

Chairperson's Annual Report (April 2024 – March 2025)

Glasgowbury

NIC104974

NI605616

Executive Summary

In 2024/25, Glasgowbury continued to deliver on its mission to *change lives, strengthen communities and nurture talent* through arts, music, multimedia, and community engagement. Across the year, more than **13,000 participants** engaged in over **5,000 creative activities and events**, alongside podcasts, community films and live performances that reached audiences at home and abroad.

Highlights included the expansion of the *Voices from the Sperrins* podcast to listeners in 24 countries, cross-generational music and drama projects, international cultural exchanges, and the continued success of our samba band at regional festivals and on television. Partnerships with schools, councils, and cultural organisations broadened opportunities for artists and participants, while local businesses and community groups further enriched the Cornstore's creative programme.

Despite financial pressures, Glasgowbury adapted with resilience and innovation. Strategic development work, supported by key funders, has set the foundation for future sustainability. Looking ahead, we are committed to expanding events, aligning programmes with wellbeing and education goals, and maintaining our role as a grassroots cultural hub at the heart of rural Mid Ulster.

Introduction

As we reflect on the close of another year, Glasgowbury's journey continues to inspire and uplift. Throughout 2024/25, 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. Challenges that might have seemed insurmountable were met with the team's resilience, creativity and passion, qualities that have defined Glasgowbury for more than two decades.

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

Charity Objects

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

- (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.

(vii) To involve the community with programme planning and be responsive to future needs.

Charity Directors March 2025:

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 achieved the following outcomes:

- Participation in the arts both in-house and through outreach, providing affordable and subsidised access to creative outlets and services in a rural area.
- Promoted the benefits of the arts as an enjoyable experience that creates positive change, enriches lives and helps people reach their potential.
- Created opportunities for participants to develop existing skills and acquire new ones through ongoing and expanded programmes.
- Delivered performance opportunities for NI's home-grown talent and developed new audiences.
- Supported progression of regular participants, with evidence of improved cognitive learning, memory and educational outcomes.

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- Enhanced confidence and self-esteem through skills development, performances, individual and group work, evidenced by evaluation and feedback.
- Contributed to improved physical, mental and emotional wellbeing across all ages through creative participation.
- Fostered greater intercommunal and interpersonal engagement, building positive relationships and mutual understanding.
- Promoted awareness of local heritage and culture through digital mediums and community engagement.
- Provided ongoing work opportunities for 23 local creative industry freelancers.
- Offered volunteering, work placements and hot desking opportunities.
- Enabled students to complete school and university projects using our space, equipment and resources.
- Supported artists from North and South of Ireland with touring logistics, recording studio facilities and rehearsal space.

Reflecting on Achievements

In 2024/25, Glasgowbury expanded its reach, offering a vibrant and diverse programme of activity with profound impact on both individuals and the wider community. From performance, arts and youth workshops to festival slots and mental health initiatives, the breadth of our work drew large audiences and strengthened community cohesion, reflecting the demand for inclusive spaces for creative expression.

We recorded participation of 13,302 across 5,118 music, multimedia, drama and arts activities and in-house events. We also published 10 Voices from the Sperrins podcasts and 6 community videos, contributing to a digital audience totalling 1,619,622. Thousands more enjoyed performances from our intergenerational samba band and young music makers at major events across Northern Ireland and Donegal.

Beyond Glasgowbury programmes, local businesses also utilised the Cornstore to host classes such as Duile Pottery and Over The Rainbow yoga, catering for adults and young children. We continue to be active members of the Ballinascreen Community Forum and Mid Ulster Council's Strategic Arts Partners forum, keeping us connected with our creative community.

Highlights in the year include:

- Celebrating filmmaker Fr Michael Collins with a screening of his 1967 film 'Ballinascreen', followed by a special NI Screen interview.
- The continued growth of the Voices from The Sperrins podcast, with listeners across 24 countries and growing local impact.

