



grassmarket  
community project

Grassmarket Community Project



# GRASSMARKET SPOTLIGHT



In our Spring issue...



Events



GCP Stories



Picture House



Get involved

20  
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# Message from the CEO

## Helene van der Ploeg

After what seems to have been the longest, darkest winter, it is so good to see the brighter days that welcome Spring into the city!

Here at Grassmarket Community Project (GCP) the team have been working hard, talking to our members (beneficiaries) and developing our programme of activities to help our people rediscover their worth, build friendships, and develop skills. We are a lifeline for over 600 vulnerable people, offering hope and belonging to those facing homelessness, isolation, and despair. Together, we transform lives, helping people reclaim their confidence, dignity, and a brighter future.

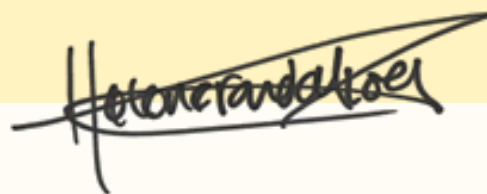
Our Social Enterprises generate vital income to support all this work, but they are so much more than that. Our Coffee Saints Cafes are acclaimed by our customers for our delicious and affordable home-cooked food and friendly service; watch out for our new menus coming soon, there will be new favourites that bring you back time and again. If you are hosting an event this year, do talk to us as we can create your event that will be memorable for all.

Our Tartan Army are beavering away crafting wonderful new products for our shop on Candlemaker Row and to exhibit at the Royal Highland Show. Using our very own Greyfriars tartan we create beautiful purses, Bobby dogs, shawls and so much more.

You will also find some of our amazing woodwork, made by our skilled staff and trainees, using both reclaimed church pews and reclaimed wood. Whether it be tartan or wood we can create bespoke clothing and furniture, reasonably priced, and fantastic quality - why not contact us and bring your designs to reality!

Of course, we still rely on funding and generous donations from our supporters, needing to raise at least £500k this year. Take a look at the story of one of our funders who have committed to supporting us for 5 years and see the transformational difference they enable us to make to the lives of so many. There are many ways you can support us from sponsorship at sporting events like the marathon and Kiltwalk, volunteering, donations and in-kind support. It is you who makes it possible for us to achieve so much and we look forward to welcoming you into our community, the GCP Family!

Enjoy a look through this snap shot of all the great things happening at GCP and if you want to get involved, do contact me or any of the team, the door is always open!



# Community Voices

## Murray

Murray's been part of GCP for a while, and he's always been clear about one thing he wants a career in the kitchen.

So we did what GCP does best we got him stuck in!

He started with a pre-apprenticeship, serving lunches, helping with KP duties, and learning how a busy kitchen really works. His passion and work ethic quickly stood out, and we're delighted to have extended his placement.



Now Murray's preparing meals, building his skills, and growing in confidence every day. It's been brilliant to watch him develop in the role he hopes to pursue in the future.

Well done, Murray - we're proud to have you on the team!

## Jeremy



Jeremy first came to us as a member of staff during the very busy Fringe period, bringing with him a calm presence, a willingness to help wherever needed, and a natural ability to connect with people. What began as a short-term role quickly became something more, as Jeremy became a familiar and valued part of the community.

Reflecting on his time here, Jeremy says that the Grassmarket Community Project has "brought humanity to my life" and that being part of the community "teaches you how to be more human."

Now volunteering with us in our IT sessions, he continues to offer his time, energy and kindness so generously. We're so grateful that what started during the Fringe has become an ongoing commitment.

## Liz

Liz is the heart of our much loved Make & Mend group. From Christmas creations to cushions and even upcycled phone cases made from old jeans, she inspires everyone to get creative and have a go.

Without Liz, this popular class simply wouldn't be the same which makes her 2023 Inspiring Volunteer Award so well deserved!

Liz says, "If you have a skill, it's important to give back a bit of what you've learned."

