background, used the central message 'Anything that has been made by people started as an idea' to empower the participants to think of themselves as change agents.

### Green Deal Outcomes

Participants learnt about net zero, the importance of trees and how they are necessary to reduce carbon in the atmosphere. Initially in one class 24 of 26 thought the world was getting colder. On revisiting this after discussion 24 of 26 knew it was in fact getting hotter and could explain why this was a problem. Expressions of sadness also demonstrated a recognition of the seriousness of climate change and an engagement with planetary wellbeing:

*Sad, angry and want to help and tell Rishi Sunak.*

*It is really sad that this is happening to our world.*

Participants

Adding to this, a teacher observed,

*I could see in their faces that they were seeing their world in a different way.*

P3/4 Teacher, observer

Posters made by participants helped to promote a new fresh produce food market that would reduce transport use to obtain these goods and thus enhance the quality of life in the area.

## Legacy

The artists have obtained funding from the local area partnership to create artwork for Whiteinch Cross in partnership with the local schools. The Whiteinch Food Market partner has talked about arranging trips for the children as a thank you as well as more educational experiences about food and community building.

Due to unforeseen circumstances the Thornwood Roundabout Mural is still in progress at the time of writing (May 2024). The artists plan to host an end of project sharing/celebration when it is completed in the next month. Engagement figures will be forwarded after the event to the Creative Communities team.



Figure 1: Thornwood roundabout mural In the Making

## Repair and Swap

Cassiltoun, Castlemilk, and Crowfoot

February to June 2024

Participants: 212: Cassiltoun Housing Youth Advisory Group, School children and their parents/carers, from Cassiltoun and Kirkriggs Primary Schools, Castlemilk Youth Complex Bike Repair Group, and Castlemilk Reminiscence Group in 23 distinct activities or events.

New organisational partners: Govanhill Food Bank, Swapclub Glasgow, and Castlemilk Youth Complex and Apparel Exchange.

Existing organisational partners: Kirkriggs Primary School, Cassiltoun Housing Association, Repair Café Glasgow, Castlemilk Food Pantry, Ardenglen Housing, Glasgow Community Food Network, and Friends of Kings Park and Revolve.

Artists: Deirdre Nelson

With support from: Jen Kerr, Paddy McKenna, and Julia Billings.

Artforms: Textile making

Audience Engagement:

Croftfoot Hall Repair Café with Repair Glasgow, 13 <sup>th</sup> April	52
Cassiltoun Primary Swap Shop, 8 <sup>th</sup> May	50
Cassiltoun Housing Association Swap Club, 6 <sup>th</sup> June (event upcoming)	
Total:	102+

### Outcome Summaries

Outcome 1: Accessibility: Activities with a number of different groups and events that bring them together increased creative opportunities to mend, maintain, repair and exchange clothing and other items. In addition the project increased access to sustainable sources of recycled, upcycled and reusable clothing and other items.

Outcome 2: Wellbeing: The opportunities to learn how to repair and maintain clothing and other items, make t-shirts and design clothing swap and repair events produce wellbeing as a result of the challenge of learning these creative, collaborative and organisational skills.

Outcome 3: Practice development: Sharing skills that allow participants to maintain, upcycle and recycle clothing and other items; and facilitating young people to take the lead in organising a bespoke clothing swap and repair event that caters to the culture and desires of the local community.

### Project Aims

- To support green wellbeing economy interests and activities already happening in the area.
- Creating activity which is educational, creative and develops sustainable capacities for the transition to net zero (repair, maintenance and exchange of clothing and other items).
- To signpost children and parents to environmentally sustainable sources of affordable clothing.

## Process Description

This is a continuation project including organisations the artist has worked with previously, and new organisations and participants. The project features T-shirt design and textile making workshops with primary school children, and the creation of a youth oriented clothing swap shop and repair café event (6th June 2024) by the Youth Advisory Group of Cassiltoun Housing Association (aged 14-17). The artist first spoke to this group in October 2023 about what they would like to do. They spoke about a clothes swap and trialled this for the first time for Halloween in 2023. They enjoyed this experience very much so wanted to work with the artist to develop this further. This is the first art based project they' have participated in.

The 23 activities are:

- A series of repair discussions and design workshops for the youth-led design of a local Clotheswap and repair event, with visits from professionals in the repair/ swap field.
- A series of T shirt design workshops sessions with school children with additional needs.
- Gathering stories of repair, collecting sound and images from Youth Complex bike repair group.
- Repair Café and display at Glencroft Hall, Crowfoot,
- A workshop in support of a family food event,
- A collaborative event with Repair Café Glasgow,
- A natural dye workshop with Julia Billings.

