

Creative Placemaking For the South of Scotland



the stove network

Acknowledgements:

We are grateful to everyone who gave their time freely and contributed to this piece of work. Particularly we would like to thank our Key Contributors, the groups and organisations across Dumfries and Galloway, who shared their experiences and stories to make this report possible.

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¹For the purposes of this document the South of Scotland refers to an area made up of Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders (this is the region of operation for South of Scotland Enterprise (SoSE) and the two Scottish Local Authorities included in the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal). Embers deals primarily with Creative Placemaking in Dumfries and Galloway, although the phenomenon is fast establishing itself in the Scottish Borders.

²For a definition of Creative Placemaking please refer to the specific section of the Embers report. While Creative Placemaking certainly exists in many places in Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway is unique in the depth and spread of the practice and the numbers of high profiles examples within close geographic proximity.

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EMBERS - CREATIVE PLACEMAKING
FOR THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

Foreword by Matt Baker

The South of Scotland stands at an exciting threshold. With new initiatives such as the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and South of Scotland Enterprise, we will have investment specifically targeted at the South, the likes of which we have not seen for at least a generation. The talk now is all of identifying the unique features of the economy, culture and environment of the South of Scotland - how can new investments be directed at the strengths that are emerging in the region? What has the most potential to pioneer a future economy, one that is fitted for the challenges and opportunities of being a rural region in the post COVID era, one addressing the Climate Crisis and aiming to create a genuinely inclusive society?

The Embers report is an in-depth analysis of one of these unique features of our local culture in the South of Scotland¹ - Creative Placemaking². Since the beginnings of the Scottish Government's support for community empowerment the South has had to go its own way because we did not have the benefit of a dedicated enterprise agency with a cultural and social remit like Highlands and Islands Enterprise in the North. As a result, grassroots placemaking activity led by communities in the South has had, by definition, to be enterprising, opportunistic and creative. What has sprung up is a Darwinian evolution- small pockets of enterprise, community engagement and innovative projects that are uniquely adapted to their local conditions. These initiatives are making significant changes to the physical, social and economic environment of places. They typically mix social enterprise, private business and community groups taking an active role in local decision-making and a bewildering mix of financial support, often stretching the boundaries of funders remits to bring precious resources direct to the grassroots of our communities.

One of the common denominators of community-led placemaking in our region is the way that creative and cultural practitioners are taking a leading role. This why the Embers report focusses on Creative Placemaking and foregrounds creative practice as a fundamental feature of community-led placemaking and enterprise in the South of Scotland. Embers is based on 6 months of detailed consultation with practitioners on the ground and the agencies active in this area of work. It makes a compelling argument for new investment in the South of Scotland to be targeted at emerging areas of strength to enable knowledge, capacity and resource sharing; and in this way for a powerfully networked region to emerge as a powerhouse of Creative Industries, Innovation and Social Enterprise - a network that is effective at a national and international scale.

Examples like Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, Langholm, Creetown, Moniaive, Wigtown, Annan and Sanquhar - taken together, present a compelling opportunity for the new investment in our region to support, amplify and spread an ethos and a way of working that is truly homegrown and already attracting international attention. The Embers report is a very timely study into the workings of Creative Placemaking in our region, compiled by people who are actually working in the field. It gathers together the needs and opportunities as practitioners see them and makes a straightforward and practical set of recommendations for future support that will position Creative Placemaking as a key tool in making the economy and communities of the South of Scotland future facing, thriving and inclusive.



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EMBERS - CREATIVE PLACEMAKING
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Embers Summary

A Vision for Creative Placemaking In the South of Scotland

Embers lays out a Vision and Approach to growing our places as prosperous, sustainable and resilient communities. It examines the role of creativity in effective placemaking work to inspire change and grow local activity and projects responsive to local need. The report highlights the prominence of the Cultural and Creative Industries in this work and the networked approach that has grown up in the last decade.

- Put Creative Placemaking at the heart of building prosperous and healthy communities, supporting grassroots enterprise and innovation and informing our region's wider strategic agenda
- Establish an innovative framework of support, resource and expertise that considers localised economies of places to build a network of opportunity, learning and collaboration
- The South of Scotland will be a leader in rural enterprise and community-led regeneration and innovation, growing national and international partnerships and opportunity for the South.

Newcastle

Carlisle

Firth

The Embers study draws on the experience and learning from across rural Dumfries and Galloway and presents a set of principles and proposals for supporting a Creative Placemaking approach to growing resilient community-focused economies for the South of Scotland.

The South of Scotland has developed nationally renowned examples of place-based practice and activity that can be considered within Creative Placemaking. These examples are deeply integrated within communities and comprise of a mixture of business, social enterprise and local planning. This work has grown organically and innovatively in a large part due to a lack of regional and national agency support and infrastructure.

An Opportunity

With the establishment of the South of Scotland Enterprise agency there is an opportunity for Creative Placemaking to be a key part of a regional strategy for enterprise and growing healthy community-focused economies. Supporting a Creative Placemaking approach across the whole of the South of Scotland would allow:

- communities to articulate and build a vision for their place
- individuals, groups and organisations to establish

new businesses and careers locally

- public sector (and other regional and national service delivery bodies) to meaningfully partner with communities to support healthy and sustainable strategies for our places.

Creative Placemaking

Effective Creative Placemaking engages communities at grassroots level, building on the existing culture, activity and relationships in each place. It brings people, communities, groups and organisations, public and third sector agencies and supporting bodies together to co-develop better strategies for our places. It is a collaborative framework that allows communities to take a lead role in local planning, design of services and local policies.

“A first key objective of reform should be to ensure that our public services are built around people and communities, their needs, aspirations, capacities and skills, and work to build up their autonomy and resilience.”³

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/commission-future-delivery-public-services/>

RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT A values-based approach COLLABORATION local identities Pathways, growing the skill base planning & local strategy A Focus on Place THE ENGINE ENCOURAGING OUTCOMES ENTERPRISE EMBRACING RISK TAKING AND CREATIVITY visibility

Consultation

Embers outlines findings from three months of detailed consultation work with groups and organisations working successfully as part of their communities. It explores the strengths and weaknesses of their work and draws a picture of effective Creative Placemaking and its impacts for our communities. Highlighted projects have developed activity that specifically considers the challenges of rural place-based economies unique to the circumstance of their locality. These activities evidence the innovative means that local groups and organisations have developed to address the gap between Scottish Government policies and concepts (such as Inclusive Growth, Place-Principle and Community Empowerment) and the grassroots activity that make them work for our communities.

We found that groups and organisations had a values-based and holistic way of working in collaboration with their communities and other partners and embraced risk and creativity as a tool of practice. They had developed structures and working practices that were embedded in their place and focused on social wellbeing and inclusion in our communities finding innovative solutions to local needs. They had grown strong relationships and networks of support to inform their work, creating opportunities for others and affecting the wider social outcomes for their place.

The Consultation Findings and In Conversation sections of this report detail key characteristics and themes of working for Creative Placemaking practice as carried out in communities in Dumfries and Galloway.

The Proposal

The Embers study builds a case for a holistic approach to community focused enterprise and economic wellbeing and makes proposals to support a network approach to **Creative Placemaking** for the South of Scotland. This is presented in the following sections of the report:

- **The Need** – challenges and opportunities identified through consultation work
- **Proposal** – a framework to support, grow and sustain a networked approach to Creative Placemaking that will establish the South of Scotland as international example of community integrated rural development
- **Next Steps** – a detailed set of proposals for the next 3 years

Embers Summary



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EMBERS - CREATIVE PLACEMAKING FOR THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

Background

The emergence of South of Scotland Enterprise presents an opportunity to establish a clear vision and a framework of support for Creative Placemaking as part of a community focused and sector-led approach to economic wellbeing for the South of Scotland.

The purpose of Embers was to consult directly with creative and culturally-led groups and organisations working successfully as part of their communities about the strengths and challenges of their work. Through consultation, feedback from regional and national support bodies and agencies and research into relative policy, to present a current analysis of this activity, the benefits of this home-grown approach to place-based work in Dumfries and Galloway and its impacts for our places. To provide focused analysis of the experience and practice of groups and organisations across Dumfries and Galloway for shared learning, understanding and future opportunity with relative activity in the Scottish Borders.

To examine the role of creativity in this work, build a picture of effective Creative Placemaking practice and propose a framework for supporting this to flourish and be more strategic for our communities across the South of Scotland.

How We Did This

We interviewed people from 21 organisations and projects that are working as part of their communities and have a relationship to creative and/or culturally-led work. We also spoke with key regional and national support agencies.

To ensure a wide range of groups and organisations were heard we spoke with:

- groups of different sizes and stages of development
- organisations offering a variety of activities and services
- and covering as many of the region's towns and villages as possible.

Interviews were informal but followed a series of questions around local identity, resource, space, impact of work on local issues, creative involvement, relationships and networks of support, collaboration with other groups and wider social impact. We also

held two open workshops for individuals, groups and organisations, one at Outpost Arts in Langholm and one in The Stove, Dumfries, to discuss emerging themes and findings.⁴

We were not able to hear from all relevant organisations or cover all areas where significant work is happening. However, we believe this study gives a strong overview of place-based practice in Dumfries and Galloway, the ingredients that has helped it grow and the support it requires.

The scope of Embers was focused on the creative and culturally-led work in communities across Dumfries and Galloway. What is laid out in this report however is a proposal that would link with relative work, groups and organisations in the Scottish Borders for a networked approach across the South of Scotland. We have kept colleagues in the Scottish Borders informed of progress throughout the project and many of the organisations we have engaged with have working links with groups in the Scottish Borders.

⁴ A third workshop was scheduled in Stranraer but was cancelled due to an accident on the A75 resulting in road closure

Embers was conceived by The Stove Network with support on relative policy background by Carnegie UK Trust

The Stove

The Stove Network is an arts and community organisation based in the centre of Dumfries in South West Scotland. It is a successful social enterprise, and the first artist-led Development Trust in Scotland, providing regular employment for 25 people with a turnover of £500 000+.⁵

The Stove engages artists and creative people to co-develop work from regular conversational activity into large-scale strategic projects working with communities. It uses creative practice to facilitate community-led development, projects and decision-making grown from a foundation in community engagement.

The Stove has a proven track record of a process-led and collaborative approach that connects diverse partners to local people. It uses a multi-disciplinary practice that creates opportunities for people to participate in meaningful artistic experiences and enables the community to influence placemaking through transformational activity.

A key example of Creative Placemaking in South of Scotland is Midsteeple Quarter. The Midsteeple Quarter project is a community-led regeneration project for the centre of Dumfries that was initiated through the practice of The Stove. The project is an exemplar of a co-creation, a collaborative community and sector led approach to economic development for its place.

Midsteeple Quarter (Dumfries High Street Ltd) has grown into a separate organisation and Community Benefit Society. It is now a multi-million pound development project working with a range of public,

third and private sector partners to support the local community to take back control of a group of underused and neglected High Street buildings and refurbish them as a contemporary living, working, socialising, learning and enterprising quarter.

See the Carnegie Trust UK case study in appendices of this report for full story.

Carnegie Trust

The Carnegie UK Trust are focused improving wellbeing, influencing policy and delivering innovative practice across the UK and Ireland. Carnegie UK Trust have been exploring the role of towns as home to vibrant and innovative communities, and are working to support towns and regional bodies to develop strategies to improve the wellbeing of their places. Discussions too often focus merely on saving or preserving rather than progressing or rethinking. Carnegie believe that community and artist-led regeneration can offer imaginative solutions to the challenges facing our towns.

The Carnegie UK Trust has supported The Stove to share their learning about community and town development and offered in-kind support for the Embers consultation work. As part of this partnership they created a case study of the Stove's approach to town regeneration through developing Midsteeple Quarter and provided policy background support from Issy Petrie.

“We think of wellbeing as falling into four domains – economic, social, environmental, and democratic. Each of these are fundamentally altered by geography, and so places as well as people are vitally important in creating a flourishing society.”⁶



⁵ <https://thestove.org/key-facts/>

⁶ <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/turnaround-towns-uk/>





EMBERS - CREATIVE PLACEMAKING
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Policy Background

The aim of the **Scottish Government** is: 'To focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth'.

