



# grassmarket

*community project*

ANNUAL REPORT  
**2019**



## Letter from the Chair

It can be hard to keep pace with all the achievements of the Grassmarket Community. It will be ten years next year since we were founded as a stand-alone charity, but the work of developing the Grassmarket Community Project goes much further back. I often tell people it goes back to the Franciscan Friars who had their friary on our site in the middle ages and ran a medicinal herb garden in the Kirk Yard. The Franciscans, or Grey Friars took vows of poverty and aligned themselves with the poorest and most vulnerable. So this bias to the poor is written into the DNA of Greyfriars, and the Grassmarket Community Project is a 21st century manifestation of that commitment to walk with and learn from the most vulnerable.

There have been lots of milestones along that way since the 15th century when the Franciscans arrived in Edinburgh. Kirk Sessions, after the Reformation, were given the task of organising “poor relief” and it is within living memory that people still called social security payments, the “Parish” in Scotland. In the 19th century The Rev Thomas Guthrie, minister at Greyfriars, founded the Ragged School up by the Castle to provide an education (and a decent meal) to the street children that roamed around the Old Town. In the late 19th century, the Grassmarket Mission was founded, and in the 1980s two ladies from the Greyfriars congregation, the Reid sisters, established our drop-in meal service that still runs today.

So, now we are on the threshold of more innovations. We hope, in the course of next year, to complete the construction of an extension into the courtyard. This will provide much needed additional space for our members’ programme and for staff. We will also have a new café and the current foyer will, we trust, become less congested and a better space for our members to meet informally.

I’d like to pay a particular tribute to all those individuals and local businesses that have supported us over the last year. The opportunity for members and staff to go away on retreat to Birnam, thanks to the generosity of Mercat Tours is truly wonderful. Residential trips are so valuable, including our jaunts to the Camas Centre

on Mull, an idea initiated by Ali Newell the Associate Chaplain to the University of Edinburgh. A small team of staff and members also went to Zambia this year on a life changing expedition for all involved.

The Oliviero restaurant in the Grassmarket that so generously feed us at our strategy days have been consistently supportive and the Hub South East Team who have given so generously through their fundraising golf tournament are just some amongst many who support our work. We are so grateful to them and to so many others who believe in what we are trying to do.

To everyone who has supported our work in any way over the last year, I want to say a huge, thank you!

This has been yet another year of awards. The charitable sector is almost as crazy with that as the film and television industry! But each award is a recognition of hard work, passion, attention to detail and love. Well done to everyone!

So, it is 10 years since the Grassmarket Community Project was established as a charity. I have difficulty with that word. Charity suggests giving, a one way flow from those who have to those who don’t have. The Grassmarket Community Project wouldn’t be the organisation it is without the hard work, passion and commitment of our staff and our members and those numerous people who volunteer. We are constantly learning that people who have struggled for one reason or another are often filled with a deep wisdom, a desire to make a positive contribution and a passion to make the world a better place and help others. So, thank you to all the people of the Grassmarket for helping us to re-imagine a community in which no-one is written off, all have a place and all find that they have something to offer.

I came across this quote about the Galgael Trust in Glasgow recently. It is a wonderful tribute to a fantastic organisation that enables people in Govan to flourish and find their feet. This quote could equally apply to us at the Grassmarket. “To work together and demonstrate that more humanity is possible in the world. This is demanding graft, but for us, it is where hope is made possible”

**Richard Frazer, Chair**

Stakeholders comments . . .



**Building Better Futures Fund Supporting Young People**



**Kiltwaking Kevin the Fundraiser**

“GCP is such a precious place for me because of the people here. When I joined I was struck by the thoughtfulness and courage people showed. They are willing to share their lives despite the hardship they have experienced or are experiencing at the time. Throughout my time, nobody discriminated against me because of my age, racial background, religion, broken English or what I have achieved or what I have been doing. People of GCP don't care about all these things, they just accept me as their friend, and I am truly humbled and honoured to be a member of such a hard to find and precious community.” – **Member**

“The GCP is absolutely incredible. It has opened up so many new doors for me” – **Member**

“I was totally amazed by the group who attended the IT session. I was impressed by their IT skills but much much more so by their willingness and patience to help each other out. Its more like a supportive family than a class” – **Social work student**

“I can't thank you and the team enough for everything. It has been the greatest years of my life at the Grassmarket and I have had an amazing time! I am truly overwhelmed by how you take care of the staff and the equality between us which absolutely blows me away. I will always be left with a fantastic feeling that the Grassmarket Community is part of me and is my second family here in Scotland. Sometimes words cannot describe and express how you feel. A lot of good things I've seen during these years and I will never ever forget it.” – **Ex-member of staff who came to the project as an Asylum seeker emailing after he left to attend university**