The researcher observed a workshop at Cassiltoun Primary School, a large room designed for small group work with a relaxing atmosphere. For 90 minutes five P4/5 children with their parents and carers made 'squishmallows' out of recycled fabrics and other materials. They are made out of old jumpers from *Apparel Exchange* and then stuffed. Parents and carers were required to attend for health and safety reasons because of the use of an iron and sewing machine during the session. However, this meant more people were engaged in the project, including intergenerational engagement within families. For example, a mother is able to use the sewing machine to complete her son's squishmallow. Children engaged in intense discussions, planning and decision-making with their parents. The school prefers this small group approach as it brings families into the school, making the creative opportunity accessible to them as well. In addition, educational films about textiles are shown at the beginning to encourage discussion on the issues of sustainable use and production. The children learnt what textiles are, about textile recycling, the environment, reuse and upcycling.

An alternative activity was devised for children with additional needs, as some autistic children will not wear used clothes; even if they are only slightly frayed. Instead, children made designs on new t-shirts, rather than second hand ones; based on their hobbies. Water soluble pencils that create a minimum of mess were used. This changed teacher assumptions that creativity is messy, the room was easily tidied after the activity. This makes creative opportunities more appealing and accessible to the organisations that host them.

Members of the Cassiltoun Housing Youth Advisory Group have taken the lead on organising the group and designing the clothing swap shop and repair café event (6<sup>th</sup> June 2024). They have had a lot of discussions about textiles and recycling. The housing association facilitator described the activities as fun, creative, and beneficial, for the young people to be doing something tangible, when most of their activity is responding to consultations on serious issues from the housing association.

There are other important practical considerations alongside the creative side, in order to make the clothing swap activity a success. For example, in a multiply-deprived area, how might people be encouraged not to simply come in and take what is there for free? How can donations be encouraged as well as swapping clothing? There are also sensitivities around poverty and appearance that need to be sensitively managed for the project to be successful. Wearing second-hand clothes is neither fashionable or a positive value statement in the area, yet.

This means that the event will not be presented as a traditional swap club found in affluent areas of the city. The youth group are designing the clothing swap based on the consumer behaviours of the area.

## Outcome One: Communities have increased access to creative and cultural opportunities in their local area.

### Locations

The artist has used a variety of community locations, making use of local contacts to bring creative activities to where residents are actively engaged in other or related activities. Attendance at the Youth Advisory Group has increased since the project began, and this is interpreted by a housing association employee working closely with the participants as the result of providing a creative activity which involves doing something tangible rather than discussing social issues. However, the artist found that attendance was also sporadic at times, perhaps due to some participants taking final exams, with different young people attending each session.

The artist hoped a Repair Café in the Castlemilk area would bring different participant groups together, however it could not be held in Castlemilk and was held instead in Crowfoot. Unfortunately young people were out cycling or doing part time jobs, so engagement was not as expected. The artist thinks that transport from Castlemilk to Crowfoot or these young people and the older Senior Centre group posed a barrier to attendance. Other forms of public sharing engagement are organised for May with the intention of bringing adults, youth and older people together. For example, Julia Billings, a natural dyer will be demonstrating techniques outdoors in King's Park alongside growing activities by the Friends of King's Park, an existing community partner organisation; and an exhibition of children's art from Kirkriggs Primary School. This is a repeat of an event held last summer as part of the Artists in Communities programme of 2022-23. This brings different elements of the project together, creating an audience for the work from participants, their friends and families.

### Initiating and maintaining partnerships

Through the workshops and events parents get to know about a local provider of affordable second hand clothing (Revolve) and The Repair Café, of which the artist is a volunteer and board member.

One of the key organisational partners are the two primary schools. The artist describes the work of one member of staff as 'a true collaboration'. This partner created a selection process for the children, to be strategic about the selection of participants. To take part in the workshops children are required to state what their strengths are and when they take part in the workshop they are assigned roles based on these, thus taking guidance from the children on how to make the activity most accessible to their strengths and interests. Children who had not had an opportunity to participate, for example those with additional needs or other challenges, also took part.

A second key organisational partner is Cassiltoun Housing Association who facilitate the Youth Advisory Group (and also the Cassiltoun Writers Group who participated in the *In Our Hands* project). The organisation is strongly geared towards community development and social enterprise and aims to enhance delivery by the community taking the lead. They said,

*We knew of Deirdre's previous work...She is very open, she lets them lead, and listens to their ideas...Our groups lead, they are used to being participative...Deirdre is engaging throughout Castlemilk, she uses the links and contacts we have well. It's very positive and of mutual benefit.*

Chief Executive, Cassiltoun Housing Association

The other organisational partner involved is *Apparel Exchange*, a clothing charity for children with a shop and a warehouse. They also provide clothing donation packages for children in need.