The National Performance Framework (NPF) details the eleven outcomes the government and its partners are working towards: It is a wellbeing framework, which embraces the economic, social, environmental and cultural dimensions of progress.⁷

In 2018 Scottish Government and COSLA agreed to adopt the Place Principle which supports the National Performance Framework's collective purpose for Scotland.

The Place Principle helps overcome organisational and sectoral boundaries, to encourage better collaboration and community involvement, and improve the impact of combined energy, resources and investment. The principle was developed by partners in the public and private sectors, the third sector and communities, to help them develop a clear vision for their place.

It promotes a shared understanding of place, and the need to take a more collaborative approach to a place's services and assets to achieve better outcomes for people and communities. The principle encourages and enables local flexibility to respond to issues and circumstances in different places. It helps partners and local communities unlock the National Performance Framework and make it applicable to where and how they live and work.

⁷ https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/sites/default/files/documents/NPF_A4_Booklet.pdf

The Place Principle

- Place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose, and is at the heart of addressing the needs and realising the full potential of communities. Places are shaped by the way resources, services and assets are directed and used by the people who live in and invest in them.
- A more joined-up, collaborative, and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, enables better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.

The principle requests that:

- All those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place need to work and plan together, and with local communities, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and create more successful places.

Scottish Government commits to taking:

- a collaborative, place-based approach with a shared purpose to support a clear way forward for all services, assets and investments which will maximise the impact of their combined resources.

The economy: supporting thriving local enterprises

The NPF states that the goal of economic policy is inclusive growth, so that 'We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone'. Inclusive Growth is defined in the Scottish Economic Strategy as:

'Growth that combines increased prosperity with greater equity: that creates opportunities for all and distributes the dividend of increased prosperity fairly.'⁸

It sits alongside innovation, internationalisation and investment as a theme of government action⁹. In its implementation it is a form of preventative spending, that aims to reduce future demand on government-supported services by creating a thriving economic environment that works for everyone¹⁰.

A fundamental part of Inclusive Growth is achieving fair outcomes between different places: supporting the distinct contribution of different communities

towards thriving regional economies. In Scotland, rural economies are recognised as unique, with distinct challenges but also strengths, forming a vital part of Scotland's identity¹¹. The Place Principle requests that local services collaborate with each other and with local communities to enhance the strength of local economies and spaces¹². It is a recognition that working together in a place is the most effective way to improve outcomes.

In addition the government has committed to embedding the Town Centre First Principle, which asks that the health of town centers is considered within all investment decisions¹³. For Inclusive Growth to achieve regional cohesion, it must become a guiding principle of public investment, focusing on sectors with potential to provide good work for communities.

Society: Empowered communities

Within the NPF, the government commits to creating 'communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.'

Alongside Inclusive Growth, a shift towards policy focused on prevention is illustrated through boosting community participation and empowerment¹⁴. Community empowerment 'helps communities to do more for themselves and have more say in decisions that affect them.'¹⁵

The Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015 was a bold statement from government that it wishes to shift power closer to communities through making common ownership easier, and by supporting their voice to be heard in local decision-making. It made it possible for communities to request asset transfers, it extended community right to buy, and it required local community planning partnerships to develop Local Outcome Improvement Plans with agreed priorities and actions.

The Local Governance Review in 2018 explored options for devolving power, responsibilities and resources to local government and communities¹⁶, but noted that communities require support to engage with these opportunities¹⁷. Local intermediaries, or community anchor institutions, can facilitate this interaction between government and the community¹⁸.

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-economic-strategy/>

⁹ https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/documents/em_briefing_notes/em-briefing-note-inclusive-growth.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/documents/econdev/regional-approaches-to-maximising-inclusive-economic-growth.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-economic-strategy/pages/5/>

¹² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/place-principle-introduction/>

¹³ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/regeneration/town-centre-regeneration/>

¹⁴ https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2019/07/26092551/LOW-RES-3570-ES-Summary-Report-Overview.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-scotland-act-summary/>

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/local-governance-review/>

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-governance-review-analysis-responses-democracy-matters/>

¹⁸ <http://www.scottishcommunityalliance.org.uk/on-the-ground/anchor-orgs/>



Local Place Plans

Local Place Plans are soon to be introduced in Scotland¹⁹ which will give people more opportunity to have influence on the future of their place. Where Community Action Plans²⁰ have been used by local groups and organisations to influence decisions about their place, Local Place Plans will give communities more statutory power in that all new Local Development Plans put together by local authorities will need to consider any registered Local Place Plans.

The emphasis is to encourage a more collaborative approach to local planning and policy that brings together different sections of a community. This approach is a key aspect of the Place Principle.

Culture: Creative and Vibrant Places

The Scottish Government has a national outcome that 'We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely.' Its vision is that:

'The imaginative role of artists, designers, creative practitioners, producers and businesses, cultural organisations, makers and places is central to shaping a democratic, diverse, open and innovative society.'²¹

The newly published Culture Strategy²² places creativity at the heart of community progress, opening routes to improve health and education, reducing inequalities and boosting innovation and the economy, and recognised the value of thriving unique local cultures.

It states that '[p]laces and people underpin culture and communities in and across Scotland and generate a distinct sense of place, identity and confidence'. One initiative that is supporting this is Creative Communities which aims to empower individuals and communities through participatory or community-led arts.

The Creative Industries are one of the Scotland's seven growth sectors, currently contributing around £5.5 billion or 4% of Scottish GDP²³. In its recent Policy Statement for the Creative Industries, the government recognises the sector's potential in fostering a dynamic and innovative economy, developing skills and talent, and encouraging inclusive growth. The creative sector is also recognised for its role in developing the importance of place, which is a primary feature of many creative enterprises built on a distinctive local identity, or reliant on local 'clusters' of creativity²⁴.

Alongside national government, local authorities are active supporters of their local cultural sector. Dumfries and Galloway are preparing to release a Cultural Strategy, which will support: a sense of place; access and inclusion to culture; the cultural and creative sectors to thrive economically; improved health; support young people; and vitally, for culture to develop and empower local communities²⁵.

Both national and local government are committed to creating thriving local economies, empowered communities who are active in local decision-making, and a vibrant cultural landscape.

¹⁹ <https://www.pas.org.uk/localplaceplans/>

²⁰ <https://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/community/community-place-plans/what-are-place-plans/community-action-plans>

²¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/culture-strategy-scotland-draft-consultation/pages/3/>

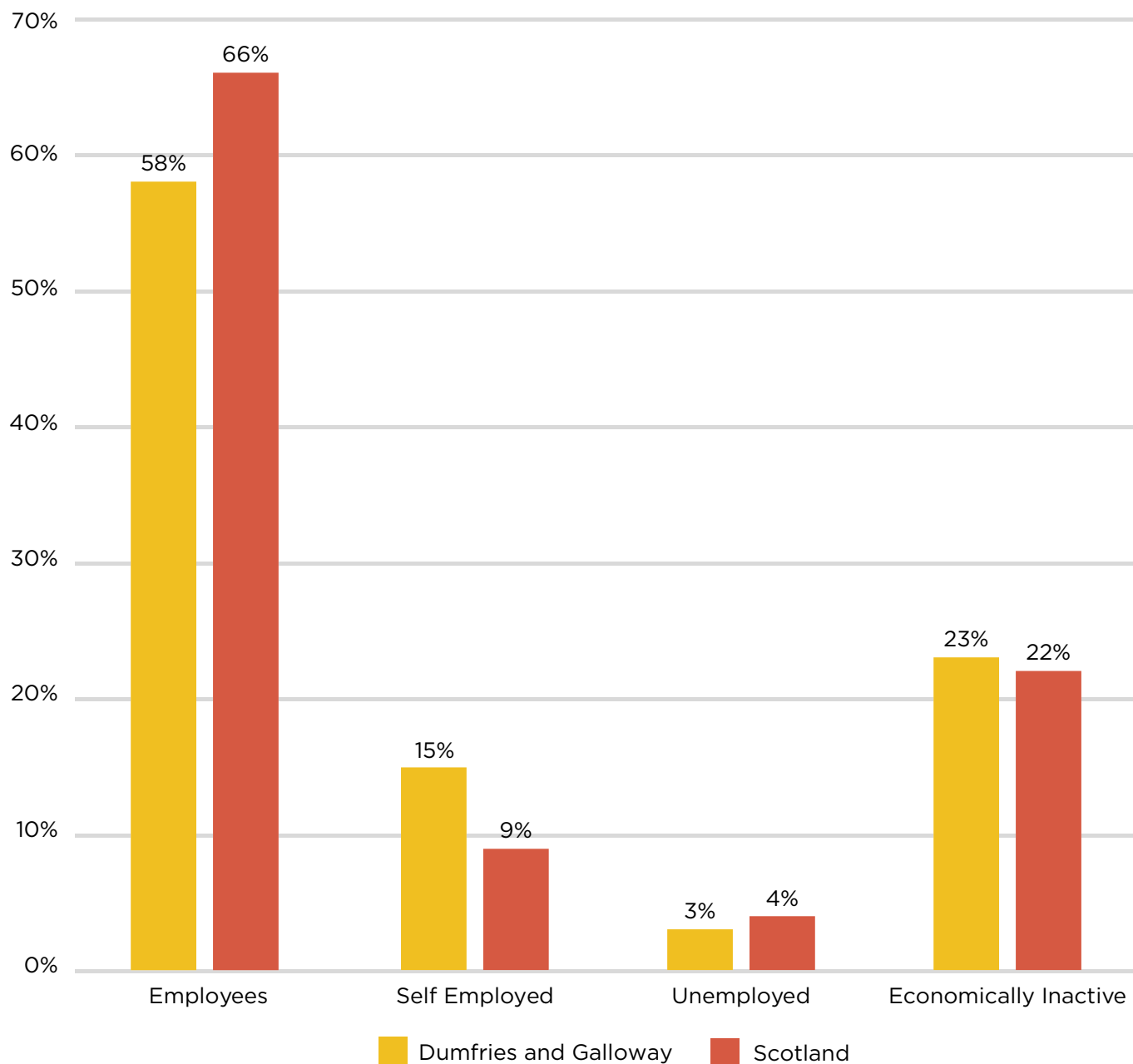
²² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/culture-strategy-scotland/>

²³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/policy-statement-creative-industries/>

²⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/policy-statement-creative-industries/>

²⁵ <https://www.dgunlimited.com/dg-cultural-strategy.html>

Dumfries and Galloway has a high level of self-employment and sole traders compared to the national average. If you take this as a percentage of employment those registered as 'self-employed' make up over a fifth of the regions workforce



Official labour market statistics for April 2018 to March 2019, accessed at www.nomisweb.co.uk. 'Economically inactive' includes retired people, students, and those looking after family full-time.



Embers within this context

Within this national, regional and local context, the contribution of placemaking, the creative sector and community organisations is paramount. Situated at the heart of communities, these organisations connect strategic action with local knowledge, and offer a conduit for conversations between formal governance structures and community networks.

The South of Scotland Enterprise Agency

In 2019, the Scottish Government passed legislation to establish the South of Scotland Enterprise agency as a statutory body. South of Scotland Enterprise (SoSE) went live on the first of April 2019 and is now the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland. It is a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) directed by its Board and is expected to have between 125-175 staff when fully formed. It will drive Inclusive Growth in the region (which encompasses Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders) through supporting a regionally distinct inclusive economy, helping to sustain and grow communities, and growing the skills and resources of the region to address exclusion²⁶.

'Our vision is to work with the people and communities across the South of Scotland to establish our region as a centre of opportunity, innovation and growth.'

Research for the agency has demonstrated the importance of 'place based investment' and 'inclusive regeneration partnerships', highlighting the importance of attracting talent to the South of Scotland, as well as encouraging people to remain²⁷.

Dumfries and Galloway

Dumfries and Galloway covers 8% of the total land area of Scotland, with a population of just 3% of Scotland (expected to decline by 6% in the next 17 years, with a decrease of 10% in under 18s over the next 19 years)²⁸.

