

The Village Storytelling Centre



# Strategic Plan 2025-2028



The Village Storytelling Centre  
Charity number SC035527  
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Storytelling is a vital art form that preserves culture, engages our imagination, and fosters empathy. It connects generations, allowing us to share knowledge and values. Through engaging narratives, storytelling expands our understanding of diverse perspectives, promoting acceptance and compassion. It sparks creativity, inspiring us to challenge boundaries and envision new possibilities. By addressing complex themes and social issues, stories ignite meaningful conversations and inspire positive change. As a powerful tool for communication and connection, storytelling entertains, educates, and empowers, making it an essential and timeless art form that enriches our lives and strengthens our collective human experience.

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## Our Terminology

As a storytelling organisation we understand that words are important and expressive. We know that language evolves and can be either a barrier, or a bridge to foster understanding and connection. Defining the terms we use is central to meaningful collaboration and to our community-led practice, ensuring we are accessible and inclusive. We actively listen and adapt our language as communities and sectors evolve, or preferences change.

**Oral Storytelling** At The Village Storytelling Centre, we give Oral Storytelling a platform and place it at the centre of our work, believing that it is at the very bedrock of human communication and connection. Oral Storytelling relies on the spoken word – voice and gesture – and often refers to the sharing of traditional tales, myths and historical or personal stories. Whilst other organisations from a range of sectors may use storytelling as a tool to relay information and connect with their chosen audience, we believe in the performative elements of how to tell a good story. In this way, we utilise storytelling as an expressive artform.

**Applied Storytelling** Applied Storytelling is the purposeful application of story as a tool for community engagement, gathering, communicating and sharing information and practice, and for personal, community or organisational development. The ultimate goal is often to support and platform participants' expression and voice in ways which feel safe, authentic and appropriate for them. These processes have the potential to be of benefit to participants' well-being and self-esteem, as well as to support people with lived experience, particularly those who are often unheard, to inform organisational and/or strategic change. At the Village Storytelling Centre, we use Oral Storytelling throughout our applied practice.

**Storytellers** Across our work the storyteller is simply the person who shares stories. This includes the professional storytellers on our staff team, someone who is paid to perform, and it also includes the participants in our projects who will become storytellers at different moments as they express fictional and real life narratives.

**Community** We may refer to our local community, which is Pollok and the surrounding areas in Cardonald and Newlands Auldburn. We may also use the word community to describe some of the individuals and groups we work with who come together due to shared interest, characteristics or life experiences.

**Marginalised** We use this term to describe the communities and people who experience discrimination and exclusion socially, politically and economically, based on intersections of the protected characteristics including age, race, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, disability, and people with a care experience background. We acknowledge that structural inequality is systemic and historic, and upheld by institutions as well as individuals, consciously and unconsciously.

## Our Story

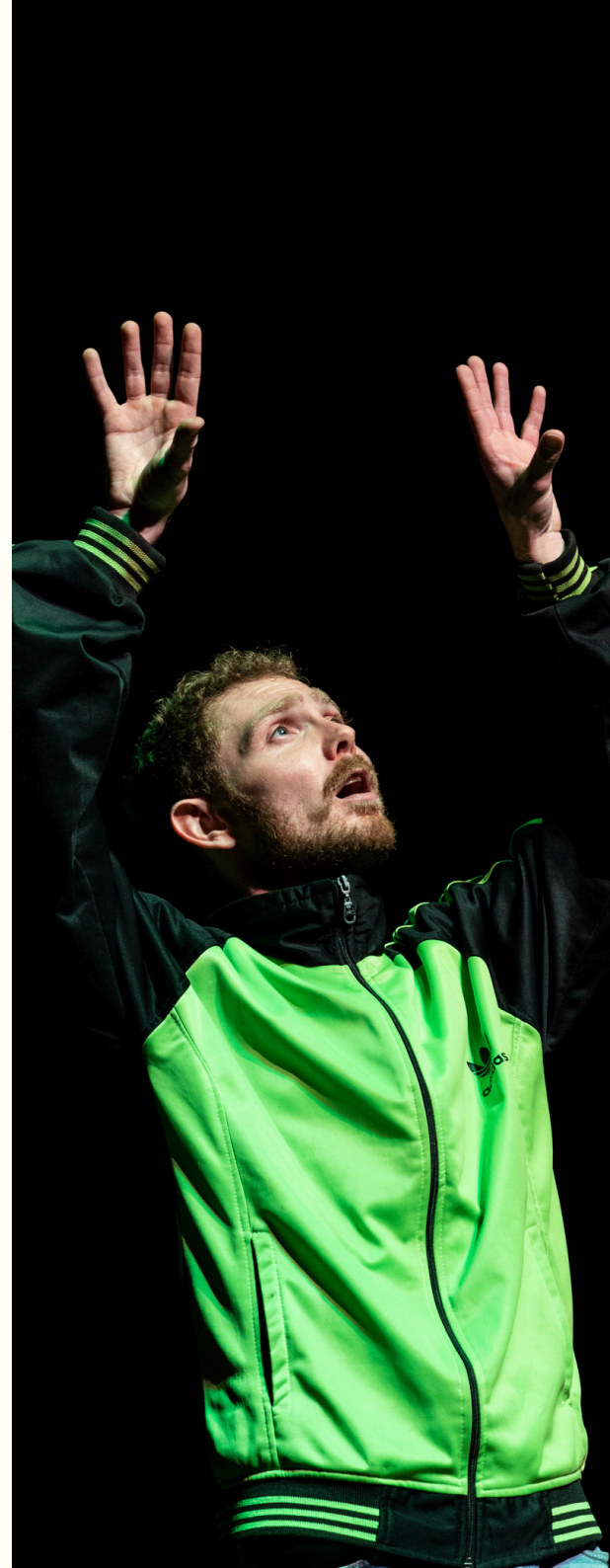
The Village Storytelling Centre is a centre for Contemporary Oral Storytelling and a European leader in Applied Storytelling. We improve lives and empower communities by bringing people together, inspiring them to find, shape and share their voices, realising their potential through the power of storytelling. We provide an opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds to develop their own creativity; to be confident in sharing their stories and the stories of their communities, ensuring their voices are at the heart of decision making, development and culture.