She doesn't just share her skills - she shares her time, her kindness, and her belief in others. And that's what makes her so special to us all.





# International Women's Day 2026

This International Women's Day, we're taking the time to celebrate the amazing women who are such a vital part of our community.

IWD gives us a chance to pause, and express how much the women in our community mean to us. 182 incredible women make up the Grassmarket Project, and they show strength in ways that continues to inspire us. Compassion that supports others through the hardest days, and resilience that helps the GCP thrive.

We are so incredibly proud of the women in our community! Thank you for the care you show so freely, the strength you carry, and for the way you look out for others.



# The National Lottery: Fairer Life Chances

Powered by Partnership



Funder Story

## Creating Fairer Life Chances

At Grassmarket Community Project, we see every day how powerful it is when someone is given the time, space and support to move forward at their own pace.

That's why funding from the National Lottery's Fairer Life Chances programme is so important to our community.

## A Safe Space to Grow!

This funding allows us to provide long term, person-centred support in a safe and welcoming environment where people feel accepted and valued. At GCP, progress isn't rushed, but built through trust, encouragement and consistent support.

## Opportunities That Build Confidence

Through Fairer Life Chances funding, our members access meaningful opportunities to build confidence, develop new skills and reconnect with their community. From volunteering and training within our social enterprises, to creative workshops like song writing, our newest learning programme 'Learning Pathways' with one to one mentoring, each journey the individual and what matters most to them!

## More Than Funding: Real Impact

What makes this support truly special is that it recognises change takes time. Every step forward, no matter how small is celebrated! For many of our members, this leads to renewed purpose, stronger connections and greater stability.

Quite simply, Fairer Life Chances funding helps us keep our doors open and our community strong. It doesn't just fund activities, it creates opportunity, restores confidence and supports people to build more hopeful futures.



Support Us

# Keep the impact going!



Because Belonging Changes Everything

"I found confidence again."

"This place gave me hope."

"I finally feel part of something."

Your support makes these words possible.



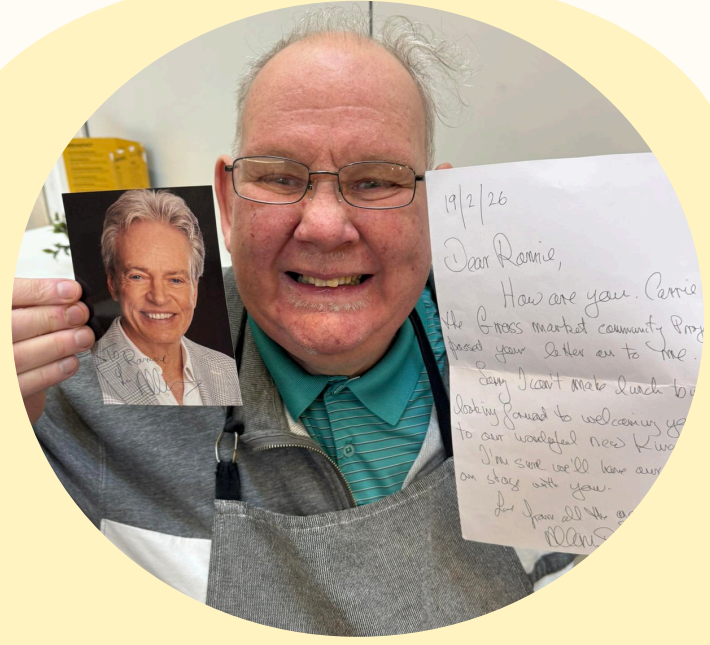
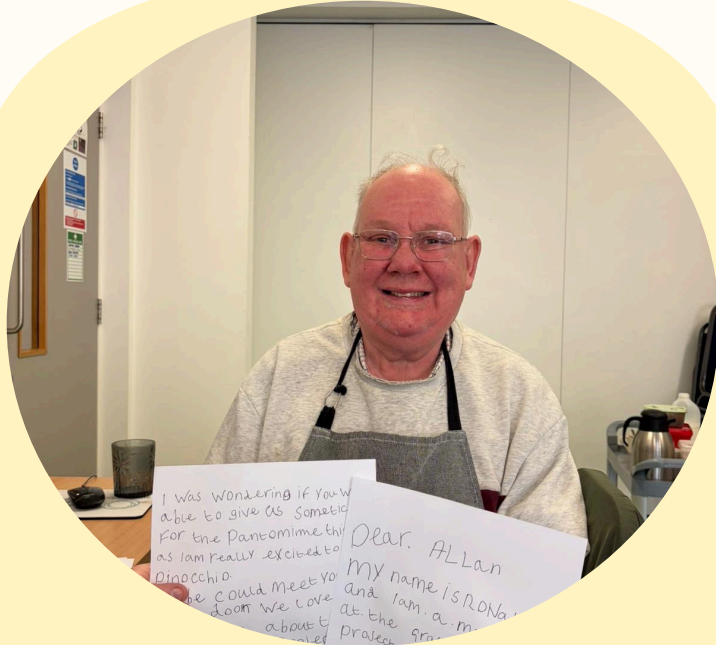
## Be Part of the Change