“Feeling valued and appreciated always keeps me coming back. I love my GCP family!” – **Member**

“We just wanted to thank you for your superb professionalism and support with our event. The venue is lovely and accessible. You and your staff are hard-working and helpful. We really appreciate it.” – **Events Customer**

“I just wanted to thank everyone at Grassmarket Project for helping me with the arrangements for our Conference last week. We are so grateful to all the staff who worked so hard to provide the venue, the meals and the hospitality for the event. You are all wonderful!” – **Events Customer**

“I stopped by tonight and danced with you all on my last night in Scotland. Safe to say it was the highlight of my entire trip! I told the everyone at the hostel all about it. I'd love for more and more people to come and have the experience I did! Thanks again for an amazing night!” – **Ceilidh Dancer/Joint Residents Association-GCP Fundraising Ceilidh**

“Shows how a project can reach out and what 'love your neighbour' can look like” – **Member**

“Huge thanks to you for letting me join the wood work this morning. I really felt it was a privilege to be amongst you all and take my first baby steps into the amazing world of wood turning. I was especially grateful for Les' watchful eye and patient guidance. I can't believe we actually made something so beautiful!” – **Italian Social Entrepreneur visiting Scotland**

“The guitar class was very nurturing. I was blown away by the teacher's patience” – **Social work student**

“Great coffee and super cakes, basically all that you need to sustain life! Staff were helpful and friendly and this is firmly anchored in the community, so pop in and support a place that works hard and gives back” – **café Customer via TripAdvisor**



**Zambia trip**



## Angie - A Members story . . .

“Up until I was 9 years old I had a loving and caring childhood. My father, who was my closest friend then became ill and passed away. The very bottom fell out of my world. I then lost another family member, in fact I lost 5 family members over a span of 4 years. One of these was my brother-in-law whom became a father figure to me after the loss of my father.

I even created a close bond with my neighbour’s dog which I loved and he was run over. This all fed me the idea that things were against me. I

became very scared of losing people and therefore avoiding allowing people to become close to me or was unable to trust anyone. It may sound ridiculous but I’m scared of people getting hurt or dying because of an association with me. I became psychologically very withdrawn.

After I moved to Edinburgh I ended up being for homeless for a short period but managed to get a part time job mail sorting and pay a friend some rent and get a room. I slept rough for a few days. I was cold. I was scared but weirdly I began to understand why people who have been homeless for a long time struggle to move into a house or hostel. I couldn’t think about anything and weirdly you feel there’s nothing to worry about when you have nothing and are roughsleeping. It’s a sad logic and your logic becomes clouded by that experience because without a roof over your head, without your own security then it’s so hard to function.

**“The thing that helped me get back in is how I thought of GCP as a safety net”**

I had a job at RBS for 2¼ years and was made redundant. I knew I wasn’t going to be at the job forever so I took the redundancy. I took advantage of the re-employment terms some redundancy money and savings I had. I invested in a Training course – learning coding, which I had done but at a beginner’s level. I really

struggled. I am light sensitive so the lights bothered me. I tried other tactics such as wearing sunglasses and a visor but that distracted me. The company then put in a light dimmer so the

lights could be less bright but often people forgot and put the lights full beam. I totally lost confidence. I kept noticing that others were not struggling as much as me. I found out that most of them had previous experience. The course was condensed from 18 months in 16 weeks. The experience was a hellish experience – added to by the pressure of investing so much of my money and feeling I had wasted my time and money. I struggled with the intensity and level of work. Every day I went in feeling awful and going home tired and then having to do homework of which there was loads. I felt more and more exhausted. All hope and confidence was knocked out of me.

I started to go to serenity Café for around 7 months which supported people with different needs. I volunteered. I found this a genuine place where I could be comfortable and not be judged. Sadly that closed and I was bereft and alone again with nowhere to go.



**St James our Biggest Social Enterprise**



**Pilot of Edinburgh’s First Dry Bar Home Turf**

Then I was in the library one day when a lady mentioned the GCP, she originally mentioned the drop in meal on a Monday which appealed to me as I wasn't always feeding myself and looking after myself very well. I did a little bit of research of the GCP online and was satisfied that they were doing a good job so filled out an application and did my induction. I could see immediately that the people there were genuine but it still took me 4 or 5 weeks to build trust.

After a few weeks I realised that I had become part of a community. I realised that I had strengths others didn't and they had other strengths so we support each other. Some people physically not as well as me but they may have confidence or strength of mind which I really lack. We compliment each other. Originally it was frightening to come to activities because it was always such a busy place. I also recognised I have issues with male authority figures and it takes me a while to trust them – so I needed to overcome this.

