

Glasgowbury

Cornstore Creative Hub 20a High Street Draperstown BT45 7AA • E: info@glasgowbury.com • T: 028 796 28428

Small But MASSIVE!

www.glasgowbury.com

Chairperson's Annual Report (April 2023 – March 2024)

Glasgowbury

NIC104974

NI605616

Introduction

Once again, we find ourselves at the close of another year, and Glasgowbury's journey continues to inspire and uplift. Throughout 2023/24, the organisation has remained steadfast in its commitment to using the arts, music, multimedia and community engagement as powerful tools for change, personal growth and healing. The challenges that always seem insurmountable have been met with the teams resilience, creativity and passion that has gone on to define Glasgowbury for over two decades.

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 2024

Mr Emmet Heron

Ms Patricia Bradley

Dr William Burke

Mr Stefan Taylor

Ms Emily Toner

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.
- developed new audiences.
- 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.
- contributed to the improvement of physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of participants of all ages, evidenced through evaluation and feedback.
- 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.
- provided ongoing work opportunities for 19 local creative industry freelancers.
- provided opportunities for volunteering, work placements and hot desking.
- provided access to space, equipment and resources to students enabling them to complete music and multimedia projects for school and university.
- supported artists from North and South of Ireland with touring logistics and affordable transport, recording studio facilities and rehearsal space.

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Reflecting on Achievements

This past year, Glasgowbury expanded its reach, continuing to offer a vibrant and diverse range of programs and events that have had a profound impact on both individuals and the wider community. From performance, art and youth workshops to music festival slots and mental health initiatives, the breadth of Glasgowbury's work has been nothing short of remarkable, continuing to draw in large audiences and community cohesion, reflecting the growing demand for inclusive and safe spaces for creative expression. Through these initiatives, Glasgowbury has touched the lives of thousands, providing opportunities for young people and adults alike to connect, create and build meaningful relationships.

In 2023/24 we had participation of 13,136 in 4842 music, multimedia and arts activities and inhouse events. In addition, we recorded 6 and published 2 Voices from the Sperrins podcasts and along with previous content accumulated a digital audience and downloads totaling 131,096. Thousands more enjoyed performances from our intergenerational community samba band and young music makers at significant outdoor events all over the North and Donegal. Over and above Glasgowbury programmes, local businesses utilised the space to facilitate their classes. Duile Pottery, Sew Happy, Fionn's Drums and Northwest Swing diversified the programmes on offer and catered mainly for adults. Mid Ulster Pride held activities for young people from the LGBTQ+ community.

We continue to be members of the Ballinascreen Community Forum and Mid Ulster Council's Strategic Arts Partners forum, keeping connected with our local and creative community organisations.

Highlights in the year include:

Partnering with the Nerve Centre Derry which provided our Rural Key young artists with performance opportunities at two events in Derry City and Stendhal Festival in Limavady.

Attending shows at the Grand Opera House and the Bardic Theatre as some of our Role With It drama students took to the stage.

Faith of Our Fathers, penned, on commission, by our drama facilitator and featuring himself and one of our drama students, became available on Amazon Prime after its initial release on Sky in 2022.

Leading the Belfast City St Patrick's parade our Small But Massive samba band featured on BBC, ITV, RTE and in all the major NI newspapers.

The exponential growth of the Voices from The Sperrins podcast audiences with listeners noted in 24 different countries and the positive impact the project is having in our local community. Interviewing former Director of Nations and Regions for the BBC, among many other professional and honorary roles, including teacher of our local High School in the 1980s, Mr. Pat Loughrey.

Hearing of the professional successes of Glasgowbury 'alumni' as they navigate their creative careers.

Starting the consultant led process of Strategic Development for the organisation with funds received from the Dormant Accounts fund.

Embracing Change

As the world continues to evolve, so too has Glasgowbury. In 2023/24, projects embracing new technologies and digital platforms, allow for an even wider reach and impact. Podcast training workshops with local groups, eg the Scouts, DC Diamonds and GAA Mothers and Others, live performances and digital content have brought the magic of Glasgowbury into the lives of many who otherwise may not have had these opportunities open to them.

Through strategic partnerships with local councils, government bodies and private donors, Paddy and Stella have ensured the sustainability and growth of Glasgowbury's offerings. Their dedication to fostering collaboration and securing funding has allowed the Cornstore to remain a beacon of hope and creativity for the many rural communities it serves.

Overcoming Challenges

However, it would be remiss not to acknowledge the financial pressures that continue to weigh heavily on the charity. Economic uncertainties and tightened budgets have made it difficult to secure consistent funding, but as always, Glasgowbury has faced these challenges with determination. The team's ability to adapt and innovate has been crucial in ensuring its continued success and while the road ahead may be difficult, the lessons learned over the past years provide a solid foundation for overcoming future obstacles.

The support of volunteers, staff and partners has been vital in this effort. Their tireless work has ensured that Glasgowbury continues to deliver its mission to "change lives, strengthen communities and nurture talent" despite the hurdles.

Looking Ahead

As we look forward to 2024/25, the focus remains on building for the future. Glasgowbury is more than just an arts charity, it is a movement that fosters resilience, creativity and community spirit. Paddy and Stella, along with their team, are committed to expanding their outreach, bringing even more diverse programming and support services to rural areas that need it most. Through an understanding of ESG programs, plans are already underway for new kind of collaboration that will aim to further integrate the arts with wellbeing, social cohesion and education, that will benefit the business community in Mid Ulster. These initiatives will help to provide safe, inclusive spaces for people of all ages and backgrounds to explore their creativity, build confidence and form lasting friendships.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank and acknowledge the following funding organisations whose support contributed to core and programming costs during 2023/24:

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Mid Ulster District Council

IMRO (Irish Music Rights Organisation)

National Lottery Heritage Fund

Dormant Accounts Fund

Department for Communities

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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 an eye on our development. This is the second year we have received this very generous donation.

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, and ASM for the professional advice, services and support.

Finance report

Refer to Audited Accounts presented by Michael McAllister ASM.

Conclusion

In conclusion, 2023/24 has been a year of growth, strength and profound impact for Glasgowbury. The dedication of Paddy, Stella and their incredible team is truly unparalleled. Their unwavering belief in the power of the arts to transform lives is evident in every aspect of their work and their influence on our community is immeasurable. As we move forward into another year, Glasgowbury remains a vital pillar of this rural community, providing hope, inspiration and a platform for creative expression. We are confident that with continued support, this grassroots model will continue to thrive, leaving a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Thank you to everyone involved for your hard work, passion and belief in the transformative power of the arts. Every rural town needs a Paddy and Stella's Glasgowbury.



Chairperson

26th September 2024