Established in Pollok, Glasgow, in 2000, we remain fully embedded in our local area, known for our range of quality programmes, events and meaningful collaboration with local people and partners. Alongside our place-based community work, we now deliver a range of high quality projects and performances across Glasgow, Scotland and beyond, including our innovative cross sectoral collaborations.

In 2024 we will host the fourth edition of the Village Storytelling Festival in Glasgow, providing an exciting platform to share the stories from the local communities we work with. The festival will have a rich and diverse programme of performance: acclaimed international storytellers premiering new work, award-winning homegrown talent, and exciting new emerging voices. Alongside our festival, we will co-host the Federation of European Storytelling's (FEST) annual conference with partners from across the UK, further enhancing Scotland's reputation as a dynamic creative hub.

As a recognition of the power of storytelling to connect, inspire, and create change increases, we now have an opportunity to foster deeper connections and amplify our influence. By harnessing the growing interest in storytelling we can engage new audiences and promote a wider appreciation for the art, in turn contributing to social, cultural and educational transformation, ultimately enriching lives and fostering a more empathetic world.

This document outlines our vision for the years 2025-2028 as we imagine our future.



## STRENGTHS

**PEOPLE** Our work is supported and delivered by a skilled, talented and passionate staff team, a diverse board of directors and a rich and exciting collection of associate and guest storytellers and artists. Because of this, we have strong and lasting relationships with communities, collaborators, audiences and supporters, which is a key element to our success.

**PLACE** We have a strong sense of place and continue to be embedded in our local community, as well as more widely in Glasgow. This is complemented by broader relationships to national and international organisations.

**ARTFORM** Consistent high standards in approaching our artform, developing new storytellers, delivering quality training, employing accredited storytellers and programming high quality events.

**GOVERNANCE** Strong governance and financial management, with robust systems, policies, procedures extending to integrated EDI, safeguarding, environmental and sustainability policy. All supported by a skilled board of directors.

**RESILIENCE** We have proven our ability to adapt and thrive under significant pressure, through Covid, the cost-of-living crisis, loss of Glasgow City Council funding (now reinstated). Throughout this we have built stronger relationships locally and internationally and further established the Village Storytelling Festival demonstrating our desire to create and develop in the face of adversity.

## DEVELOPMENT AREAS

**PERFORMANCE INCOME** As our staff team and broader associate artists continue to make work and develop their practice; alongside growth of a storytelling scene in Glasgow, public events and ticket sales can increase, raising profile and income.

**INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY** By hosting the FEST conference we are growing our networks and connections across Europe, consolidating our leadership in Applied Storytelling to an expanding audience.

**STAFF POLICY & SUPPORT** Our championing of flexible working and fair work practices provide an excellent jumping off point to explore progressive organisational attitudes and policies. We aim to be the standard bearers for organisational support and pastoral care.

**TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT** We continue to invest in training opportunities, placements and professional development. Our aim is to build a critical mass of practitioners who can produce high quality performance and Applied Storytelling experiences, thus future proofing the organisation.

## CHALLENGES

**STAFF CAPACITY** Due to the unique nature of our storytellers' skillset and relatively small team, capacity can be pushed to the limit and can threaten a drop in quality. A loss of any individual staff member could be detrimental due to small and highly skilled level of staff.

**SPACE** Our fragile tenancy and lack of autonomy within the venue can lead to a sense of uncertainty and hinder opportunities to create a sense of place within the building that is reflective of the work we do.

**OPERATIONS** A lack of capacity within the operations team leaves us several steps behind when promoting work, updating communication structures and project management software.

**FUNDRAISING** The complexity of the funding climate has made funds less available and more competitive. Unsuccessful funding applications and failure to secure arts specific funding means quality and values could suffer in pursuit of other project-based income.

## OPPORTUNITIES

**COMMUNITY** We have the potential to further develop the impact of our work through continuing to build on a wide range of partnerships, including our collaboration with Glasgow City Council and the Centre for Civic Innovation which opens up opportunities to support local decision making thus reaching new platforms. Commitment to our placebased approach is a counterpoint to our international connections.

**EVALUATION** Our unique and story led approach opens up an opportunity to develop interesting arts-based evaluation models. With further development we can provide support to other organisations to adapt and deliver these evaluation models thus raising our profile as a leader in story led evaluation. This would then increase potential revenue streams.

**APPLIED STORYTELLING STANDARD BEARERS** Our unique position as Applied Storytelling standard bearers has and continues to open up new partnerships across Europe and beyond, thus allowing for us to develop and share practice, increase capacity and pool of storytellers for potential employment, as well as plug in new and developing storytellers into wider networks.

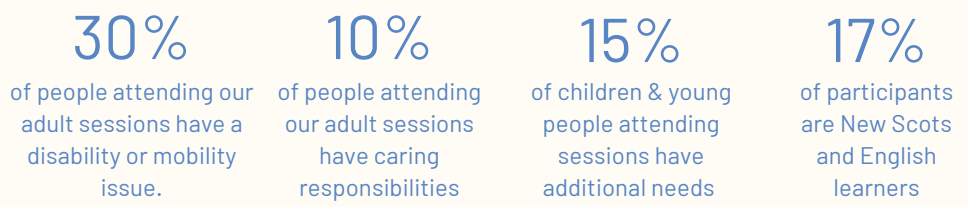
**ACCESS & INCLUSION** The recent development of new post of Accessibility Coordinator within the organisation presents an exciting opportunity to interrogate our Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion practices, to meaningfully support a wider range of storytellers, artists and audiences, and to share our learning journey, therefore supporting access across the sector.