Dumfries and Galloway's Regional Economic Strategy²⁹ outlines the area's strengths, including the quality of life of people, and natural beauty of the area; the high number of microbusinesses with chances for growth; and the number of resilient and innovative local communities.

However, significant challenges remain, such as:

1. *Gross Value Added that is much lower than the Scottish average*
2. *an ageing population*
3. *a low wage economy*
4. *a high rate of youth unemployment*

In tackling these challenges, the Community Planning Partnership's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan recognises the importance of empowering individuals and communities³⁰, and the local authority is committed to ensuring local communities are at the heart of decision-making³¹.

The Borderlands Growth Deal

The Borderlands Growth Deal³² is an agreement between the five Local Authorities that run along the border between England and Scotland; Carlisle City, Cumbria County, Dumfries and Galloway, Northumberland County and the Scottish Borders. Part of this deal is an investment in local communities through the 'place proposal' which aims to 'create places that are economically vibrant, resilient to change and that attract a working age population'. There is an emphasis on creating inwards investment and attracting visitors.

²⁶ <https://www.southofscotlandenterprise.com/>

²⁷ <http://www.thegoodeconomy.co.uk/articles/business-led-inclusive-growth-in-scotland>

²⁸ https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/media/19669/Council-Plan-2017-22/pdf/Council_Plan.pdf?m=636760582917630000

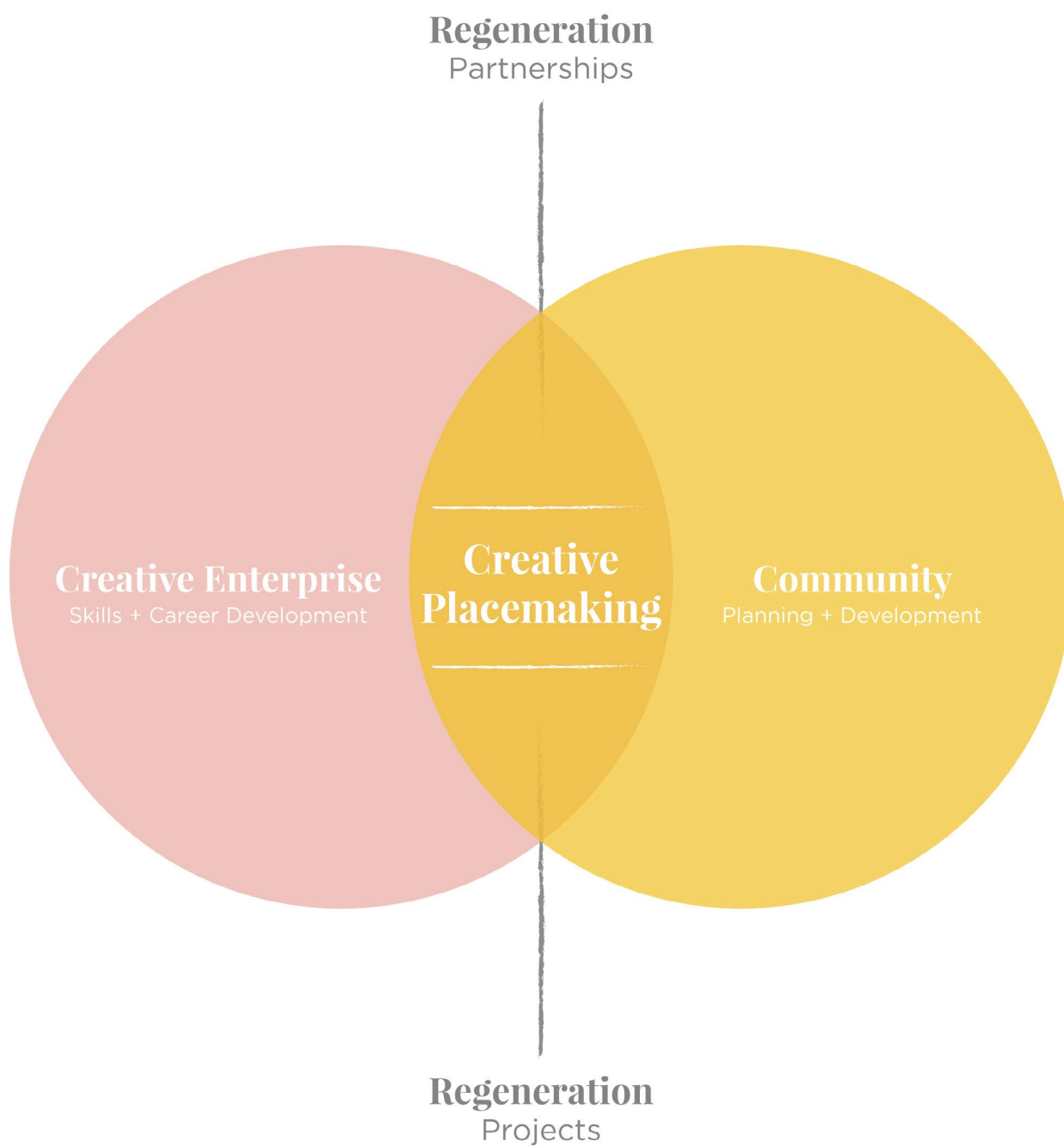
²⁹ https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/media/18717/Regional-Economic-Strategy-2016-2020/pdf/Regional_Economic_Strategy_2016_-_2020.pdf

³⁰ <https://www.holyrood.com/articles/inside-politics/forgotten-region-south-scotland-regional-focus>

³¹ https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/media/19669/Council-Plan-2017-22/pdf/Council_Plan.pdf?m=636760582917630000

³² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/816873/Borderlands_Growth_Deal_-_Heads_of_Terms_2019.pdf





Community + Enterprise in a Creative Placemaking approach to
Rural Regeneration in D+G



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Defining Creative Placemaking

Creative Placemaking is a relatively new term and one that has not yet developed a fixed or generally accepted meaning. Through our experience of place-based work at The Stove Network and our Embers consultation we want to establish a more coherent narrative around Creative Placemaking. One that presents Creative Placemaking as a practice that communities, groups and organisations, public and third sector agencies and supporting bodies use together to co-develop better strategies for our places.

This placemaking practice uses creative activity as a means to be innovative and imagine our places differently by engaging with communities. It uses public and community-owned spaces and resources, allowing communities to take a lead role in local planning. Creative Placemaking typically involves working partnerships with established local groups and organisations and leads to the formation of new social enterprises, learning opportunities and regenerative local initiatives.

We have found that effective Creative Placemaking engages communities at grassroots level, building on the existing culture, activity and relationships in each place. It spans both the Creative Industries and Community Development sectors and contributes to long-term social outcomes for our communities. It works as part of our communities to help grow networks and social enterprise which can together play a strategic role in the identity, development and decision making of their place in partnership with public agencies.

The literature on Creative Placemaking

In the literature on Creative Placemaking it is often described as a process in which partners from across a wide range of public, private and third sector organisations work together to re-imagine and strategically reshape neighbourhoods, towns and cities³³.

Here we put forward some key principals and concepts which we find are helpful for understanding Creative Placemaking. We also make a distinction throughout between types of cultural and creatively-led regeneration that have been imposed on communities, and define effective Creative Placemaking as being grown from the bottom-up approach that we are advocating. This is a holistic and values-based approach that is both approachable and visible allowing outcomes to be driven by process and involvement rather than laid out from the start.

The role of the creative sector

'The local creative sector is often vital in facilitating this imaginative process, and using playfulness to spark the imagination of the local community and decision-makers within a town'

– Turnaround Towns, Carnegie Trust UK

In this sense it is the creative element coupled with the intent for societal change that distinguishes Creative Placemaking from traditional forms of community development. Creativity plays a key part in this process (as used by The Stove) and relates to working with artists and other people as collaborators. For many decades participatory arts and community arts have had an important role in empowering our communities, challenging perceptions, building confidence, developing skills and enabling disenfranchised people to develop a stronger voice³⁴.

While the term Creative Placemaking is used most frequently in the US, the idea that the arts and culture more generally can have a central role in bringing about positive social and economic change in our towns and cities has been a mainstream concept in UK and Scottish policy for some time^{35 36 37}. The discussion is ongoing around the civic role of arts

organisations³⁸ and artistic practice; community arts practice, socially-engaged and participatory arts. François Matarasso explores the history, relationship and future of these participatory practices in A Restless Art stating that:

*'...[that] is a vast, diverse field spanning the sophistication of contemporary art to the politics of social action, but it is defined by the shared creative act.'*³⁹

At The Stove we talk about developing work with, and as part of, our community, using embedded practice where art is not solely for an arts audience but used as a tool for people to have a stake in the future of their town.

Grassroots initiatives

For Creative Placemaking work to have a meaningful impact in terms of economic wellbeing for our places there needs to be a shift in power to our communities through a grassroots, collaborative approach rather than an imposed or 'top-down' approach.

Grassroots Creative Placemaking initiatives work by actively supporting the culture that is already there. They work best when many smaller-scale grassroots projects are supported, working through long term relationships in their place rather than being led by a single, expensive flagship project such as a large art gallery or development⁴⁰. In one of the most in-depth studies of its kind, researchers at the Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP) found that having a high concentration of varied arts organisations helped to build the social connections between people in a community; alleviated poverty; had a range of positive social effects; and did not result in displacement^{41 42 43}.

The role that arts and culture can play in changing towns and cities has been criticised when used contrary to this grassroots community-led approach. In some cases, major cultural projects with no pre-existing connection to the local people have been catalysts for private developer-led regeneration, with little regard to the devastating effects of rising house prices and gentrification.

³³ <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>

³⁴ B. Orton (1996) 'Community Arts: Reconnecting with the Radical Tradition' in I. Cooke and M. Shaw, eds (1996) 'Radical Community Work' (Edinburgh: Moray House)

³⁵ L. Lees and Melhuish, C (2013) 'Arts-led regeneration in the UK: The rhetoric and the evidence on urban social inclusion'. European Urban and Regional Studies.

³⁶ <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/17002/0023718.pdf>

³⁷ <http://www.artshelthresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/1997-Matarasso-Use-or-Ornament-The-Social-Impact-of-Participation-in-the-Arts-1.pdf>

³⁸ <http://civicroleartsinquiry.gulbenkian.org.uk/>

³⁹ <https://arestlessart.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/2019-a-restless-art.pdf>

⁴⁰ <https://www.thedeveloper.live/places/places/why-does-every-article-about-placemaking-begin-with-a-definition-of-placemaking>

⁴¹ http://www.goethe.de/ins/us/was/pro/creative_placemaking/2014_Symposium_Report.pdf

⁴² M. Stern and S. Susan (2010) 'Cultural Clusters: The Implications of Cultural Assets Agglomeration for Neighborhood Revitalization'. Journal of Planning Education and Research 29(3)

⁴³ M. Stern and S. Seifert (1998) 'Cultural Participation and Civic Engagement In Five Philadelphia Neighborhoods'. Culture Builds Community, 7

Economic wellbeing

This work can be seen as part of an economic wellbeing agenda, which measures the success of an economy by how well it serves people and the environment^{44 45}. We believe that social and economic measures should be considered together when judging the success of relative placemaking projects. As we have seen, the cautionary tales of developments that lead to gentrification show that regeneration that is successful purely in economic terms does not consider the deeper impacts on communities and displacement of social and economic issues^{46 47}.

The relatively new policy term 'Inclusive Growth' combines 'increased prosperity with greater equality'⁴⁸. This emphasis on equity is one few would argue with. But in a recent report by think tank Centre for Local Economic Strategies they claim that the continued centring of economic growth in GDP terms may not lend itself well to community-led development⁴⁹. It is outside the scope of this report to provide a full vision for economic development in the region: the main point here is that the benefits of Creative Placemaking can best be recognised and understood when taking a holistic view that incorporates the social, environmental and economic.

