



Grassmarket Community Project

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT 2022



OUR AIM

VISION:

We believe in a world where people reach their full potential, feel positive about themselves, valued and connected to others and the wider community.

MISSION:

We will create an inclusive person-centred environment where people feel empowered to develop skills, build positive relationships and enjoy an ongoing sense of belonging.

We seek to achieve these core Social Impact Outcomes

- an inclusive community and programme of activities along with support that is accessible and benefits all individuals facing social exclusion by lack of opportunity, skills, mental health and aspiration, where they can achieve greater self-esteem, improved health, employment skills and a purpose in life.
- an inclusive community where individuals can, through membership and volunteering, contribute to the wellbeing of those facing social exclusion or with experience of trauma.
- sustain a building which provides a safe home for the Grassmarket Community Project Members, moving the project towards self-sufficiency through social enterprise.
- sustain the Grassmarket Community Project as a partnership comprising Greyfriars Kirk, the Grassmarket Mission, statutory and voluntary agencies, local and national businesses and local residents.

MEMBER'S STORY

The beginning, the middle – but not the end – to be continued...

"Whilst I was homeless in Edinburgh, I suffered a massive bereavement. This was beyond devastating.

Resulting in a major breakdown both physically and mentally. Soon after I was able to move into a flat with my best friend. Tragically I lost my friend 6 months later. These were very dark times. This was 11 years ago.

I am now living with the diagnosis of depression, anxiety, agoraphobia and PTSD. Isolated, only leaving the house to attend Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) meetings when able, I was housebound for 5 years.

Slowly, bit by bit, with the continued support of my CPN, I was able to find the strength to reach out for further support and to re-connect with the world. It was through my Grassmarket-based CPN that I found the Grassmarket Community Project.

Unfortunately, my first encounter with GCP was not the most positive experience. It took me a full year to return, encouraged by my CPN, who informed me it was worth

trying again. It is now over 6 years since my first day and reconnecting after a period of absence, I returned to find the doors of GCP had remained welcomingly open.

All the GCP Members and staff have always been supportive, caring and encouraging, which really helped me, especially during all the difficult and challenging times that I have gone through. My time within GCP has been filled with the most amazing opportunities.

Attending many classes, eating many meals, and I have been on many day trips and residential. All of which would simply not be possible for me without the help and support of staff Members.

I found a new love for one particular activity I got to do at the grassmarket. It has inspired me to take up something new. I have been blessed to meet lots of lovely people along the way. To all the staff old and new and to the Members too – thank you all from the bottom of my heart!"

We operate a 'No Wrong Door' referral policy and welcome anyone and everyone who shares our values into our community.

The following are the challenges that Members most identified as facing at referral (induction) or at check in (2022 Member Census):

Being on benefits	66%
Mental health issues	57%
Social isolation / loneliness	53%
Difficulty interacting with others	51%
Unemployment / insecure work	39%
Long term illness	30%
Physical disability	27%
Neurological disorder / learning difficulty	27%
Homelessness or temporary accommodation	22%
In low paid employment	17%
Recent bereavement	17%
Survivor of a serious crime or abuse	14%
Drugs or alcohol misuse	12%
Looked after / in-care	9%
Experienced sexism	8%
Struggle with anger management	8%
Experienced racism	6%
Recently arrested	6%
Recently released from prison	5%
Discharged from the Armed Forces	3%
Refugee / asylum support	2%

GCP has enabled me to...

Make friends	69%
Leave the house more often	60%
Be myself and know myself more	43%
Reach my full potential	40%
Volunteer	15%
Complete training	15%

from 2022 Member Census – top 6 stated outcomes

The main benefits our Members have felt participating in GCP Activities

Meeting and making friends	76%
Learning or trying something new	64%
Feeling less isolated or lonely	60%
Laughing with others	51%
Feeling more motivated	50%
Having a safe place to go to	50%
Helping other people	49%
Feeling more relaxed	49%
Feeling more positive about my future	48%
Being more creative	48%
Feeling more cheerful	48%
Feeling good about myself	47%
Establishing/maintaining a routine	46%
Having someone I can trust to talk to	40%
Valuing myself	39%

from 2022 Member Census – top 15 stated benefits of being a Member

AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Coffee Saints - Scottish Social Enterprise of the Year (one-to-watch)
- Scottish Social Enterprise Champion (Catherine Jones, Social Enterprise Director)
- UK Digital Film Programme of the Year, Cinema for All
- Peter Cargin Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual, Cinema for All (Rohan Crickmar)
- UK Top 100 Women in Social Enterprise, Natwest (Catherine Jones, Social Enterprise Director)
- Listed in SE100UK index Top 100 Social Enterprises in the UK, Natwest
- Responsible Business of the Year, Chamber of Commerce (highly commended)

MEMBER'S STORY

"I was abandoned at the age of 16. I've lived a life of poverty and have struggled with addiction and homelessness.