# Our Context

**LOCAL COMMUNITY** Despite developments, Pollok continues to be defined by multiple deprivation, poverty and disadvantage. Our centre is within Scotland’s 20% most deprived areas (SIMD2020) and is surrounded by streets and communities in the 5% most deprived. Recent statistics (2020) show 20% of children in Greater Pollok live below the poverty line. Recovery from Covid19 and the current Cost of Living Crisis continue to exacerbate these issues with many local people feeling excluded and disenfranchised. However, it is also a community of activism, with a rich, exceptional history; beautiful greenspaces and assets, and people who care. Recent consultation led by the Centre for Civic Innovation along with our own formal and informal consultations tell us that placemaking, co-creation, neighbourhood-led decision-making and better utilised greenspaces are priorities for the people of Pollok.

**SOCIALLY ENGAGED PRACTICE: APPLIED STORYTELLING** Applied Storytelling is the ideal socially engaged arts practice as it encourages dialogue and promotes inclusion to address social, political or environmental issues and empower communities. It is a growing field within the storytelling sector in Europe. In Scotland, a drive towards involving communities in policy development, service design and strategic change has created interest in the power of stories, and the Applied Storytelling approach. As Scotland’s only organisation specialising in Applied Storytelling, we have delivered and supported a range of projects across the country, though capacity in our team is limited and we can’t take on every project we are invited to deliver. The breadth of our experience is not matched by any organisation in the UK or Europe and we regularly provide consultation, share practice or deliver projects with a broad spectrum of organisations and storytellers.

According to recent feedback within our local community, participants value having creative opportunities locally, as costs and transport issues make attending other activities prohibitive. We also know:



**CONTEMPORARY ORAL STORYTELLING IN SCOTLAND** The Scottish storytelling sector, has undergone a huge renaissance in the last 30 years yet is still largely dominated by the white, middle classes, centred around the East Central Belt. It is a sector which many move into later in life, from positions of relative privilege and therefore diverse voices are under-represented. Glasgow has a thriving, cutting edge arts and music scene. The people are known for their unique ‘patter’ and as Scotland’s most ethnically and culturally diverse city, elements of ‘traditional’ Scottish folklore do not represent the voices of the city. Glasgow’s increased ethnic diversity due to developing inward migration provides an opportunity to amplify and bolster the storytelling and oral traditions of New Scots, enriching the Scottish artistic cultural landscape. We are contacted regularly by aspiring or professional storytellers who want more training, opportunities to perform or to be part of a network essential for a career in the arts to flourish yet there simply aren’t enough opportunities particularly for those from marginalised communities in West Central Scotland. There is a distinct lack of events that champion Oral Storytelling and blend tradition with contemporary narratives. On top of this, the abundant Spoken Word community has waned since the Covid-19 pandemic, creating opportunity to develop platforms for vibrant, outspoken and Contemporary Storytelling.

## Our Context

**INTERNATIONAL WORK** The Village Storytelling Centre has been developing a strong international presence and reputation over the last 10 years from 2014. We have been invited to deliver training, presentations and keynote speeches about our work in Applied Storytelling at several international festivals and events. We have welcomed study groups from Belgium, Lithuania and the United States, as well as provided the role of critical friend to partners across the UK and as far as Armenia in recent years.

From 2020 to 2022, funded through Erasmus, we collaborated with partners from the Netherlands, Greece, Hungary and England to develop a toolkit of Applied Storytelling which was officially launched in Scotland at our Village Storytelling Festival 2022. Since this time it has been referenced to students at Glasgow School of Art and Glasgow University as best practice in community-led creative approaches.

In 2022, funded through the Creative Scotland administered Four Nations programme, we developed a partnership with Adverse Camber (England), Beyond the Border (Wales), Armstrong Storytelling Trust (Northern Ireland) and FEST (international network organisation Federation of European Storytelling). This partnership has led to the annual conference of FEST being held in Glasgow in 2024, co-hosted by all partners and delivered alongside the Village Storytelling Festival.

### All of this means:

- There is a continued need for our work in our local community of Pollok. To drive real change we must provide diverse opportunities for community engagement, leverage the relationships we have with people and partners, and amplify local voices to influence decision makers, with a wellbeing economy approach.
- We must build capacity within our team and operations to meet increasing demand from external sectors and to better evaluate and promote our work. We also have the opportunity to build capacity beyond our internal operations and share practice in Applied Storytelling methods with the wider storytelling and third/public sectors of Scotland, with a particular focus on Applied Storytelling's potential in supporting strategic change.
- There is a gap in Glasgow's artistic programme of events which can be met by a growing storytelling 'scene', but that it must be reflective of the diverse communities that form the city today and explore what it means to be contemporary through experimentation and innovation.
- We must provide pathways for storyteller development and multiple platforms for performance to ensure storytelling is a viable career choice; to future proof our organisation; and ensure the long term sustainability of storytelling as an artform.
- We have the opportunity to build on our reputation across Europe; build on existing and forge new collaborations; and to advocate for the role of storytelling in multiple sectors by sharing practice and promoting our work.



# Vision, Mission & Values

**OUR VALUES** shape our culture, reputation & relationships, reinforcing our purpose and providing a guiding compass for decision making and actions. They help to ensure consistency, authenticity, and integrity throughout our work.

**People are at the centre of everything we do** - The Village Storytelling Centre is shaped by the expertise, needs, and experiences of a range of individuals. We acknowledge and appreciate that people, including staff, associate storytellers and artists, volunteers, funders, partners, and of course the communities we work alongside, are the heart of our mission and activities. This statement reflects our dedication to fostering meaningful connections and nurturing relationships. It also demonstrates our commitment to placing our communities at the forefront of decision-making processes, ensuring their voices are heard, and valuing their contributions. It signifies a people-centric approach that strives for inclusivity, empathy, and a focus on creating positive outcomes for individuals and society.