## Facilitation style

The artist's interpersonal skills were also reported as a significant aspect of making the project accessible:

*Her [the artist] passion for textiles, repair and her ability to facilitate freedom for our pupils to express themselves was at the heart of everything she did.*

Teacher observer, Castleton Primary.

## Accessible content providing interest, including community-led subject matter

The artist had no challenges with the Green Economy content, but as previously explained the community they worked with often have many poverty challenges which shape everyday cultural practices, in this case clothing; so it is important to provide relevant activity suitable to their needs and be aware of designing activity appropriately. Allowing the participants to take the design lead is a crucial element of ensuring this. The Cassiltoun Housing Youth Advisory Group are taking the lead in creating a clothing swap market and repair café supported by experienced experts from Revolve, Apparel Exchange, Repair Café Glasgow and Castlemilk Youth Complex. Secondly, observation of the school repair and maintain workshop found that children were highly engaged in the activity. For further details of both of these activities, see the 'Other Green Deal Outcomes' section below.

*I loved learning how to stitch and patch clothes.*

Young person participant

## Outcome Two: Participants and communities have improved wellbeing

The benefits to wellbeing in this project stem from gaining competence and confidence in new skills, followed by the pride and sense of achievement in sharing these skills publicly through local events.

### Supported challenge - Self-actualisation - Sharing artworks -- Increased sense of civic agency

Children and young people improved their wellbeing through challenging, creative and collaborative activities. The organisation and delivery of the clothing swap and repair market will generate greater wellbeing benefits not only in terms of self-actualisation but in providing a service that benefits the community.

*Deirdre [the artist] works closely with my pupils to build their confidence in a safe and supported environment. I enjoy watching them excitedly rifle through her resources as she assists them to realise their creations. The impact has benefited them beyond the classroom by assisting with their decision making skills, social interactions and self-regulation. The end of session showcase at their local park was a particular highlight.*

Teacher, observer Kirkriggs Primary School, for children with additional needs

## Green Deal Outcomes

### Building capacity to act: using creative activity as a vehicle for positive change

The focus on doing things now emphasises that pro-environmental behaviour isn't just about knowledge but often about skills, and the artist notes, creating the view that these skills are achievable and can be learnt. The project supports the learning of skills that enable participants to contribute to a green, wellbeing economy by maintaining and upcycling clothing and other items. The work with Cassiltoun Primary School and the Cassiltoun Housing Youth Advisory Group is building their capacity to run their own clothing swap market. Teaching darning, mending, cleaning and crafting skills enable participants to maintain, and upcycle clothing and other textiles already in circulation. School children have learnt how to reuse textiles, how to clean old trainers, and how to make repairs.

*A group of 20 orchestrated the final swap shop and 50 pupils took part, diverting hundreds of garments from landfill. The question I have been asked since 'when can we do it again?'*

Teacher observer, Castleton Primary.

One of the children involved said, 'I like upcycling now!' This participant signed up to all of the workshops and acquired four new items of clothing that he repaired. This project brought a new purpose to his love of repair. The opportunity to act proactively through the workshops is valued by participant families living in areas with no room for recycling, An adult parent explained that they recycle at home and use *Vinted* to purchase second hand clothing regularly, so for this family the workshops are consolidating an existing domestic practice, with an activity designed to engage children.

### Outcome Three: Practice Development

The artist's practice development is focused on developing the artistic practice of participants. They disagree with the use of the term 'socially engaged arts practice' to describe this work because the work as such, is not *their* practice as a body of work.

*I think we should all be socially engaged anyway. Day to day life as a person and an artist is about being engaged with the world and people.*

Artist, Deirdre Nelson

Instead they describe this work as "community facilitation, I work with communities". The artist adds, "if you are invested in the communities then it's hard to go in with big ideas of what I want to do, particularly when they are dealing with so many challenges." Their work is therefore weighted towards supporting the development of *participants as artists* through:

- Sharing skills that allow participants to maintain, upcycle and recycle clothing and other items
- Facilitating young people to take the lead in organising a bespoke clothing swap and repair event that caters to the culture and desires of the local community.

### Learning

In terms of developing their practice through what they have learnt in delivering the project, the artist has learnt the following:

- Sometimes you need to flex or change the subject or materials, and follow guidance from those who know the participants best (i.e. partner organisations).
- The specific material situation of the area means that one cannot directly transfer methods and approaches that are successful in other areas without an appreciation of the different socio-economic context that shapes everyday cultural practices. There has to be rigour in transferring tactics and approaches.

## *In Our Hands, East Glasgow and Castlemilk.*

October 2023 – March 2024

Participants: 118, including 56 performers (play): primary school children, retired adults, adults in recovery, and mental health groups.

New partners: Miller, St Anne's, Dalmarnock and Primary schools and Cassiltoun Writers Group.