There's more than one way to get involved. You can become a member, volunteer your time, share your skills, or support us through fundraising. However you choose to stand with us, you are helping build a stronger, kinder community.



2026

# Oh Yes He Did! Ronald writes to Panto Legend Allan Stewart



There's nothing quite like the magic of panto... Oh no there isn't! And for our very own Ronald (or should we say, Ronnie!), that magic became even more special this year.

If there's one thing everyone knows about Ronald, it's he loves a panto! Every year, he can be found eagerly chatting with Hazel about when tickets go on sale, counting down the days until he gets to see his idol, Allan Stewart, perform. After the show, he excitedly tells everyone how brilliant it was — it's a tradition that brings him endless joy.

This year, Carlie, our super-duper Project Support Worker, had a bright idea. She suggested Ronald write to Allan, sharing how much his performances mean to him and maybe even asking if Allan could help with tickets or a visit so Ronald could share the experience with our community.

In our Reading and Writing Group, Ronald carefully wrote the letter, full of admiration for Allan and excitement for the panto. Then we posted it, fingers crossed.

The reply was more than we could have hoped for. Allan not only responded but sent a signed photo for Ronald! The smile on Ronald's face when he opened it was priceless, pure joy, like the curtain rising on opening night.

It was a small gesture, but to Ronald, it meant the world. The panto is truly where he feels a sense of belonging, surrounded by laughter, music, and a community that shares his excitement. It reminded us all why kindness, connection, and a little bit of panto magic are so important. Thank you, Allan, for making Ronald one very happy man!



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# Host Your Event at The Grassmarket Centre

Looking for a characterful, welcoming venue in the heart of Edinburgh's Old Town? The Grassmarket Centre offers a unique and flexible space for events of all kinds – from corporate meetings and workshops to community gatherings, celebrations, and private functions.

Located in the vibrant Grassmarket area, just moments from Edinburgh Castle, the Grassmarket Centre combines historic charm with modern facilities. Set within beautifully restored architecture, the venue provides a warm and inspiring environment that leaves a lasting impression on guests.

## Versatile Spaces for Every Occasion

### Whether you're hosting:

- Business meetings and training sessions
- Conferences and seminars
- Networking events
- Community activities
- Exhibitions and performances
- Private parties or celebrations



The Centre offers flexible room layouts to suit your needs. Spaces can accommodate both small, intimate groups and larger audiences, with adaptable seating arrangements and presentation setups.

### When you hire space at the Grassmarket Centre, you benefit from:

- Audio-visual equipment
- Wi-Fi access
- Flexible seating and layout options
- Accessible facilities
- On-site support staff
- In-house catering

# Hosting Your Event at The Grassmarket Centre



The team is experienced in helping organisers plan and deliver successful events, ensuring everything runs smoothly from start to finish.