Partnership working

Much work has also been done in the community development sector in Scotland to understand how to work effectively and in response to genuine community need and many of these lessons are incorporated into Creative Placemaking. Increasingly in community development working together in partnerships based on mutual trust is seen as vital. For What Works Scotland:

'... this means they build myriad networks of both local partnerships with a diversity of public services and other third sector bodies, and local participation across a diversity of local organisations, groups, residents, service-users and citizens, and of activity, e.g. environment, equalities.'⁵⁰

As noted earlier, partnership working is also advocated by Scottish Government through the Place Principle which encourages a more integrated, collaborative and participative approach to decisions about services, land and buildings.⁵¹

Anchor Organisations

Often so-called Anchor Organisations have an important role in facilitating these partnerships and providing local leadership. The Scottish Community Alliance claim that:

'There are no examples of sustained community empowerment without some such locally embedded organisation'⁵²

–Scottish Community Alliance, 2020

What Works Scotland summarises that Anchor Organisations tend to be community-led or controlled; holistic and multi-purpose; and responsive and committed to a particular community. While they suggest that community-led organisations such as Community Development Trusts and community-controlled housing associations often fulfil this role, they believe any organisation that is committed to serving a community over the long term can be considered an Anchor Organisation. It is also possible that two or three organisations working together can share this type of community leadership.

Part of a broader policy landscape

Finally, we need to be realistic about the level to which Creative Placemaking can tackle deep inequalities in the absence of other policy interventions. It has been argued that all for all place-based initiatives, additional policy and government intervention (e.g. in transport infrastructure and maintaining basic government services) is necessary to fully tackle long-standing inequalities^{53 54}.

While there is evidence that Creative Placemaking can improve people's social and economic conditions, we do not propose it can singlehandedly 'solve' all the problems with our economy and society so it should be seen within the context of a wider range of policies and state provisions.

⁴⁴ <https://academic.oup.com/cje/article/41/4/1123/2327835>

⁴⁵ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/building-wellbeing-economy/>

⁴⁶ V. Smirnova and V. Guerra (2017) 'Placemaking Revisited'. Community Change 1(1), pp.68-72

⁴⁷ L. Lees and C. Melhuish (2013) 'Arts-led regeneration in the UK: The rhetoric and the evidence on urban social inclusion'. European Urban and Regional Studies.

⁴⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/economic-growth/inclusive-growth/>

⁴⁹ <https://cles.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CWB2019FINAL-web.pdf>

⁵⁰ <https://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/policy-briefing-community-anchor-organisations-in-public-service-reform-and-social-change/>

⁵¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/place-principle-introduction/>

⁵² <https://scottishcommunityalliance.org.uk/about/anchor-orgs/>

⁵³ V. Smirnova and V. Guerra (2017) 'Placemaking Revisited'. Community Change, 1(1), pp.68-72

⁵⁴ <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/WWSEconomicRegenerationinScotlandLessonsPracticeChallenges.pdf>



EMBERS - CREATIVE PLACEMAKING
FOR THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

Consultation Findings

Our research identified the following characteristics and themes of Creative Placemaking practice as carried out in communities in Dumfries and Galloway:

Embracing Risk and Creativity: The importance of risk-taking and creativity to try new things and test ideas, problem solve and respond to local need imaginatively. Creative activity emerged as a key tool used by communities to inspire change and grow projects and highlighted the opportunity of “creativity” in its wider sense; innovative thinking, imagination, outside of traditional engagement.

A Focus on Place: Understanding our places and communities came up frequently in our conversations. This relates to understanding the movement of people and infrastructure that is specific to each place in order to develop activity, services, social enterprises and small businesses that are relevant and considerate within that.

A Door to Knock: Visibility is key in place-based work and the spaces used are a vital part of this. Spaces are used to gather, to be playful, to think about their places differently and crucial for healthy communities. “Meanwhile” spaces and creative ‘hubs’ can have a key role in supporting small businesses and community projects with challenges mostly related to access and ownership.

The Engine: We spoke with people about how they had grown their initial ideas and start up activity into more established sustainable work and management structures. This initiated discussion around initial resource to drive a project forward, the fragility of transition in times of development and what is needed to support the momentum and community investment of a project by regional and national support bodies.

A Value-Based Approach: Projects that are embedded and thriving within their communities presented a values-based approach underpinning their work. A

shared aim being part of, and for the benefit of, their local community. This holistic thinking informs their decision-making to consider wider community issues outside of more traditional models based on bottom-line and profit only criteria.

Relationships and Networks of Support emerged as particularly significant in terms of shared learning, accessing relevant support and expertise and growing a vision. They were highlighted in the early stages of groups in growing the right structure, framework, for their community and once established in working sustainably within a wider context and building meaningful collaborations.

Collaboration emerged as vital for effective place-based work. This is between groups and organisations, regional and national agencies and with local people and communities. We found meaningful collaboration to take time and commitment allowing for those involved to work together in an open and creative process to shape the direction of the work towards a shared goal.

Planning and Local Strategy: We found the appetite for collaboration with creative practice is growing with fantastic examples of projects working as part of their community for long term impact. The opportunity here is to empower communities as meaningful collaborators in local planning and policy where solutions are reflective of that place.

Encouraging Enterprise: Multiple stories of individual development evidenced the agency this type of work can develop for people but often found that this was not meaningfully communicated or captured for wider understanding. We need to communicate this type of place-based cultural and creative regeneration work

better in economic and enterprise terms, both through direct activity and opportunity and as a sector-led approach that encourages new businesses and social enterprise.

Pathways, Growing the Skills Base: This relates to growing the skill base and learning opportunities within cultural and Creative Industries and activity that encourages “creative” thinking as an essential skill for individual development. It also relates to growing the learning and opportunity to then apply these skills into effective Creative Placemaking work.

Local Identities: This relates to identity and culture specific to an individual place and the ability of place-based work to engage communities in growing that as

part of developing opportunities. This is particularly significant in developing a sense of pride for communities especially for places that struggle with social challenges such as high unemployment.

Social Outcomes: Our conversations highlighted the significance that small businesses and community activity have for our rural towns, villages and communities and conversely the negative impact the loss of one business, service or public space can have as a catalyst for the decline of our places. The wider social impact of this type of work in our rural places is not fully understood despite case studies, and relative research, evidencing the positive long term impact of creative place-based work.



7

EMBERS - CREATIVE PLACEMAKING
FOR THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

In Conversation

This is a summary of the findings and themes from conversations with 21 groups and organisations across Dumfries and Galloway, feedback from regional and national support bodies and agencies and shared learning from discussion groups.

Embracing Risk and Creativity

“You need to problem solve all the time when you’re working somewhere rural like this and I think creativity plays a huge part in that, whether or not you are doing something creative.”

– Aidan Nicol, Arts, Cultural and Heritage Manager for Glenkens Community and Arts Trust, New Galloway

Interviewees told us of the importance of risk-taking and creativity to try new things, test ideas, problem solve and respond to local need imaginatively. Creative activity emerged as a key tool used by communities to grow projects and highlighted the significance of “creativity” in its wider sense; innovative thinking and imaginative play. We found that successful projects had a wholesome approach to taking risks and often spoke of the need to be able to get it wrong as part of the process to successful and impactful work.

Creative activity is important especially in the early stages of a project/organisation when it is crucial to actively explore the relevance and context of an idea. The Midsteeple Quarter’s plans for community ownership of part of Dumfries High Street grew out of creative interventions and public events that explored the opportunity and need over five years of activity.

“Where the market has failed our towns and the usual stakeholders have run out of ideas, we need creativity and imagination to find new ways of instigating change. It requires boldness and confidence to take matters into our own hands.”

– Scott Mackay, MSQ Manager, Midsteeple Quarter, Dumfries

In this place-based work the creative opportunity is found in using creative practice to explore ideas and connect meaningfully to strategic development work for your area. This work involves using artists and other professionals who are skilful in co-creation and development. They can help enable collaboration between community embedded groups/organisations and public sector organisations and support agencies.

“It’s important to have a shared ambition, a shared ground to what you are doing and an ability to articulate something that is bold but remains connected and rooted. That is really important: that it is connected down there and open up there – finding that balance.”

– Tina Fiske, Director of Cample Line, Thornhill

Across the groups and organisations that we spoke to there was an appetite for working with “creative” people in more strategic ways as part of the development of our places. We found however that more “enterprise” focused organisations, groups and public sector organisations were often unaware of how to use or work with creative people where as “arts” organisations struggled to communicate and advocate for their value in these conversations. Where the potential was recognised it was sometimes not acted upon due to lack of resource, capacity and/or understanding of how best to initiate this type of collaboration.

Langholm Initiatives project worker and Outpost Arts trustee Jason Railton and Outpost Arts Creative Director Lucy MacLeod talked about the aim of

Outpost to help bring skill sets together to tackle the challenges of disparate perspectives in Langholm.

“How can we, as a creative agency for change, make things slightly different here.”

– Lucy MacLeod, Creative Director for Outpost Arts, Langholm

A Focus on Place

The need to understand a place, in most cases a village, town or part of a town, and its individual set of circumstances at a micro level came up frequently in our conversations. This was communicated as especially vital for developing services and infrastructure that address accessibility, long-term social impact and contribute to the sustainable growth of place-based economies. This understanding of place relates to access to resources, activity and patterns of movement.

A' the Airts in Sanquhar spoke of their young people travelling to education in Kilmarnock, rather than their regional college in Dumfries, due largely to ease of travel. This becomes relevant when you are discussing Dumfries and Galloway College's role in extra school provision for example. Annan Harbour Action Group spoke of the drain of people to Carlisle for music and entertainment despite being known historically for its own live music venues.

“The community has low expectations from their High Street, and everyone goes to Carlisle, its only 20 minutes to Carlisle.”

– Alan Thomson, Harbour Development Officer for Annan Harbour Action Group

We were interested in projects that have grown local solutions as a response to the challenges of their places: Midsteeple Quarter is addressing the drain of people from Dumfries town centre by incorporating affordable housing and multi-use space to encourage people and activity back into the town and provide smaller spaces for businesses. New Galloway Community Shop has set up a fuel buying co-operative to address the issue of fuel poverty alongside other community services like a laundrette and rentable accommodation. They spoke of the role of their engagement worker “to foster the economies and social wellbeing of their community”.

“It is about bringing people together to focus on New Galloway and The Kells as a place where things can happen. I think community begins to die when people always look outwith their community for things that are happening.”

– Mike Brown, Chair of New Galloway Community Shop and Enterprises

We found initiatives like this address both social and economic issues together, developing activity, services, social enterprises and small businesses that are relevant to their place.

A Door to Knock

For place-based work, visibility and connection to people is crucial and the spaces used are a vital part of this with ‘a door to knock on’ fostering a sense of ownership of projects by communities. Many projects we spoke to had, or were developing, a central hub though some some intentionally relied more on “meanwhile” spaces to test and explore ideas for space use in their area. Dumfries Music Conference explores using different spaces around Dumfries as a venue through its project The Plaza.

“It's important to exist beyond the formal structures of what defines ‘a music venue’ or ‘an arts centre’, so as to engage with as wide a demographic of communities as possible. To work with businesses, landlords and key holders and to communicate what the project is all about widens the participation and inspires others to take on similar approaches.”

– Martin O'Neil, Dumfries Music Conference

There was strong agreement across projects that healthy communities need spaces to gather, to socialise, to think about their places differently together. Examples of community initiatives that have tried to address the loss community spaces and businesses can be seen across Dumfries and Galloway: Auchencairn has started a community initiative taking over its local shop having recently lost their pub, Dunscore has a community run pub as one of the last public spaces for activity in their village, Moniaive has opened a community-run “Hive” to sell local crafts and be a point of contact for Moniaive Festivals.

Challenges in terms of space related mostly to access and ownership: lack of publicly owned space; buildings unfit for purpose due to size or being in disrepair; high rental rates; absentee landlords; or large proportions of property owned by one local person giving a single point of negotiation.

“The fact that we can't open up the door for people to see the boats is a major drawback for us. We have to be down there in some shape or form so we can interact with the people who are asking the questions.”