**Everyone has stories to tell** - Whatever our cultural background, language, age or life experience, our lives are made up of a tapestry of stories. Each of us possesses a unique set of experiences, perspectives, and personal journeys that can be shared through storytelling. Often, the people we work with are bound by stories, have been impressed upon or feel that there is no value in their stories, experiences or ideas. At The Village Storytelling Centre, we acknowledge that everyone's life is filled with meaningful moments, challenges, triumphs, and lessons that are worth sharing and can resonate with others. This statement highlights the inherent value of personal narratives and recognises that storytelling is a universal human trait, allowing individuals to express their thoughts, emotions, and identities.

**Storytelling has the power to change lives** - Storytelling can inspire, educate, and empower, fostering personal and community growth and transformation. Through story, we can accept our own and other's experiences evoking empathy, promoting understanding across diverse perspectives, imagining new possibilities and driving change. Over the years, our work has supported many thousands of people to improve their lives, whether it is through feeling more connected to their community, reimagining their personal narratives or by feeling heard and their stories contributing to strategic change or policy development.

## Our Vision

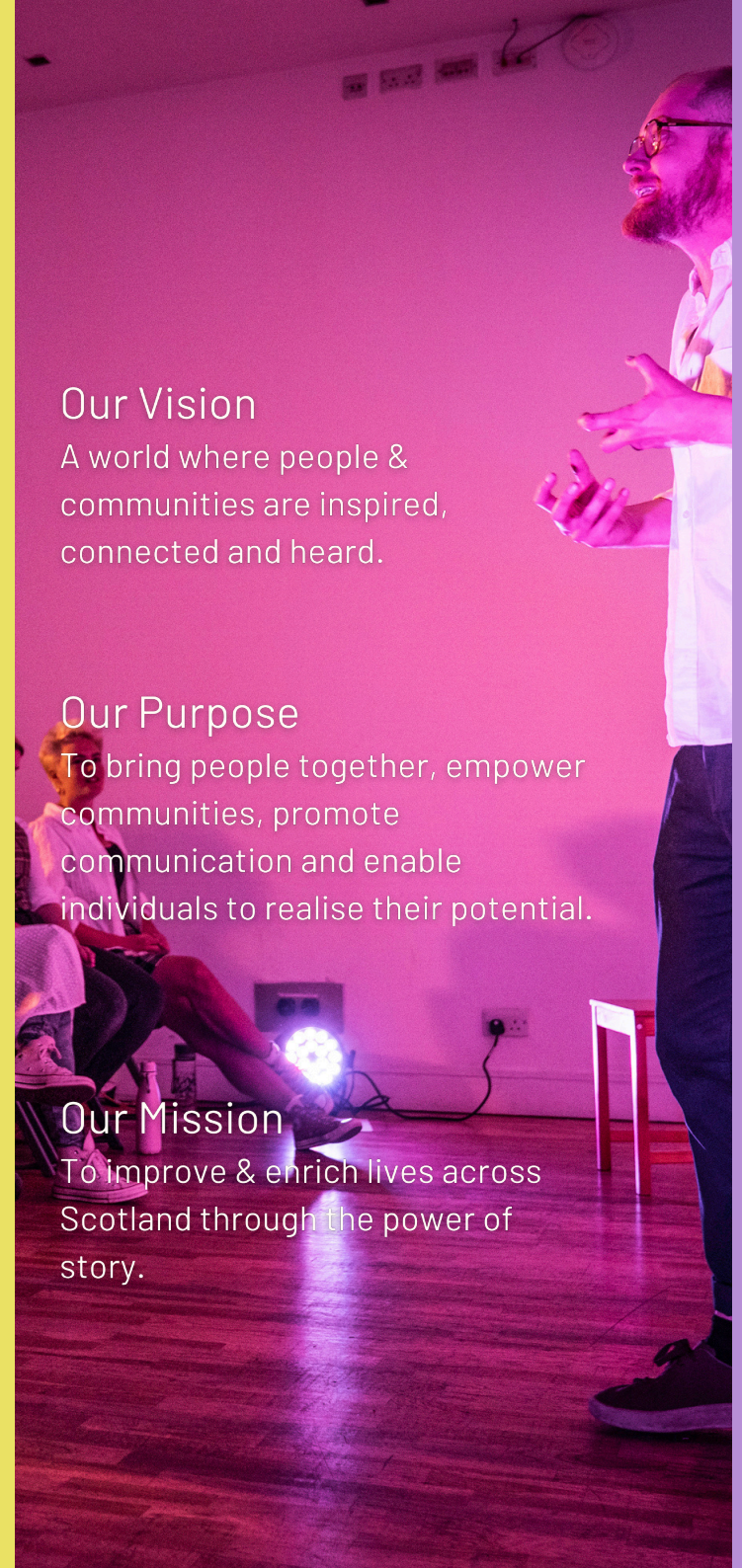
A world where people & communities are inspired, connected and heard.

## Our Purpose

To bring people together, empower communities, promote communication and enable individuals to realise their potential.

## Our Mission

To improve & enrich lives across Scotland through the power of story.



# Strategic Aims & Outcomes

## STRATEGIC AIMS

1. To increase access to storytelling and creative opportunities for communities
2. To provide platforms for people to share their voices
3. To promote the artform of Contemporary Oral Storytelling across Scotland & beyond

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

1. People will have improved mental health & wellbeing
2. People will feel better connected to each other and their communities
3. People will actively shape their communities and influence decision makers
4. The diversity of voices in Contemporary Oral Storytelling will be improved
5. Audiences for Contemporary Oral Storytelling will be increased and diversified

## Our Approach

### People-led

We believe that power, expertise and knowledge are innate and exist already in the communities we work with. Their autonomy, needs and voices are of central importance and will guide the focus and direction of our work. We will continue to reflect on and build our practice in this approach.