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- Songs of Ballinascreen workshops with Glasgowbury's Rural Key and Ballinascreen Traditional Group participants, reviving old local songs and poems through performance.
- Celebrating the end of Heritage Lottery funded series of Voices from the Sperrins podcasts with a successful event for all involved in the Shepherd's Rest and presentation of bespoke ceramic tiles to all the guests.
- Capturing the story of the St. Columbcille Bell at the Ulster Museum with historian Pat Loughrey.
- Recording a podcast with local actor Elinor Lawless, known for her role as Dr Nash in BBC's Casualty.
- Supporting four local primary school students to record and publish a sports podcast.
- Celebrating 'Faith of Our Fathers', written by our drama facilitator, which won Best Feature Film at the 58th Gabriel Awards.
- Partnering with the Nerve Centre Derry to provide Rural Key artists with festival performance opportunities.
- Attending the launch of Maurice Bradley's album 'Oran na Heala', recorded in our studio, and remembering his legacy following his passing in May 2025.
- Continuing participation in the NI Music Prize nominator academy, celebrating outstanding home-grown talent.
- Welcoming musicians from Colombia for workshops and a sold-out performance. The workshops were featured on BBC Newsline.
- Our samba band leading regional events, appearing on television and attending masterclasses with Brazilian experts.
- Our piano tutor completing 'Sounds of Intent' training, enhancing our capacity to teach young people with disabilities.
- Progressing our Strategic Development process, including a Social Impact study, Income Diversification study and new Business Plan supported by the Dormant Accounts fund.

Embracing Change

As the world evolves, so too has Glasgowbury. In 2024/25, we embraced new technologies and digital platforms, expanding our reach and impact. Podcast training workshops with diverse groups, including traditional musicians, set dancers, and representatives of the LGBTQ+, farming and horse racing communities, along with live performances and digital content, brought the magic of Glasgowbury to new audiences. Strategic partnerships with councils, funders and donors have supported the sustainability and growth of our programmes, ensuring the Cornstore remains a beacon of creativity for rural communities.

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Overcoming Challenges

Financial pressures and uncertainty around funding continued to weigh on the charity. Yet Glasgowbury met these challenges with determination. The adaptability and innovation of our team ensured delivery of high-quality programmes, while the support of volunteers, staff and partners was vital to sustaining our mission to 'change lives, strengthen communities and nurture talent' despite external pressures.

Looking Ahead

Looking forward to 2025/26, Glasgowbury remains committed to building for the future. More than just an arts charity, Glasgowbury is a movement that fosters resilience, creativity and community spirit. Plans are underway to integrate the arts with wellbeing, social cohesion and education through ESG-aligned programmes. These initiatives will provide safe, inclusive spaces for people of all ages and backgrounds to explore creativity, build confidence and form lasting relationships.

Acknowledgements

We warmly thank the following funding organisations whose support contributed to our core and programming costs in 2024/25:

Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Mid Ulster District Council
IMRO (Irish Music Rights Organisation)
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Dormant Accounts Fund
Department for Communities
Brackagh Quarry Wind Farm
DAERA
Workspace Community Fund
The British Council

We are especially grateful for two generous donations of £5,000 each from businesses who wish to remain anonymous. One donor has supported Glasgowbury for several years, while the second, a retired businessman, directed his gift to support children with disabilities and young people's access to music. Their generosity has been deeply impactful.

We also acknowledge the continued in-kind support from Workspace Ltd for use of the Cornstore, Heron Bros Ltd for maintenance and supplies, and ASM for professional advice and services.

Finance Report

Refer to Audited Accounts presented by Michael McAllister ASM.

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Conclusion

In conclusion, 2024/25 has been a year of growth, resilience and impact for Glasgowbury. The dedication of Paddy, Stella and their incredible team is 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 into another year, Glasgowbury remains a vital pillar of this rural community, providing hope, inspiration and a platform for creative expression. With continued support, this grassroots model will thrive, leaving a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Thank you to everyone involved for your passion, hard work and belief in the transformative power of the arts. Every rural town deserves its own 'Small But Massive' Glasgowbury.



Chairperson

4th September 2025