I spent almost 15 years working in the horticultural industry, I worked in private gardens. I enjoy working with my hands, but it was bad employment; long hours, and I was isolated for being gay and not fitting in. It was a very cruel environment. Eventually I fell into a deep depression, at that point I felt like the rug had been taken from my feet and everything I had built up just didn't exist, it was a very slow and painful experience. I was signed off sick and ended up as an outpatient at the community mental health hospital for 2 years.

You don't think about depression being physical, but depression completely debilitates you; I was seriously ill. Because I went so low, it actually effected my physical health. I could not lift my head up and had to spend a year working with a physio just to get my posture back.

My support worker invited me to the Grassmarket Community Project and I started going to Yoga. It was a weekly session and through yoga I learnt to breathe. This enabled my body to move, it enabled an inner strength I wasn't aware I had. I was able to build up again, it was a slow process, but I really enjoyed the yoga movements, and the meditation.

I must have been the only person to enjoy Covid, the shops were shut, the streets were dead, it was very peaceful. My neighbours were about, I was able to work on my garden as it was summer, and it was just good that people were around.

At this point I was working with a one-to-one support worker from the hospital. She suggested I work on a personal project over lockdown like drawing or knitting so of course I was out with a chainsaw, I got some bits of wood and started to make gifts which I even sold on. I seemed to take to it naturally, some people find power tools intimidating, but I was familiar with these sorts of tools through gardening.

When Covid was over it was back to being alone, I felt isolated as everyone was away again, everyone was suddenly busy. After Covid I went to the woodwork drop-in on a Friday, and then started going along on Thursdays. I spoke to John about my personal issues, I mean at this point I was struggling to get on the bus alone and trying to build a routine. So, I was given another day, to help counteract my mental health.

I like Jon a lot, he is a fair guy and I have a very good working relationship with him. He's genuine, compliments my work, and he is like that with everyone. I'm relaxed with Jon, I know if I go to him he will get things done. He is not offensive or aggressive, but he expects everyone to get on and to keep a high standard of work, be professional. He treats us all with respect, and if I have problems with my mental health, he will accommodate me.

I work on my own projects and some projects for the enterprise. I just finished making candlesticks, we made loads of them. They are all intricate and made up of a lot of pieces — they look really good. I just hope they sell; I think they will, I am very proud of them.

I am just thankful that I am in the woodwork, I am so grateful I am there, I'm accepted by the guys there. It has been building on my self-awareness and my sense of achievement — I've been completing projects not just leaving them. It's still tough when I get home, I'm only at GCP two days a week and when I am out of the woodwork I am just at home, and I struggle. I sleep a lot, and my diet has been suffering — I'm trying to get on top of the diet, but sometimes it can just get too much.

I still have the first ever thing I made at woodwork, it was a pencil box with a sliding lid, I think that is the thing I am most proud of, I still have it today. But I am proud of everything I've done. It's a lot of hard work, takes a lot of concentration, but I know it's good quality.

I've been on a few Grassmarket trips. Ages ago I went away for Christmas, which was fantastic. We had a proper Christmas dinner — turkey and all the trimmings. This year I was on the West Highland Way, which was my first time doing a long walk. It was absolutely brilliant, I enjoyed every moment of it, even the moaning! It was great just to be in the Highlands, I went to parts of Scotland I had never been before.

We walked about 15 miles each day. I didn't think I could, but I did it. You would see the same walkers over the days, and it was fun to chat with them, a bit of banter just saying hello to people, and it was fun when they would recognise me and wave and shout over. I was walking in my old woodwork boots, which weren't that good for walking in. A couple of days in the soles completely broke, and I was worried I'd have to stop walking. GCP bought me some new walking boots and I walked the rest of the way wearing them. I'm actually wearing them today. It was one of the best experiences, just being out in nature — just being able to breathe."