### Inclusive

We strive to be inclusive in every aspect of our work by fostering a safe space for all voices and experiences, considering and implementing accessibility measures when planning. We developed the new post of Accessibility Coordinator in 2024 and remain open to learn and improve by actively seeking feedback from the people we work with and by working with experts to create safer, more welcoming spaces for all.

### Ethical

We understand the issues of consent, ownership, power and authenticity that need to be considered when working with personal narratives and in sharing stories. We treat people's real-life stories and experience with care when story gathering, making, and sharing, and we are careful to promote cultural and social awareness in the stories and performances we platform. We will develop a Storytelling Code of Ethics to support planning, delivery and to share with collaborators, partners and the storytelling community. (for further information see Appendix 4, p.33)

### Collaborative

We champion collaboration in all forms. This includes collaborative working within our own staff team and reflexively within our wider team of associate artists; local, national and international professional and community partners. Collaborative practice is embedded across all of our programmes, with each and every community we work with, as we recognise that true knowledge and expertise is strengthened by collective lived and creative experience. We seek meaningful collaboration with a wider, more diverse group of artists, organisations and communities.



# Our Approach

## Wellness

We understand that many of the people we work with experience disproportionate levels of trauma and systemic oppression due to socio-economic factors. We acknowledge the challenging nature of our applied work and the varied life experiences of our staff. We aim to foster a culture which prioritises kindness, care and rest, for our staff and for the communities we work with. This includes having a Wellbeing Champion within the team, providing staff with two mental health days per annum and downtime for staff to recover, reflect and rejuvenate between busy periods. We embrace our people with empathy, offering caring support during their times of difficulty, rooted in love and compassion.

## Nurturing

We encourage our people, staff, associates and communities to enhance their creative skills and build their practice through experimentation and play, without fear of failure. We will build in time and provide platforms for staff and artists to share ideas; for creative exploration and development; and to nurture self-expression to benefit their own wellbeing and professional practice.

## Climate-focused

We acknowledge the climate emergency and recognise the power of storytelling to bridge understanding and imagine a positive future for the communities we work with. We will build themes of climate justice into our programming and we will work with strategic decision-makers to ensure the voices of the communities most impacted inform change that is equitable and sustainable.



## Our Creative Programmes

The Village Storytelling Centre will deliver an innovative, interconnected programme which centres the storytelling artforms of our diverse community, promotes health & wellbeing, provides local access to creative & cultural experiences, influences decision, policy-making & strategic social change, and develops the capacity of storytellers to advance their careers through four key strands of work: Community Stories, Collaborative Projects, Storytelling in Education and Artform Development.

Our programme will follow a praxis model. Theory – action – reflection, which will ensure that learning and feedback from each strand of activity can loop into and enhance the next, year on year. This means we expect to see a growth in impact, not necessarily in the size or scale of the programme, and drill down into each strand of activity to improve our depth of understanding around creative outcomes, programme management and continue to reflect on our work through a climate and equalities lens.

A detailed Creative Programme Delivery Plan can be seen in Appendix 4.



# Our Creative Programmes

## Citizen Storytellers

An intergenerational group of ambassadors for the local area who will explore and celebrate the past, present stories of the community and generate future stories

## Events

Community-curated events and professional performances showcasing local talent and stories, and widening access to quality performance

## Ongoing activities

A broad and consistent range of sessions for people in our local neighbourhood. Projects include: Imagine Lab for under 5's and their adults; Story Clubs, Story Makers and Young Storytellers for children and young people; Our Stories, Our Voices for adults, with tailored projects for specialist groups, such as New Scots

## Volunteering

Informal and formal volunteering opportunities for local people and those keen on building skills in storytelling or community development practice

## Performance

Oral Storytelling Performance to introduce storytelling and promote literacy. These are mostly commissioned events and often linked to wider themed events such as World Book Day, Book Week, Scottish International Storytelling Festival, or school specific events

## Residency Programmes

Timebound school-based storyteller/artist residencies focusing on wellbeing and literacy and, for teachers, embedding story-led approaches into their practice. These projects may be commissioned or funded through partnerships with individual schools

## Developing Young Storytellers (2027)

An in-depth, 20 week residency programme introducing primary and secondary school students to contemporary and traditional modes of storytelling, in partnership with TRACS (Traditional Arts & Culture Scotland)

**Strategic Collaboration**  
work with partners across the community to support community led decision making and development

**Participatory Projects**  
Time-bound projects that support groups from communities with shared lived experience to explore and reflect on their stories for personal development, advocacy and strategic change. These projects are partnership-led and often commissioned by third or public sector organisations, designed bespoke to their respective requirements

**Professional Development and Training**  
One-off or short training programmes or longer term collaborations developed to support community partner organisations to utilise storytelling approaches for community engagement, strategic change, advocacy and personal development

**Sharing Practice**  
Enhancing the European Storytelling Sector by sharing best practice in Applied Storytelling through training, contributing as 'experts' within larger collaborations (unavailable to us due to Brexit), presentations, and leading practice sharing sessions as part of our FEST (Federation of European Storytelling) membership

