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Scotland's Year of Stories 2022

**Telling the Story of the Community Stories
Programme**

YEAR OF
STORIES
— 2022 —

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Supplementary Report

Fifteen case studies were also produced as part of the evaluation and can be found in the document titled Community Stories Case Studies Report.

Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Delivered as a partnership between VisitScotland and Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS), with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and Scottish Government, the Community Stories Programme supported 180 organisations and community groups to celebrate Scotland's Year of Stories 2022.

The Community Stories Programme was developed to provide an opportunity for community groups and organisations to deliver small scale events as part of Scotland's Year of Stories.

Highlights

Over 400 organisations applied for funding through the Community Stories Programme, and subsequently 180 projects were funded and delivered. Together this resulted in the delivery of over 1,000 events and activities that added to the overall programme of Scotland's Year of Stories.

The programme provided more than 5,000 artist opportunities, and over 900,000 audience/participant attendances were recorded.

Together these figures demonstrate the strong level of appetite among community groups and organisations to participate in the Themed Year, and also demonstrate how a community events fund such as the Community Stories Programme can extend the reach of the Themed Year as a whole.

This was possible as a result of the considerable investment in the programme, which was extended throughout the delivery of the project to respond to the high level of interest.

The programme has contributed substantially to the overall diversity of Scotland's Year of Stories. The programme elevated the stories of specific communities and groups, including telling the stories of Scotland's LGBTQI+ communities, refugees, and disabled people – to name just a few. In addition to this, the scale of the programme has extended the reach beyond the Open Events Programme, providing opportunity to involve communities all the way across Scotland in the Themed Year.

Key highlights of the Community Stories Programme include bringing communities together, providing opportunities to share community stories beyond the immediate community and showcasing the talents of under-represented groups.

The programme has brought about a range of benefits for grantees and communities. It has:

- Enabled them to expand the reach of their activities or reach new audiences
- Raised the profile of their organisations
- Supported them to strengthen existing partnerships or develop new collaborations
- Opened up new areas of work.

The partnership approach

The partnership approach to delivery has been successful, and both VisitScotland and MGS should be commended for their ability to deliver a growing fund at pace. Alongside the grant funding, MGS and VisitScotland delivered a wrap-around programme of support, which included webinars to support grantees to get the most out of their involvement, including advice on marketing, reaching audiences, and Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), amongst others. The wrap-around programme saw a good level of engagement from grantees:

- There were 294 live attendances at webinars, and a further 355 video views
- Seventy-six per cent of organisations listed their events on the VisitScotland website
- More than a quarter of grantees shared information relating to their event on the ICH website.

Feedback on the wrap-around provision was positive, with 94% of survey respondents rating the webinars they attended as good or excellent.

Dedicated Community Stories marketing and media activity provided significant added profile for supported events and activities. One hundred and fifty-nine items of Community Stories media coverage reached people almost 4.3 million times, and the marketing campaign reached people over 2.3 million times.

The focus on ICH within the programme was also felt to have added strong benefits. In particular the focus on 'stories' was felt to provide a more accessible route for exploring ICH, which helped to boost awareness of ICH among grantees and wider partners.

Legacy

The Community Stories Programme has demonstrated how a community events fund can support delivery of the Themed Year, and therefore provides a potential model to be built on in future years. The volume of applications received, and high level of positivity among grantees regarding the Community Stories Programme, also suggests that there is considerable appetite from community groups and organisations to engage more with Scotland's Themed Years.

Alongside the events and activities delivered within 2022, through the programme many organisations have also produced resources that will enable the legacy of Scotland's Year of Stories to live on, with podcasts, walking trails, zines and other materials produced that will continue to tell Scotland's stories.

1. Introduction to the Community Stories Programme

The Community Stories Programme supported 180 organisations and community groups to celebrate Scotland's Year of Stories 2022. This report tells the story of the programme.

This section provides background context on the wider Year of Stories Programme and contextualises the role of the Community Stories Programme within this.

The report that follows explores:

- The story of the Community Stories Programme
- Key successes and benefits derived from the programme
- The support from VisitScotland and Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS), including feedback on the wrap-around programme; and
- The partnership approach to delivery.

It culminates in a series of lessons learned and conclusions to support the delivery of future programmes.

1.1 The Year of Stories

Since 2009, VisitScotland has led a series of Themed Years on behalf of the Scottish Government. These Themed Years are designed to showcase the best of Scotland, through the creation of a collaborative promotional platform designed to amplify multiple individual efforts, shining a spotlight on Scotland and its unique attributes. 2022 was designated Scotland's Year of Stories.

The overarching aim of the Year of Stories was to: "sustain and build upon the momentum of the preceding Themed Years to spotlight, celebrate and promote the wealth of stories inspired by, written, or created in Scotland. From icons of literature to local tales, the year will encourage locals and visitors to experience a diversity of voices, take part in events and explore the places, people and cultures connected to all forms of our stories, past and present. It will contribute to recovery from the pandemic and inspire new stories of Scotland to be shared." (Scotland's Year of Stories 2022 – Strategic Plan, May 2021)

The Year of Stories had five key objectives:

1. **Promotion** – to raise the profile of Scotland nationally and internationally, showcasing our wealth and diversity of stories and associated visitor experiences with a co-ordinated marketing and communications programme promoting responsible engagement and participation.
2. **Celebration** – to encourage and develop opportunities for the discovery and celebration of our stories with a focus on the tourism and events sectors.

3. **Participation** – to inspire the people of Scotland and our visitors to participate in activity aligned and developed in response to Year of Stories 2022, with emphasis on encouraging (re)engagement of locals and broadening visitors’ experiences and perceptions of Scotland.
4. **Collaboration** – encourage collaborative working between the sectors represented by Year of Stories 2022 themes and wider tourism sector.
5. **Industry Engagement** – to communicate with a wide range of businesses in tourism and other relevant sectors to help them recognise the opportunities presented by Year of Stories 2022 and capitalise on those opportunities as part of COVID-19 recovery.

The Year of Stories included an Open Events Programme, to support the creation of key moments and events to drive media and engage high levels of participants and audience throughout the year. This is a staple of the Themed Year approach, and the Open Events Programme typically includes medium-large scale events. To complement this provision and realise the potential of the Year of Stories opportunity, a community events fund was devised that would support community groups and community facing organisations to share and showcase their stories through smaller-scale events. The initial project budget allocation of £100,000 was multiplied almost 10-fold as a result of strong partner support.

1.2 The Community Stories Programme

The Community Stories Programme was developed in partnership between VisitScotland and Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS), with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and Scottish Government. Organisations and community groups across Scotland were invited to apply for funding, to support them to take part in and contribute to Scotland's Year of Stories. Grants of between £500-£5,000 were available, through two funding rounds.

Round 1 was open between August 2021 and October 2021. A total of 135 applications were received, and of these 47 were awarded funding. Round 2 opened in January 2022 and closed in March 2022. At this stage, in response to demand, additional investment was secured from NLHF and Scottish Government, which enabled the CSF Project Team (VisitScotland and MGS) to support further awards in Round 2. A total of 266 applications were received in Round 2, and of these 136 were awarded funding. This brought the total number of projects across the two rounds to 183, although three projects were subsequently cancelled.

Across the two rounds, a total of 401 applications were received, showing a high level of appetite among community groups and organisations to participate in the Themed Year. Through the Community Stories Fund, the Themed Year has been able to support more community groups and organisations than ever before.



401 Applications



180 projects funded



More than
£730,000
distributed in
grants



Activity supported
across all 32 local
authority areas in
Scotland

Through the Fund a total of £731,920 was distributed in grants, and an additional £128,575 was invested to resource the delivery of a 'wrap-around' programme of support to help grantees to maximise the opportunity and enhance their activity.¹

In addition, grantees raised and contributed a further total of £430,399 (detailed in Table 1.1 below) to support activity delivered through the programme, bringing the total expenditure on the Community Stories events programme to £1,290,894. This was made up of a combination of ticket sales, contributions from organisations' own funds, donations and other funding raised to support activity. This is broken down in the following table:

Table 1.1: Additional income sources

Type of funding	Number of organisations who reported this source of income	Total income of this type
Ticket Sales	42	£32,476
Contribution from own funds	75	£139,274
Donations	20	£28,333
Other Funders	57	£230,316

Source: Project Reports (Number=179)

Activity was delivered all across Scotland in each local authority area.

Table 1.2: Number of projects funded by local authority area

Local authority area	Number of projects
Aberdeen City	2
Aberdeenshire	4
Angus	2
Argyll & Bute	5
City of Edinburgh	22
Clackmannanshire	3
Dumfries and Galloway	6
Dundee City	2
East Ayrshire	3

¹ This figure does not include £67,372 spent on MGS admin, systems and process support.

Local authority area	Number of projects
East Dunbartonshire	3
East Lothian	2
East Renfrewshire	1
Eilean Siar	3
Falkirk	1
Fife	5
Glasgow City	26
Highland	25
Inverclyde	4
Midlothian	2
Moray	2
North Ayrshire	5
North Lanarkshire	1
Orkney Islands	3
Perth and Kinross	7
Renfrewshire	3
Scottish Borders	2
Shetland Islands	2
South Ayrshire	1
South Lanarkshire	4
Stirling	3
West Dunbartonshire	2
West Lothian	5
Multiple Areas	16
Online	2

2. The Story of the Community Stories Programme

This section tells the story of the Community Stories Programme. It explores the reach of the programme, the stories that were told, and how the programme has supported key objectives around sustainable and accessible event delivery.

2.1 The Community Stories Programme in focus

Overall, the Community Stories Fund directly supported 180 projects that together delivered over 1,000 events and activities. This resulted in 942,061 audience/participant attendances (357,543 in-person, and 584,518 online). The programme has therefore considerably broadened the reach of the Themed Year as a whole.



180 projects



1,002 Events



942,061
audience/participant
attendances²



5,182 artist
opportunities³

107 organisations reported that they had commissioned new work from artists or storytellers as part of their project, resulting in over 5,000 artist opportunities created across the programme.

As set out in the previous section, the Community Stories Fund granted funding to 183 projects. However, subsequently three projects were cancelled due to issues relating to resource within the delivery organisations – the funds from these projects were therefore returned. In addition to these, two projects part-returned funding due to difficulties delivering all of their proposed activity. This resulted in £14,132.21 of returned funding, representing an underspend of around two per cent.

² As some events were intended to reach the same individuals multiple times (for example themed workshops) the term audience/participant attendances has been used to capture the fact that not every audience opportunity will represent a unique individual.

³ Due to the way data was supplied in Project Reports it is not possible to identify where the same artist may have delivered multiple events within the same project, and so 'artist opportunities' are counted instead of number of artists.

2.2 What stories were told through the Community Stories Programme?

The Year of Stories 2022 had five cross-cutting themes. These were:

1. Iconic Stories and Storytellers
2. New Stories
3. Scotland's People and Places
4. Local Tales and Legends
5. Inspired by Nature

Organisers were invited to submit projects that responded to any of these five themes or a combination of them. Further details on the types of events funded under these themes are described below, and case studies are provided throughout the report to showcase particular events and activities funded through the programme.

Theme 1: Iconic Stories and Storytellers

Iconic Stories and Storytellers was the principal theme for 29 projects. Many of the stories explored under this theme celebrated iconic individuals from throughout Scotland's history. For example, **Striking Herstories** explored the lives and histories of famous Scottish footballers, Rose Reilly and Julie Fleeting. Projects were also dedicated to celebrating Scottish storytellers, such as the novelist, poet and playwright Naomi Michison, the geologist and folklorist Hugh Miller and the poet George Mackay Brown.

Events under this theme also included those involved with retelling folk tales. For example, as part of **Blairgowrie and Rattray Arts for Wellbeing month**, an event was delivered exploring The Green Lady of Newton, a local legend.

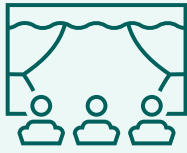
Through this theme several events also shone a light on women's history, providing an opportunity to bring lesser-known stories to a wider audience. For example, **A Monstrous Regiment of Women**, delivered by Garidge Theatre, told the story of Caroline Phillips. Phillips was born in 1874 and was the honorary secretary of the Aberdeen branch of the Women's Social and Political Union and a journalist at a time when there were just 66 female journalists across the UK.



Figure 1: A Monstrous Regiment of Women (Credit: VisitScotland / Rob McDougall)

Case Study: Striking Herstories – How the Community Stories Programme has shone a light on women's history

Organisation & Location: The Scottish Football Museum, Glasgow



2 events



1179 audience attendances



6 artist opportunities



1 venue supported

The Scottish Football Museum is in the top three per cent of visitor attractions in Scotland and its collections are recognised as Nationally Significant by Museums Galleries Scotland. The Museum's 14 galleries transport the visitor from the game's humble 19th century beginnings to the modern day. The Museum's Community Stories project **Striking Herstories** – which includes a new trail and engagement events – follows the history of women's football in Scotland, a story of resilience and activism.

As the Museum's existing collections held little material of women's football pre-1970, four local artists were commissioned to produce new artworks, thus allowing the Museum to tell the story of women's football in Scotland more fully. The four artworks were featured in the trail along with four additional stops to object-based case panels. These covered specific periods of women's football; the increase in female football throughout the First World War, the first official match of Scotland's Women's National Football team in 1972, the formation of the Scottish Women's Premier League in 2002 and finished with 2019 and the Scottish Women's National Team's first FIFA Women's World Cup. Furthermore, five case panels which feature in the trail were updated with new or further information, in some cases they had not been updated since the Museum's opening in 2001. Updating these five panels was hugely valuable as previously the tactic had been to have standalone 'women's cases', whereas now the Museum is moving towards integrating this information. As such, having funding to enable text panels to be updated and weave women's history into existing cases is immensely important.

The importance of telling these stories is centered on unveiling hidden histories and shining a light on forgotten figures who are embedded within Scotland's heritage. By telling these stories, this heritage is being safeguarded, which would not have been possible without sufficient funding. Moreover, with women's football finally gaining recognition, support and development, it's important to share the history of what led to this moment. The importance of telling these stories is also captured by inspiring a young generation of girls involved in football. The Museum partnered with Bo'ness United Community Football Club and Glasgow Schools FA Under 15s, two clubs the Museum has existing relationships with. Transport was provided through the project funding to enable the girls to visit the Museum, learn more about the history of women in sport and partake in various activities. The girls were given a

guided tour of the trail and stadium, and encouraged to write the labels that were showcased underneath the artwork, helping to tell the stories of women in football.