OUR ACTIVITIES

Activities	Average Individuals engaged each month	Highest monthly attendance
IT Skills (4 classes)	50	53
Day Trips	18	22
Reading & Writing	16	20
Woodwork (5 day/week)	16	21
Cinema	11	16
Art (2 classes)	10	25
Wellbeing	10	17
Make & Mend	9	23
Choir	9	18
Souper Thursdays	7	16
Guitar	7	9
Swim	6	9
Numeracy	6	9
Walking	6	22
Creative Writing	5	8
Telephone Support incl walk n talk	5	32
Training Courses	4	49
Herb Garden	4	6
Cooking (online)	4	4
Tartan Volunteering	4	16
History	4	8
Open Book	3	6
Woman's Group	3	7
Kitchen Volunteering	3	14
Relaxation	2	6
Coffee Break (online)	2	6
Casework	2	18
Home support	1	3

46 Members (16% of our community) have no next-of-kin or emergency contact

indicating their level of isolation and how important GCP is to them – they tell us we are their only support.

Number of individuals actively engaged¹

Nov-21	82
Dec-21	90
Jan	97
Feb	81
Mar	108
Apr	92
May	<u>92</u>
Jun	68
Jul	94
Aug	150
Sep	94
Oct	88

¹attended at least one activity or course that month

474

vulnerable adults supported

1,648

meals served to people who are homeless, vulnerable housed or have no recourse to public funds

1,386

classes, engagement activities or groups delivered (3,297 hours)

5

key partnerships³
(St Mary's Catholic Cathedral, Mercat Tours, Hub Foundation John Lewis and Digital Lifelines)

101

volunteers attended 10 training courses

32

qualifications awarded to young people

² Scottish Social Enterprise of the Year (one-to-watch), Scottish Social Enterprise Champion, UK Digital Film Programme of the Year, Peter Cargin Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual, UK Top 100 Women in Social Enterprise, SE100UK index of top 100 social enterprises in the UK & Responsible Business of the Year (highly commended).

7

awards won²

5

supported respite breaks
(20 nights away) which 61
Members took part in

5,496

hours of paid work
experience and training

152

volunteers engaged

47

referral agencies and third /
public sector partners referred
a new Member

9,754

Member's lunches served

³(1) Coffee Saints (with St Mary's Cathedral), (2) Our Stories Your City (with Mercat Tours and 6 visitor attractions), (3) Pre-Apprenticeship & Young People's Development Programme (Hub Foundation Building Brighter Futures Fund) (4) Woodwork Training & accredited learning (John Lewis) and (5) Digital Lifelines – IT training/support for at highest risk people misusing substances (NHS)

MEMBER'S QUOTES

"GCP made me feel better and helped with my depression"

"Everyone is very welcoming, and it is a joy and privilege to be a part of it"

"Everyone I speak to at Grassmarket finds it their only safe place where they can be themselves and not feel judged"

"It has given me support and the opportunity to learn new skills for a brighter future"

"I think the Grassmarket Project is an amazing service for the community"

"The Grassmarket has saved [my life] 3 times. I love it here. The first step is the hardest. After that you are part of the family"

"[GCP] has given me many opportunities I wouldn't have had otherwise"

"It is a great place to be [and] it has helped me feel more confident about myself than ever before"

"[GCP] has given my life structure"

"It has been a big family where everyone is welcome"

"Without [GCP], I'd be isolated completely"

"Grassmarket made it worth getting out of bed"

"The GCP makes a real difference in people's lives"

"GCP is an important part of my life"

"The Grassmarket is a comfortable and safe space where I feel safe to learn and chat with others"

"A vital part of the community and an essential part of my week"

"Gets me out the house to meet new people"



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Thanks to our amazing customers and partners we now employ 28 staff in our social enterprises.

This year we opened our Pavilion building at Grassmarket Centre, extending our café and event space. After a year of construction, we have re-opened our building for events, and have reopened our Coffee Saints café within the Centre.

Additionally, our woodwork and tartan enterprises have expanded as we have opened a gift shop on Candlemaker Row and partnered with Edinburgh Castle to sell our tartan gifts through their website.

£487k

of combined sales from social enterprise commercial activity

874

hours of textiles skills development delivered

975

hours of catering accredited modern apprenticeship experience delivered

1,104

hours of work experience delivered in woodwork & furniture making

"It has got me out of bed when I have been struggling with unemployment"

"Gave me a sense of community, support and purpose"

"[GCP has] created an opportunity to be involved in community"

"Has helped me increase my computer knowledge"

"The way the staff, volunteers, and Members are is amazing. In the IT class I'm loving doing virtual college about Word. The reading and writing class is really good"

"A lifeline"

"The volunteers and staff are dedicated and very helpful"

"I feel more positive and purposeful and part of a community"

"The Grassmarket is a comfortable and safe space where I feel safe to learn and chat with others"

YOUNG PEOPLE & TRAINING

In the last 12 months...