Existing partners: NHS Restart, Singing For Fun, Calton Heritage and Learning Centre; Lodging House Mission, Bridgeton Family Learning Centre, Riverbank Primary School, and Bluevale Community Centre.

Artists: John Binnie, Tina Freeland and Robin Mitchell.

With support from: Carmen Pieraccini and David Rankine.

Artforms: Writing, drama, songwriting, percussion, photography, samba, prop and performance design.

Audience Engagement:

<i>In Our Hands</i> extract, Lodging House Mission, 25 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	47
<i>In Our Hands</i> scenes/songs extracts, Miller Primary School 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	39
<i>In Our Hands</i> complete performance, Riverbank Primary School, 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	55
Total	141

### Project Aim

To develop and perform a musical eco-play based on the contributions of collaborating groups of adults and children.

Five community groups, and two primary schools co-created and performed an eco-play based on their knowledge and personal experience. The groups included school children, an elderly and disabled group, two groups living with mental health issues, a substance recovery group and a group experiencing issues relating to homelessness. The eco-play included themes of wellbeing, climate justice, pollution, recycling and government responsibility, and was set in the rivers, by the seaside and the city centre. The play's set was made out of used packaging and other recycled materials and costumes found by the participants and artists.

### Process Description

Project time was approximately spent on the following tasks:

Co-creating artworks	30%
Supporting participants to create their own artworks	25%
Teaching or demonstrating a creative skill or technique	15%
Organising, planning, prep, admin	15%
Conversations about climate justice	10%
Identifying and approaching new participants	5%

Co-creation took place in weekly workshops that involved a range of artforms. In February an informal sharing took place where schoolchildren and the Cassiltoun Writers Group shared some scenes, songs and thoughts. In March, 56 people performed the play at a local school. The performers included pupils of Riverbank Primary School, NHS Restart, Cassiltoun Writers, Singing For Fun and Lodging House Mission. People talked to each other throughout rehearsals, and then shared their thoughts and ideas with the audience. The audience got the opportunity to have conversations with the cast afterwards and fill in feedback forms.

### Outcome One: Increased Accessibility

Making the project accessible to a variety of participants is achieved through a combination of working where participants already meet, organisation, encouragement, and facilitation skills, which includes creating an environment where people feel comfortable to be creative:

*I really enjoyed doing music and writing. At first I was nervous but if you let yourself go, it's like discovering your inner child. You can play...This is part of my journey. It's a safe place to share.*

Bluevale Participant.

The facilitation skills are recognised by people who work with participants on a more regular basis:

*You have a real skill helping these folk find their genuine voice. Them standing up and speaking and sharing their truth is so moving.*

Singing For Fun Worker.

One participant described the relationship-based practice of the artists in detail:

*Thank you for everything. Most of all your love, support, kindness and compassion you show to us all. That means the world to me and I know the others in the group.*

Participant.

This thank you not only shows personal gratitude, but an appreciation of the way in which the artists work using an ethics of care. This is ignored in considerations of accessibility which focus solely on its physical and intellectual aspects. An organisational partner explains the high participation level in terms of the artist's facilitation style as follows:

*Inspirational, the encouragement he [John Binnie] gives people and the way he treats everyone equally and aspires to bring out the best in people. This is one of the best attended groups within Restart and people really look forward to the days John [one of the artists] is attending and delivering his sessions.*

Organisation Partner, Nhs Restart Coordinator

Participants' autonomy in the process is also valued:

*We write what we want to share. Nobody is being pushed to reveal anything they don't want to.*

Participant

The artists used a wide variety of creative forms including writing, drawing, music making, singing, prop-making, design, songwriting and performing. Ensuring the creative work is accessible does not mean making the work easy, but includes challenge, as this and other participants stated,

*It will be a real experiment, an adventure for the writing group, Trying something new by acting in a play.  
It pushes us out of our comfort zones, that's good.*

Cassiltoun Writers Participant

When a performative aspect proved to be too challenging for some participants, the artists were able to adapt to maintain participation. For example, performing was a challenge for elderly and other participants who had difficulty memorizing the script. To overcome this two professional actors were employed to perform some of the scenes, and act as mentors.

Accessibility to having a final performance with a large cast was supported by the headmaster of Riverbank Primary School, who saw the value of intergenerational community work. A P4 class of children at the school were engaged in co-creating the play throughout November to March.



Figure 2: Members of the community music group *Singing for Fun* (Musical Director Karen Maciver), joined by members of *CrossReach* during rehearsals.

### Green Deal language accessibility

Artists found that some of the terms used in the Green Deal discourse present an information barrier, with some participants not knowing the meaning of some words. In addition, the subject was initially rejected by some groups. As the following artist comment explains this presented an accessibility challenge to the content of the project. This highlights class differences in the familiarity and resonance of this language and the need for future public communication to adapt to be more accessible.