I started volunteering in the kitchen for a few months and then had a dip in my mental health, which threw me out of the routine and I started coming in to GCP less and less. But the thing that helped me get back in is how I thought of GCP as a safety net with people that I had built a friendship with and could trust. I now occasionally meet up with people out with the project.

**“The GCP has a good heart. I go as far as to say it is a heavenly oasis.”**

In the past there were times when I was suicidal. I planned suicide on many occasions. The only thing that stopped me was my sister and my nieces. I was just hanging on for them. Now I think like, ‘why would I want to do that when I feel like I do when I am with people at GCP’. I now always have something to look forward to

every week because of the GCP which is really important.

I started taking meditation which has helped me feel more stabilised. I feel more positive because of the

community in the GCP. People have helped me and I have helped them. I feel I have greater self-esteem and self-worth than I ever felt working at RBS. The GCP has a good heart. I go as far as to say it is a heavenly oasis.

Now I have been able to access other support. I was referred to Loreto by my housing officer. They supported me in decision making which was very helpful. They linked me to different agencies. Loreto supported me in managing people in my own house. They helped me install new curtains to help with my light sensitivity. These little things have helped me get by day to day but thanks to GCP I am focusing on maintaining a quality of life week-to-week. That's about all I can manage but that's loads than before. I would like to improve my confidence and feel less nervous. If people enjoy my music that's brilliant. In time, who knows, I hope to be able to dream and set myself goals once more but for now its one week at a time.”







Partnership with Community Social Work Course

## In 2018 we . . .

- **successfully hosted 219 events & served food to 8,436 customers**, over 110k in our centre.
- **served 800 people in one evening a 5 course meal** at the World Social Enterprise Forum & **thousands of tea and coffees every day twice daily** at the Church of Scotland assembly.
- **supported 38 people in our Woodwork enterprise** (3 months +) & **29 at our weekly drop-in**.
- **enjoyed high profile furniture commissions** incl. St Giles Cathedral, Greyfriars Kirk and Edinburgh Castle where we built furniture for the oldest surviving building in Edinburgh.
- **supported 503 members across 1,152 activities** in our Engagement Activity Programme – a range of free weekly creative, practical, physical and educational activities.
- **expanded** our programme to include more **residential overnights (51 members took part across 23 overnights)** including a Christmas residential for 10 of our most vulnerable.
- **expanded** our group work to support **29 members in our 6 week group work programme**.
- **supported 169 Members to take part in 1,783 hours of accredited training**. Thanks to a grant from Scottish Government & EU GCP delivered SQA's in Catering & Hospitality, Literacy (communications) Food Safety (City & Guilds Levels 2/ 3) volunteering skills and woodwork.
- **served 6,742 free meals made largely by volunteers** to our members participating in activities and **1,879 free meals served to those attending our open door meal service targeted at people who are homeless, roughsleeping, vulnerably housed, destitute or have no recourse to public funds**.

## In 2019 we . . .

- we were awarded **Inspiring Partnership Award** by Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce for opening our 6th Social Enterprise – providing a staff canteen for up to 800 Laing O'Rourke contractors on the St James Centre building site
- won **Scottish Café of the Year 2019** (not-for-profit)
- won **UK Community Cinema of the Year** for our volunteer/member-led free film screening
- **Delivered 95 accredited courses to 806 attendees**; Awarded 10 SQA Certificates to 5 members in Furniture (Craft Skills) & 5 members in Reading/Writing (Communications)
- **Delivered a 6 x week Cooking Course to 34 members**
- **supported 9 members completing the West Highland Way** – a 96 mile long walk
- **completed year one of our Building Better Futures Fund Pre-apprenticeship scheme supporting 4 young people with 75% of them going into employment**
- **upcycled over £25k worth of Church pews and disregarded wood** including hundreds of large timber from below North Bridge courtesy of Balfour Beatty
- **now have 637 members on our GDPR compliant database** [462 receive email bulletins every week & 533 receive texts reaching out to many of the most isolated
- **provided a record breaking 278 activity places in one month to 182 individuals** (May 2019)
- **engaged 23% of our members in social enterprise activities**
- **funded 6 members to attend Counselling Programmes** of 12 weeks or more
- **supported 7 uni student placements/interns** as well as **4 Erasmus volunteer placements** from 4 different Countries & our staff/members taught 65 social work students Community Social Work
- **took referrals from 31 referral agencies** across Edinburgh, West Lothian and East Lothian
- **engaged 387 volunteers in the last 10 months** including: members, local volunteers, local school pupils, businesses, corporations, international students and university of Edinburgh students.