Gender inequality undoubtedly features as a key theme in **Striking Herstories**. The project really worked to emphasise the discrimination of women in football throughout history, highlighting to audiences the reasons why women's football is where it is in the modern day. It is also a story of overcoming significant adversity and therefore acted as inspiration to audiences, particularly young girls involved in football already. Furthermore, hosting the football clubs was hugely valuable to the Museum as they are not often able to provide learning and engagement events.

In terms of legacy, the Museum established various partnerships through the delivery of the project. Design consultant Tea and Type, for instance, created the trail leaflet. This partnership is one the Museum hopes to continue moving forward, with the intention of creating more learning and engagement activities. The trail leaflet itself also provides a resource for future use – 500 copies were ordered with the intention of ordering more. Further, the trail and the stories it tells have greatly expanded the audience of the Museum. Previously, the audience demographic had been mainly older males and as such, telling stories like this really worked to engage women and girls with the Museum which is likely to have a lasting impact.



Figure 2: Striking Herstories (Credit: VisitScotland / Rob McDougall)

Theme 2: New Stories

New Stories was the principal theme within 20 projects. Many of the projects responding to this theme either commissioned or created new stories or told the stories of people who have recently made Scotland their home.

For example, **Queer Stories**, led by Shaper/Caper, sought to capture the stories of a generation who had been silenced by Section 28.



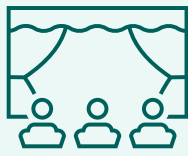
Figure 3: Queer Stories (Credit: VisitScotland / Rob McDougall)

Many projects also focused on exploration of the experiences of refugees and migrants. For example, **Standing Tall Stories**, led by Standing Tall Arts, delivered a series of workshops to help children and young refugees and asylum seekers to tell their stories through different art forms. They were supported by a range of artists, who taught them about storytelling through photography, music and film. The artworks were shared at a final performance during Refugee Week.

Projects also sought to share the stories of communities who are under-represented in the arts. For example, **BE United Live @ The Fringe** shared the stories of the Black Community, through a three-night showcase of Afro-Caribbean music, dance and spoken word.

Case Study: OMOS Workshops and Storytelling Cabaret - Engaging in the Community Stories and history of Scotland's Black LGBTQI+ community

Organisation & Location: Icky Arts (Pollyanna), Edinburgh



8 events



238 audience attendances



18 artist opportunities



5 venues supported

This project consisted of six workshops and one storytelling session engaging with audiences as participants in September 2022, as well as one final cabaret event in October 2022. This project successfully told the stories of Black members of the LGBTQI+ community in Scotland, and the aim was to create an inclusive environment for the forgotten and hidden stories of the community to come to light, celebrating Black history in Scotland, Black performance, and Black storytelling techniques through movement, spoken words and song. Through the workshops, participants were able to share their own stories through different themes, and hear the stories of other participants. While the project had a significant teaching and showcasing component, based on OMOS – a moving image exhibition exploring the history of Black LGBTQI+ culture in Scotland – there was also a substantial component allowing participants to engage personally. For example, a workshop in lip-syncing enabled participants to tell personal stories through music, and a storytelling workshop interlinked fairy tales with participants' personal experiences, inviting them to create modern, personal tales. Icky Arts (Pollyanna) said:

“By presenting workshops by Black and Queer artists, we created an environment where the artists could share diverse stories as well as audiences being able to share their own stories and find the connections, similarities, and differences between a wide range of experiences.”

The effects this project's activities had on the participants were extensive and incredibly profound, and audiences included Black LGBTQI+ persons, other members of the LGBTQI+ community, people in the local community who wanted to learn more about the topic, and school classes and young people who also got a chance to partake in a workshop hosted at their school. Feedback from audiences and participants highlighted the need to uncover and underline other minority stories in LGBTQI+ and Scottish cultural spaces, with some people mentioning they felt personally inspired to be more creative and to engage in storytelling in “their own way”. Others said they were going to consider the relationship between Scotland and Black history in a different way from before. Icky Arts (Pollyanna) also said:

“The uniqueness of this situation should not be understated, with the number of diverse artists platformed and sharing their story in a significant gallery in the heart of the capital as an engaged audience learned about new and untold stories.”

Theme 3: Scotland's People and Places

Scotland's People and Places was the most dominant theme within the Community Stories Programme, listed as the principal theme for 80 projects (44% of delivered projects). The CSF Project Team noted that through this theme many organisations had elected to deliver projects that empowered communities to share stories about their own lives and experiences. This has brought about an interesting benefit to the programme – as described by a member of the CSF Project Team – this has "created an interesting snapshot of contemporary Scotland", which tells not just well-known Scottish tales, but has provided a voice for Scotland's diverse communities, and broadened understanding of life in Scotland today.

In addition to the cross-cutting themes that organisations were invited to apply under, many also sought to showcase communities, with a wide variety of projects funded that had a focus on gender, LGBTQI+ communities, ethnicity or nationality, refugee or migrant stories, young people, and disabled people. For example, **The Pink Triangle Podcast** delivered a new podcast series to showcase the untold stories of Scotland's LGBTQI+ community. **Home Fae Home (Home From Home)** brought together refugees and migrants learning English as a second language with pupils from a neighbouring college to create a collaborative musical performance that showcased poems and stories from their home countries, and explored perceptions of Glasgow and Scotland.

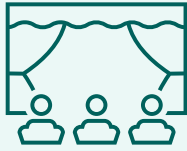
The breadth of the theme has also enabled community groups and organisations to highlight hidden stories, or highlight issues that are meaningful to their organisation or local community. For example, the Crichton Trust was able to explore stories of mental health care delivered through The Crichton Royal Institution, with the aim of de-stigmatising mental health.



Figure 4: *Up the Middle Road* (Credit: VisitScotland / Rob McDougall)

Case Study: Up the Middle Road – How the Community Stories Programme uncovered the history of mental health care in Scotland

Organisation & Location: The Crichton Trust, Dumfries



3 events



219 audience attendances



9 artist opportunities



1 venue supported

Up the Middle Road, led by Dr Valentina Bold, Heritage Project Officer at The Crichton Trust, creatively shared the stories of The Crichton Royal Institution in Dumfries as told by former patients, nurses, support staff, and those who grew up on the site. With the aim of de-stigmatising mental ill health, and commemorating past events, approaches, and treatments within the village of The Crichton, these stories work to incorporate hidden aspects of Scotland's cultural heritage.

The project commissioned local artist Amanda Edmiston, who specialises in healing tales, and storyteller Kathleen Cronie who guided attendees around the site. Building on The Crichton's heritage of developing creativity through movement and the arts, musical interpretations were also provided in The Crichton's historic buildings by performers Emily Smith and Jamie McClennan that communicate the past of particular places, and the lived experiences of those who had received treatments, worked, and lived on the site. Artists were also joined by two locally recruited apprentices, contributing to a legacy of expertise among young people within Dumfries and Galloway. In terms of developing the project, The Crichton Trust formed a strong connection with former staff and patients, who were consulted at every stage about which stories to tell and how they should be told. As such, the project centered on uncovering hidden stories as well as hidden voices. The Trust also worked with various mental health charities, such as Support in Mind Scotland, to ensure the project was developed in a responsible and ethical way, with mental health professionals being on site to support anyone affected by the stories.

Exploring the history of mental health treatment and care was the consistent and broader element to the project. The project was able to evidence Scotland's history of providing mental health treatment based on models of compassionate care, demonstrating an empathy and understanding within mental health treatment being intrinsically linked to Scotland's cultural heritage. As such, bringing new light to these stories ultimately worked to further dispel stigmas around mental health, especially in the surrounding local community of Dumfries. The project was therefore hugely successful in demonstrating why these stories deserve to be told. Within this exploration of compassionate care models, themes of recovery and resilience featured prominently in the project. This was particularly fitting given the events took place as the area was coming out of COVID-19 lockdowns, though it wasn't necessarily wholly centered on COVID-19 – the project instead primarily aimed to highlight the idea of The Crichton being a sanctuary and, within this, dismiss any negative connotations to receiving mental health treatment. By focusing on this theme, positive messages came through in stories, particularly those told by former patients where they highlighted how The Crichton was able to help them during a difficult point in their life, as well as showcasing the kindness and dedication of staff, and strengthened the element of Scotland's historically compassionate culture.

Community engagement was also a central tenet of the project. The event was free for former patients and staff and to people under the age of 25. The Crichton also worked with the two local schools, attended by children of former staff of the Crichton Royal Institution, to provide a learning picnic day when they learned more about the site through storytelling.

In terms of impacts, giving hidden voices and stories a platform has enabled more people to learn about Scotland's history of mental health care/treatment. The majority of former patients commented on how emotive the event was in making them feel like their experiences and stories were valued. The project also helped to connect the local community with an important part of their history and cultural heritage, as well as connecting them to further research in other arenas, including the Scottish Archives Records Association. Moreover, new opportunities for performance and collaboration have arisen, with Dr Bold developing a UNESCO Memory of the World bid focusing on The Crichton's oral history recordings and archives, which is linked to on-site initiatives to develop a new Centre for Memory and Wellbeing.

Theme 4: Local Tales and Legends

Local Tales and Legends was the principal theme for 35 projects. This theme enabled grantees to engage audiences with well-known Scottish history in new ways, and also created a space to elevate local tales or history that may have been forgotten or may be relatively unknown. For example, Robert Gordon University delivered events dedicated to exploring the history of 'The Disappeared Village' of Culbin (explored below) and **Tìr Ìseal nan Òran (Tìree: low land of song)** explored seven stories from the history, tradition and mythology of Tìree.

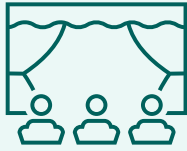
Additionally, events celebrated the storytelling tradition in Scotland. For example, as part of **Our Stories: Traditional Gaelic Storytelling**, Auchindrain Trust (Urras Achadh an Droighinn), delivered storytelling sessions in Auchindrain, the best-preserved example of a Scottish Highland farm township, and delivered in Argyll Gaelic and English. **Stories of Nairn** also celebrated the storytelling tradition, and invited audiences to flag making workshops in response to local tales and legends.



Figure 5: Auchindrain Trust / Urras Achadh an Droighinn, (Credit: VisitScotland / Rob McDougall)

Case Study: The Disappeared Village - How the Community Stories Programme has uncovered the disappeared village of Culbin

Organisation & Location: Robert Gordon University, Elgin



8 events



4,031 audience attendances



19 artist opportunities



1 venue supported

The Disappeared Village was built around the story of Culbin: a village on the shore of the Moray Firth which was subsumed by the Great Sand Drift of 1694. Academics Dr Rachael Ironside and Professor Peter Reid, from the School of Creative and Cultural Business at Robert Gordon University, worked in collaboration with Elgin Library to explore and uncover the story of the village and create an exhibition called **The Disappeared Village**. The project seeks to emphasise the scientific and natural explanations for the disappearance of the village, but also leans into the stories of myth and legend that have shrouded the village in mystery. The exhibition sought to uncover these mysteries and retell the many stories of Culbin in new and creative ways, including exploring local history, national history, environmentalism, culture, heritage, legend and folklore. The exhibition launch was highly successful, with huge support from the local civic community, including the Lord Lieutenant, the Chief Executive of the local authority, the local MP, MSP, councillors and others. Twenty main stories were explored, and these formed the basis of a real-life exhibition, with 23 interpretation panels, and a digital exhibition. These were researched by the team in conjunction with the local heritage staff at Elgin Library. The project also benefitted from help and support from the 'Forestry Memories' project and from others who have previously been involved in the interpretation of the Culbin Forest site for visitors, such as a local heritage organisation in Findhorn.

The story of Culbin was not particularly well known in Scotland, even within the local area. As such, a key driver for the project was to engage the local community as well as to reach new audiences. Therefore, as well as aiming to attract a demographic already interested in engaging with the environment, the exhibition also provided storytelling and crafting activities in an effort to attract families and young children, with the folklore element proving particularly popular among children. Moreover, the organisers were able to appeal to wider audiences by presenting the story of the disappeared village through an artistic lens. By doing this, the project was able to demonstrate that key themes such as environmentalism and creative storytelling can be explored beyond the written word, which was particularly engaging for children. The Community Stories Programme and partaking in the Year of Stories provided a substantial platform to showcase this aspect of Scotland's heritage, which was reflected in significant press coverage of the project and the abandoned village.

For example, Professor Peter Reid was interviewed by BBC Scotland's Landward about the project.

Similar to various other Community Stories funded projects, "uncovering forgotten stories" has featured as another key theme to **The Disappeared Village**. As the project unfolded, researchers quickly realised that delving deeper into archive material, such as newspaper accounts or old books, would lead to deeper and more culturally rich stories – leading to the exhibition being designed in such a way that each panel acts as a standalone vignette but, when taken together, they collectively provide a bigger picture. This multidimensional element to the project was key to its success – it worked on various levels; historical, folkloric, cultural, geographical, and therefore ultimately had the ability to capture people's imaginations.

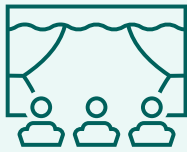
Theme 5: Inspired by Nature

Inspired by Nature was the principal theme for 15 events. This theme included projects related to celebrating nature and the environment, with many stories focused on Scotland's landscape, Scotland's wildlife, and the importance of environmental sustainability. For example, as part of **If Our Trees Could Talk**, a storyteller was commissioned to capture stories related to Scotland's temperate rainforests including the people who live and work in these environments, to highlight the importance of preserving these natural habitats.

Many of these events were situated within settings that enabled participants to engage directly with the natural environment of Scotland, such as forests and woodlands. For example, **Abriachan's Stories, Seanchaidh and some Stars**, delivered events in Abriachan Forest, including storytelling events around a campfire and **Dark Sky Storywalks** explored the Scottish and Celtic stories associated with stars and their patterns.

Case Study: Whisper from the Woods and Wilds: Tales of the Badger from Across Scotland - inclusivity, creativity and accessibility through the Community Stories Programme

Organisation & Location: Scottish Badgers SCIO, Lanark



23 events



1,131 audience attendances



2 artist opportunities



3 venues supported

Scottish Badgers' project **Whisper from the Woods and Wilds: Tales of the Badger from Across Scotland** explored and shared the importance of Scotland's environment, wildlife, and biodiversity by attempting to break negative perceptions and stereotypes surrounding the badger. This was done by sharing old Scottish stories relating to the animal with the local community and other groups, who were then invited to create their own stories and engage personally with the theme. While Scottish Badgers had previously worked to improve people's knowledge and perception of the badger, this was the first time they were able to take such a creative approach, something they had been wanting to do for some time:

"The whole kind of creative angle is something we've not really worked on within our charity [...] Now we could focus on telling new stories, and positive stories, about badgers and wildlife which we already knew we wanted to do but hadn't had the confidence or funding to do before. What we learnt is that people really, really engaged with and enjoyed it."