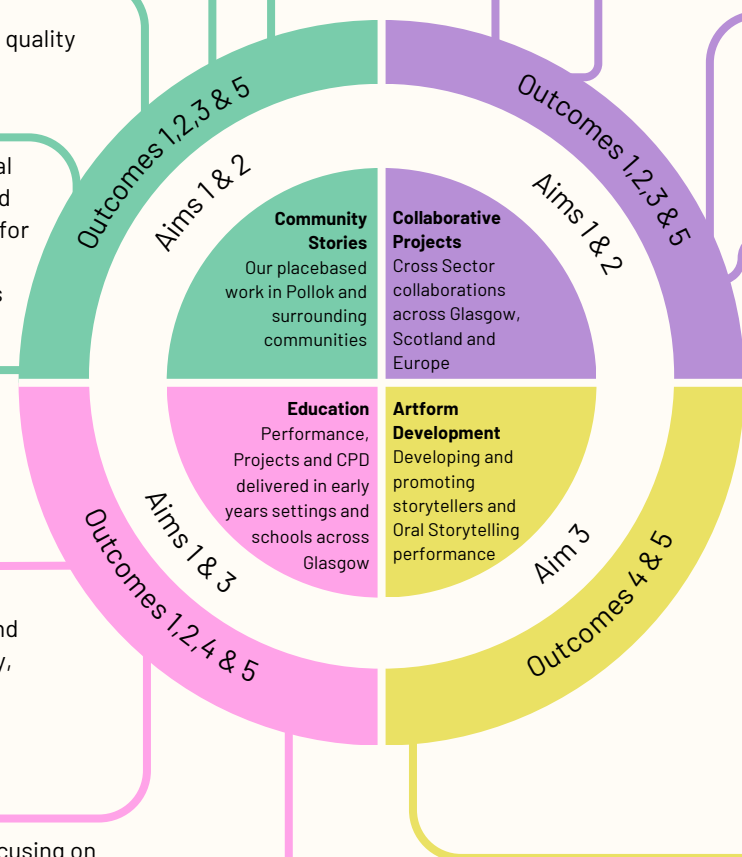
**Long-Term Collaboration**  
A long-term legacy programme supporting childhood survivors of abuse, with Simon Community Scotland

**Storyteller Development**  
Supporting and diversifying storytellers through:

- Emerging Voices In Storytelling: Mentoring placements for emerging storytellers from underrepresented backgrounds
- Sharing Practice Events: Informal skill sharing sessions for our network of storytellers
- Young Storyteller Exchange (2027): Bringing together Young Storytellers from Glasgow with Young Storytellers from Storytelling Centre, Amsterdam, to further develop their creative practice and build international friendships
- Apprenticeship: A fully paid apprenticeship opportunity within the core team for an emerging storyteller from an underrepresented background
- Training: Delivery of training in performance and Applied Storytelling methods delivered as part of TRACS CPD certified programme

**Developing & Promoting Storytelling Performance**  
Generating new work, increasing platforms and diversifying audience through:

- New Work: Developing new performance with a wraparound programme of support and mentoring for storytellers at any stage in their career
- Sangs an' Clatter: Regular storytelling events at venues across Glasgow
- Village Storytelling Festival (2026 and 2028): Our flagship biennial international event. An extraordinary programme of contemporary performances, workshops, discussions and family events
- International Co-production (2026): Further development of our partnership with Amsterdam Storytelling Centre through collaborative production of a performance combining storytelling with dance
- Commissioned Performance: Providing storytelling performance for a range of partners and events, including bespoke collaborations



# Research & Advocacy

## Strategic Partnerships

Members of the Village Storytelling Centre team have key roles on several Boards and partnerships which either centre the role of storytelling or position the work of the Village Storytelling Centre's within other sectors in the local community or nationally. This includes:

- Member of the Board of TRACS
- Member of the Scottish Storytelling Forum
- Member of the Governing Body of FEST (Federation of European Storytelling)
- Member of thematic groups within Pollok: 'Children & Young People', 'Community Wellbeing and Social Isolation', 'Environment and Safety', 'Food Insecurity & Poverty'
- Membership of UK Four Nations collaboration with representatives from Armstrong Storytelling Trust (Northern Ireland), Adverse Camber (England) and the storytelling community of Wales (represented by Tamar Eluned Williams)
- Ongoing partnership with the Centre for Civic Innovation (Glasgow City Council) to embed storytelling methods in service design and neighbourhood development.