## Financial Information 2018

	2018	% of Total	2017	Difference	% Increase or decrease on 2017
<b>Income</b>					
<i>Enterprise (66%)</i>					
Catering Sales	£336,793	39%	£213,523	£123,270	+ 58%
Events Sales	£135,828	16%	£126,185	£9,643	+ 8%
Furniture Sales	£85,849	10%	£76,801	£9,048	+ 12%
Textile Sales	£4,648	1%	£5,296	£648	- 12%
Other income	£12,192	1%	£16,500	£4,308	- 26%
<i>Grants &amp; Donations (34%)</i>					
Grants	£217,792	25%	£139,402	£78,390	+ 56%
Donations	£70,089	8%	£92,538	£22,449	- 24%
Gift Aid	£3,351		£3,811	£460	- 12%
Investments	£513		£291	£222	+ 76%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£867,055</b>		<b>£674,347</b>	<b>£192,708</b>	<b>+ 29%</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Salaries	£479,550	56%	£410,401	£69,149	+ 17%
Consumables & Non Consumables	£141,062	16%	£123,690	£17,372	+ 14%
Project Delivery/Support Costs	£71,397	8%	£34,542	£36,855	+ 107%
Repairs, maintenance & Cleaning	£36,495	4%	328,008	£8,487	+ 30%
Rent & Rates	£23,495	3%	£19,146	£4,349	+ 23%
Depreciation	£19,426	2%	£13,370	£6,056	+ 45%
Heat & Light	£16,255	2%	£15,932	£323	+ 2%
Members, Staff & Volunteer training	£13,717	2%	£11,513	£2,204	+ 19%
Administrative Costs incl Stationary	£13,691	2%	£8,012	£5,679	+ 71%
Marketing	£12,025	1%	£4,870	£7,155	+ 147%
Small equipment	£7,174	1%	£7,054	£120	+ 2%
Legal, Audit & Accountancy fees	£5,448	1%	£5,029	£419	+ 8%
Travel & Expenses	£4,625	1%	£5,654	£1,029	- 18%
Irrecoverable VAT	£3,222		£3,829	£607	- 16%
Insurance	£2,653		£2,792	£139	- 5%
Telephone	£2,519		£2,467	£52	+ 2%
Transport	£2,412		£1,901	£511	+ 27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£855,166</b>		<b>£698,210</b>	<b>£156,956</b>	<b>+ 22%</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>£11,889</b>		<b>- £23,863</b>		



## Acknowledgements

Most importantly we would like to thank our members: without you there would be no community and no safe, supportive and nurturing environment to welcome people.

We would also like to thank our founders Grassmarket Mission and Greyfriars Kirk. You are the rock upon which we stand, our 'parents' and we hope you're proud of how far we have come.

A huge thank you to the hundreds of people who have volunteered with us over the last year. From teaching sewing, yoga or photography to grafting away in our busy kitchen or cafe every week, to a corporate volunteer days, to international school visits 60 pupils strong to being on our Board of Trustees and safeguarding our mission – you are critical to our success and survival.

Thank you to the many people who have made financial donations and to our customers. You provide us with the capacity to change people's lives by enabling us to journey alongside the most vulnerable and respond to their needs for as long as it takes. You enable us to wear our own vulnerabilities, seek support from everyone in our community and see lived experience as an asset and not a reason to be judged.

**Finally, thank you to our incredible, dedicated and professional staff team who frequently astound us with their commitment, flexibility and contribution to this project.**

## Thank you to our funders

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BAM Construction Ltd  
Binks Trust  
Church & Orchards Fund  
Clothworkers Foundation  
CMS Foundation Award  
Compulsion Gamers  
Co-op Charity Member Giving Scheme  
Cruach Trust  
Earth Matters/Grab a Grant  
Erasmus+ European Commission EU  
Film Hub Scotland  
Foundation Scotland  
Gloag Foundation  
Grassmarket Mission  
Greyfriars Kirk  
Henry Smith Charity  
High Constables of Edinburgh  
Hope Trust  
HUB Building Better Future Fund  
Hub South East  
Itison Us  
Kevin Robinson the Kiltwaker  
Lankelley Chase  
Mamas/O'Oliviero

Marshgate Charitable Settlement  
MBM Commercial  
Mercat Tours  
Mushroom Trust  
Nancie Massey Trust  
Neighbourly (Heineken)  
People's Postcode Lottery  
Quakers Edinburgh Central  
Resilient Scotland  
Robertson Trust  
Royal Bank of Scotland  
Rutterford Holdings  
Ryvoan  
Sahara Boutique  
Santander  
Scotch Whisky Experience  
Sir Tom Farmer Foundation  
Social Bite  
Social Economy Growth Fund [EU/ Scottish Government]  
Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick  
St Columba's by the Castle  
St Giles' Cathedral  
Tabhair  
Transformation & Growth Fund  
Tulip Trust  
Viewforth Trust  
Voice Your Choice  
Walter Scott Associates  
William Grant Step Change  
Women's Fund for Scotland

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*"a good place to be"*