The project was highly successful in its attempt to break negative connotations of the badger, whilst also succeeding in connecting people with one another and with Scottish nature. This was done through their nature workshops and storytelling events delivered in nature at a local wildlife reserve. Along with sessions for the wider public, the organisation also specifically chose to engage with under-represented people, delivering events for ethnic minority groups and refugees, people with disabilities, and primary school students with additional learning needs amongst others. The project team worked closely with partners to identify opportunities to reach these groups. For example, they utilised an existing partnership with a school, and were connected with the Central and West Integration Network in Glasgow through a storytelling consultant who had previously worked with minority groups in the environmental sector. These connections helped them to identify potential networks to reach out to.

2.3 How the Community Stories Programme told Scotland's stories

The Fund supported a wide range of events and activities, which are broken down in the illustration below. As discussed above, a total of 1,002 events were delivered across the 180 funded projects, with an average of five events delivered per grantee.

Figure 2.1: Types of events included in the Community Stories Programme



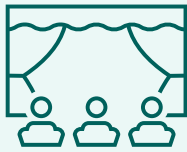
The programme included many diverse approaches to storytelling such as traditional oral storytelling, theatrical performance, dance, guided walking tours, exhibitions, film screenings and live music. These events sat alongside a range of participatory activities or workshops that provided opportunities for communities to share their own stories.

The programme has also generated some legacy materials, this will ensure the stories will not be limited to a particular point in time, but can be shared and revisited time and time again. For example, some grantees developed materials such as books, interactive walking trails, podcasts, apps, videos and other media to capture their stories. This has included the creation of materials related to Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), which are now detailed on the [ICH Scotland website](#).

Some of these materials have had considerable reach. For example, [Unforgotten Highland Women](#), Museums and Heritage Highland's series of six podcasts, was downloaded over 3,000 times within the first two months of its release.

Case Study: 'Stories of Nairn' Community Flag Making Workshops and Parade - reviving and reinforcing the storytelling tradition in Nairn through the Community Stories Programme

Organisation & Location: Nairn Book and Arts Festival, Nairn



8 events



1220 audience attendances



37 artist opportunities



3 venues supported

Nairn Book and Arts Festival looked to explore the Themed Year in an imaginative way by uncovering and reinforcing the vibrant heritage of storytelling in the area through the creation of story flags. The flags captured tales, legends, and other stories from the local community in a visual medium, safeguarding the stories for future generations. The festival was inspired to take this creative and different approach because storytelling was already quite a common custom within the local community:

“From our perspective, because we are a community that tells a lot of stories generally, we were looking to find a different approach to what we usually do. The fact that the year was focused on stories meant we had to think a bit differently. [Because of the Themed Year] so many people were already telling stories that it meant that we didn’t necessarily want to repeat what had already been done, so we wanted to do something else, something more creative.”

The flags were created through engaging with community groups of all ages to gather common tales, legends and stories that had been passed down through generations. The focus of the stories was relatively wide, as they could relate to anything from local myths, to famous people with connections to Nairn, to old knowledge, stories and superstitions from Nairn’s past. Later, the community groups worked with artist storyteller Lizzie McDougall to create designs based on the stories which were then turned into 20 silk flags by international arts company Kinetika. The flags were premiered at a storytelling flag parade in Nairn High Street with large participation from the community; this enabled Lizzie McDougall to present the flags and the stories they represented to the community whose stories they were based on, and introduce these tales to the rest of the public. After the parade, the flags were displayed in the central bandstand with each representative story attached for everyone to read. Following the festival, the flags have continued to be used at further events and been added to an online gallery alongside the stories they represent, giving everyone an opportunity to fully learn these stories. In this way, the flags have created a legacy for continuing Nairn’s storytelling custom and have reinforced the stories for younger audiences so that the town’s storytelling heritage can continue to flourish for coming generations.

“The Stories of Nairn Project sparked so many ideas, in addition to creating a really wonderful piece of intangible heritage for the town and a community resource which has already been used by community groups. Through the Year of Stories we could pass stories on verbally to children, which is something not necessarily done by their parents. The actual idea of oral traditions of storytelling was aided in its revival in younger people.”



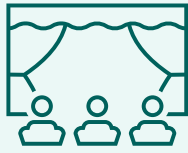
Figure 6: Stories of Nairn (Credit: VisitScotland / Rob McDougall)

2.4 Promoting the use of Scotland's indigenous languages

Sixty-four grantees reported that their events/activities had included use of Scotland's indigenous languages. This encompassed 42 projects that involved Scots and 29 that included Gaelic. As a result, the programme has been able to elevate and promote the use of Scotland's indigenous languages.

Case Study: Ceithir Ceàrnaidhean (Four Corners) - preserving and sharing Gaelic culture through literature, poetry, song, and storytelling

Organisation & Location: Comhairle nan Leabhraichean (The Gaelic Books Council), Various locations throughout Scotland



4 events



345 audience attendances



12 artist opportunities



4 venues supported

The Gaelic Books Council aimed to demonstrate the richness, and range of literature and stories that exist in the Gaelic language with their project **Four Corners (Ceithir Ceàrnaidhean)**. Their Year of Stories participation consisted of four different events across different parts of Scotland, and each event was very different from the others.

The events themselves provided entertainment and learning for both adults and children alike, whilst also focusing on preserving Gaelic heritage and storytelling. The first event, *Friends and Monsters (Caraidean is Uilebheistean)* in Inverness included the characters and work of three Gaelic children's book authors. Big cuddly versions of their characters were present and the event engaged children in different practical arts and crafts projects related to the stories.

The second event, *Poetry, Songs, and Stories (Uibhist Mo Ghràidh)* was held in a new community venue in South Uist in the Outer Hebrides and featured various Gaelic singers and storytellers. Thirdly, *Poems for a Winter's Afternoon (Ann an Solas na Cagailt)* was hosted in the Scottish Poetry Library in Edinburgh. Two established poets and an emerging poet treated the audience to an afternoon of Gaelic poetry, thereby enabling them to widen their reach and represent their art. Finally, the fourth event, *St Columba's Legacy in Poetry and Prayer (An Deagh Sgeul)*, took place in Glasgow and celebrated the 500th anniversary of St Columba's birth through poetry and prayer. This event was also filmed and published online, creating a legacy for Gaelic storytelling and literature that can be continued to be engaged with long after the Year of Stories has ended. Through the events, Gaelic Books Council reported that they were able to share and preserve the use of Gaelic, demonstrating the richness of materials that are available.

2.5 How the Community Stories Programme has provided a platform for under-represented communities to tell their stories or participate in storytelling activity

The Year of Stories as a whole sought to encourage locals and visitors to experience a diversity of voices, take part in events and explore the places, people and cultures connected to all forms of Scotland's stories, past and present. The Community Stories Programme has been a key facilitator for involving diverse voices in Scotland's Year of Stories. The programme included events that shared the stories of under-represented communities and provided a platform for Scotland's diverse communities to share their own stories themselves.

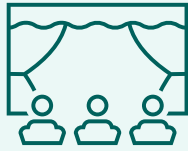
Events and activities from the Community Stories Programme spotlighted the stories of refugees and migrants, LGBTQI+ communities, different nationalities, disabled individuals and the Deaf community.

Many organisations reported that their activities had a focus on engaging specific groups. For example:

- 56 projects included activity to engage people from minority ethnic groups
- 38 projects included activity to engage people with disabilities
- 22 projects included activity to engage LGBTQI+ individuals
- 16 projects included activity to engage people on the basis of gender
- 103 projects included activity to engage children and young people
- 70 projects included activity to engage older people
- 9 projects included activity to engage faith groups or religious communities; and
- 70 projects included an activity to engage people on low incomes.

Case Study: Govanhill Food Stories – how the Community Stories Programme brought communities together through food

Organisation & Location: Glasgow Artists' Moving Image Studio, Govanhill



9 events



192 audience attendances



28 artist opportunities



2 venues supported

Govanhill Food Stories celebrated narrative through food as part of Govanhill International Festival and the Year of Stories 2022. Through three markets, stories of Govanhill communities and beyond were told through sharing food, and the stories, history and traditions behind the dishes. The initial idea was to connect and break down barriers between diverse communities in the local area. Govanhill is an area of high deprivation and substantial inequality, but it is also a hugely creative area with a lot of local artists and creative students. This part of Glasgow is considered to be one of the most multicultural neighbourhoods in Scotland, with over 88 languages spoken there. As such, the central idea for the event was to encourage a positive integration of all these communities and backgrounds, but not in an assimilation sense – the project aimed to connect them rather than merge them.

By partnering with local food shops and businesses, a long table was created for food cooked by community organisations and businesses from Govanhill

Figure 7: Govanhill Food Stories (Credit: VisitScotland / Rob McDougall)

and beyond, providing opportunities for attendees to try an exciting variety of cuisines. Some stall holders included MILK café, Soul Food Sisters, Transylvania Shop and Coffee, Pink Peacock, UNITY sisters, Swap Market (Feminist Exchange Network) and Outside the Box. The project also worked with Glasgow Zine Library (GZL) to deliver a zine-making activity during which participants were invited to submit a one-page contribution inspired by food. Market visitors shared stories, drawings, favourite dishes and beloved recipes. After the event, the stories were collated into a zine as a collaboration between GZL and editor Polly Rappapor to tell the story of Govanhill through food. Hard copies of the zine were distributed at future market events and a digital copy was uploaded onto [Govanhill Open Museum website](#) and [Govanhill Baths website](#), demonstrating a key legacy to the project.

A key part of telling these stories was to explore links between migration, colonialism and food systems. An accessible session named 'More than Just Food: Stories, Relationships and Memories' - led by Tunvii Khurana and Diana Jimáñez from Nourish Scotland - allowed people to share stories about their own heritage, demonstrating Scotland's multidimensional cultural heritage as well as highlighting the various cultures that call Glasgow their home. Further, by giving diverse groups a platform within their community such as this, members of

other communities gained access to different cultures which would not have typically happened otherwise. From these interactions, the project was able to break down prejudices that may have previously existed within Govanhill and encouraged new audiences to use local food businesses they may not have previously visited.

The project was a natural fit for Glasgow Artists' Moving Image Studio as it built on their work surrounding anti-racism, civil rights and female empowerment. The continuous nature of this work means that this project was not just a one-off and is something the organisation hopes to consistently keep doing. As they comment, under-represented groups tend to go under the radar, demonstrating the need in communities such as Govanhill for initiatives like the Community Stories Programme which gives organisations a visible presence within hard-to-reach communities.

2.6 Accessibility in the Community Stories Programme

Grantees took a range of steps to make their events accessible, and to reduce the barriers to participation that may be faced by individuals or groups. When describing this activity in their project reports, most commonly organisations discussed actions they had taken to support physical accessibility, for example, using accessible venues (described by 89 organisations), and providing accessibility information in event listings (described by 21 organisations). Many organisations (36) also reported that they had delivered livestreaming or other online activity within their projects to reach wider audiences.⁴

16 organisations reported that they had taken steps to ensure their events were accessible to d/Deaf people, including the involvement of British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters and captioning on video outputs. In addition to this, one project was funded that specifically shared the stories of the Deaf community.

Several organisations also described how they had proactively asked their audiences about their accessibility requirements to ensure adjustments could be deployed to best support participation. This was deployed in some activities where organisers invited members of the public to share their stories or participate in activities. For example, Community Integrated Care brought together a group of individuals who access social care support to engage in a Creativity Club. When recruiting individuals to join the project, they enquired about what help may be needed to best encourage each individual to engage and how they could plan sessions to best reduce the barriers to access they might face. This included, for example, delivering activities at times that would not clash with individuals' care arrangements.

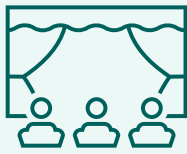
Many organisations also took action on financial accessibility. This was described by 96 grantees in their project reports. This included offering free events/activities or seeking payment only through optional donation or 'pay what you can' mechanisms to ensure that no

⁴ It should be noted that these responses relate to an open question which asked, 'Please tell us how you made your activities as accessible as possible, to remove any barriers people might have faced in participating?' As a result this is self-reported data, and the values presented here may not represent the full scale of activity delivered across the programme.

one was unable to attend due to affordability. Several organisations also reported that they had made out of pocket expenses available to members of the public who were participating in the project or provided free transport to minimise the costs to attendees or participants. For example, as part of the **Govanhill Food Stories** project, organisers partnered with The People's Pantry, a local shop in Govanhill that sells food at a discounted rate, so that people within the community could use vouchers to shop for ingredients to make their own dish to bring to the market.

Case Study: Deaf Action - Preserving and Celebrating Edinburgh's Deaf Heritage

Organisation & Location: Deaf Action, Edinburgh



1 event



700 audience
attendances



18 artist
opportunities



1 venue supported

Deaf Action was looking to preserve, celebrate and raise awareness of their Edinburgh heritage - linking this to their building and chapel, home to the organisation since 1889 and 1891 respectively. This was done through capturing stories from the Deaf community, connecting the audience with the legacy and history of their Albany Street building, and revealing narratives of the building through people's stories. The project was important in creating an archive of stories about the usage of the building and its people - many personal events took place in the chapel, including weddings, christenings and funerals, while the building has also been used for social activities and overall connection for the Deaf community. There were a wide range of ages and experiences of the people telling stories. Thus, many stories drew parallels and led to mirroring of similar experiences across different generations, and led to reflections about the past, present, and future of both the building and wider Deaf community. On the meaning and significance of the stories chosen to tell, Deaf Action said:

"These stories are important to share because the building and charity has been around for over 130 years, and has been used as a Deaf Centre by the community and the building in that way is not really owned by us, but the community itself. It wouldn't feel fair if we only told our story and known history of the building, [so] it was important for us to get actual community stories".

These stories were presented in an exhibition created by their internal in-house media agency and introduced during the Edinburgh Deaf Festival in August 2022. The exhibition took place in various locations around Deaf Action's building on Albany Street with exhibits displayed in accessible formats suitable for both deaf and hearing audiences. This included video screenings, QR codes alongside photo portraits, and objects, such as old photos and artifacts, collected from participants. The stories were also presented in British Sign Language, with captions and voiceover added to ensure fully accessible content for all. The project successfully resulted in a large audience from Scotland and beyond engaging with the history of Edinburgh's Deaf community and its building, whilst also creating legacy through a rich digital archive of stories and history. Thus, Deaf Action feels it has accomplished a great deal and has revealed the potential for exploring the theme further in the future, becoming more aware of people in the Deaf community with important stories who they have not engaged with previously.