– Alan Thomson, Harbour Development Officer for Annan Harbour Action Group

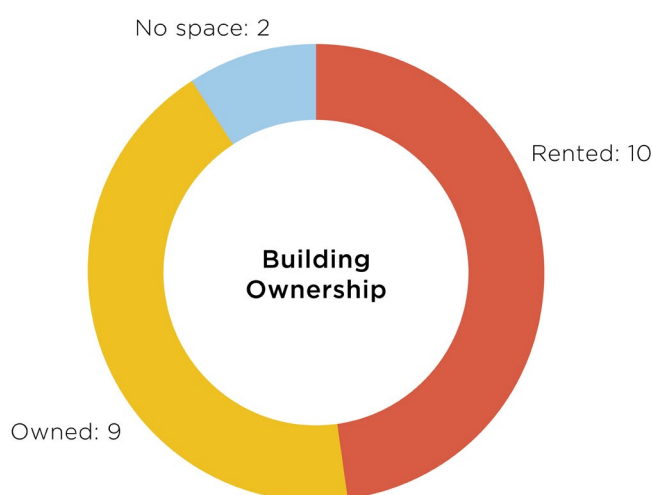
For projects like New Galloway Community Shop, Old School Thornhill, Johnson School in Kirkcudbright, Midsteeple Quarter, a community-owned building gave

control over a space and long-term stability. It allowed them to be a resource for their community, and in the case of community-ownership, an asset, and formed an integral part of their business model, bringing in additional income through hire of rooms – see Anchor Organisations in “Defining Creative Placemaking”.

There is a pattern of start-up use by individuals or groups who then progressed onto use other spaces in their area. This highlights how Anchor Organisations can have a key role in supporting small businesses and community projects who are able to benefit from initially cheap, or sometimes free, space use on a short-term basis.

“It’s about having a presence, people are able to see us and say that’s what you do. There’ll be things in the newspaper about what we do but it’s about that physical presence and also acting as a base for things like the Festival of Light.”

– Debbie Craig, Project Worker/Officer for Kirkcudbright Development Trust



The Engine

The Engine refers to the resources required for groups and organisations to grow long-term and impactful projects and activity. We spoke with people about how they had grown their initial ideas and start up activity into more established sustainable work and management structures. We discussed the initial resources required to drive a project forward, the fragility of transition in times of development and what is needed to support the momentum and community investment of a project by regional and national support bodies.

Our conversations highlighted a “driver”, an individual or small collective who are knowledgeable of wider conversations, relevant policy and decision-making platforms (community councils, local authority) and who have access to the experience and expertise required to launch an initial idea.

“Our [initial] chair and then Project Manager, she’s quite a dynamo, but also we had that in depth experience on the Board and still have. We have people who have run hotels, caravan shops and that sort of business as well as others who are creative or more legalistic and so on.”

– Mike Brown, Chair of New Galloway Community Shop and Enterprises

Old School Thornhill started with a strong local team with diverse experience (which is not always possible) and accessed small pots of money to contribute to initial work. New Galloway Community Shop spoke of a diverse initial skillset across their board to get started. This raises the question of how groups and communities with less individual resource can get work off the ground and how they can be supported to grow their own expertise in this area.

“There are also some key players and that is very important because wherever you have a successful project there is nearly always someone who is championing it, they are often connected to organisations. One danger in that, of course, is that there is a single point of failure.”

– Andrew Ward, Senior Project Worker for Creetown Initiative, Creetown

The development of groups and organisations into more established work often required investment specifically to support the transition into a more grown up structure. This transition period, moving from a small group of individuals with an idea into a structure that is informed by a wider community, was highlighted as a significant point of fragility.

A project worker was a game changer for most groups and who it was, their vision and strategic understanding, made the difference of success. All of the groups we spoke to were initiated by local people and at this point the committed work required by project workers to get to know the community (if they were not already part of it) was highlighted as vital for projects to stay relevant. When supported, these people were able to grow their groups and organisations and make that transition from a more singular vision to sustainable organisations.

“This would run without me, but it’s having that person in place to drive it forward, you definitely need that.”

– Yvonne Barbour, Centre Manager for A’ the Airts, Sanquhar

A Values-Based Approach

“The community here feel like this is theirs more than they ever have done I think. It’s their building and they can come in and give ideas. I’m very open and people know that they can come in and talk to me any time.”

– Yvonne Barbour, Centre Manager for A’ the Airts, Sanquhar

We found that projects that were embedded and thriving within their communities had grown a values-based approach that underpinned and informed their work. The form of this, in terms of decision-making and more inclusive working structures, was varied and particular to each organisation but included the core value of being part of, and for the benefit of, their local community.

“We are not constituted as a community organisation in the strictest sense of the term but we are very much a part of our place. Our building is open to the public, and we offer a year-round public program. We are a hybrid if you like. What we want to do is build a community – of contributors, users and visitors – around Cample Line.

– Tina Fiske, Director of Cample Line, Thornhill

We found this to be a feature of rural practice in Dumfries and Galloway. For many it involved a commitment to building strong local relationships and developing structures for community programming and development of activity. Cample Line is an interesting example of a more traditional working structure but with the aim of connecting with its place upfront in how it chooses to operate: sourcing local expertise, collective programming, growing connections with its schools through internships and shared learning activities.

This holistic approach by groups and organisations to how they thought about their work informed decision-making to consider wider community issues outside of traditional models based on bottom-line and profit only criteria. For Cample Line this involved a commitment to sharing resources, free programming which paid local artists and using local trades. Wigtown Book Festival encouraged trade in local businesses throughout programming activities in their spaces and Old School Thornhill committed to activity and development that is complimentary to surrounding businesses, making sure not to pose competition to local cafes for example.

This is a shared sense of practice that can be defined within effective Creative Placemaking work: engaged, visible and informed by wider social issues.

“Now we need to try to get even further out into the community and keep asking those questions around how to reach more people because there are still a lot of people we aren’t reaching.”

– Lee McQueen, Creative Development Worker for Creative Futures in Lincluden and Lochside

Relationships and Networks of Support

We asked people about their relationships with other groups, organisations and networks of support (both regionally and nationally) and how important that was to their work.

This emerged as particularly significant in terms of shared learning, accessing relevant support and expertise and in growing their vision. These relationships were important early on for groups in growing the right structure or framework for their community. Once established, the strength of a group or organisations relationships was an indicator of its success and enabled peer to peer learning and meaningful collaborations. (see Collaborations section)

“Being connected with a network is always really important, being in the midst of your peers and being able to share with your peers, the pitfalls, the things you would like to do better, the challenges you face on a regular basis. Understanding that they are also the ones other people face can help you find a way to move on from them.”

– Tina Fiske, Director of Cample Line, Thornhill

Strong local relationships emerged as paramount to this placemaking work both with communities and other groups and organisations. We found this fostered a grassroots approach to accessing support and delivery of services and ensured advice was locally relevant. Creative Futures in Lincluden and Lochside is independently project managed by their Creative Development Worker, Lee McQueen. Lee is supported and mentored by The Stove Network and Sleeping Giants, a local social enterprise skilled at supporting creative community development. We talked with Lee, who is local to Lochside, about this relationship and his initial activity focused on bringing groups together.

“Having connections to other projects and organisations has been really important. For example, through The Stove Network we worked with The National Galleries of Scotland and Sounds Systems project. They also linked us into creative and



We asked people what groups and organisations with a regional remit they had strong working relationships with.

cultural consultations, so we have the opportunity to be involved and to use those connections if we need them.”

– Lee McQueen, Creative Development Worker for Creative Futures in Lincluden and Lochside

This is a challenge for support networks, who are sometimes brought in to facilitate these conversations and connecting spaces, to ensure there is a commitment to meaningful local relationships and time given to establish these. Groups spoke of consultation where the intent and resource were welcome but the speed of delivery and lack of meaningful relationships did not allow for the work to be as impactful as it could. How learning and knowledge is “left” usefully with those it involves can also be an issue.

The most successful examples in communities coming together and affecting planning and local policy evidenced strong local relationships and with local authorities and regional and national support agencies (Development Trust Association Scotland, Community Land Scotland, Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum).

In these cases time was given to build collaborative working processes with grassroots organisations often taking a leading role. There is clear potential for regional support networks (DG Unlimited, Third Sector D&G) to be instrumental in fostering these relationships between local groups and organisations and regional and national support bodies.

“We have strong connections to Dumfries, through The Stove, Theatre Royal and Moat Brae, mostly I would say that those are connections that have been built through the pARTners Group through DGU.”

– Anne Barclay, Operational Director of Wigtown Book Festival

Collaboration

Collaboration came up throughout our conversations in respect to the work between groups and organisations, regional and national agencies and with local people and communities. Meaningful collaboration can be defined as allowing for those involved to work together in an open and creative process where all engaged are able to shape the direction of the work with equal measure.

The importance of working together to develop more joined-up strategies for our places was evidenced across projects. For Kirkcudbright Development Trust this meant coming together with local groups to talk about, and prioritise, the development of local spaces based on need, particularly along Kirkcudbright High Street. In Sanquhar collaborative working between local groups and organisations led to their first Arts Festival building a local focus that complimented Uplands flagship Spring Fling event in May.

“We have a Tourism Action Group that meets here and on that group is representation from different parts of the area – an Upper Nithsdale Partnership Group – people represented from Kirkcudbright, Kelloholm, ourselves (Sanquhar), Leadhills. We meet monthly and try to move the tourism agenda forward. A lot of ideas around the arts has come out of that and we had our first Sanquhar Arts Festival here in May.”

– Yvonne Barbour, Centre Manager for A' the Airts, Sanquhar

For many growing this collaboration work was an important consideration going forward in terms of their strategic visioning and planning with their community and other partners. Connecting with neighbouring communities to build strength and capacity: share resources, training, programming opportunities and influence local policy. Developing cross-sector collaboration to understand shared outcomes and identify resources and income opportunities through grassroots delivery mechanisms.

“There are certain needs, around health (and services) with the NHS, that are the same for the region but need to be delivered in a more creative way in our communities. We've had people come to us and ask how we do that, not just with health but that's one that springs to mind.”

– Lee McQueen, Creative Development Worker for Creative Futures in Lincluden and Lochside

The challenges to meaningful collaboration, faced by groups and organisations, often relate to a lack of commitment by decision-making bodies and the time and resources to build the relationships needed for this across groups. The “creative opportunity” here is to use Creative Placemaking practice as a process for building these collaborative relationships between communities, groups, organisations and public and third sector bodies and support agencies. This is especially useful for involvement of communities as meaningful collaborators, as evidenced across

projects.

“So it's about developing those relationships – which takes time – there has to be trust – we have got make those connections and that doesn't happen overnight.”

– Ken Gouge, chair of Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival

Planning and Local Strategy

“There is an opportunity here to make better use of our individual organisations role in strategic/policy conversations.”

– Norma Hart, chief executive of Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway

To find out more from groups and organisations about the effect of their work on local planning and strategy we asked what they understood to be the biggest issues or challenges for their place and whether their work had any effect on this. This initiated conversation on infrastructure and the geographical challenges of Dumfries and Galloway; varied access to services and activity, transport and fuel poverty, the need for affordable housing, high unemployment and lack of quality employment, attracting/retaining young people, learning pathways and ability to progress within work.

The value of meaningful collaboration in a community-led planning approach can be seen in projects working as part of their communities for long-term impact. Midsteeple Quarter (MSQ) is directly involved in local planning for Dumfries High Street using a community-led, and owned, approach to the development of affordable housing and spaces for small businesses. This project has helped shape Dumfries and Galloway Council's most recent regeneration agenda that now prioritises bringing people back to live in the town centre. As a Community Benefit Society local people have voting rights and MSQ keeps the community-led values at the forefront of activity through ongoing engagement.

“Midsteeple Quarter is community-led and emerged from an identified need to take back control of our High Street. Listening to local people, through on-going engagement and consultation has enabled us to bring the town together and take our plans forward with the consensus and support of our community.”

– Scott Mackay, MSQ Manager, Midsteeple Quarter, Dumfries

Wigtown Book Festival, now going for 21 years, spoke about the long term positive impact of their work for Wigtown establishing it as a thriving book town and tourist destination for the region. They also spoke about the challenges of growth on their community, such as school capacity and affordable

housing for local people, and the need for current and joined-up local strategies and ongoing policy conversations to approach this in a way that works for everyone.