*Some groups had preconceptions about the green economy. They felt it is worthy, middle-class and dry.  
In creating a play that was consciously entertaining, participants soon realised that green issues are  
about community, interactions, talking, being kind to each other and coming up with a strategy to make  
Glasgow a better place to live.*

John Binnie, Artist.

The artists' successful response was to put the issue into a wider, relational context that is valued. This is a key aspect of social problem solving and so is part of bringing about positive change.

## Outcome Two: Participants and communities have improved wellbeing

Artists and researchers recorded participants' and partners' voluntary expressions of wellbeing during the activities. The comments are organised by the multi-domain (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social) themes listed below, to show how wellbeing arising from the social arts practice relationship also extend outwards into the individual and the wider group and social setting.

- Supporting creativity - Self-actualisation - A positive sense of self - Improved relationships
- Self-actualisation through public sharing - Benefiting others

### Supporting creativity - Self-actualisation - A positive sense of self - Improved relationships

The following participant and partner organisation responses indicate the benefits of creative group working in terms of social connectedness and free expression:

*I was buzzing from last week. It was so good to be in everyone's company, to be creative, to write, to have a laugh. We all produced such interesting writing. We so support each other.*

Participant, Cassiltoun Writers Group

*This is a safe place. We are so individual, but we can be ourselves here. We sometimes write about personal stuff and that is therapeutic, but the rest of the group listen and support. We care for each other. You go home feeling uplifted.*

Participant

*I was nervous and anxious about coming along today because of my mental health. I'm so glad I did. It's been really positive working in a group and sharing such interesting writing from everybody. I'm looking forward to next week.*

*When I first came here. I couldn't speak. I couldn't write. You have brought me out my shell. I feel so much better in my recovery. I can push myself. I can interact. I am part of a community.*

Participants.

*The sessions provide stimulation, improved mental health, working in smaller groups so that individuals get more time spent with them, They provide an increase in confidence and self-esteem, and harm reduction: when people are engaged with a group they tend not to 'use' during that period (albeit short) as they want to be part of the group, their group. It gives them an opportunity to express themselves in a way that might feel easier and there is positive reinforcement of their work.*

Partner organisation, June Macleod, Lodging House Mission

*As my physical activity becomes more challenging it is the friendships, the laughter and, dare I say it, the weekly writing tasks that have a huge impact on my personal wellbeing and long may it last.*

Participant, Cassiltoun Writers Group

A large proportion of comments document the subjective change in self-perception resulting from participating in creative group work with responsive artists:

*When I first came I wasn't functioning. I didn't have any confidence in my ability. I had no self-belief. You have helped me integrate and be part of something. I am so much more confident in my musical-abilities.*

*I had no belief in myself. I was riddled with doubt. I feel so creative in the group.*

Participants.

Another participant presents how their self-perception changed in the form of a poem:

<i>I thought I would break myself</i>	<i>If I tried to get involved</i>
<i>I thought that I couldn't make myself</i>	<i>Find new things and evolve</i>
<i>I thought that I'd just hate myself</i>	<i>If my efforts didn't solve my mess</i>
<i>I never thought that in these sessions</i>	<i>I'd stop stressing</i>
<i>That I'd be present</i>	<i>I'd be bold</i>
<i>That I'd impress myself</i>	<i>I'd help myself, And keep on moving forward.</i>

The challenge of creative activity also generated wellbeing:

*Acting can be so good for you. It gives you such a release and a feeling of accomplishment afterwards.*

*I challenge myself to do new things. I feel I am pushing myself. I feel I have achieved such a lot with my writing.*

Participants.

*It's great to be out with our comfort zones. I love sharing my work with the singing group. We are on the same wavelength. Singing For Fun are supportive and friendly. We should collaborate with them. They could be our choir when we do the green play.*

Participant, Cassiltoun Writers Group

*I will stand up and read my writing. It's because you have helped me on my road to recovery. Remember the first class I came to, I couldn't read out what I wrote. Now look at me singing in a band, writing all these poems, performing them. You have helped me achieve this. And you are kind.*

Participant

From a different perspective of a support worker who works with participants on a more regular basis, what appears to also contribute to improved wellbeing is the facilitation style of the artists, specifically being supportive, creating psychological safety and inclusivity:

*When she first came here, she was crying at the steps. Now she is standing up and reading a poem about well-being and feeling in charge of her mental health...People feel safe and supported in the class. Everybody gets a chance to participate...Your writing and drama classes help transform lives, It is so powerful.*

NHS Restart Support worker

## Increasing engagement through public sharing - Benefiting others

The above statements demonstrate the personal benefits of sharing creative work with others. The participants' creativity was also appreciated by other community members who attended the performance:

*The group are so strong. I found many bits of the writing so moving. It's good to find out what everyone else is doing in the local Castlemilk area.*

Audience Member

## Outcome Three: Socially Engaged Practice Development

The artists developed their practice by using creative activity as a vehicle for change in attitudes. In addition, bringing seven groups with different needs together to create and perform an entertaining play was ambitious but successful, and based partly on the experience of encouraging this type of collaboration in the Artists in Communities project of 2022-23. Achieving this required a lot of one-to-one support and encouragement in the lead up to the performance.