2.7 Sustainability in the Community Stories Programme

As part of their project reports, organisers were invited to share what, if any, actions they had taken to promote sustainable development practice. The vast majority of organisations reported that they had taken some action to promote sustainability. Most commonly this included:

- Sourcing materials locally or using local suppliers (reported by 77 organisations)
- Involving local artists or businesses in their project (reported by 106 organisations)
- Making use of recycled or reusable materials, to reduce waste (reported by 45 organisations)
- Encouraging the use of public transport among the project delivery team and/or audiences (reported by 29 organisations)
- Live streaming events to enable members of the public to access activities without the need to travel (reported by 6 organisations).

It should be noted that some of the examples provided by organisations were quite limited in scope, such as one-off examples of using a local supplier for catering. However, at the other end of the spectrum, there were examples of innovative practice and examples of a strong commitment to sustainability that were threaded throughout some projects. For example, Gairloch Museum described how their whole set was designed to be borrowed and reusable.

"From the outset, we planned to create our Room For Stories by borrowing as many of the set furnishings as we could. We sourced a local business 'Home Sweet Home' in Inverness who loaned us furniture and props for the duration of the festival. The room was a huge success, and the store was name checked in the exhibition labelling. We were pleased to be able to create an ethical exhibition design, creating a unique setting that got people talking, out of things that would all be rehomed and reused. We even managed to find a new home for some unwanted items of furniture locally. They were given to us for the exhibition, and we were then able to give them to visitors who admired them - a sort of story room swap shop!"
(Project Report, Make Room for Stories - Gairloch Museum)

In addition to this, 19 organisations reported that the stories they told held an environmental or sustainable message. For example, sustainability was at the centre of the story of the disappeared village of Culbin.

"The disappeared village resonated strongly with those who engaged with the exhibition both physically and virtually and the message that humankind can, if we have the willpower and commitment, turn back environmental damage was at the heart of the story." (Project Report, Culbin: The Disappeared Village - Robert Gordon University)

Through their events, Scottish Badgers also delivered workshops for individuals who have newly made Scotland their home, where they introduced concepts such as 'leave no trace', and involved individuals in active conservation work, which included sharing knowledge about Scotland's nature and how to maintain it.

TEDxGlasgow also delivered an event exploring sustainability, based around the theme 'The Future We Choose'. As part of this event, speakers shared ideas on how individuals can make more sustainable choices and reduce consumerism.

These examples show that some of the events within the programme have actively contributed to efforts to educate audiences about sustainability.

These varied approaches to sustainability suggest that additional guidance on sustainability may be beneficial to ensure there is a common level of understanding across community programme grantees. This could utilise examples from organisations who took innovative approaches to embedding sustainability within their projects.

2.8 Highlights of delivery

This subsection explores some of the key highlights from the programme, as described by grantees in their project reports.⁵

Grantees described a wide range of highlights from their experience participating in the Community Stories Programme. These included:

- The stories they had been able to tell or experience as a result of their project, including the opportunity to hear personal experiences from members of the community, tell inspiring stories, or share stories that could help to destigmatise particular issues or experiences (described by 82 organisers).
- The opportunity to engage with local communities (described by 77 organisers).
- Positive feedback from audience members or community contributors (described by 73 organisers).
- The opportunity to raise awareness of Scotland's history and heritage (described by 45 organisers).

⁵ This is based on thematically coded free-text responses, and as such numbers do not represent the proportion of organisations who experienced the benefit, but the number of organisations who freely volunteered this information.

- The opportunity to commission new work (described by 38 organisers) and work with Scottish artists (described by 20 organisers).
- Reaching new audiences (described by 32 organisers); and
- Sharing the stories of under-represented groups, including stories related to mental health, disability, ethnicity, migration, sexual identity, and hearing personal experiences (described by 53 organisers).

In addition to this, organisations frequently discussed how the fund had supported them to bring people together, share community stories more widely, and showcase the talents of under-represented groups. These themes demonstrate the wider impact of the programme on Scotland's communities and are discussed in greater detail below.

Bringing people together

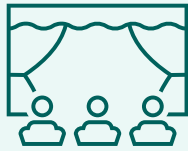
Organisations also frequently reported that the Themed Year helped to bring people together. For example, organisers discussed how they had been able to bring together individuals from different communities and promote shared understanding through storytelling. Organisers were able to bring together people based on shared experience, but also on the basis of shared interest and nostalgia. For example, the success of the **SUPERFAN: Stirling's Story of the Beatles – Music, People & Place** project (discussed below), shows how storytelling events related to The Beatles were able to bring together communities based on shared memories.

The timing of the Community Stories Programme was felt to be particularly valuable in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, where communities had missed out on opportunities to come together. These events had created a range of opportunities to facilitate this and support community wellbeing.

Case Study: SUPERFAN: Stirling's Story of the Beatles – Music, People & Place – how a community connected over the Beatles

Organisation & Location: Creative Stirling, Stirling

Project Title: SUPERFAN: Stirling's Story of the Beatles – Music, People & Place



5 events



8,586 audience attendances



23 artist opportunities



2 venues supported

Creative Stirling first created their **SUPERFAN: Stirling's Story of the Beatles – Music, People & Place** project after being approached by a local record shop owner, who had just acquired a massive collection of Beatles memorabilia. Thinking about the late fan who had collected these memorabilia, and later realising that the Beatles had their first Scottish concert in Stirling in 1962, it was clear to Creative Stirling that stories and objects concerning the Beatles could have a great impact on audiences and help to connect the local community. Creative Stirling's Director said this:

"I knew about the fact that the Beatles had played in the local community in January 1962 [...] I was later introduced to someone who had attended the gig at seventeen, and who is now approaching eighty. He had written a comprehensive book documenting bands who had played across the Forth Valley during the 60s, 70s, and 80s. Connecting this [to the collection of Beatles memorabilia], the connections for our Year of Stories project just started to happen."

The project succeeded more than originally hoped in bringing people from the community together, and it also attracted a wider audience who travelled from all over Scotland and further afield to talk about their memories of the Beatles and their 1962 Stirling concert. An exhibition of the Beatles memorabilia displayed fan club ephemera, fanzines and rare records alongside a newly commissioned mural. Artist Fran Ryan worked with the family of the late fan whose collection inspired the project to create the mural as a tribute to his love for the Beatles. As well as the exhibition, there was a new theatre piece depicting the band's rise in fame from 1960 to 1965, two live music performances at which multiple artists played Beatles songs and tributes, and an exhibition talk by Europa Music. This activity created a lot of impromptu storytelling; people from the local community, visitors from further away, and past employees of the music industry came and shared their stories from the time and the concert.

The project brought people of all ages together – young people volunteered and engaged in the Beatles storytelling, whilst older people came and connected over shared memories of a time they felt deeply nostalgic about. This was something Creative Stirling previously had not seen to this extent. Succeeding in attracting big audience numbers, the exhibition attracted locals and visitors of approximately 165 people per day – totaling over 8,000 people for its fifty-day run. Meanwhile, the music and theatre performances and exhibition talk were successful in attracting local people from the community, with a total of over 330 people attending these.

“It was the most well received and attended project that we have had to date. Everyone who worked on it: our artists, performers, musicians, and the Superfan’s family are all very proud of what was achieved. This was the high point of the year so far and we would love to do something this ambitious again.”

Sharing community stories beyond the community

The Community Stories Programme has also provided opportunities for particular communities to share their stories with wider audiences. For example, as part of **Preserving and Celebrating Edinburgh's Deaf Heritage**, Deaf Action described how they had been able to bring the stories of the Deaf community to a wider audience:

“The context of the Fringe Festival and the Edinburgh Deaf Festival offered the unique opportunity to share Deaf culture and stories with a wider audience: hearing, deaf, local people and visitors [...] Through this project, we intended to promote deaf culture, deaf heritage, and a positive deaf identity, recognising the power of this to enrich the lives of the deaf community, foster positive well-being and promote a greater degree of inclusion through shared experiences.” (Project Report, Deaf Action)

As illustrated in the example above this was beneficial in elevating the stories of particular communities, but this also had benefits for those who had the opportunity to share their stories, who may feel more enriched or valued as a result of the opportunity.

Showcasing the talents of under-represented groups

Related to the above point, involvement in the programme also enabled organisations to raise the profile of individuals who may be under-represented within the arts. This is illustrated in the following example.

“Participating in Scotland's Year of Stories enabled us to put 30 cast and crew members of The Enchanted Forest – all with a range of abilities and a variety of needs, including those who are wheelchair users and others with non-verbal communication skills – on the map of stories in Scotland.”
(Cutting Edge Theatre, Project)

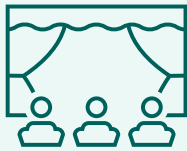


Figure 8: Story Ceilidh (Credit: VisitScotland / Rob McDougall)

Case Study: Story Ceilidh - how the Community Stories Programme enabled a newly settled community to connect through stories

Organisation & Location: Magic Torch Comics, Inverclyde

Project Title: Story Ceilidh



10 events



80 audience attendances



11 artist opportunities



2 venues supported

The **Story Ceilidh** project was focused on sharing folk tales and traditional stories from Inverclyde, wider stories of Scotland, and stories from refugees newly settled in Inverclyde; the aim was to create a blended narrative of diverse folk tales and cultural traditions. The project was created through two stages, the first one aiming to gather the stories of people who live in Inverclyde, and the second involving a performance event where the stories were shared with an audience in English, Gaelic and Arabic. This started with multiple community workshops at which refugee families and native Scots families shared and retold stories, finding common ground in many experiences regardless of seeming cultural or geographical differences.

Magic Torch Comics was able to connect with their local community, support the participants in their storytelling, and help them to learn from one another's experiences. The stories were also published in a [book](#), alongside illustrations by professional artists, so that they can be read for years to come and find a wider audience. As well as the wider impacts of community integration, safeguarding local stories, and bringing people together, many participants reported that they felt supported and heard, and were able to improve their storytelling skills and gain confidence as a result of taking part in the project.

"People who wouldn't have been part of the community usually, found connections through the event night. With storytelling, it's always a confidence thing and people's confidence improved, while also feeling the notion that what they were saying is valued and heard which makes a big difference. For example, one man was very shy, but came up and told a story in Arabic. I think he was mainly telling the story to his children in the audience, but it was nice for him to be seen in that context in front of his children. These personal journeys are what I think is the nicest part of this project. [...] We would take part in a similar initiative again in a heartbeat, it was definitely my favourite process of last year."

2.9 Experiences of Grantees

This sub-section explores the experiences of grantees, including audience reach and challenges encountered in the delivery of their projects.

Audience Reach

As set out above, the Community Stories Programme included 942,061 audience/participant attendances. 52% (92/176) of grantees reported that they had met or exceeded their target audience numbers. This included 19% of grantees (33/176) who had exceeded their targets by over 15%.

Table 2.1: Did you meet your targets in terms of audience numbers?

Response	Number	Proportion of respondents
Achieved Target Audience Numbers	41	23%
Slightly better (up by 1% -15%)	18	10%
Much better (up by more than 15%)	33	19%
Slightly worse (down by 1% -15%)	31	18%
Much worse (down by more than 15%)	29	16%
Other please describe	24	14%

Source: Project Reports (n=176)

However, a substantial number of grantees reported that they had not been able to achieve the numbers they had hoped for, with 18% (31/176) reporting that numbers were down on targets set by between 1-15%, and 16% (29/176) reporting that their numbers were down by more than 15%. There were a range of issues that had influenced weaker attendance numbers than anticipated, including:

- Staffing or capacity challenges that resulted in fewer activities being delivered or reduced marketing output.
- Challenges related to specific venues that resulted in audience numbers or events having to be reduced.
- Adverse weather conditions.
- On the day no-shows.
- Challenges related to COVID-19, including both restrictions on venue capacity being in place, as well as organisations being unable to anticipate that audience numbers would still be below pre-COVID levels when planning their events. Some organisations also reported that online engagement with live events appeared to have been affected by "fatigue" resulting in drops in their online engagement compared with similar initiatives delivered in 2020/2021.
- Challenges engaging specific groups in storytelling opportunities, such as refugees and migrants, due to concerns about stigma within the community.

Challenges encountered by grantees & considerations for the future

Within project reports, grantees were invited to share aspects of their projects that had not gone as well as they had hoped, or things that they would do differently in the future. The key themes discussed in these responses are explored below.

Operational challenges: venue selection, timing of events & spread of events

The majority of challenges related to issues that were operational in nature and, therefore, specific to the context of each project. For example, nine grantees reported that they would choose a different venue in the future. This included those who had under-anticipated the popularity of their events, who would elect to use larger venues or increase the number of events if they were delivering a similar initiative in the future, as well as those who had the opposite experience where a smaller venue may have resulted in an improved atmosphere.

Grantees faced various challenges with regards to timing of events. For example, some projects encountered challenges related to wet weather or dark winter evenings that they felt had negatively impacted audience numbers. In contrast, several grantees who delivered events in the summer highlighted challenges in relation to school holidays. In particular, where grantees were working with children and school groups, they reported that it was important to have a long lead-in time to arrange activity with more time allocated to initial engagement.

Similarly, organisations reported that they had taken learnings forward in how they decided to programme events or activities. For example, some organisations that elected to deliver activity over a short period, such as a weekend, found that this was quite intensive, and a more spread-out approach could have been beneficial. In contrast, some grantees who programmed monthly events reported that this had diluted their marketing effort. It also proved problematic for some grantees who were aiming to bring a consistent group of participants together as this gave rise to conflicts with other commitments, which may have been easier to avoid if a more intensive timescale had been applied.

Some grantees also reported that they would take a different approach to ticketing in the future. For example, some organisers experienced no-shows that resulted in smaller audiences than anticipated. Some organisers suggested that in future they would put in place waiting lists or add a nominal fee to try and reduce non-attendance.

These learnings may support organisations with devising their approach should similar opportunities arise in the future. Additionally, some organisations reported intentions to deliver further activity aligned to their Year of Stories activity, as a result of the success of their events and enthusiasm in the community.

Resource constraints

Grantees also encountered constraints related to time to deliver their activity, the budget to deliver the extent of activity they would have liked, and other internal resource constraints, including staff sickness. In some comments, organisations reported that they would have liked to do more, as delivering their project enabled them to see there was a strong appetite for community events focused on stories.