Our conversations highlighted this need for more meaningful interconnection between communities and local planning and policy with the potential for Anchor Organisations to help facilitate this. Kirkcudbright Development Trust could be seen as an example of an Anchor Organisation with a joined-up planning approach for Kirkcudbright, that aims to consider the needs of all in their community.

“We discovered that there were a number of groups within Kirkcudbright all trying to do similar things but with different buildings so the first thing we needed to do was bring them together into one place.”

– Andrew Ward, Project Manager for Johnson School (Creetown Initiative), Kirkcudbright

People spoke of the current mechanisms (Community Action Plans, Participatory Budgeting and Community Consultation) but identified a gap between the concepts of a community-focused planning agenda and the practical tools that empower communities as meaningful collaborators in local planning and policy.

There is an opportunity here for the practice-led approach with the experience of groups and organisations brought into decision-making processes in the earliest stages of developing local policy and strategies. Groups and organisations we spoke to saw the value of their place-based creative and culturally-led activity as part of local planning and strategy work but often alongside a lack of capacity and/or specific expertise in this Creative Placemaking approach.

“Regeneration has meant different things to some people who have not necessarily seen the value of creativity or the arts. Whereas now, there is a much younger force who have different life experiences, have maybe left and come back, have different expectations, have more of a willingness to engage with other types of regeneration, see how other people do things, seek out different solutions. We are about having more of a formal body in Outpost to kind of bring that together and try to join it up

– Lucy MacLeod, Creative Director for Outpost Arts, Langholm

Encouraging Enterprise

The Embers consultation presented a shared understanding amongst groups and organisations of the wider impact of their work in supporting and encouraging new activity in their places. We found this through the creation of direct opportunity within the work they were doing and through growing a culture of activity and agency in their area.

The Stove Network has encouraged a number of new projects through its work and activity that are now established organisations in their own right: Dumfries Music Conference, D-Lux Light Festival, Midsteeple Quarter, Environmental Arts Festival Scotland. We wanted to talk with other groups and organisations about the effect their activity was having on new things starting for their area.

“There is a big demand for start up units and it's part of the trend toward self employment, some of them have got great ideas and are do well. A bit more mentoring would be good to support this but it's very hard for the self-employed to take time out of their work.”

– Alan Thomson, Harbour Development Officer for Annan Harbour Action Group

A' the Airts in Sanquhar spoke of local people testing activities that then grew out of their space into others. Old School Thornhill was initiated by a group of local people who want to bring their work into their local area through shared work space. Wigtown Book Festival spoke of growing the trade of local businesses. Stranraer Development Trust spoke of the culture they had contributed to in terms of a growing numbers of festivals in their area.

“Progress may look different in Stranraer to how it looks in other towns, but it is happening! People are increasingly active in the community and are less resistant to change. This year there has been a plethora of festivals in the town and community engagement has been phenomenal.”

– Karen O-Rourke, Program Activity Co-ordinator for Stranraer Development Trust

We found multiple stories of individual development evidencing the agency this type of work can develop for people but often found that this was not meaningfully captured or communicated. This especially related to the wider impacts for our communities and the effect of this type of work in growing enterprise over longer periods of time (see Social Impacts).

“She was running a dancercise class on a Monday night and it just grew and grew. So she came to me and said I'm going to have to move venue and I said that's fine. So we're feeding other organisations and helping their income as well.”

– Yvonne Barbour, Centre Manager for A' the Airts, Sanquhar

“The economic impact group that gathered feedback for the Oyster Festival in the first year said that they had never seen such a high percentage of positivity and that's down to the community support, turning up, funding it, supporting it.”

– Romano Petrucci – Chair of Stranraer Development Trust

Embers identified the need to better understand and communicate this place-based cultural and creative regeneration work in economic terms and advocate for the value of this sector-led approach in encouraging new businesses and social enterprises.

Pathways, Growing the Skill Base

Growing the skill base and learning opportunities within cultural and Creative Industries and activity supports the development of creative thinking as an essential skill for self-led development.

Groups and organisations talked about the need for greater understanding of the breadth of learning opportunities and work within Creative Industries and the need for a more innovative approach to learning pathways across the sector. The opportunity here is to consider different approaches, and models of support, and to make more of our rural offer by designing programs unique to our place rather than lesser developments of an urban concept. Feedback from young people highlighted the lack of joined-up thinking between formal education and learning pathways and working experience/opportunities with groups and organisations across the region.⁵⁵

The gaps in provision to study subjects in Dumfries and Galloway was also raised, particularly in relation to music and performance. A grassroots movement to increase access and grow learning opportunities can be seen in groups like Dumfries Music Conference, Performance Collective Stranraer, Absolute Classics and the development of youth programs: CatStrand Youth Arts, Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festivals Young Promoters Group and Birchvale Theatre's youth engagement program.

“We help to make new connections within the town – for example, a photographer working with a band, to an emerging producer working with a young artist – it's about creating the spaces where those kind of connections can be made.”

– Martin O'Neil, Dumfries Music Conference

The value in self-development and learning is evident across projects that have built these programs and opportunities into their work and can be seen through the progression stories of those involved. Outpost Arts have grown a base of young energy feeding into their work with a volunteer program and paid opportunities across their activity. Wigtown Book Festival have a young adult programming team and due to the success of their internships in supporting career development are now building this into their core plan.

⁵⁵ Feedback from Embers consultation, blueprint100 members and D&G Regional Cultural Strategy discussions hosted at The Stove on the 25th July 2019

“A lot of those former interns are now working in the creative sector across the UK, some of them with publishers, some with international book festivals, some with marketing and advertising.”

– Anne Barclay, Operational Director of Wigtoen Book Festival

Upland’s Emerge and mentoring programs offer supported opportunities in visual arts and crafts giving paid work and learning to both the young people and the local professionals that support them. It was acknowledged that having a regional funder (The Holywood Trust) with a commitment to youth-led activity and supporting young people has been a significant factor in the amount of programs available across Dumfries and Galloway.

“We’ve had some youngsters come on placements with us which has been good, it’s a different environment, more relaxed than school, and school doesn’t always work does it? It didn’t work for me.”

– Yvonne Barbour, Centre Manager for A’ the Airts, Sanquhar

The need to explore the relationship between formal and informal learning pathways and work in collaboration with regional services emerged as key to providing better support for professional development and a more interconnected approach to our regions learning offer.

“We have been a way for people to connect to opportunities for themselves and also take a bit more control of their development. We’ve given people the confidence etc. as well as helping people test and try things.”

– Lee McQueen, Creative Development Worker for Creative Futures in Lincluden and Lochside

The opportunity here is to better harness our regional resource and consider our strengths in community engaged and rural creative practice as part of a system of learning that embraces the challenges and uniqueness of our region⁵⁶. For Creative Placemaking work this means also growing the opportunities for shared-practice and learning between groups and organisations that are working effectively in this area and supporting regeneration and community development projects with creative people.

Local Identities

“[Local image and identity are] hugely important. This is what we’ve been talking about in terms of being proud, finding what makes us unique and different. People being able to share their pride in their place.”

– Lee McQueen, Creative Development Worker for Creative Futures in Lincluden and Lochside

This relates to identity and culture specific to an individual place and the ability of place-based work to engage communities in building on that. This is particularly significant in developing a sense of pride in communities, especially for places that struggle with social challenges such as high unemployment. Lincluden and Lochside, both in North West Dumfries, have distinct and individual communities which has to be considered and inform the development of activity that encourages collaboration and shared resources for their place.

Because of the engaged nature of the place-based work of projects we spoke with, we found local identity was often an inherent part of their work. Creative Futures ran a project exploring the local identity of The Meadows housing estate and ‘Popeye’s Park’. Stranraer Development Trust’s founding project, Stranraer Oyster Festival, was grown from an almost forgotten local resource as having the last remaining wild oyster bed in Scotland. Sanquhar knitting features predominantly within A’ the Airts and has led to their inclusion as part of an annual Irish Knitting Tour attracting over 30 people.

“I was working one day, I was frying chips, and an old lady came in and said “why don’t you tell everybody about we’re Oysters”. She came in the next day with a picture of her granddad and completely sold it to me, and I got very excited very quickly to be honest with you, I thought this was an incredible thing.”

– Romano Petrucci – Chair of Stranraer Development Trust

Lockerbie Old School is an interesting example of place identity with the initial focus for their project relating to the traumatic Lockerbie Disaster of 1988 and the significance of the old school as investigation headquarters. As their project developed over the following five years the Lockerbie Old School group were able to honour people’s strong connection to this building while also not losing sight of the fact that the building must respond to genuine community need.

⁵⁶ <https://info.dumgal.gov.uk/culturalmap/>

“My involvement was initially very much an emotional one, because I was closely involved with the disaster, having worked at the academy, having lived in Sherwood Crescent, but now it's very much a changed thing because we see a need for, the strength and the viability for, the Old School.”

–Jackie Moffat, Lockerbie Old School trustee

A common and interesting form of place-based development is ‘place branding’; initiatives that promote a singular identity. Examples of this in Dumfries and Galloway can be seen in Castle Douglas (food town), Wigtown (book town), Kirkcudbright (art town) and Moniaive (festival village) where place branding has been used to promote very specific aspects of these places mainly to make them attractive as tourist destinations.

There are clear positive effects in these places but also a challenge in being inclusive for all their community if not carefully considered within a wider Creative Placemaking conversation. Operational Manager of Wigtown Book Festival, Anne Barclay, described the importance of community empowerment in addressing this.

“I think the first thing is empowering people to think that they can do it without permission. It's really important to communicate to people that if they have a good idea they can just run with it, you don't need our permission.”

–Anne Barclay, Operational Director of Wigtown Book Festival

This concept of “Cultural Democracy” came through in our conversations around the continued need to readdress the lack of value sometimes placed on community grown culture and enable a more multidimensional understanding.

“Throughout the 1970's, the community art movement rejected the standards of the art world... which responded by rejecting community art for failing to meet those standards”⁵⁷

–François Matarasso, A Restless Art

Social Outcomes

We asked people if they believed their work had an effect on the wider social impacts of social cohesion, health and wellbeing, community empowerment and self-esteem, local image and identity, individual development and imagination and vision. Most organisations considered their work to have a positive effect on most, if not all, of these social outcomes and that they considered them within their work. This is integral to the holistic approach we found across conversations, recognising the interconnectedness of these social issues.

“In terms of indicators and measuring these outcomes I feel there is a real need for meaningful data collection in these areas so that we can better understand where we are at in order to allow us to measure differences, changes, impacts made.”

–Norma Hart, Chief Executive of Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway

Organisations almost universally communicated their struggle to evidence these impacts. Interviewees often said they lacked resource and sometimes the expertise to evaluate effectively in this regard however all had learning/progression stories relating to these impacts. There was agreement that better understanding and communicating the wider social impacts of this place-based work would allow it to be better valued in local decision-making, policy development and in designing support structures and as part of sustaining and growing economic wellbeing in our communities.

“I think that's a weakness that we have, a weakness that we all have, that we do not evidence enough what the impact of our projects are and that might be on the social impacts or the economic impacts.”

–Andrew Ward, Senior Projects Officer at Creetown Initiative, Creetown

Research using case study methods (see Midsteeples Quarter case study in Appendices) was thought to be useful for projects as a way of understanding their work better and also for articulating it to others. Some groups expressed an interest in finding ways of connecting with academics or other researchers who could help explore their work in this wider context.



⁵⁷ François Matarasso, A Restless Art (p20)

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EMBERS - CREATIVE PLACEMAKING FOR THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

The Need

We wanted to find out directly from groups and organisations working successfully as part of their communities more about the strengths and challenges of their work and understand what is needed for this type of place-based work to flourish.

This section summarises what is needed to grow and sustain place-based initiatives and enable them to be more strategic for their places.

Understanding Creative Placemaking: understanding the work and activity of groups and organisations within the context of individual economies of place and how small indicators can contribute to deeper and long-term impacts for our communities.

- A common language and articulation of Creative Placemaking work
- Better understanding of individual local economies and indicators of success
- Better understanding by support bodies, funders and national networks of the specifics of individual local contexts

Funding: building a more relevant picture of the resource required for initiatives to grow, sustain and be innovative as well as supporting the momentum and community investment in a project.