## Green Deal Outcomes

### Increasing Knowledge of the Green Economy and the Glasgow Green Deal

The project stimulated discussion on Green Deal themes by encouraging participants to share their experience and knowledge. By encouraging communication, the production process contributed to tackling climate change by revealing knowledge, questions and encouraging mobilisation on the issue. Workshops involved the sharing of beliefs and attitudes about pro- and negative environmental behaviours, and thoughts and ideas were shared with an audience through the performance of the play. The audience also had an opportunity to have conversations with the cast afterwards.

### Building capacity to communicate or act in the transition towards net zero

- By facilitating intergenerational solidarity on the issue, people young and old imagined and performatively enacted a campaign and a climate adaptation future to engage and positively influence others.

## Conclusion

This project contributed to raising awareness of Green Deal themes by encouraging discussion and communication of the issues of pollution and climate change. In doing so it responds to a call in current medical humanities research for "developing narratives and histories that redirect temporal trajectories towards a better future, while respecting and acknowledging diverse narratives of individual experience." (Zaragoza Bernal, 2024).

Engaging meaningfully with a risk of this scale can have a negative impact on mental health. However, in this project engaging with the problem has helped individual participants to manage their personal challenges effectively through the opportunities provided by creative and collaborative working. A number of factors contributed to successful, intergenerational collaboration, including existing relationships with organisational partners and participants, the facilitation skills and encouragement of the artists, and a theme with universal relevance.

## Section Four: Programme Learning and Recommendations

### Programme Learning

This section shares learning from the artists' perspective.

#### Successful tactics and strategies

Working with participants with existing long-standing relationships with artists

Providing activities on consecutive days supports momentum.

By making entertainment a primary objective, participants understood green issues in terms of community, having caring interactions and collaborating to improve the quality of life in Glasgow and beyond.

Co-creation alongside professional artists acting as mentors.

#### Green Economy theme challenges

Some concepts are complex so it is difficult to introduce them to new groups. as trust needs to build up first. New groups can be suspicious of the Wellbeing Economy concept and why artists are asking them to think about it.

Some participants are really fed up with being used as a facility for consultancy.

Some groups had preconceptions about the Green Economy, feeling it is worthy, middle-class and dry.

#### Working with vulnerable groups

Working with some groups can require more time and support, and needs to be timed with consideration of their stage of recovery and potential for participation assessed, for example through professional assessment; so it can be set at a feasible level. Supporting needs to provide accessibility to creative opportunities can include providing or arranging access to transport, food, toilets, wellbeing and additional encouragement and care.

#### Seasonal weather and other logistical challenges

Working outside in winter months can lead to short notice cancellation of activities and interruptions to participation which need to be consistent to be effective. This can mean time is lost for subsequent phases of the project.

#### Partner challenges

Longer time frames or prior agreements are needed to meet objectives involving larger agencies and gain permissions from them, for example the council.

#### Project scale challenges

The short project lead in time and duration made coordinating project activities with partner organisations and delivery partners existing plans very challenging.

A number of projects opted to work with larger numbers of participants. This stems from a desire to engage as many people as possible to provide value for money in a short time frame. However, this increases the time spent on organizing (planning and scheduling) activities and decreases the amount of time spent working with each participant or participant group, which decreases the depth of engagement. This is very important in a programme of this type which wants to engage people meaningfully in a complex social issue which implies personal responsibility.

Working with larger numbers of participants to co-create public artworks within a set time frame is not always as effective as working in more depth with a smaller number of participants, which also means an increase in the ownership of artworks.

## Recommendations

This section provides some recommendations informed by the learning from the artists' perspectives.

Projects delivering activities requiring outdoor working to occur March to September instead of October to March because of poor weather conditions.

Longer lead-in time so that cross-sector collaborations can be planned to identify any resource challenges, and strategic synergies (between organisations and departments within the Council) can be identified and exploited to a greater extent, for example the successful partnerships noted in this report.

For outdoor-based project proposals to include contingency plans so that other activities can continue in suitable community-based indoor venues wherever possible.

Clearer, more explicit guidance on whether the programme prioritises increases in the number of new *active* participants or more in-depth engagement with existing participants to build capacity, and for this to be guided by the complexity and public attitude to any prescribed themes of the programme.

