

## **Chairperson's Annual Report (April 2022 – March 2023)**

**Glasgowbury**

**NIC104974**

**NI605616**

### **Introduction**

The Cornstore Creative Hub continues to be a thriving resource facilitating both in-house and outreach activity. We have had another busy year of music, drama, arts and multimedia providing affordable, accessible quality activities and events for our rural community to participate in or experience.

Glasgowbury is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors. The charity is regulated by the Articles of Association of Glasgowbury adopted January 2013.

The Charity's objects ("Objects") are:-

The advancement of arts and culture in disadvantaged rural communities in Northern Ireland providing opportunities for performance, education, lifelong learning, employment, business generation and active community engagement through healthy and inclusive creative activities for people of all ages and abilities and in particular:

- (i) To provide high quality venues, facilities, amenities and equipment for rehearsal, performance, business development and community benefit.
- (ii) To organise, promote and present festivals and other concerts, performances and events;
- (iii) To facilitate learning through creative arts and community arts programmes that deliver access-progression routes into the creative industries, the arts and digital communities;
- (iv) To organise and deliver participatory music, dance, multimedia and arts classes that are affordable and inclusive;
- (v) To create opportunities for educational work placements, volunteering, training and entrepreneurship;
- (vi) To provide workshops, discussions, seminars, lectures and other means of developing ideas and raising awareness of opportunities for participation in creative industries and cultural matters and issues.
- (vii) To involve the community with programme planning and be responsive to future needs.

### **Charity Directors March 2023**

Mr Emmet Heron  
Ms Patricia Bradley  
Dr William Burke  
Mr Stefan Taylor  
Ms Emily Toner

### **Community Participation and Highlights**

Glasgowbury's programme throughout 2022/23 included education and training, access to facilities, equipment, projects and events. The range of programmes continued to support community participation in the arts and provided access-progression routes for participants enabling them to further engage with the arts, benefit from personal and skills development, undertake entrepreneurial activity or enhance their employability and be entertained.

Overall, we had participation of 14,688 in 4846 activities and 14 inhouse events. In addition, we published 4 podcasts with a known digital audience and downloads totalling 10,729. Thousands more interacted with our community samba band and young music makers at significant outdoor events all over the North and Donegal. Glasgowbury participants and audience come from our local area and the wider Mid Ulster district.

The Youth Steering Group has been integral this year in the formation of 'Backbeat' youth music events, building young audiences for live music while offering a social outlet for local teenagers. The events showcased and gave performance experience to our Rural Key music makers, one of whom represented NI in the Irish Youth Music Awards in the RDS Dublin after successfully performing her way through the heats. In March the 'Backbeat' bands took part in the Mayor's Charity Busk for homelessness in Derry.

For over 18's we continued to provide audiences with quality events in our rural venue while supporting homegrown and touring musicians and comedians. Highlights were Beoga featuring local musician Liam Bradley and Three for the Road featuring local musician Gino Lupari.

A highlight in the Role With It camp was the commissioning of Glasgowbury's drama facilitator Buggy McMahon, by American TV channel EWTN, to script and produce a film exploring penal times in Ireland. *Faith of our Fathers* was filmed in Newry in summer of 2022, broadcast on Sky EWTN channel in July 2023, with one of our drama participants being successful in auditions for the leading child role. The drama facilitator also directs theatre productions and is a working actor himself. We are grateful to have him come to Draperstown to nurture the young talent. During the year, when home visiting, the class had an inspirational visit from successful local actress of stage and screen, Elinor Lawless.

Our intergenerational community Small But Massive Samba band met weekly for rehearsals and brought their energy to both community and larger scale events throughout the year. As well as performances for local charity STEPS 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, the samba band performed in Belfast, Derry, Newry and Donegal taking part in Pride, Feile, Culture Night and Halloween events.

We supported local artists through our recording studio and tour services enabling 7 artists to record new material and 13 bands/artists to travel safe in Ireland, UK and Europe.

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Media Services provided audio and visual equipment hire for schools and private business and the recording of a podcast research project for the Open University.

We continued this year with the production of more Voices from the Sperrin's and Small But Massive podcasts and have seen a great response and growing digital audience for the content. Thanks to all our great guests who represented the arts, media, sports and business and much more in the community. Film Club also continued and availed from workshops from BFI (British Film Industry through the Nerve Centre), and worked together on a short film for one of the members with the use of specialised equipment from Glasgowbury.

Over and above Glasgowbury programmes, local self employed creatives utilised the space to facilitate their classes. Pottery and Sewing for adults and Over The Rainbow Arts/Crafts/Yoga for kids ran weekly providing access to participation in the arts. Fionn's Drums and Jazzlife Alliance held one off workshops in the premises. Mid Ulster Pride held social evenings for young people from the LBGTQ+ community and their parents.

This year Rural Key students come Rural Key tutors, Gemma, Ruairi, Eimear, Kate and Cora moved on in their studies and careers. We thank them all for their music over the years, their commitment to learning as young people, their commitment to passing on their skills and experience as tutors. We wish them all every success. Taking their places are their students, Bronagh, Emma, Emer and Anna who have reached an age and level of ability to teach graded and ungraded music tuition. They have been joined by Kelvin who's new to Glasgowbury.

Our Project Manager was nominated and received a Local Hero Award, an Association of Independent Music and BBC Radio 1 Introducing acknowledgement of committed, unwavering support for the local music community. 30 awards were given throughout the UK.