- Development money, with an acceptance of risk, for early testing of ideas
- Longer-term support for what is working i.e. core funding that adds capacity to established organisations for them to deliver more effectively and spread their influence to other places
- Closer relationship with funders, including in person, to build mutual trust and understanding of work/support
- Joined up funding approach from the different agencies active in this field

Physical resources: a deeper understanding of spaces needed to grow initiatives within communities that considers the long-term impact, opportunities for shared resources and smarter long-term investment

plans that support groups and organisations.

- Resource and support for community use/owned space that provides HQ for groups and organisations and improves public access
- Shared resources and equipment for individual and community use

Education and career development: developing interconnectedness between place-based initiatives and formal learning pathways for a learning approach that is more considerate of our rurality.

- Better understanding of the variety of learning and career opportunities outside of traditional Creative Industries or Community Learning and Development
- Capacity to develop learning pathways and opportunities for people
- More effective relationships with national organisations and support services with bespoke delivery to ensure services are respondent to each place
- Explore paid internships, paid mentoring, support to participate on boards etc. and formal/informal pathways for young people

Making connections: support to grow meaningful partnerships between groups and organisations and ensure wider sector representation within regional strategy and policy decision-making processes

- Capacity to build and sustain meaningful partnerships and relationships with other groups and organisations

- communities, groups and organisations
- Support/resource for meaningful evaluation on the wider social impact of work
- CPD support for groups and organisations

- Development of regional expertise in Creative Placemaking and how it can be used by

Political change: connect grassroots and sector-led activity to regional and national policy ambitions.

- More decision-making powers at local level
- Support for Creative Placemaking built into local and national policy frameworks
- Understanding of value and commitment to sector support and development of Creative Industries



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The Proposal

Here we lay out a Vision and Framework of Support for Creative Placemaking in the South of Scotland as part of a community-focused and sector-led approach to economic wellbeing for our communities.

This Vision distils the learning and experience of The Stove Network, sector engagement through our Embers consultation, feedback and input from regional and national support agencies/bodies and falls in line with national policy on community empowerment and place-based agendas. This is a recognised approach by progressive decision-making bodies and agencies throughout Scotland⁵⁸. Research and in-depth analysis continues to describe the benefits for economic sustainability and significant long term social impact for our communities.

Working together across Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders we propose this Vision and Framework of Support be included as a Creative Placemaking strand within the new South of Scotland Enterprise agency as an innovative, agile and holistic approach to supporting enterprise in our communities.

Vision

- Put Creative Placemaking at the heart of building prosperous and healthy communities, supporting grassroots enterprise and innovation and informing our region's wider strategic agenda
- Establish an innovative framework of support, resource and expertise that considers localised economies of places to build a network of opportunity, learning and collaboration
- The South of Scotland will be a leader in rural enterprise and community-led regeneration and innovation, growing national and international partnerships and opportunity for the region

⁵⁸ Scottish Government (Place Principle & National Culture Strategy), Scottish Futures Trust, Scotland's Towns Partnership, Creative Scotland, Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum, Development Trust Association Scotland, Community Land Scotland, Corra Foundation, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Carnegie Trust UK

A model of support for Creative Placemaking within South of Scotland Enterprise agency (SoSE)

Working Structure

- Set up a practitioner-led Steering Group for Creative Placemaking within SoSE with decision-making and grant awarding powers
- Dedicated SoSE workers to deliver Creative Placemaking programme of support
- Values-based working process – a robust process of interrogation and mechanisms of involvement that commits to community-led and localised decision-making

Funding Available to South of Scotland from SoSE

- Create informed funding strands that support, sustain and grow place-based work (for example, but not limited to):
 - o Testing ideas – pot for small grants with flexible agenda
 - o Taking it forward grants – large, longer-term grants for Creative Placemaking projects that have built momentum
- Identify and support development of partnership funding and opportunity (e.g Dumfries and Galloway Council, Creative Scotland, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Land Fund etc.)

Support and Resource

- Identify and support growth of community-led spaces and resources across the region
- Grow expertise – develop a body/network of expertise with access to research, relevant policy and a shared understanding of good practice in Creative Placemaking
- Engaging creatives – guidance to groups and organisations that are looking to engage creative people in their work

Sector Development and Creative Industries

- Pathways – support development of formal and informal learning pathways, e.g. funded CPD grants/fellowships for local practitioners, funded internships for individuals with revenue support for organisations. Grassroots models that can better connect to national support agencies and learning institutions, Skills Development Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway College, learning through distance for postgraduate education, Masters of Arts etc.
- Growing the skill base – support partnership work with education (primary and secondary) to better articulate the variety of work/career opportunities within Creative Industries and Creative Placemaking.

Knowledge and Research

- Grow understanding of wider impact – up-to-date research into deeper understanding of wider social impacts of Creative Placemaking work across the region that is accessible to groups and organisations
- Cross sector innovation – identify and support opportunity for cross-sector collaboration between Creative Placemaking, Creative Industries and other sectors

Policy and Advocacy

- Building bridges – commit to growing creative practice representation on local authority, public and third sector decision-making panels
- Profile raising of Creative Placemaking approach to growing healthy communities, encouraging social enterprise and wellbeing economies.



Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS)

The new South of Scotland Enterprise agency has a unique opportunity to harness the passion and creativity of communities throughout the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway, as a key element in the development of strong and sustainable local economies which utilise local opportunity and address community need.

DTAS believes that the key involvement of community-led activity is essential to ensure that development is both owned and driven by local people. Other parts of Scotland have demonstrated that genuinely empowered communities have a unique and significant contribution to make to the building and development of both place and economy.

Ian Cooke – Director of Development Trust Association Scotland

Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is the national skills agency providing Scotland's career services, Scottish Apprenticeships, skills planning, employability skills for individuals and employer support for workforce development.

SDS supports individuals to build their career management, work-based and employability skills, throughout their career journey, from school into further learning opportunities and employment.

SDS is at the forefront of thought leadership, policy and practice in skills planning and alignment, Skills 4.0, metaskills, work-based learning, fully committed to equalities, diversity, inclusion, fair work and well-being. This is brought together in our strategic plan *Scotland 2035 - A Human Future*.⁵⁹

We hope to continue to develop pathways that are relevant to the grassroots work of organisations like The Stove Network and work with them to grow an innovative learning offer for the South of Scotland.

David Martin – Key Sector Manager for Creative Industries in Skills Development Scotland

⁵⁹ <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/a-human-future-strategic-plan/strategic-plan-2019-22/>



DG Unlimited (DGU)

DG Unlimited (DGU) is an innovative sector-led umbrella organisation with a growing membership of over 450 artists, arts organisations and professional creative practitioners.

DGU's independence and neutrality within Dumfries and Galloway's cultural and Creative Industries sector gives us the credibility to work with individual practitioners and cultural organisations to define sector needs.

We broker partnerships to help meet specific community and cross-sectoral outcomes that contribute to the inclusive economic growth of the South of Scotland.

We would welcome the opportunity to continue and expand our role in supporting, advocating and championing the role that the cultural and Creative Industries plays in making our region a better place to live, work in and visit.

Specifically, we can support the ambitions of the Embers proposal and contribute to alleviating some of the identified challenges through the expansion of three core areas of our current activities:

1. **Growing Leaders** – nurturing and developing existing and emerging creative leaders through a support network, training and professional development opportunities.
2. **Growing Ambition** – encouraging the interrogation of how things are currently done and supporting creative risk-taking.
3. **Growing Visibility** – shine a light on our region's creative excellence and the associated social and economic impacts.

DG Unlimited can play a significant supporting role in the successful delivery of the proposed 3-yr Creative Placemaking pilot. We believe this will enhance the sustainability and resilience of the region's cultural and Creative Industries, raise ambition, stimulate growth and increase the capacity of the region's creative micro-businesses and cultural organisations.

David McDonald - Arts Development Director for DG Unlimited

Carnegie UK Trust

Carnegie UK Trust has been promoting the wellbeing of the UK and Ireland for over 100 years and has long recognised that place has a significant impact on wellbeing at all levels: on individuals, communities and on society.

Wellbeing means that we all have what we need to live well, now and in the future. We believe that wellbeing – economic, social, environmental and democratic – should be the purpose of governments. In Scotland, over the past decade, a wellbeing approach to government has grown and developed, as the National Performance Framework has matured.

To increase Scotland's wellbeing we now need a change in the relationships between citizens, community and the state, to an Enabling State, where government of all levels enable communities to do what they do best.⁶⁰

We contend communities are best-placed to bring a wealth of local knowledge and collective energy to the decisions that affect them. This is particularly important for reinvigorating towns, and is illustrated in the stories of *Turnaround Towns*.⁶¹

We hope to continue to support Embers to strengthen local government collaboration with community groups and local enterprise, to enable communities to improve their own wellbeing according to local priorities.

Pippa Coutts - Research and Development consultant for Carnegie Trust

⁶⁰ Elvidge, J. (2012). The Enabling State: A discussion paper. Dunfermline: Carnegie UK Trust

⁶¹ Coutts, P., Petrie, I., Ormiston, H. (2019) Turnaround Towns UK. Dunfermline: Carnegie Trust



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Next Steps

Proposed PROGRAM of Activity and Resource

In this section we lay out a detailed proposal of how to pilot this Framework of Support over the next three years by establishing:

- South of Scotland Enterprise (SoSE) workers for Creative Placemaking
- Practice-based Working Group
- Development Fund for Programme of Activity (criteria detailed below)
- Evaluation and Monitoring

SoSE workers

Appointment of two SoSE workers with relevant placemaking knowledge as part of the agency's initial team (one in Dumfries and Galloway and one in the Scottish Borders). These workers would support the Working Group and be responsible for management of the Development Fund. The costs and expenses for the SoSE workers would sit within SoSE. These workers would be accessible and based in relevant premises to Creative Placemaking work. We propose the Dumfries and Galloway worker to be based at The Oven in Dumfries that is being developed as part of Midsteeples Quarter.

Working Group

The Working Group will be made up of six people from organisations across the South of Scotland (three in Dumfries and Galloway and three in the Scottish Borders) whose work can be identified within Creative Placemaking. The main function of the Working Group is to lead the next stage of development for a placemaking strand of support within SoSE and pilot a working structure that can test activity and support models through a Program of Activity. The Working Group will operate as a collective bringing the skills, knowledge and resource of their organisations, and networks, to connect relative work and activity across Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders. The Working Group will explore methods of shared learning, joined-up working and collaboration to build a network of skills and resource in Creative Placemaking for the South of Scotland.

The Working Group will work with support agencies regionally (SoSE, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Third Sector D&G, Creative Arts Business Network, DG Unlimited, etc.) and nationally (Development Trusts Association Scotland, Skills Development Scotland, Creative Scotland, Community Land Scotland) to further inform and support this model.

The group will follow a values-based process of working that is committed to robust processes of interrogation and mechanisms of involvement that allows for community-led and localised decision-making.

Proposed PROGRAM of activity and resource

A three year Program of Activity will build on existing and emerging community/creative enterprise work to support and grow activities/projects in Creative Placemaking. It will support new spaces and initiatives in community-led decision-making and planning of our places as well as opportunities for shared learning and skills development.

The program of activity will be funded through the Development Fund with projects going through a grant application phase for this with support from the Working Group.

The criteria for activities/projects will be to support and grow work that address areas of "need" identified through our Embers research and pilot ideas/work in effective Creative Placemaking that:

- Supports the building of healthy and resilient communities for long-term social benefit

- Provides localised solutions that consider smaller place-based economies
- Encourages learning, community development and social enterprise
- Sustains the engagement of a wide range of people in placemaking activity
- Connects people to local decision-making and community-led planning
- Encourages holistic approaches to “growth”
- Is community-led (with support from local and national agencies)
- Uses partnership and collaborative working across public, private and third sectors
- Connects grassroots activity to wider strategic outcomes
- Creates an environment in which innovation and new enterprise can flourish

Additional activity will include an in-depth audit of creative and culturally-led regeneration work to build on the learning of Embers through case studies of projects, groups and organisations across Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders.