For this programme to be reviewed and assessed as a pilot, with a focus on learning; for future arts-led environmental responsibility and participation programmes in areas not engaged by this iteration, to ensure the inclusivity and equality of creative opportunities in Glasgow.

Projects' new engagement proposals to determine project length as establishing new collaborative relationships is valuable and takes time to develop.

Longer term funding to achieve and sustain Wellbeing Economy objectives with greater impact, including a research and development phase for developing relationships across council teams that provide distinct but complementary services, for developing volunteer capacity, for establishing a relationship and actions for a 'fixer' role within the Green Economy Unit, to plan strategic and delivery partnerships, and any other logistical requirements.

## Section Five: How do the arts contribute towards the Glasgow Green Deal and a green, wellbeing economy?

It is important to highlight that the arts should not be viewed solely or chiefly as a means or a tool for creating effective new engagements with climate change problems. Rather, the arts should be viewed as able to achieve a number of outcomes, or conditions; for realising the aims of the Glasgow Green Deal, and more widely a green, wellbeing economy. These conditions include valuing existing urban spaces as green and grey spaces that can provide benefits (motivation); people believing they are capable of making positive social changes (confidence and capability); and thirdly, imagining and then creating or proposing solutions that are inclusive and ambitious. This programme (alongside others across the country) indicates how artistic activity can provide all three of these.

### **Valuing urban space and goods as co-beneficial assets**

A variety of techniques encouraged a revaluation of places and goods. The arts provide alternative ways of experiencing and so valuing the world and local places, which also supports creativity. From somatic experiences to learning to mending clothing and repairing other consumable goods, projects instilled greater use value into objects and places so that they are used and re-used sustainably. Crucially this work is also outward facing because it involves informing more powerful stakeholders that existing assets do hold value including environmental co-benefits (for example for public health in the case of active travel, tree planting and increased use of green spaces; and for net zero repairing and recycling domestic goods and clothing) that they might be otherwise unaware of. This revaluation process is highly significant because it is a necessary condition of transitioning to a wellbeing economy.

### **Building confidence and capability to communicate and act on climate change problems**

The projects in this programme and the previous Artists in Communities programme show that creating artworks is challenging, so it builds peoples' confidence in their capabilities generally, and provides them with a means to enact their cultural citizenship, in other words, to communicate in an engaging way about social and environmental problems at a public level. This engages networks of friends, families and peers in particular but can also engage other stakeholders through public campaigns and the performance and exhibition of artworks. In many cases projects have successfully built confidence and capability amongst people with few material resources and facing many challenges, which serves to demonstrate the potential of increasing access to creative opportunities.

### **Creating solutions**

Whilst many climate change problems already have feasible, technological solutions that simply need to be implemented at an upstream, macro level with stronger state and corporate leadership, there also remains a need for solutions to problems at a neighbourhood level which are transferable to other contexts. The projects of this programme include a variety of techniques from design and art practices that cultivate the imagination in the young and the old, which stimulates innovation. A significant element of these projects has been the use of history, to show that current conditions do change and that other conditions are indeed possible. This is then applied to imagining positive changes to built environments that will support the transition to net zero.

In addition, socially engaged arts provide responsive techniques for fostering collaboration, which is an essential component of solving social and environmental problems, and an additional source of creativity.

## Conclusion

All projects have increased knowledge and participation in fairer and more inclusive, co-beneficial (human and planetary health and wellbeing) activities. This report provides a range of evidence of arts-based environmental engagement and how it has benefited participants, by facilitating and encouraging greater participation in their communities. These areas not only lack regular and accessible creative opportunities, they are also subject to either the negative impact of pollution from city transport infrastructure, or multiple forms of material deprivation that negatively impact health and wellbeing. What is encouraging is the initiative and commitment of residents and grassroots organisations to improve conditions and raise awareness in these areas. In addition, the commissioned artists have demonstrated how it is possible to harness and develop creative and environmental interests which build momentum and raise the profile of locally led activities that support transitioning to a green, wellbeing economy.

## Appendix: Artists' and Evaluators' Biographies

### Repair and Swap

#### **Deirdre Nelson**

Deirdre enables communities to explore social and environmental issues through textile making. She is a volunteer and board member at Repair Cafe Glasgow. She partners traditional techniques with contemporary processes such as digital print in creating work not only to be exhibited but on artist residencies, within education and community projects. Resulting works cross over art, design and craft. She also works to commission for arts and healthcare organisations. Deirdre is a member of Closing the Loop research Group with Applied Arts Scotland; and of Circumpolar Crafters Network, developing work exploring the High North.