"We quickly realised the scale of the stories we were about to uncover. [...] We could have done more, and hope to do so, and are investigating other funding and sponsorship sources to develop this further." (Project Report)

Several grantees also reported that some activities had taken longer than they anticipated, which required more staff time to support than they had envisaged at the offset. This included the time needed to set up and market their events, which they reported may have benefited from them including a longer lead-in time. The need for elongated timescales to support mobilisation was frequently reported by organisations who had committed to delivering exhibitions or participatory events.

Organisations also frequently emphasised the importance of having a “back up plan”, as several of them encountered challenges where key individuals had become unavailable due to sickness or personal emergencies, which threatened their events. As a result, some organisers reported that in future they would allocate a budget for standby artists or videographers to mitigate these risks.

Marketing, communications and advertising

Marketing and communications were also frequently reported by organisations as something they would do differently in the future.

Organisations reported that they would dedicate more time and resource to this activity to reach a broader audience, some organisers reported that they would work more closely with partner organisations to support outreach in the future. Typically, where organisations described improvements they would make, this related to their own activity or capacity, rather than additional support required from VisitScotland and MGS. Although some organisations did report that, with the benefit of hindsight, they perhaps could have engaged more with the marketing support available in the wrap-around programme than they had. Related to this, some organisations reported that they had not budgeted for internal communications support, but felt this would be beneficial to elevate their activities if they participated in similar initiatives in the future. This lack of internal capacity also sometimes meant that some organisations were too thinly stretched to fully engage with the support available from VisitScotland and MGS, for example, providing content for VisitScotland website listings.

A small number of grantees also reported that they had difficulties conveying messaging for participatory events in order to recruit individuals to share their stories. This is articulated in the quote below:

“The biggest hurdle with this kind of storytelling is convincing adult audiences in particular that storytelling isn’t just for kids. We publicised as much as possible [...] spreading the message that this was fully fledged drama / theatre not just a diversion for young children, but the message may not have fully got across with potential adult audiences [...] How exactly one engages those audiences without having them see the shows in the first place remains an open question.” (Project Report)

This may be an area where collaborative learning opportunities could be beneficial to support community groups or organisations who are newer to delivering participatory events.

Making storytelling events safe

The project reports also included useful feedback for organisers developing storytelling events that explore histories or experiences which could be distressing for some audience members. In these events it will be important for organisers to consider what actions they may need to take to ensure that the content shared in events is not retraumatising for some audience members. This is likely to be particularly important in the context of events or activities that include sharing of stories related to lived experience of communities who may have faced prejudice or oppression.

Issues related to delivering events in a pandemic context

Several organisations also detailed challenges encountered in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. In late November 2021 the Omicron variant of COVID-19 was identified in Scotland. In December 2021 the Scottish Government published guidance that encouraged members of the public to reduce social interactions. This included guidance that meetings in any indoor places should be limited to three households at a time.⁶ Following this, the Scottish Government later announced new physical distancing requirements in hospitality and leisure settings. This included restrictions on event numbers, and a requirement for one metre physical distancing between individuals.⁷ Restrictions on outdoor events were withdrawn on 17 January 2022, and restrictions on indoor venues were removed on 24 January 2022.⁸ However, over this period the Scottish Government emphasised that COVID-

⁶ Scottish Government, New measures required to slow the spread of coronavirus (2021). Available at: [New measures required to slow the spread of Coronavirus - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/news/new-measures-required-to-slow-the-spread-of-coronavirus/)

⁷ Scottish Government, Further measures needed to reduce contacts (2021). Available at: [Further measures needed to reduce contacts - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/news/further-measures-needed-to-reduce-contacts/)

⁸ Scottish Government, Omicron measures to be lifted (2022). Available at: [Omicron measures to be lifted - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/news/omicron-measures-to-be-lifted/)

19 cases were still highly prevalent and encouraged members of the public to continue to use 'caution and limit contacts where possible'.⁹ Preventative measures, such as the use of face coverings in public places, contact tracing, and a Covid certification scheme¹⁰ remained in place until 18 April 2022.

There was evidence from event organisers that COVID-19 regulations had impacted upon audience numbers. For example, some organisers had to reduce the number of attendees they could allow in venues to comply with social distancing guidance. Impacts also extended beyond the period in which restrictions were in place, with some organisers reporting that audience confidence had been affected by the pandemic.

“Covid did have an effect on audiences, numbers were much less than anticipated as there was a wave of Covid in the community at the time.”
(Project Report)

This was a particular challenge for grantees who were delivering events in the first quarter of 2022. Some organisations who had elected to deliver additional online materials or resources reported that this had been particularly beneficial within this context to enable them to reach audiences who may not have been confident to engage with face-to-face events at the time.

⁹ Scottish Government, Omicron measures to be lifted (2022). Available at: [Omicron measures to be lifted - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/news/2022/03/23/omicron-measures-to-be-lifted/)

¹⁰ This required attendees of venues to show a negative lateral flow test or proof of COVID-19 vaccination.

3. Key Successes and Benefits of the Community Stories Programme

This section explores how the Community Stories Programme has benefited participating organisations, and how it has contributed to the overall Year of Stories 2022.

3.1 How the Community Stories Programme has benefited participating organisations

The Community Stories Programme brought about a range of benefits to organisers and organisations, which are outlined below.

Figure 3.1: Benefits to organisations from participating in the Community Stories Programme



48 organisations reported that they had strengthened or developed new partnerships or collaborations



48 organisations reported they had expanded the reach of their activities or reached new audiences



43 organisations reported that involvement in the programme had raised their profile



27 organisations reported that they had produced something innovative or found a new way of delivering activity



46 organisations reported that the programme had opened up new opportunities or areas of work



9 organisations reported involvement benefited them financially, through ticket sales, donations or new funders

Source: Project Reports (Coded data)¹¹

¹¹ This data is based on an open text question about the benefits organisations had experienced as a result of participating in the programme, as such this represents only volunteered impacts, and not the proportion of grantees who reported each impact.

The reception to the Community Stories Programme among event organisers was very positive. Almost every organisation reported that they had accrued some benefit from their participation (176/179 respondents)¹². A large number of organisers (93/179) also reported that they were likely to participate in future Themed Years if the theme is relevant to their activity. It should be noted that the latter is likely to be an underestimate, due to an issue in the design of the reporting template, whereby not all respondents directly addressed the question about whether they would participate in future Themed Years.¹³

Several organisations provided examples of how involvement in the Community Stories Programme had helped to boost their activities, as exemplified below.

"The Year of Stories grant has been a real boost to the Museum of Abernethy. We have seen a real terms increase in visitor numbers, particularly over the weekends when the events have been on and have been able to tie that into a refreshed social media strategy to increase the Museum's reach. We do not charge an admission fee, but as a direct result of the increase in visitor numbers, of around 25%, we have also seen 57% real terms increase in donations over the summer season, which indicated that the visitors are from outwith the immediate area. Overall, Year of Stories 2022 has been a really good experience for us, so much so that we are now working on a programme of events for next year to build on the foundations built by our participation in the Year of Stories Programme, and we would certainly be interested in participating in any similar, relevant project in the future." (Museum of Abernethy, Project Report)

This suggests that the programme has been able to extend the reach of organisations and help them bring in new audiences. Several organisations and community groups also noted that the support had come at a pivotal time, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and provided an opportunity for them to elevate their activities after a challenging period.

¹² Note that the remaining three respondents did not provide a response to the relevant question in their project report.

¹³ The project reports asked organisations 'please tell us about any benefit your organisation gained from participating in the Themed Year in 2022 and if you are likely to want to take part in a future Themed Year if the theme is relevant to your activity'. The wording of the question resulted in a large number of respondents addressing the first part of the question, but not the second half. In the future it would be beneficial to include a closed question in project reports to gather more accurate data.

In addition to extending their reach among the wider public, organisations also reported that the activity had helped them to reach members of the communities they were already hooked into but who had not previously engaged with their work. This was a key theme, with 40 organisations reporting that through their Community Stories project they had been able to build relationships with the local community.

“Our main lesson would probably be that, in the beginning we knew there were stories among those we already engage with, but as time went on, we realised there were a lot more people who we hadn’t heard of before. We’ve heard some amazing stories. For example, there was one man who came in [and shared a story,] and no one in our team had engaged with him before – he donated a beautiful artefact to the exhibition. We realised the potential of casting our nets wider to reach the stories of those we haven’t met yet.” (Deaf Action, Case Study Interview)

This also shows how the focus on stories has had broad appeal that has potentially created a hook for individuals to engage with organisations for the first time. For some organisations the focus on stories also helped to springboard further activity, as their Community Stories project demonstrated that this was an effective hook for engaging audiences with their work.



Figure 9: Story Ceilidh (Credit: VisitScotland / Rob McDougall)

3.2 How the Community Stories Programme contributed to Scotland's Year of Stories as a whole

The Community Stories Programme was a key enabler for delivering against the wider strategy for the Themed Year. For example, it increased opportunities for participation and collaboration, and supported ambitions to share diverse voices.

The CSF Project Team also felt that the Community Stories Programme helped to amplify the Open Events Programme, as the critical mass of events helped to get people talking about the Year of Stories as a whole.

The Community Stories Programme also extended the reach of the Themed Year, offering activities in every local authority across Scotland. This had two benefits. Firstly, this had the potential to encourage tourist activity to a wide range of areas, but this also brought opportunity to Scotland's communities by providing opportunities to engage with the Themed Year on their doorstep. It is suggested that this will have enabled the Themed Year to reach audiences who may have been unable to travel to the Open Programme events, or who may have been drawn in by the opportunity to hear stories from their local community that may not have been of significant enough scale to secure funding from the Open Events Fund. This is, to some extent, supported by the evidence provided in project reports. For example, 161 organisations reported that their attendees were local, while 18 reported that attendees were visitors to the area. However, it should be noted that this evidence is limited as the reporting template did not include an option for organisations to report both. It was also not clear what – if any – monitoring organisations had in place to robustly monitor where their audiences had come from.

Any organisations who were surveying their audiences were asked to include some specific questions related to the Themed Year. This helps to evidence that the programme has boosted the Year of Stories as a whole. Thirty-nine organisations provided this data and their responses have been averaged below.¹⁴

For example, 48% of averaged respondents reported that they were aware 2022 was a Themed Year celebrating Scotland's Year of Stories, but 64% reported that they were aware the event they had attended was part of Scotland's Year of Stories. This suggests the events themselves have increased awareness of the Year of Stories. In addition to this, based on averaged responses, after attending an event as part of the Community Stories Programme:

- Eighty-one per cent of attendees reported that they are more aware of the wealth and diversity of stories written, inspired by and created in Scotland.

¹⁴ Readers should be cautious publishing these percentage figures, as these are based on organisations that reported the percentage response for their events, rather than raw numbers, which means weighting could not be applied equally to each response.

- Seventy-five per cent of attendees reported that they are more likely to visit locations or places connected with Scotland's stories; and
- Seventy-one per cent of attendees reported they are inspired to share their own story or stories of Scotland.

This further evidences that the Community Stories Programme has benefitted the Year of Stories as a whole.

VisitScotland also reported that the wide range of events and geographies included in the Community Stories Programme helped to secure additional regional press coverage which is likely to have amplified the media reach of the overall Year of Stories programme. The CSF Project Team also reported that they felt the cross-fertilisation provided from having a larger number of events to promote helped to further elevate the Year of Stories as a whole.

The Community Stories Programme was also valuable in enabling the Year of Stories to tell a much wider range of stories than would have been possible through the Open Events Programme on its own. Given the high profile of events funded through the Open Events Fund, without the Community Stories Programme, smaller organisations with more niche stories that may be highly valuable to communities but may not have the same audience reach, may have missed out on the opportunity to showcase these stories. The Community Stories Programme has instead enabled stories to be told all the way across Scotland.

4. Support from VisitScotland and Museums Galleries Scotland

This section explores the effectiveness of the wrap-around programme. It draws on feedback from surveys undertaken with grantees who attended webinars, interviews with a sample of grantees, and perspectives from management and delivery staff within VisitScotland and MGS (the CSF Project Team).

4.1 The wrap-around programme

The Community Stories Programme included a range of provision delivered by VisitScotland and MGS that aimed to provide support to funded organisations to help them make the most of the Themed Year opportunity. This support included:

- Introductory and marketing and event skills development webinars. These covered the following topics:
 - Two introductory webinars covering the support available
 - Reaching digitally excluded audiences
 - Diversifying audiences
 - Delivering events sustainably
 - How to deliver online events.
- Support from the Marketing and Communications Officer. This included one-to-one support for organisations, complemented by:
 - Access to a Marketing & PR Toolkit
 - An event listing on VisitScotland.com and potential for inclusion in the Year of Stories marketing campaign.
- Support from the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Officer. This included tailored support for projects, alongside relevant webinars:
 - An introduction to ICH
 - An overview of ICH and next steps.
- Film footage and photographs of 16 selected events, captured by an external filmmaker.

This section explores the impact of this support, and feedback on the support delivered, from the perspectives of both supported organisations and the CSF Project Team involved in the development and delivery of the wrap-around programme.

4.2 Engagement with the wrap-around programme

4.2.1 Webinars, formal training opportunities and resources

All webinars were delivered online and recorded so they could be accessed by individuals who could not attend the sessions live and could be rewatched by those who did attend. These were published online, alongside associated resource and top tips documents. This includes the [webinars relating to ICH](#), which have provided a lasting resource that will support individuals in understanding ICH and its importance.

A total of 294 live attendances were logged across the eight webinars included in the wrap-around programme. This includes 247 attendances at the marketing and event skills development and introductory webinars, and 47 attendances at the ICH training webinars. The number of attendees ranged from 10-66 per session.

In addition to live attendances, 335 video views were recorded, evidencing strong reach of the resources from the wrap-around programme.

The webinar provision was complemented by access to a range of resources, including a one-stop-shop Year of Stories 2022 advice section on the MGS website which provided advice and guidance for grantees. This included access to marketing guidance, the Marketing & PR Toolkit, information relating to ICH and the funded support, training webinars, and details of all supported projects. There was a high level of reach for these resources, with the YS2022 advice section receiving 4,025 unique visitors overall, and the Marketing & PR Toolkit receiving 828 unique visitors and the wider training pages receiving 477 unique visitors specifically. This suggests that a high number of grantees had sought out information to support them in the delivery of their project. Unfortunately, data was not available on the number of downloads of PDF resources, so it is not clear how many grantees made use of those materials.