29

young people accessed
our services

10

young people achieved
qualifications

32

courses delivered

7

young people moved onto positive
destinations (work, volunteering,
FE or HE college courses)

432

hours training delivered to
young people

96

hours of one-to-one
support

39

Members attended
learning/training and
achieved a qualification

8

visits/collaborations

464

hours of training delivered

2

Online Learning systems launched
[Flow and Learning Assistant (e-portfolio)]
fully funded by the city region deal
(Capital City Partnership)

23

different qualifications/
training courses delivered

39

partners/referral agencies
engaged with⁴

⁴Citizens Rights Project, Rock Trust, Move On, Canongate Youth, Capital City Partnership, SQA, Inspiring Scotland, Scottish Refugee Council, DWP, Edinburgh City Mission, Edinburgh City Council, Craigroyston High School, City of Glasgow College, IHG Hotels and Resorts, Venture Trust, The Skills Network, Peek Project, LGBT Youth, Skills Development Scotland, Action for Children, Cyrenians, Fresh Start Web, Care Inspectorate, Training Matters, Apprenticeship in Hospitality, Port of Leith Housing Association, Barnardo's, Career Ready, Spartans, Edinburgh Guarantee, Witches Tour, Pink Saltire, Hampden Park, Apex Hotels, Westfield Training, John Lewis, National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh Science, Brave Strong Beautiful

OLDER PERSON'S PROGRAMME

Support & Pastoral Care

The aim of the project was to provide the elderly community of both St Mary's Catholic church and the Grassmarket Community Project with support and pastoral care – an age group that is the most vulnerable and isolated in society.

ACHIEVED IN 2022

- Meetings with potential group participants to identify their needs and establish a rapport.
- Recruitment & Training of a Volunteer Driver for trips
- Engaged with St Marys Catholic Church and the SSVP to provided partnership, familiarity and continuity to target group.
- The project made a significant difference to over 100 people who would not have otherwise had these experiences
- Each weekly activity group had an average weekly attendance of 9 people

Older Person's Activity Programme (Feb-Oct 2022)

Group name	No. of Activities	Total attendance
Coffee	39	742
IT	9	20
Cinema	20	179
Book	9	81
Visit	7	65
Trips	4	31
	= 88	= 1118

IMPACT

Two thirds of participants indicated that they feel less socially isolated than they did beforehand.

"As you get older your social circle seems to shrink and then Covid came and staying in/staying safe became NORMAL"

Two thirds of participants said they felt more connected.

"Was not aware and not attending any of Over 60's groups and now feel very connected"

14 out of 21 stated that their Mental Health had improved significantly.

"I feel much happier today"

"(I now) practice the power of positive thinking"

100% of respondents stated that the project did help their health and wellbeing

"Yes, I can see the contrast of me before and me since being part of this group"

"I have met more people in the last 8 months that I have met having lived in Edinburgh for 40 years"

"The engagement officer is very much a people person. Makes everyone feel included. Doesn't talk down to you as some can when speaking to people older than them"

VOLUNTEERING

A large thank you to our 152 amazing volunteers who have given 5,133 hours of their own time this year.

- 31 volunteers involved with our Members Programme, assisting and leading our weekly activity sessions
- 59 people volunteered at our weekly Open Door Meals, serving 1,494 meals to an average attendance of 32 homeless or vulnerably housed individuals
- 93 volunteer inductions
- 15 volunteer training courses provided

A special thank you to our corporate partners who gave their time, skills, and experiences during corporate volunteer days:

- HSBC
- Expedia
- John Lewis
- Edinburgh Remakery



"It is a brilliant opportunity to use your skills in a different way, and the guys here want to learn, and it's fantastic."

Evelyn



"I really enjoy doing art, and it is my job, I thought I could give something, and that I would get something from it too."

Maggy



"I chose the Grassmarket because I think it is so important to give people life skills, to give options and opportunities."

Jilly



"The Grassmarket helps to develop your skills, and it gives you confidence."

Dennis



"I love the community, it's always so busy with lots to do but there's always time to have fun."

Helen



"It's a great way to step out of your own world, to meet others, and it's really enjoyable."

Caelan



"If you just persuade somebody to try something, they often become really enthusiastic, and it's a sheer joy to see them finish something. It's very satisfying to be here"

Liz



"Specifically, seeing how the Members interact is special, how they react to each other with so much compassion, it's always everybody really looking after each other."

Jamie



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