### In The Making

#### **In the Making (Jennifer Olley, Lynsey Wells)**

Jennifer and Lynsey have worked in the area of Scotstoun, Whiteinch and Thornwood since 2009, have a creative studio in Anderston and hold weekly clubs catering to young people who want to make artworks. The relationship between artmaking and wellbeing has always been at the core of their shared practice. They are members of the Glasgow Connected Arts Network.

### In Our Hands

#### **John Binnie**

A playwright and director, who has worked in theatre since the 1980s. He set up Glasgow's Clyde Unity Theatre with friends and wrote and directed over 30 productions that toured all over Scotland, and beyond. He's been fortunate to make theatre in America, Germany, Singapore, Africa and India. His plays have won three Edinburgh Fringe Firsts, the Independent Theatre award and been broadcast on BBC Radio 4. All of his work is rooted in community engagement. He believes everyone has a story to tell, and his drama/writing classes encourage people to find their voice, develop their confidence and creativity, and contribute to community.

#### **Robin Mitchell**

A freelance photographer and theatre designer. He worked full time in theatre for 20 years, designing shows for small- and medium-scale companies and later teaching props and set design at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD) in Glasgow and at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh. In 2007 he returned to university to study for a degree in documentary photography, graduating in 2010. Since then he has combined theatre and photography, working as a photographer on short films, theatre productions, classical music performances and with third sector organisations. He has designed pantomimes for the RSAMD, the Webster Theatre in Arbroath and the Brunton Theatre in Musselburgh and he has worked on many community projects over the years. He has been working with John Binnie and Tina Freeland as joint artists in communities for Glasgow Life since 2019. [www.robinmitchellphotography.com](http://www.robinmitchellphotography.com).

## **Tina Freeland**

Tina began her musical career in 1992 with SheBoom, one of the first all-female community samba bands. She began teaching percussion workshops with children whilst working as an after-school care playworker in 1995 and founded *TopCat Productions* in 1999. In that role, she led the samba band at the Gorbals's Fair for 10 years. She has worked as a Cultural Coordinator in East Dunbartonshire with children with disabilities for MusicAll and numerous other community groups of children and vulnerable adults. She began collaborating with John Binnie and Robin Mitchell in July 2017. She is a freelance musician and member of the Musicians' Union.

## Sharing Cowlairs

### **Saffy Setohy**

Saffy has a keen interest in and experience of facilitating learning and participatory experiences in a range of education and community settings. She teaches release-based technique, yoga, and facilitates creative workshops and projects involving improvisation and choreographic practices, working with people of varied experience levels. The thread through all of the work is the exploration of our embodied experiences and creativity in an inclusive environment. She has worked with young people in schools, colleges, and youth dance companies, adults in community groups, and professional dance artists. Saffy has also worked as a visiting or associate lecturer at universities including Plymouth, Falmouth and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.  
<https://www.saffysetohy.co.uk/>

## Our Green Home – Let it Breathe

### **Walker & Bromwich**

A collaborative visual artist practice with over fifteen years of experience creating high profile participatory art projects in the public realm. We work with diverse communities evolving work that grows out of specific sites and situations, interpreting the unique qualities of people, place, past histories, present usage and future imaginings to create art works that open up a space where we can collectively envisage a future that celebrates and learns from the past. We are internationally recognised for pioneering an artistic practice that employs expert communication skills, to bring disparate and hard to reach communities together with a wide range of creative practices; in order to bring in to being unexpected and inspiring art works of a world leading calibre.  
<https://www.walkerandbromwich.org.uk/about>

## Taigh-craoibhe na Gaidhlig (The Gaelic Treehouse)

### **Rebecca Fraser**

Rebecca Fraser is a community artist who grew up, lives, and works in the East End of Glasgow. Rebecca aims to promote cultural advocacy, engagement, and education through creative community groups and projects.  
<https://parkheadartist.com/>

### **Màiri NicilleMhoire / Mairi Morrison**

Works primarily in performing arts as an actor, singer, writer and director. A native Gaelic speaker based in east Glasgow, always interested in finding ways to incorporate Gaelic language and culture into their creative practice. Keen to empower all people through creative activities, encouraging a strong sense of self, and promoting

wellbeing by facilitating community connections which in turn lead to a sense of pride in preserving and developing local areas.

## Evaluators

Hugh Ortega Breton Ph.D.

Hugh has conducted qualitative process and impact evaluations of arts and heritage programmes for five years. He is trained in Cultural Studies, Sociology, Psychosocial and psychoanalytic theories and methods, and has worked with community based participatory arts organisations, dance and theatre companies, nurseries, schools, museums, libraries and historic collections.

Beth Pearson Ph.D.

Dr Bethia Pearson is a Research Associate in the Adam Smith Business School, where she is based on a project researching the civil society-led remunicipalisation movement. Her personal research includes projects on media participation for migrants and refugees and media capture in the Global South. She previously worked as a journalist.



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