4.2.2 Wider marketing support

All grantees were provided with the opportunity to receive wider marketing support, which included the option to have their events listed on the VisitScotland and The List's websites. In total 137 grantees engaged with this support, resulting in 219 individual event listings. In addition, a total of 91 funded organisations received individual promotion of their events as a part of the wider marketing and press campaign. Details of these events were featured in a mixture of paid newsletters, native articles, digital adverts, social media posts, radio adverts and/or press releases.

For context, the overall Year of Stories marketing campaign reached people 148 million times, whilst a media reach (across corporate and consumer titles) of 5.6 billion was achieved. As part of this, the marketing and press campaign that specifically supported the Community Stories Programme was substantial. The Community Stories press campaign alone achieved 159 items of coverage across print, online and broadcast media and reached people almost 4.3 million times. In addition to this, the marketing campaign, which included promotional videos, and activity across a range of channels and publications (including The

List, Daily Record, Bauer Radio, The Skinny, The Herald, The Scotsman amongst others), reached people over 2.3 million times in total. The aims of the campaign were to raise the profile of the Community Stories Programme and of participating organisations, drive ticket sales for specific events, and encourage people to attend events and visit new places post-COVID-19.

A professional filmmaker was also engaged to undertake filming and photography of 16 Community Stories Programme events across the country. These 16 organisations received photographs and a highlights reel of footage of their events which they can use for promotional and legacy purposes. The footage was also used to create four short videos which were shared via various online publications and on social media platforms with the intention of raising the profile of the overall Community Stories Programme and linking through to the listings on VisitScotland's website. These videos received almost 7,000 views. From available evidence it is not possible to extrapolate what impact these videos had on attendance for the Community Stories Programme or wider Year of Stories, but anecdotal feedback showed that grantees valued the opportunity to participate and to amplify their work. A longer legacy film has also been created showcasing some of the many highlights of the programme, as well as a separate film focused on ICH elements explored through some of the supported projects.

4.2.3 Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Community Stories Programme

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) refers to a 'living form of heritage which is continuously recreated, and which evolves as communities adapt their practices and traditions in response to their environment' (ICH Scotland). It includes aspects of heritage that cannot be touched, such as oral traditions and social practices.

A dedicated ICH Officer was included within the CSF Project Team, whose role was to support grantees to be able to identify, document and ultimately help safeguard ICH in Scotland. In tandem with MGS's Museum Development Manager (Collections & Interpretation), the ICH Officer delivered two workshops to assist grantees with their understanding of ICH, and to consider what practical steps they could take regarding the delivery and documenting of ICH activity. These workshops are described in the section above.

In addition to this, the ICH Officer met with 55 organisations whose projects contained strong elements of ICH to provide them with one-to-one advice. This represents 31% of grantees who were funded through the programme. Following on from this engagement, 48 organisations shared content from their projects to be included on the ICH Scotland website, helping to enrich this database of ICH practices and living cultural heritage in Scotland. They can be viewed on the [Storytelling section of the website](#).

Details of three Community Stories projects which featured ICH were shared with grantees, and the wider museums and galleries sector, for learning purposes. Case studies were published on MGS's website about **Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches'** project which engaged professional storytellers to bring to life traditional Scottish tales from their online audio

archive, and Gairloch Museum's **Festival of Stories** project which included the creation of a 'room for stories' - an inclusive and participatory space in the heart of the museum. In addition to this, MGS invited two grantees to talk about their Community Stories projects as part of an ICH knowledge exchange event held in March 2023. Dr Valentina Bold discussed **Up the Middle Road**, an exploration of creative responses to the history of mental health treatment at Crichton Hall in Dumfries, while Janos Lang spoke about Ando Glaso's **Tales of a Travelling Scotland** project which showcased new commissions of stories and live music from Scotland's indigenous GRT (Gypsy, Roma and Traveller) community.

4.3 Feedback from organisations who engaged with webinars delivered as part of the wrap-around programme

All attendees who participated in webinars were invited to complete a feedback form, except for those who just attended introductory sessions. In total 83 forms were returned across the programme, representing a response rate of around 44% (83/190). Consistent questions were used across each feedback form, and the findings have been synthesised below.

Participating organisations were positive about the support they received from the webinars. For example, 94% of respondents (78/83) rated the activity they had attended as 'good' or 'excellent', while just six per cent (5/83) rated the activity as fair. Additionally, 92% of attendees (76/83) agreed that the webinars met their expectations.

The wrap-around support has delivered clear benefits for individuals and their organisations. For example, 96% (80/83) reported that the webinar they attended enhanced their knowledge of the topic under exploration. Ninety-three per cent attendees (77/83) reported that they could see how they could apply their learning from the webinar within their current role, and 93% (76/82) reported that they could see how the learning could benefit their organisation or project.

Attendees were also positive about the delivery of the webinars. For example, 91% of attendees (75/82) reported that the delivery of the webinar, including the online platform used and the format of the training, was successful. Whilst a small number of attendees disagreed (7/82), where they did so, free text comments often indicated that this related to challenges with accessing breakout rooms, as opposed to the content of the sessions or style of delivery.

However, there were a few potential areas that could be built on in future years, if a similar wrap-around programme is delivered.

Attendees of several webinars reported it would have been beneficial to have more opportunities to network with other event organisers. For example, while 78% of attendees (63/81) reported that the webinar they attended enabled them to gain peer support or connect with other organisers, 22% of attendees (18/81) disagreed with this statement. Steps had been taken within the webinars to facilitate this activity. For example, break-out rooms were used in some sessions to enable discussions. However, in free-text responses several organisers reported that they would have liked more time dedicated to this activity.

It should be noted that the Year of Stories team also developed a closed group on LinkedIn to encourage networking between the grantees. This was joined by 51 organisers from the Community Stories Programme. However, the CSF Project Team reported that engagement with this platform had been limited. This may suggest that the appetite is for stronger face-to-face networking opportunities (even if these are delivered remotely). Alternatively, it may be that different platforms may be preferred to access these kinds of opportunities.

Across webinars, several attendees also reported that it would be beneficial to include more moderation and facilitation within breakout discussions. This could serve dual purposes, firstly helping to aid discussion and remove awkward silences where attendees needed help warming up – in comments it was clear that some attendees found this to be a general challenge with online webinars, rather than something specific to the Community Stories webinars. Other attendees also felt facilitation would be helpful to prevent discussions from being dominated by a small number of voices.

A small number of attendees reported that technical difficulties were experienced in relation to breakout rooms. In future, using an alternative hosting system may be beneficial to overcome these technical challenges.

Overall, feedback on the delivery of the webinars was positive.

4.4 Lessons learned in the delivery of the wrap-around programme

There were differing levels of engagement from funded organisations both with the more formalised aspects of the wrap-around programme (such as the webinars, toolkits etc.), as well as with the additional support such as event listings on the VisitScotland website. For example, the CSF Project Team reported some organisations opted not to provide information for event listings. This was an aspect of the programme that could help to amplify the events being delivered and could also benefit the wider programme by showcasing the breadth of events. However, the CSF Project Team found some organisations chose not to engage.

Anecdotal feedback suggested that this may be the result of a lack of capacity of some organisations to engage with the wider aspects of the programme, and in some cases, this appeared to result from a high level of confidence amongst organisers that they were already reaching the audience numbers they needed. Some members of the CSF Project Team reported that in future programmes it may be beneficial to remove the requirement for organisations to provide information for listings and make it optional instead, as it was felt that very small organisations, particularly in rural areas, may not always derive a benefit from this. In some cases this was because organisations were aiming to reach known and relatively small audiences. Additionally, in some cases the CSF Project Team reported that not all events were suitable for wider promotion, either because: information was not available with sufficient time for the CSF Project Team to promote their event; the event did not have an up-to-date website or online presence that could be signposted to in promotional activity; or because they were hosting events with capacity that was very small.

Feedback obtained as part of interviews with grantees showed that some organisations were not able to engage in the wrap-around provision due to internal capacity, and in some cases felt they just did not require any further support. This was also supported by analysis of project report data, as some organisations reported that they lacked internal capacity to fully engage with the wider marketing campaign.

“I think we were happy just being left to our own devices really. We didn’t require any guidance/support [...] We had a really clear idea of what we wanted the event to be, so being able to run it ourselves was great.” (Case Study Interviewee)

Organisations who had engaged with the marketing support were positive about this experience. Those who reported that they had received support from the Marketing and Communications Officer were positive about this support and were appreciative of how responsive MGS were. Additionally, in interviews several organisations reported that they felt the listing on VisitScotland's website and wider marketing support had increased the reach of their project both within the community and to potential funders.

“The marketing support gave us a bit more backing behind the things we were doing – being a part of this big event really helped with our standing. Definitely helped to raise the profile of our organisation being a part of this event. The social media support was also great with what to post and what to share.” (Case Study Interviewee)

In general organisations seemed positive about the approach VisitScotland and MGS had taken in relation to the wrap-around support. Organisations reported that they felt “well supported”, that they felt the overall support package was "good", but also appreciated that they were not pressured into engaging and could choose how they wanted to engage. This included both the formal training opportunities – such as the webinars – as well as the resources that had been made available to them, such as the Marketing and PR Toolkit. The support style was viewed as a particular strength that also differentiated the Community Stories Programme from other funded programmes, where organisations had sometimes found the approach of funders to be more rigid.

“I think they did a really good job of striking the right balance between giving grantees a level of trust but also being there to provide the support that’s needed. They were very responsive when we needed them to be and very good at providing a large amount of material that we were able to consult with independently.” (Case Study Interviewee)

Some organisations also had to navigate substantial obstacles in the delivery of their events and activities, particularly against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. Against this backdrop, organisations were positive about the support VisitScotland and MGS had provided, as articulated in the quote below.

“When Covid struck I let them know that we were having problems and may need to pull the event. They were very understanding and reassuring [...] They had the mindset of how we can make this work and support you.”
(Case Study Interviewee)

Organisers frequently named individuals within the CSF Project Team who they felt had provided particularly strong support and praised the pro-activity of those individuals, as well as the interactions they had with them.

In a small number of comments, organisations reported that they had found some aspects of the fund required a lot of resource, relative to the level of funding. This included references to the time required to apply for funding, time associated with delivery, and reporting requirements. This was encountered in interviews with organisations who applied for grants at the higher end of the available funding, and the lower end. While this was only identified in a small number of interviews with grantees, the CSF Project Team also reported that they had received feedback from some organisations that some of the requirements had felt disproportionate to the level of funding. It is possible that this may not have been identified more frequently in the evaluation work, as individuals who had experienced resource challenges may have been less likely to participate in feedback opportunities.

It is, therefore, suggested that in the future some of the requirements could be streamlined. This could include reducing the level of information projects are asked to supply in monitoring reports. Additionally, a small number of organisations reported that they had not been able to benefit from the wrap-around marketing campaign due to uncertainties within the timetable of their events which had meant they were unable to achieve the lead-in time required by VisitScotland.

VisitScotland and MGS also reported that some aspects of the wrap-around programme had been more challenging to deliver than anticipated. In particular the filming project had been more complex than anticipated, due in part to new processes VisitScotland was required to comply with in relation to data protection regarding capturing images featuring people. This raised practical challenges in the delivery of this aspect of the work that took time to address, however it was noted that this was not a reflection on the Community Stories Programme, but a challenge related to internal processes. The film project itself was felt to be valuable in providing tangible outputs that could showcase what the programme had delivered, and organisations who had been able to participate in this part of the programme were grateful for the experience and opportunity to amplify their project.

Overall, the wrap-around provision appears to have added strong value to the overall programme and has been well received by grantees. While not all organisations elected to engage with the provision, there were nevertheless good levels of engagement recorded. For example, the webinar provision saw 629 engagements (294 live attendances, and 355 video views), 76% of organisations listed their events on the VisitScotland website, and more than a quarter of organisers elected to share information about their events on the ICH Scotland website. This suggests that the overall provision has been attractive to organisations. Additionally, feedback supplied by organisations shows that the opportunities themselves have been regarded as high quality and have provided them with learning that can benefit both individual skillsets and organisations.

5. The Partnership Approach to Delivery

The programme was delivered in partnership by VisitScotland and MGS, with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Scottish Government. This section explores the partnership approach to delivering the Community Stories Fund, and the key successes, challenges and opportunities identified in relation to the approach.

5.1 Overview

VisitScotland and MGS have a track record of working together on other programmes and activities, including previous Themed Years. The Themed Year is typically led by VisitScotland, in partnership with organisations from the associated Steering Group and Working Group. However, partnering on the delivery of the Community Stories Programme was seen as a mutually beneficial arrangement that could bring together the strengths of the two organisations for the benefit of the programme. In particular, it was felt that MGS's experience delivering small grant programmes would be particularly valuable in the operationalisation of the fund.

5.2 Key successes of the partnership

The CSF Project Team was positive about the partnership between VisitScotland and MGS and saw substantial benefits from the two organisations coming together. Both organisations reported numerous ways they had benefited from coming together, both in their capacity to deliver such a large programme of funding at pace, and in wider ways the partnership had improved their work.

The involvement of MGS has been pivotal in providing the capacity and expertise required to support the delivery of the Community Stories Programme. MGS run a range of funding programmes, including those that provide both higher and lower levels of funding, and were therefore able to bring expertise from previous programmes to consider the process and design elements that would be beneficial. This included use of an online grants management system. This was a key enabler, particularly in the context of the speed at which the project needed to mobilise.

Staff members from both organisations involved in the partnership reported that working together through the Community Stories Programme had helped to build connections at “every level” of their organisation. Their teams were therefore better connected at both an operational and strategic level. This had given both partner organisations a greater appreciation of each other's organisations and priorities and had also provided opportunities to amplify other areas of their delivery beyond the Community Stories Programme. While the partnership had further cemented the relationship between the organisations, it had also helped to foster other partnerships. For example, MGS reported that they had been introduced to other organisations and community groups through their involvement in the Community Stories Programme, which may help to amplify other projects in the future. Beyond the CSF Project Team, it was also reported that involvement in the delivery of the

programme had also provided an opportunity to increase awareness of MGS's assets among the wider Year of Stories Steering Group.

The CSF Project Team also reported that involvement in the project has benefited them in adding to their learning around how to effectively deliver grants programmes, including how to target diverse groups and ensure community groups are aware of funding opportunities.