We were delighted to receive investment from Future Screens/Department For Communities for a 3 year full time Project Development Assistant post. Nathan has settled well into the post bringing his own blend of skills, experience and knowledge to the table.

In total we have provided ongoing work opportunities for 20 local freelancers in order to facilitate our programmes.

We continue to be involved with the Ballinascreen Community Forum and ACNI's Rural Deliberative Forum, keeping in communication with our communities.

## **Mission Statement Achievements**

*The programme of activity in the Cornstore Creative Hub has enabled us to continue to 'change lives, strengthen communities and nurture talent'. Through adhering to our mission statement we have been able to achieve the following outcomes:*

- participation in the arts both in house and outreach by providing affordable and subsidised access to a creative outlet and services in a rural area.
- through marketing and face to face promoted the benefits of the arts as an enjoyable experience that can create positive change, enrich lives and help people to reach their potential.

- provided opportunities for participants to develop existing skills and learn new skills by continuing and developing existing and new programmes.
- provided performance opportunities for NI's home-grown talent and promotion for them and their music releases – albums, ep's and singles.
- developed new audiences for new music and artists through digital content and youth events.
- seen the progression of participants who take part in regular activity and can say that it helps overall in enhancing cognitive learning and impacts on ability to learn and memory.
- helped to develop confidence and self-esteem of participants through skills development, performances, individual and group work, evidenced through evaluation and feedback.
- taking part in activities has contributed to the improvement of physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of participants of all ages, evidenced through evaluation and feedback.
- our projects have provided more opportunity for active engagement leading to improved intercommunal and interpersonal interaction, improved relationships, promoting mutual understanding and positive peer relations.
- provided a better understanding of local heritage and culture through new digital mediums and community engagement.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank and acknowledge the following funding organisations who continued to support us during 2022/23 –

**Arts Council of Northern Ireland:** Annual Funding Programme and Rural Engagement Arts Programme.

**Mid Ulster District Council:** Strategic Arts Fund

Special thanks to **Department for Communities** who through Arts Council NI awarded funding that enabled an uplift to Annual Funding Programme. Also, through Future Screens NI enabling us to employ a new staff member on a 3 year contract. Both these were very gratefully received and have strengthened the organisation going into 2023/2024 year.

Also, thanks to the following organisations for their support -

The Honourable Irish Society, Brackagh Quarry Wind Farm, Community Western Shores Area Network and DAERA.

Glasgowbury are especially grateful for a donation of £5,000 from a business who would like to remain anonymous. The donor has fond memories of Glasgowbury over the years and has kept

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an eye on our development. This gentleman and his family have given us this much needed unrestricted, philanthropic investment.

I would like to acknowledge the continued In Kind support from Workspace Ltd for the use of the Cornstore, Heron Bros Ltd for support with maintenance and supplies, EDS for carrying out the annual electrical inspections and maintenance in kind and ASM for the professional advice, services and support.

## Finance report

Refer to Audited Accounts presented by Michael McAllister ASM.

In conclusion, yet again, through another difficult year, Glasgowbury have been on point. The team has continued to shine as a beacon of creativity, connection, and compassion within our community. Throughout 2022/23, from shows, podcasts, theatre, concerts, comedy nights, education, tuition, etc. we have witnessed the transformative power of the arts, drama, music, and wellbeing initiatives in enhancing the lives of our beneficiaries. Glasgowbury's commitment to fostering social interaction has never been more relevant, as it has provided solace, camaraderie, and a sense of belonging during challenging times.

The programs have reached new heights, expanding in scope and impact. The diverse array of events, workshops, and performances has not only enriched the lives of those directly involved but has also brought our rural community closer together. Additionally, the Glasgowbury team have embraced technology to reach wider audiences and adapt to changing circumstances. The success of their initiatives would not have been possible without the dedication and enthusiasm of our volunteers, partners, and donors. Your unwavering support has been a cornerstone of the Cornstore.

In 2022/23, Paddy and Stella have worked tirelessly to ensure Glasgowbury's future sustainability and growth. Their work has been to develop strategic partnerships with local organizations, government departments, trusts and businesses, to ensure the long-term viability of the many projects.

Whilst it is nice to celebrate the accomplishments, we acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. The world continues to grapple with uncertainty, but, like in the past, through Covid, recessions and lack of funding Paddy/Stella and the wonderful team of volunteers/tutors/staff are poised to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity. As Glasgowbury continue to fight the good fight, they have passed on the lessons to the staff and volunteers of the importance of values, determination, focus, planning and evaluation.

From the beginning, Glasgowbury's commitment to promoting the arts, drama, music, wellbeing, and social interaction remains unwavered, and in the coming years they are determined to make an even greater impact.... because they believe and care for the communities that avail of their services.

As we look forward, let us remember the sense of unity Paddy and Stella have fostered in our community. Together, they will continue to be a source of inspiration, resilience, and creativity, using the arts and social interaction as tools to build a brighter and more connected future.

Thank you to you both and your unbelievable team for your continued support, dedication, and passion for your mission. With help, I truly believe that this grassroots sustainable model will create a legacy of positive change that will resonate for generations to come.

Every rural town needs a Paddy and Stella's Glasgowbury.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linnet Heron". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'L'.

Chairperson

21<sup>st</sup> September 2023