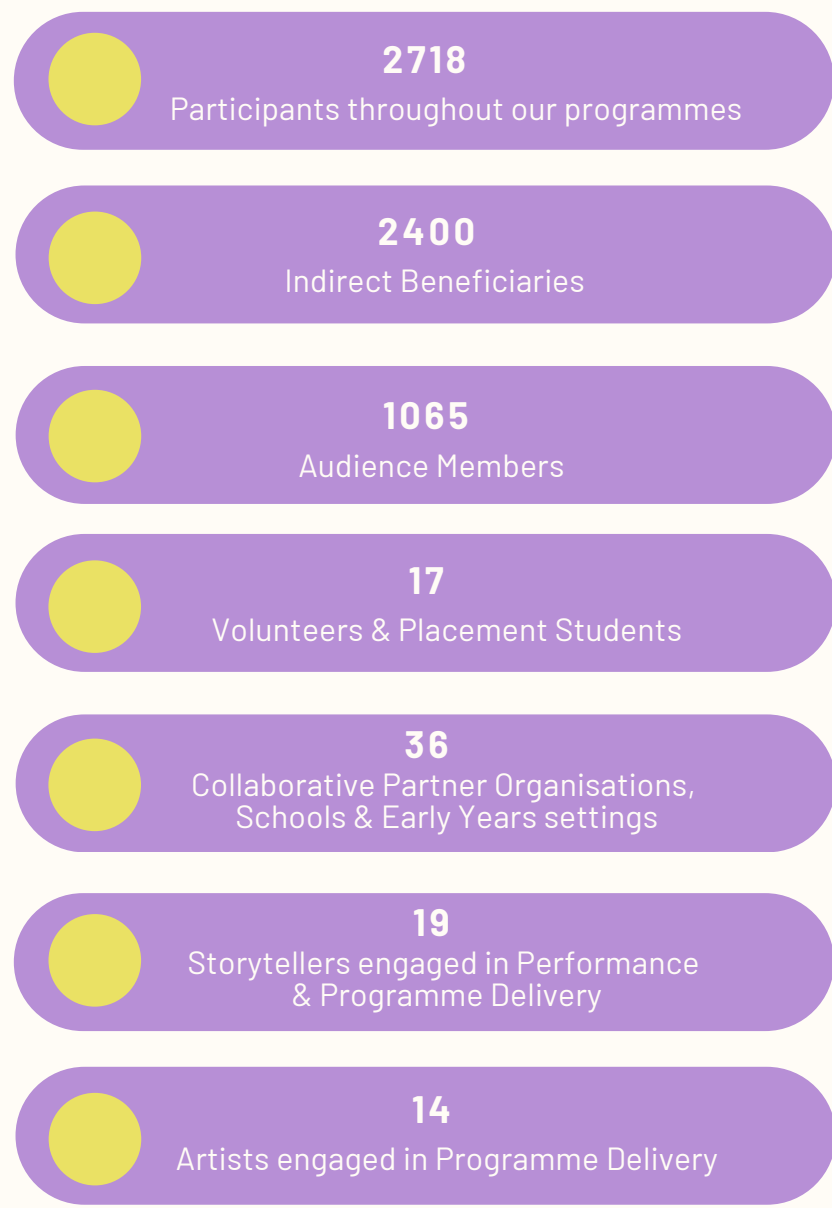


## Exploring and Celebrating a Contemporary Glasgow Identity Through Storytelling

Dr Stephe Harrop of Liverpool Hope University will continue her research on the key question 'what is contemporary storytelling in and for Glasgow?' begun in 2024. The aim of the research is ultimately to ensure our work centres and empowers urban communities, providing platforms for the development of a diverse sector in Glasgow and reaching new audiences. The final outputs will be launched at the end of 2025.

# Our Reach

The Village Storytelling Centre works with a broad range of people, communities and partners, across our programmes. In the year from April 2023 to March 2024 we worked with:







## Deepening Connection & Increasing Our Reach

### COMMUNITY STORIES

We are fully embedded in the local community where participants range in age from babies through to the oldest residents, and represent diversity in culture and experience. It is essential we continue to deepen the connections we have with individuals, families and partner organisations to ensure we achieve more impact and maximise opportunities for our participants and reach those not currently engaged who would benefit most.

#### Priorities:

- Use our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan and listen to our people to reduce barriers to engagement
- Continue to build on existing partnerships and forge new partnerships
- Launch the Pollok Arts & Creativity Strategy in partnership with local people and strategic partners
- Promote and deliver a wide range of events that create greater visibility in the community

### COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

In recent years we have been extremely fortunate to work with a range of excellent organisations and communities of shared experience. Projects have been developed through existing relationships, or we have been commissioned on the basis of our reputation. As we look to increase the capacity within our team and create pathways for storytellers to develop applied practice we have the opportunity to increase the number of projects we deliver.

#### Priorities:

- Develop and promote Applied Storytelling packages that can be adapted to the needs of individual client organisations
- Improve the evaluation of our collaborative projects to better capture transferable learning and share widely to scale up impact
- Develop a long term strategic approach with individual partners such as the Simon Community that is mutually beneficial to increase our impact and opportunities to share practice



## Deepening Connection & Increasing Our Reach

### EDUCATION

As we look to increase the capacity within our team and create pathways for storytellers to develop applied practice we have the opportunity to increase the number of schools we work with, thus widening access to storytelling for a wider range of children and young people.

#### Priorities

- Seek funding for an Education Programme Coordinator
- Develop and promote performance, project and training packages for early years settings and schools in the Greater Glasgow area
- Seek funding in partnership with TRACS to deliver a Young Storyteller programme from 2027 in schools where pupils lack pathways to careers within the arts

#### Indicators of Success

- Increased engagements across our programmes from a more diverse range of participants
- Increased numbers of storytellers within our Glasgow network, including a greater number from underrepresented communities
- Growth in numbers and diversity of audiences
- Increased commissions from wider range of partner organisations, schools and early years

### ARTFORM DEVELOPMENT

We have the skills, knowledge and responsibility to ensure sustainability and innovation within Contemporary Oral Storytelling in Scotland and beyond. This includes reaching new audiences and nurturing a diverse group of storytellers in Glasgow.

#### Priorities

- Explore new ways of presenting performance in non traditional performance spaces
- Increase the number of new work we deliver throughout the 2025-28 period
- Develop and implement an improved marketing strategy
- Engage a Marketing and Communications Officer

## Impact Measurement

Impact measurement enhances the experiences and long-term development for our participants, communities, partners and creative team. It supports our ongoing development and sustainability as a socially-engaged and artform-led organisation and is embedded throughout our work.

Following a period of prototyping from November 2023 to March 2025 we will embed a new evaluation approach across our programmes. This approach aims to formalise tried and tested story-led methods and incorporate them with new multi-sensory story and visual arts processes. This will capture & creatively evaluate experiences of participants/audiences in an ethical, considered & multi-dimensional way using quantitative, collaborative and observational methods and is itself a creative, artistic process.



## Our People

At The Village Storytelling Centre, people are at the centre of everything we do. Our talented community of individuals form the foundations of our organisation and we are committed to the fair work principals as set out in Appendix 8.



# Operational Development Plan

In order to deliver and maximise the impacts of our Creative Programme, it is vital that we have the appropriate infrastructure and resources. Our Operational Development Plan sets out the measures we will take to enhance our internal operations and improve the organisation's infrastructure to support delivery and sustainability.

A detailed Operational Development Plan can be seen in Appendix 5.