It was also felt that the programme has helped to place a renewed focus on ICH. This is evidenced in the good levels of engagement that the ICH Officer saw from grantees, but the CSF Project Team also reported that the ICH elements of the project had also helped them to engage partner organisations and appeared to be influencing a renewed focus on this area among stakeholders outside of the Community Stories Programme. This perspective was also echoed in interviews undertaken with partners from the Steering Group for the Themed Year. In particular it was reported that storytelling provided an accessible way to explore ICH, that enabled individuals to connect their activities with ICH – a term that was recognised to otherwise feel highly technical.

There was also positivity regarding the phased approach to the fund, which had two rounds. Whilst there were challenges regarding certainty over funding allocations (discussed below), the second round provided an opportunity to further the diversity of the stories and communities that were reached by the fund, as it provided opportunity for the CSF Project Team to identify where there were potential gaps in the projects that had come forward for Round 1 funding. This provided an opportunity to consider both projects within regions that had not yet been reached, or that were focused on specific communities who had not come through within the initial set of applications. This approach appears to have successfully supported the aim of the fund to reach across Scotland and share diverse voices.

There were, however, a small number of aspects of delivery that could benefit from refinement should the partnership approach continue in other programmes of a similar nature. These are discussed in the section below.

5.3 Challenges associated with the project

There were a small number of challenges reported associated with delivering the programme. These included:

- The relatively short timeframes involved in delivering funding to large numbers of grantees – this was heightened in Round 2 where additional funding provided by Scottish Government and NLHF for Round 2 resulted in a much greater number of applicants being funded than initially anticipated. The CFS Project Team was very positive about being able to fund more events and the provision of additional resource with this extra funding was critical. However, the timing placed pressure on MGS, who were responsible for managing the grant funding system and administering the fund. This created challenges both with regard to monitoring supported projects, as well as assessing applications. The latter required more

resource than initially anticipated, both due to the time needed to make decisions, and due to the increasing size of the fund.

- The resource associated with collating monitoring information for the programme and keeping information up to date across a diverse events portfolio and two delivery organisations. The grant management processes themselves were managed by MGS, however this required substantial systems work and resource to ensure that relevant information was viewable to the team in VisitScotland. In addition to this, there were a number of additional spreadsheets used to capture other information, that required regular updates.
- Members of the CSF Project Team reported that they had received anecdotal feedback from some organisations that suggested some of the forms were perhaps overly complex, and felt the requirements were at times disproportionate to the level of funding. It was felt this was something that could be refined if a similar community fund was delivered in the future.

In future programmes these challenges could be overcome by:

- Providing increased lead-in time to support mobilisation and agree partnership arrangements. While both organisations were positive about how the partners had worked together and felt the delivery of the fund was particularly strong, it would have been beneficial to have elongated timescales to support the development of ways of working and shared systems. This was not available within the context of the delivery period due to difficulty planning resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Streamlining processes, in particular the partnership may benefit from greater expectation setting around monitoring and evaluation requirements, including communicating "need to have" and "nice to have" requirements to better support teams to manage their capacity.
- The partners were very grateful to the Scottish Government and NLHF for responding to the demand with additional funds at the end of the financial year, coinciding with Round 2, enabling many more events to be supported. As noted above however, this also presented challenges. In future, the potential of year end funds could be taken into account in the timing of rounds. The potential of additional funds could also be discussed earlier, and the possibility of such funds could be built into process planning, such as allowing for deferral of decisions from earlier rounds.
- It should, however, be stressed that where improvements were identified, the delivery organisations remained enthusiastic and positive about the partnership, and both MGS and VisitScotland staff praised the whole staff team for the successful delivery of the programme. Both partners had valued the experience of working together, and staff from the CSF Project Team frequently reiterated how proud they were of what the partnership and programme had been able to achieve.

As outlined in the previous section, the Community Stories Programme was a key enabler for meeting some of the key objectives of the Year of Stories, and the CSF Project Team frequently emphasised how important this programme had been in involving diverse stories, reaching diverse audiences across Scotland, and promoting collaboration.

5.4 Opportunities

Both organisations were enthusiastic about collaborating on future initiatives and held the Community Stories Programme to be a key example of how the organisations could come together to deliver a programme that built on their relative areas of expertise.

The Community Stories Programme was regarded as a valuable experience, and both partner organisations felt it had demonstrated strong appetite for community funds to elevate future Themed Years delivery. Beyond Scotland's Year of Stories, the programme also demonstrates how a potential community events fund can work in Scotland and can bring considerable added value to the Themed Years approach.

6. Lessons Learned and Conclusions

The Community Stories Programme has been a highly valued programme, evidenced by the high volume of applicants across Scotland, and the positive feedback provided by grantees. At least 93 grantees reported that they would be likely to participate in future Themed Years, based on their experience of the Community Stories Programme. It should be stressed that this is likely an underestimate, as the question design within project reports meant that many grantees did not clearly answer this question¹⁵, however grantees were on the whole positive about the activity they had been able to deliver and the benefits they had derived from the programme.

This suggests there is a high level of interest for future community grants funds of this nature to support community groups and organisations to participate in future Themed Years. However, organisations did regularly mention that their participation would depend on the alignment of the future Themed Years with their delivery – the Year of Stories itself had been suitably broad that it has attracted a wide range of organisations and community groups, providing a wealth of opportunities for communities to share stories that matter to them.

The Community Stories Programme has made a substantial contribution to the Year of Stories as a whole. Through the Fund, more than 1,000 events/activities have been delivered, through 180 funded projects. This has provided over 900,000 audience/participant attendances, and over 5,000 artist opportunities. This demonstrates how a fund of this nature can help to further the reach of the Themed Year and extend the offer beyond the Open Events Programme.

A key success of the programme has been its diversity of stories, which has provided an opportunity to spotlight the stories of a wide range of communities all across Scotland. This has broadened the range of stories told through the overall Themed Year, and also widened understanding of what it means to live in Scotland today. This would not have been possible without the scale of investment that was put into the Community Stories Programme.

The overall delivery of the programme has been successful, and the partnership approach to delivery had brought clear value to both VisitScotland and MGS. The two organisations should be credited with their ability to quickly mobilise to meet the needs of administering a large fund, that grew over the course of the delivery period. However, if future opportunities arise it would be beneficial to have earlier clarity on the scale of funding available to reduce pressures associated with administering the programme.

The Community Stories Programme has also brought a wide range of benefits to community groups and organisations. There was evidence that the programme has supported

¹⁵ The project reports asked organisations 'please tell us about any benefit your organisation gained from participating in the Themed Year in 2022 and if you are likely to want to take part in a future Themed Year if the theme is relevant to your activity'. The wording of the question resulted in a large number of respondents addressing the first part of the question, but not the second half.

organisations to reach new audiences, attract new funding, and develop new partnerships. This appears to have been well supported by the wrap-around programme, with many interviewees reporting that they felt they had seen tangible impacts from this wider marketing support and had benefited from being part of a much larger programme.

The programme has also brought about benefits for Scotland's people and communities. For example, activities and events funded through the Community Stories Programme provided opportunities for people to come together, and for people to share their own experiences and showcase their talents.

The programme has also created numerous resources which will provide a lasting legacy for Scotland's Year of Stories. This includes the wide range of contributions to ICH, which have been recorded on ICH Scotland's website, enabling others to engage with the programme on a continual basis. In addition to this, multiple organisations created tangible resources to capture their stories. This included the creation of podcasts, books, zines, films, online exhibitions and other materials. These resources will allow the stories they shared within the Year of Stories to reach wider audiences.

Appendix 1: Methodology

This report has been developed from analysis of the following data sources:



Analysis of Project Report

All grantees were required to provide a project report, which provided a mixture of qualitative and quantitative information exploring the impact of their event, lessons learned, and challenges encountered delivering their project. The templates for these reports were developed by VisitScotland and MGS. Wavehill undertook an independent analysis of 179 reports. Just one report was not included in this analysis due to a delay in submission.



Case Study Interviews with selected grantees

A total of 15 case study interviews were undertaken with selected grantees. These interviews explored in detail the events that had been delivered, experiences around the wrap-around provision, and of the wider fund. Interviewees were selected to provide maximum variation in the kinds of stories included.



Group interviews with the Community Stories Fund Project Team, which included staff from VisitScotland and MGS

Group interviews were undertaken, separately, with staff from VisitScotland and MGS. These interviews explored the rationale for the partnership approach, and perceived benefits, challenges and opportunities associated with the approach.



Document review

This included analysis of documents shared with the evaluation team, including surveys undertaken with participants who took part in webinars, the master tracker, and various others.

Limitations and Challenges

When interpreting data reported from the Project Reports, readers should be aware that a substantial number of questions invited free-text responses. As a result, free-text data has been coded using a thematic coding framework. This means that where the prevalence of a particular issue is discussed this relates to how often this issue was discussed, not necessarily how widely that view was held, as the data does not enable us to draw such conclusions. There were also a number of data consistency issues that have resulted in the evaluation team having to exclude some information within analysis. This includes:

- Responses to questions around marketing and reach, as organisations responded to these questions in very inconsistent ways reducing opportunities for data synthesis. For example, some organisations reported reach, whilst others reported engagement, and many did not provide details of which they were referring to.
- Data organisations were asked to provide on the impact of their event on the Year of Stories (such as 'what percentage were aware 2022 is a Themed Year celebrating Scotland's Year of Stories' and 'After attending this event are you more likely to visit locations or places connected with Scotland's stories'). From responses it was clear that at least two organisations had misinterpreted these questions as questions for the project team rather than the audience. There were also inconsistencies in the data provided. Many organisations provided percentage figures (which was the expected convention), however some projects provided numbers without a percentage sign that fell below the number one. It is assumed that these responses were a translation issue as excel will often report % figures as 0-1 figures before they are translated. In future forms it would be useful to validate data cells to prevent such inconsistencies. The decision to ask grantees to provide information on the percentage of attendees who agreed with each statement, without providing the number of individuals who participated in the surveys, also meant that it was not possible for the evaluation team to synthesise the data provided related to these questions. This was a missed opportunity for understanding the wider impact of the Community Stories Programme.

Appendix 2: Funded Projects

The table below provides an overview of all of the projects delivered as part of the Community Stories Programme.

Event Name/Project Title	Organiser	Local Authority Delivery Area	Award Made
"After_ _ _ _ _" - An evening of new writing based on iconic storytelling	Framework Theatre Company Ltd	Online	£5,000
#StirlingStories	Stirling Smith Art Gallery & Museum Trust	Stirling	£2,273
"Celebrating our Can Do Stories" - A public display in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway College and The Bridge	Leonard Cheshire Disability	Dumfries and Galloway	£1,249
"The Journey: Personal testimonies of Africans living and working in Scotland"	Josephine Oboh-Macleod Charity (JOM Charity)	East Dunbartonshire	£5,000
A Celebration of the Tales and Legends of Houston Past, Present, Future	Houston and Killellan Kirk	Renfrewshire	£5,000
A happy Namaste (greetings to you).	Dance Ihayami	City of Edinburgh	£5,000
A Monstrous Regiment of Women	Garidge Theatre	Aberdeenshire	£4,600
A Poetry Feast of Mythical Beasts	Push the Boat Out Ltd	City of Edinburgh	£4,450
A Season of Stories	High Life Highland	Highland	£2,400
A Story to Tell	Gathering Ground Spaces CIC	Glasgow City	£4,978
A Yarn Worth Spinning	Live Borders	Scottish Borders	£4,650
Aberdeen's Voices: iconic stories through the generations	Aberdeen City Council	Aberdeen City	£2,400
Abriachan's Stories, Seanchaidh and some Stars	Abriachan Forest Trust	Highland	£4,950
Accessible Sensory Storytelling- East Dunbartonshire and North Ayrshire	Sense Scotland	Multiple Areas	£5,000
African Story Telling Events	African Women's Group Scotland	Multiple Areas	£4,540
Arctic Ventures- Forgotten stories of Scottish Whaling	Scottish Fisheries Museum Trust	Fife	£1,500
Arran Faerie Tales with Storyteller Marty Ross	Rotts of Arran Community Woodland	North Ayrshire	£4,726
Auld Toon Tales	The Iris Arts Ayr	South Ayrshire	£3,500
BE United presents	BE United	City of Edinburgh	£5,000

Bearsden and Milngavie Community Writing Festival	Bearsden Writers	East Dunbartonshire	£750
Beyond 2020: Community Reflections	East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure	East Renfrewshire	£5,000
Blairgowrie and Rattray Arts for Wellbeing month	It's BRAW (Blairgowrie and Rattray Arts for Wellbeing)	Perth and Kinross	£3,400
Blas Festival 2022	Fèisean nan Gàidheal	Highland	£5,000
Carmunnock Stories.	Carmunnock Village Gala Committee	Glasgow City	£2,009
Ceithir Ceàrnaidhean (Four Corners)	Comhairle nan Leabhraichean (The Gaelic Books Council)	Multiple Areas	£4,200
Celebrating Scottish Stories	Healthy n Happy	South Lanarkshire	£4,960
Celebrating Scottish Stories of Nature At Summer Solstice	Peebles CAN	Scottish Borders	£4,455
Celebrating the Year of Stories	West Kilbride Community Initiative Limited (Craft Town Scotland)	North Ayrshire	£2,400
Cliabh An t-Seanachais - The Creel of Stories	South West Mull and Iona Development	Argyll and Bute	£5,000
Come to Clackmannanshire to Look, Learn and Love	Alloa Hub Limited	Clackmannanshire	£5,000
Coming to Scotland: The stories of African and Caribbean pioneers	Jambo! Radio	Renfrewshire	£5,000
Compose The Environment	The Cumnock Tryst	East Ayrshire	£5,000
Crossing The Ken	Glenkens Community & Arts Trust	Dumfries and Galloway	£4,664
Dark Sky Storywalks	Tomintoul & Glenlivet Development Trust	Moray	£660
Doors Open Days: Spaces, Places and Stories	Scottish Civic Trust (Doors Open Days)	Multiple Areas	£5,000
Edinburgh Festival Carnival - 'Carnival Stories'.	Edinburgh International Jazz and Blues Festival Ltd	City of Edinburgh	£5,000
Emerging Artist Residency & Adult Drama Community Production	Capall Dorcha Theatre Company	North Ayrshire	£3,984
Epic Art Challenge - Once Upon a Time	Macrobert Arts Centre	Stirling	£2,578
Fables at the Stables	Cassiltoun Housing Association	Glasgow City	£4,700
Facing Our Past: The legacy of slavery at Pollok House	National Trust for Scotland	Glasgow City	£4,860