Beyond being a beautiful event space, the Grassmarket Centre is a community-focused organisation that supports local initiatives and social impact programmes. By hiring the venue, you're not only securing a fantastic space, you're also contributing to meaningful work within the local community.

Situated in central Edinburgh, the venue is easily accessible by public transport and within walking distance of major attractions, hotels, and transport links – making it convenient for both local attendees and visitors.

If you're searching for a distinctive Edinburgh venue that combines history, flexibility, and community spirit, the Grassmarket Centre is the perfect choice.



To enquire about availability, pricing, and tailored packages, contact the team today and start planning your next successful event.

**Contact us on [events@grassmarket.org](mailto:events@grassmarket.org)**



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# Mother's Day Afternoon Tea & Tartan Fairy Crafting

Treat your mum (or yourself!) to a magical afternoon of crafting, laughter, and delicious treats. Sip prosecco, enjoy a sweet and savoury spread, and design your very own Tartan Fairy to take home – a keepsake as unique as she is.



No experience needed –  
just bring yourself and  
enjoy! ✨

 17 JUL 14th & 15th March  
2026

 Limited spaces  
available – book now!



20  
26



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# GRASSMARKET COMMUNITY PICTUREHOUSE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EDINBURGH FILM GUILD

AN OPEN DOOR TO GREAT CINEMA

EVERY WEDNESDAY @ 7PM

FEB	MAR	APR
<p><b>4TH</b> 2000 METERS TO ANDRIIVKA (2025)</p> <p><b>11TH</b> BRIDGET JONES: MAD ABOUT THE BOY (2025)</p> <p><b>18TH</b> FIRST LOVE (2019)</p> <p><b>25TH</b> SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE (1998)</p>	<p><b>4TH</b> WILD ROSE (2018)</p> <p><b>11TH</b> MERRILY WE GO TO HELL (1932)</p> <p><b>18TH</b> PERSEPOLIS (2007)</p> <p><b>25TH</b> SUPERMAN (2025)</p>	<p><b>1ST</b> TBC</p> <p><b>8TH</b> I SWEAR (2025)</p> <p><b>15TH</b> BOYZ N THE HOOD (1991)</p> <p><b>22ND</b> FOLK FILM GATHERING</p> <p><b>29TH</b> FOLK FILM GATHERING</p>



OUR FACILITIES ARE  
WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE.  
ALL FILMS CAPTIONED  
WHERE AVAILABLE

**TICKETS ARE FREE  
DONATIONS ACCEPTED  
EVENTBRITE BOOKING ADVISED**

# Keep the impact going!



Be Part of Someone's New Beginning - You Belong in This Story.  
At Grassmarket Community Project, we see every day how powerful belonging can be. Your donation helps create a safe, welcoming space for people facing homelessness, isolation and complex challenges. A place where they can rebuild confidence, learn new skills and feel part of a supportive community.  
When you give, you're not just funding programmes, you're empowering people to take steps toward independence, rediscover their strengths and believe in their future again.  
Together, we're building a community where everyone has the chance to thrive.



## What Your Donation Makes Possible

£10 provides a hot two-course meal for four GCP Members or Open Door guests at the Grassmarket Centre.

£25 funds four weeks of accredited training for one Member..

£50 pays for a minibus day trip to explore and discover new passions.

£100 enables a Member to attend 10 creative, health or wellbeing classes – from IT and numeracy to poetry and music.



Every gift, no matter the size, creates real impact.

# Follow us on socials!



**@grassmarketcommunity  
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**@grassmarketcommunity**



**@grassmarketcommunity**



## Contact us:



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General Enquiries: [info@grassmarket.org](mailto:info@grassmarket.org)  
07520667354

Events: [events@grassmarket.org](mailto:events@grassmarket.org)