# Operational Development Plan

## People

Our core team, associates, freelance artists, network of storytellers, volunteers and board members are vital to our success and continued development. We aim to be an inclusive, nurturing and dynamic workplace and will prioritise:

- embedding the Fair Work principles of Respect; Opportunity; Effective Voice; Security; and Fulfilment in our policies, across our delivery programmes and in developing our workforce (see our Fair Work Commitment in Appendix 8)
- Increasing the Core Operational and Delivery staff teams
- Regularly reviewing staff policies
- Completing a comprehensive Salary Review & Benchmarking

## Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion

We firmly believe that participation in creative & cultural activity and having your voice heard are a fundamental human right. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion underpins everything we do and is critical to our work, and the future of the storytelling sector. We will prioritise:

- Embedding EDI into planning, delivery and development of all our work, with quarterly reviews of our Strategic EDI Framework and annual review of relevant policies. (see our Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, Appendix 6, and EDI Plan summary Appendix 7)
- Regular training for Staff, Associates, Board and Volunteers

## Succession Planning

It is vital for the sustainability and development of our organisation that we plan for the future and support our staff to their fullest potential. To do this we will prioritise:

- Leadership development within the current staff team
- Create vital pathways for storyteller development (see Artform Development Programme)

## Financial sustainability

We will focus on long term organisational sustainability through diversifying income generation. We will prioritise:

- Implement a fundraising strategy with ethical fundraising guidelines in line with our EDI responsibilities
- Diversify income streams through developing relationships with new funders, sponsorship, crowdfunding and other people-led activities, and legacy donations
- Develop scalable Project & Training packages to increase sales and commissions

## Marketing & Communications

Effective Marketing & Communications will support visibility to potential participants, storytellers, artists, audiences, funders, sponsors and donors. We will prioritise:

- Implementing a new Marketing & Communications Strategy
- Engaging a skilled Marketing & Communications Officer
- Updating our current website and online visibility

## Operating Systems

To maximise capacity across the organisation, to manage risk against loss of staff and to ensure the information we hold is up to date and easily accessible for those who need it, yet secure against misuse, we will develop more effective operating systems in our core operations. We will prioritise:

- Scaling up our cloud based system to a more efficient service
- Source an effective Project Management system for gathering, storing and sharing information

## Environmental Sustainability

We are committed to reducing the environmental impact of our activities and integrate sustainability into our core operations therefore we are developing processes and procedures to support this. We will prioritise:

- Recording and reducing our carbon footprint throughout our work from delivery to core operations
- Seeking opportunities to embed Climate Justice themes in our Community Stories programme
- Appointing a Climate Justice Champion from our team

## Space/ Venue

We are committed to our local community of Pollok. It is vital that we are based in a venue which serves as both an office space and has ample room for workshops and breakout spaces to ensure participants feel safe, welcome and feel a sense of ownership. We will prioritise:

- Completing a review of our current tenancy with support from Inspiring Scotland's pro bono Professional Volunteer Programme
- Reviewing alternative venue options within the local area
- Exploring the potential of a tenancy partnership with local partner organisation, Spider Arts.



# Governance & Management

## BOARD

We are governed by an increasingly diverse and skilled Board of Directors who are committed to upholding our values and supporting our future sustainability through effective governance and strategic development. A proportion of Board Members are local people which ensures we stay grounded in our responsibilities to our community. At the same time, we have increased representation of Board members from the arts and education sectors, as well as other professional practice which has enabled us to reflect on our work practices and seek challenging opportunities. We are committed to developing our Board and upholding best practice within Governance.

A detailed list of Board Members and Governance Structure can be seen in Appendix 10.

## MANAGEMENT




Our Management team consists of our Executive Director and Operations Manager. Both roles have evolved in recent years but retain the responsibility of overseeing and managing the core operations of the organisation. They work closely with both the staff teams and Board of Directors to ensure the organisation continues to thrive. The introduction of new staff will enhance the management's capacity to fulfil their responsibilities and further develop the Village Storytelling Centre.

## RISK

Having developed our organisation over many years, we have extensive experience in identifying potential risks and considering creative and safe ways to mitigate these. In order to identify risks, we use a combination of horizon-scanning, to ensure we are aware of current trends and challenges across the sector, as well as understanding and documenting risks within our organisation. A Risk Register is reviewed at quarterly Board meetings. This can be seen in Appendix 11.



### Governance Priorities:

- 
 In 2025 a subgroup will be established to focus on our venue as we seek to develop the venue we are currently in or source an alternative venue in the local area
- 
 We will explore an ongoing model of succession planning to inform recruitment
- 
 In 2026 will review our Memorandum and Articles (last reviewed with no change in 2022)










## Financial Information

The Village Storytelling Centre is a financially sustainable organisation with support from a range of sources and positive cashflow situation. We have proven ability to thrive during challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing Cost of Living crisis. Our financial plan outlines a framework for ensuring a sustainable financial position for the present and into the future. This can be seen in detail within our Operational Development Plan (Appendix 5) and Detailed Financial Plan (Appendix 3).






The period 2025-2028 will see a planned increase in charitable restricted funds. This is necessary to facilitate the growth of our organisation as we increase capacity to support core operations and delivery, and to meet the increase demand for our services. With the increased capacity we plan to grow income from a variety of funding streams including new sources such as legacy donations, as well as through increased partnership and sales.

Following this period of establishing new team members, systems and processes, we will build further sustainability by developing a robust plan to reduce income through grants and increasing income through the diverse streams explored during 2025-2028.

### Current Funders 2024-2025

-  Creative Scotland National Lottery Extended Fund
-  Inspiring Scotland Creative Communities Glasgow (UKSPF)
-  Young Start (National Lottery)
-  Cattanach
-  Glasgow Communities Fund
-  Glasgow Health & Social Care Partnership (through Impact Funding Partners)
-  Scottish Children's Lottery
-  Volant (Foundation Scotland)
-  Glasgow Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund (through GCVS)

### Key Future Funding Sources 2025-2028

-  Creative Scotland Multi Year Funding
-  Paul Hamlyn Foundation
-  We also anticipate continuation funding from current sources
-  Inspiring Scotland (in partnership with Simon Community Scotland)
-  National Lottery Heritage Lottery Fund

### From 2025-2028 we will:

- Increase our overall annual income to £590,700 by 2028
- Distribute 79% of our Expenditure on artist fees and arts worker salaries
- Increase cash donations by 212% by 2028
- Increase income from sales, partnerships and performance fees to £90,760
- Develop and Implement ethical fundraising guidelines in line with Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion responsibilities





[WWW.VILLAGESTORYTELLING.ORG.UK](http://WWW.VILLAGESTORYTELLING.ORG.UK)