Family Encounters - New Stories Strand	Imagine	City of Edinburgh	£5,000
Family Storytelling – Scotland’s Identities Past and Present	University of Glasgow	Glasgow City	£5,000
First Stages Festival November 2022	Traverse Theatre (Scotland) Ltd	City of Edinburgh	£4,896
Fisherfolk Storytelling & Song	Seaboard Memorial Hall Ltd	Highland	£4,000
Folk Tales of Lanarkshire	North Lanarkshire Council	North Lanarkshire	£5,000
Following the blairack, weaving beelines: Hugh Miller inspires new tales and nature connection in his hometown	Cromarty Courthouse Trust	Highland	£4,350
Forgotten Folk, Finding the Stories at Innerpefferay	Innerpefferay Mortification	Perth and Kinross	£4,968
Generation 2 Generation	MILAN (Senior Welfare Organisation) Ltd	City of Edinburgh	£4,974
Glasgow Mela Stories	Glasgow Life, Glasgow Museums	Glasgow City	£3,885
Glorious Govan Gala	Loop Theatre CIC	Glasgow City	£4,954
Gossip from the Graveyard II : Talking Heads	The Whithorn Trust	Dumfries and Galloway	£5,000
Govanhill Food Stories	Glasgow Artists' Moving Image Studio SCIO	Glasgow City	£5,000
Granny King's Summer of Scottish Stories interactive storytelling tour and videos engaging and connecting our local community.	Go Kids Performing Arts, Scotland	Multiple Areas	£3,000
Guardian of the Gateway: 800 years of the Beaully Wych Elm	Creative Inverness Limited (Circus Artspace)	Highland	£4,933
Guthan na Tìre – Festival of the Land	Ionad Thròndairnis	Highland	£4,740
Harbour Voices	Open Road Ltd	Aberdeen City	£2,839
Hearth in the Howe	Heids and Herts	Fife	£3,243
Heaven and Hell, stories of hope and despair in Kinross-shire	Kinross (Marshall) Museum Trust	Perth and Kinross	£930
Highlands, Lowlands, and Homelands: what Scotland means to me	Grassmarket Community Project	City of Edinburgh	£4,687
Home Fae Home	St Aloysius ESOL School	Glasgow City	£4,000
Howff Tales	Driftwood Cinema Ltd	Dumfries and Galloway	£5,000

If Our Trees Could Talk	Cove Park Ltd	Argyll and Bute	£4,500
If the islands could speak: Shetland's hidden stories	Shetland Amenity Trust	Shetland Islands	£3,080
Inspiring Me, Inspiring My Community	The Junction, Young People, Health and Wellbeing	City of Edinburgh	£4,984
John Byrne exhibition, A Big Adventure: storytelling weekend and supporting programme at Kelvingrove	Glasgow Life, Glasgow Museums	Glasgow City	£4,950
Johnner Jack's Smuggler's Coast Stories for Children and Adults	Benholm and Johnshaven Heritage Society	Aberdeenshire	£3,009
Kilmarnock's Killieween (St Marnock Square Launch)	Kilmarnock Town Centre Partnership	East Ayrshire	£5,000
Launch of the George Mackay Brown Trail in Stromness	Orkney Arts Society	Orkney Islands	£830
Legendary Braemar	St Margaret's Trust Braemar	Highland	£4,160
Leith Stories	Leith Civic Trust	City of Edinburgh	£5,000
Letters of Hope	TinCat CIC (Milk Cafe Glasgow)	Glasgow City	£3,316
Listening to Linlithgow - The People's Stories.	Linlithgow Heritage Trust	West Lothian	£4,557
Little Donegal- Stories of Glasgow's Irish	Govanhill Baths Community Trust	Glasgow City	£5,000
Lost Inverlael - Echoes of the Glen	Ullapool Museum Trust	Highland	£2,100
Made in Scotland	School of African Cultures (SOAC)	Renfrewshire	£4,980
Make Room for Stories	Gairloch and District Heritage Company Ltd	Highland	£4,050
Mary Hill - the family and the legacy	Maryhill Burgh Halls Trust	Glasgow City	£4,550
Memoirs of a Spacewoman : Celebrating the Life and Work of Naomi Mitchison	Clyde Fishermen's Trust	Argyll and Bute	£5,000
Mining seams and drawing wells: a living archive for Easterhouse	Glasgow East Arts Company	Glasgow City	£5,000
Museum of Missing Myths	RIG Arts Ltd	Inverclyde	£4,750
My Friend, Selkie	What Moves You CIC	Multiple Areas	£5,000
Object of my desire	West Lothian Council	West Lothian	£3,400
Object Stories	Cothrom Ltd (Restore)	Eilean Siar	£3,281

Objects Speak Louder Than Words	Greater Govanhill CIC	Glasgow City	£4,700
October Tales	Scottish Maritime Museum Trust	North Ayrshire	£5,000
OMOS Workshops and Storytelling Cabaret	Icky Arts CIC (Pollyanna)	City of Edinburgh	£4,498
One Life, Two Cultures	African and Caribbean Elders in Scotland (ACES) CIC	Multiple Areas	£3,800
Oor Stories - Tales frae Doon the Clyde	Inverclyde Council	Inverclyde	£3,150
Oor Toon	Penicuik Community Arts Association	Midlothian	£3,400
Open Book's Stories Across Scotland	Open Book	Multiple Areas	£4,950
Orkney, Scotland and Norway: Stories in music and verse	University of the Highlands and Islands	Orkney Islands	£935
Our City, Our Stories	ScrapAntics CIC	Dundee City	£4,941
Our Scotland: The Scot refugee stories	Turn Flicks	Glasgow City	£5,000
Our Stories: Traditional Gaelic Storytelling	Auchindrain Trust - Urras Achadh an Droighinn	Argyll and Bute	£3,570
Our Story: Closing the queer history gap in the Highlands	Eden Court Highlands	Highland	£5,000
Our Woodland Stories - Evanton Community Wood	Evanton Wood Community Company	Highland	£3,600
Park Life	Project 31 SCIO	South Lanarkshire	£4,600
Pavementology - the story of Street Events at the Fringe.	Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society	City of Edinburgh	£5,000
Perchance to Dream	Cutting Edge Theatre	Fife	£3,000
Picturing Leith	LeithLate	City of Edinburgh	£5,000
Preserving and Celebrating Edinburgh's Deaf Heritage	Deaf Action	City of Edinburgh	£5,000
Prestongrange Inspires	East Lothian Council	East Lothian	£975
Queer Stories: Small Town Boys	Shaper Caper Limited	Multiple Areas	£5,000
Reels and Recollections	Clan Macpherson Museum Trust	Highland	£4,481
Rekindling the ceilidh: storytelling through the Scottish seasons	The Three Hares Woodland CIC	Midlothian	£4,945
Ri tac an teine	Ness Historical Society - Comunn Eachdraidh Nis	Eilean Siar	£4,890
Sanday Stories - a celebration of Sanday's folklore and its folklorist, Walter Traill Dennison	Sanday Development Trust	Orkney Islands	£673
Scotland Re:Design Fashion Festival	Scotland Redesign CIC	Dundee City	£5,000

Scotland's Year of Stories Short Film Award and Tour	Glasgow Short Film Festival	Multiple Areas	£5,000
Scottish Black Lives in Story and Song	Yard Heads International Ltd	City of Edinburgh	£2,265
Second Fiddle No More: the stories of Scotland's forgotten musical women	University of Edinburgh	City of Edinburgh	£2,000
Seen & Heard: Stories of Scottish sport to inspire and include	LEAP Sports Scotland	Perth and Kinross	£5,000
Sgeulaichean Siarach	Urras Coimhearsnachd Bhràdhagair agus Àrnoil	Eilean Siar	£1,755
Sharing Stories: Treasuring our Past, Inspiring our Future	Highland Museum of Childhood Trust	Highland	£3,994
She Settles in the Shields - 10 years on	Glasgow Women's Library	Glasgow City	£4,730
Short Sharp Stories - from a whisper to a cacophony	Hospitalfield Trust	Angus	£5,000
Silent Cinema: Telling Old Stories, Singing Songs	Falkirk Community Trust	Falkirk	£5,000
Skylark Journeys	The Skylark IX Recovery Trust	West Dunbartonshire	£4,000
Solidarity for All	Africa Delice	Glasgow City	£3,400
Somewhere: For Us - Celebrating and championing LGBTQ+ people and stories	Somewhere EDI Community Interest Company	City of Edinburgh	£5,000
South Lanarkshire's Story Sessions	South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture Ltd.	South Lanarkshire	£705
St Duthac Book and Arts Festival	St Duthac Book and Arts Festival Group	Highland	£3,865
Standing Tall Stories	Standing Tall Arts	Glasgow City	£4,728
Stirling's Story of the Beatles - Music, People & Place	Creative Stirling	Stirling	£4,225
Stories from the Kist	Sabhal Mòr Ostaig	City of Edinburgh	£4,000
Stories from the Mining Villages'	University of Strathclyde	East Ayrshire	£1,604
Stories of Bridgend	Bridgend Farmhouse	City of Edinburgh	£4,995
Stories of Nairn' community flag making workshops and parade, Nairn Book and Arts Festival	Nairn Book and Arts Festival	Highland	£5,000
Stories of our People, Place and Planet	Concrete Garden	Glasgow City	£4,960
Stories of Queer Edinburgh	The Living Memory Association	City of Edinburgh	£4,415

Stories of the Bathgate Hills: A Celebration of the Voices of People and Place	Bathgate Hills Venture SCIO	West Lothian	£4,377
Story Ceilidh	Magic Torch Comics CIC	Renfrewshire	£4,800
Striking Herstories	Scottish Football Association Museum Trust	Glasgow City	£2,516
TakeAways: Reflections on the connections between local stories and global realities	Take One Action Film Festivals	Multiple Areas	£2,974
Tales and Legends from Tain	Tain and District Museum Trust	Highland	£2,079
Tales o' the Toon	St Andrews Preservation Trust	Fife	£3,003
Tales of a Travelling Scotland	Ando Glaso SCIO	Glasgow City	£4,100
Tales of Abernethy	Abernethy Museum Trust	Perth and Kinross	£1,410
Tales of Birnam and Dunkeld	Autumn Voices	Perth and Kinross	£4,725
Tall Tales and Short Stories from the NE of Scotland	Stonehaven Folk Festival SCIO	Aberdeenshire	£720
Tanuki Tales - exploring and sharing stories from near and far.	The Japanese Garden at Cowden castle SCIO	Clackmannanshire	£3,268
TEDxGlasgow	TedXGlasgow Ltd	Online	£5,000
The Apprentice's Tale	The Tall Ship Glenlee Trust	Glasgow City	£5,000
The Battle of Littleferry 1746	Golspie Heritage Society	Highland	£1,848
The Bearsden Shark - a celebration	The Bearsden Festival Association	East Dunbartonshire	£5,000
The Calder Witch Hunt	West Lothian Council	West Lothian	£4,855
The Dance and The Story: Mary Queen of Scots and Robert Burns	Nonsuch History and Dance	Dumfries and Galloway	£5,000
The Disappeared Village	Robert Gordon University	Moray	£4,247
The Elephant in the Close and Other Tall Tales	Lanark Community Development Trust	South Lanarkshire	£4,665
The Force K6 Story	Colourful Heritage Limited	Highland	£5,000
The Forfar Witches Story for a New Generation	ANGUSalive	Angus	£4,764
The Hero Of My Story	Community Integrated Care	Online	£5,000
The Key Above The Door - 100 years on.	Grantown Museum and Heritage Trust	Highland	£2,200

The Legend of Kinnoull Dragon	Adventure Circus SCIO	Perth and Kinross	£5,000
The Little Spinner at the Window and Gletna Kirk and The Wishing Well	Unst Heritage Trust	Shetland Islands	£3,084
The 'McLellan Drama' Production, and the 'Wee Mac Arran', nuts about books' Children's book Festival	Arran Theatre and Arts Trust	North Ayrshire	£5,000
The New Mythology: Alternative Stories from Scotland	Blunt Knife Co. Limited	City of Edinburgh	£4,865
The Phone Box – East Linton voices shared down the line	Catherine Wheels Theatre Company	East Lothian	£4,935
The Pink Triangle Podcast	Pink Saltire SCIO	Fife	£3,500
The Singing Land	Tarland Development Group (Tarland Food and Music Festival)	Aberdeenshire	£3,100
The Story of Dumbarton West	Clifftop Projects CiC	West Dunbartonshire	£5,000
Tir Ìseal nan Òran (Tìree: low land of song)	Friends of the Argyll Papers	Argyll and Bute	£5,000
Traditional Tales for Tiny People	Live Music Now Scotland	Multiple Areas	£4,650
Travel in Time - Revisiting places of the past - The Lochaber series	West Highland Museum Trust	Highland	£4,750
Under the Trees - Year of Stories Programme 2022 (Warrior Wallace Club and Mini Wallace Club)	Under the Trees	Clackmannanshire	£4,700
Unforgotten Highland Women	Museums and Heritage Highland	Multiple Areas	£5,000
Untold Orcadian Stories	Orkney News Ltd	Orkney Islands	£3,911
Up the Middle Road: Crichton Stories of Recovery and Resilience	The Crichton Trust	Dumfries and Galloway	£5,000
View Points: Sharing Stories through Art and Poetry	Art in Healthcare	Multiple Areas	£4,862
Voices from a New Town	Craigsfarm Community Development Project Ltd	West Lothian	£4,772
Voices of the Eigg Community Buy-Out	Comunn Eachdraidh Eige	Highland	£3,391
Wallace the Firedog Storytime Weekend & History of the Greenock Fire Brigade	Scottish Fire and Rescue Heritage Trust	Inverclyde	£3,415
We all have a story to tell	Deafblind Scotland	Multiple Areas	£4,814
Weaving tales - Lochaber stories quilt project	High Life Highland	Highland	£4,214

Weaving with words: the magic of Highland Storytelling at Hugh Miller's Birthplace Museum	National Trust for Scotland	Highland	£3,045
Whispered, written, hidden, shouted! YASS! & TYCI Summer of Stories	Helmsdale Heritage Society	Highland	£4,497
Whispers from the Woods & Wilds: Tales of the badger from across Scotland	Scottish Badgers SCIO	Multiple Areas	£5,000
Wild Seed	CCA: Centre for Contemporary Arts	Glasgow City	£3,383
Women's Treasures; stories of worth, belonging, and meaning from the women of Pollokshields	The Glendale Women's Cafe	Glasgow City	£4,000
Young Writers, Young Voices - a celebration of youth writing in Scotland	The Super Power Agency	City of Edinburgh	£5,000

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