Development Fund

The Development Fund will be set up and managed by the Working Group, with administrative support from SoSE, to resource the Program of Activity as it develops. This will be a ring-fenced pot of money accessed by a grant application process to pilot a specific strand of funding for Creative Placemaking work for the South of Scotland. Types of activity will include:

- Support for development and testing of Creative Placemaking ideas in communities
- Strengthening and deepening existing organisations/ practice for the benefit of the wider network
- Support for the use of buildings in communities that operate as hubs/HQ’s for Creative Placemaking. This in synergy with community ownership support from SoSE
- Long-term Creative Placemaking initiatives
- Core support for emerging Creative Placemaking organisations
- Advocacy, profile raising and policy work
- Baseline research into existing activity in sector
- Innovative evaluation and monitoring
- Sharing and dissemination regionally, nationally and internationally.

The mechanism for administration of funds will be developed in collaboration with the new SoSE agency and key stakeholders (Creative Placemaking organisations) to agree a structure that is best suited to delivery.



Evaluation and Monitoring

A robust system of evaluation, monitoring and data collection will accompany the 3 year pilot with structured reflection and learning with participants and stakeholders in the final year. Evaluation will focus on growing a local understanding, using qualitative and quantitative data, of the wider social impact of effective Creative Placemaking in the South of Scotland.

This piece of work will serve the dual purpose of evaluating the piloted model/framework of support to inform the next phase and start to grow a resource of local knowledge and learning that is accessible for groups and organisations in Creative Placemaking work. A localised understanding of the wider social impact of Creative Placemaking work for our communities will build opportunity for long-term cross-sector collaboration and economic sustainability.

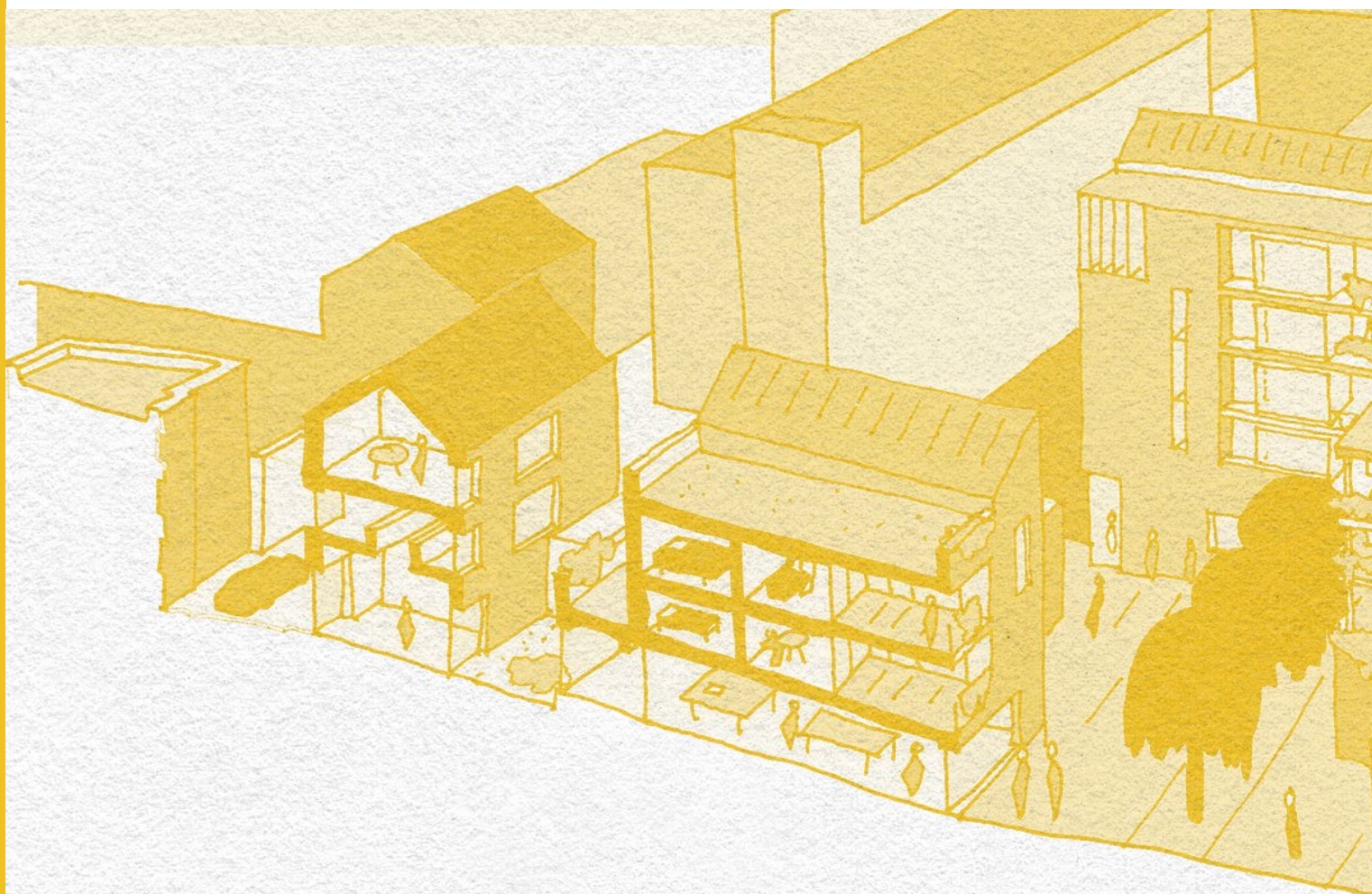
...detail

The Working Group will recruit then work with a research consultant(s) with expertise in evaluation and the culture and Creative Industries. The consultant will conduct an in-depth evaluation of the Framework

of Support being piloted, including its governance structure, how well it facilitates cross-sector working, and how effectively it delivers the support needed by Creative Placemaking organisations. This would be a transparent and iterative process involving:

- input from a wide range of stakeholders
- an interim report published early enough to inform the pilot's progress
- structured reflection and learning events with participants and stakeholders in the final year

Alongside this, the consultant will develop an impact evaluation framework for any Creative Placemaking organisation in the region. This would include guidance on straight forward qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. This framework will need to be highly adaptable and allow for a wide range of social and economic outcomes to be selected, based on each organisation's aims.



BUDGET:

- **Practice-based Working Group: 6 x part-time workers, paid 1 day per week**

£10 400 each x 6 = £62 400 per annum

- **Expenses and operations budget to facilitate Working Group**

£20 000 per annum

- **Development Fund for Programme of Activity**

Year 1: £300 000

Year 2: £700 000

Year 3: £500 000

- **Evaluation and Monitoring**

Year 1: £15 000

Year 2: £15 000

Year 3: £15 000

Year 1: £400 000

Year 2: £800 000

Year 3: £600 000

TOTAL: £1,800,000





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Key Contributors

Local GROUPS and ORGANISATIONS:

A' the Airts:

www.atheairts.org.uk

A' The Airts is a community arts space in Sanquhar working to contribute to the social, economic and cultural well-being of the communities of Upper Nithsdale by actively encouraging participation in a range of arts, crafts and related activities.

Annan Harbour Action Group:

www.annanharbouractiongroup.co.uk

A local charity working towards the re-development of Annan harbour and surrounding area as a community asset to become a hub for events and activities which celebrate the maritime heritage, history and natural environment.

Birchvale Theatre Group (Old School Project):

www.birchvaletheatre.co.uk

The Birchvale Theatre is a small community venue providing a local hub for drama, film, and entertainment. It is currently working to develop the Old School in Dalbeattie for future use for itself and the wider the community.

Cample Line:

www.campleline.org.uk

Located in rural south west Scotland near Thornhill and Closeburn, Cample Line is an independent arts organisation. We present contemporary visual art and film of international scope as part of a wide-ranging public program for local people and visitors from further afield.

CatStrand (GCAT):

www.catstrand.com

Glenkens Community and Arts Trust (GCAT) develops projects focused on wellbeing and sustainability using arts, culture and community engagement. The CatStrand acts as the HQ of GCAT and a cultural hub for Glenkens with a program of high quality, accessible arts and creative learning opportunities.

Creetown Initiative:

www.creetowninitiative.co.uk

Creetown Initiative is a charity formed by local residents to improve services and quality of life for people living in the Kirkmabreck Parish. Activity includes projects for our village and surrounding area and consultancy work for other communities and organisations around D&G and further afield in Scotland.

Dumfries Music Conference:

www.dumfriesmusicconference.com

We are a community interest organisation to galvanise the vibrant Dumfries & Galloway music scene and give it a voice on a national level. We support local artists alongside high quality national acts and run a program of workshops and events for the benefit of Dumfries and the surrounding area.

Kirkcudbright Art & Craft Trail:

www.artandcraftstrail.com

Kirkcudbright Art and Crafts Trail is a voluntarily run trail approaching its 17th year. Our annual event promotes local artists and makers leading you through venues and studios all through Kirkcudbright with activities for all the family.

Kircudbright Development Trust: www.kircudbrightdevelopmenttrust.org
Kircudbright Development Trust (KDT) is a community run and managed charity supporting local groups to develop new and improved community projects for their area. We provide resources for community groups to make grant applications to local and national bodies and advise and support the development of local projects.

Langholm Initiative: www.langholminitiative.org.uk
We are a community development trust for Eskdale working to make our area a better place to live, work and visit for over 25 years. We support the people and places that need it most working with partners locally, regionally and nationally to offer expertise and guidance through projects and development work.

Lockerbie Old School: www.lockerbieoldschool.co.uk
The Lockerbie Old School is working towards the creation of a multi-use facility for the town to support and enhance the quality of life and wellbeing for our communities through a programme of arts, culture and heritage, skills development and learning.

MidSteeple Quarter (Dumfries High Street Ltd): www.midsteeplequarter.org
Midsteeple Quarter is a Community Benefit Society focused on building a more diverse town centre for Dumfries. The project will see the local community take back control of a group of underused and neglected High Street buildings and refurbish these as a contemporary living, working, socialising, learning and enterprising quarter.

Moat Brae: www.peterpanmoatbrae.org
Moat Brae is Scotland's National Centre for Children's Literature and Storytelling. Based in Dumfries, we aim to be a place which promotes and encourages imagination, creativity and play, for everyone to enjoy, in recognition of its literary, cultural and historical heritage as the birthplace of Peter Pan.

New Galloway Community Enterprises Ltd: www.newgallowaycommunity.shop
A Community Benefit Society that manages our local community shop including 2 self catering flats, a landrette, fuel poverty scheme and other projects to support the community of New Galloway and the Kells. We aim to be part of growing a self-sustaining village with its own income and strong community support for all its residents.

Old School Thornhill www.oldschoolthornhill.com
Old School Thornhill has grown from a small local collective and is working to transform the 'Old School' in Thornhill into an innovative, design-led, community asset. We are working in collaboration with our community, local businesses and Wallace Hall Academy to develop a space that will foster creative collaboration and benefit the village and the surrounding communities.

Outpost Arts: www.outpostarts.co.uk
A charity run from a High Street location in Langholm that delivers an ambitious, contemporary and diverse programme of rural arts. OutPost Arts offers a high quality creative education programme, creative health and well-being opportunities, supports the regeneration of Langholm & Esk Valley and benefits people of all ages and abilities.

Stranraer Development Trust: www.stranraerdevelopmenttrust.co.uk
Stranraer Development Trust was formed by a group of people who were concerned about the downturn of the town. We aim to support sustainable regeneration of our community through projects and events which increase opportunities and revive the sense of pride for local people in Stranraer and what it has to offer.





Local PROJECTS:

Johnston School Project:

www.kirkcudbrightdevelopmenttrust.org/projects/

Project run by Kirkcudbright Development Trust (KDT), The Johnston School project aims to renovate one of the beloved buildings in Kirkcudbright and bring it alive again with activity. Building work has begun and is expected to finish mid 2020.

Creative Futures:

www.creativefuturesll.com

Creative Futures Lochside and Lincluden is a program of activities supported by The Stove Network but independently run by a local team. Its program of activities aim to give local people opportunities to come together, to learn new skills and make a difference to their own lives and the wider community.

Regional ORGANISATIONS/NETWORKS

D&G Arts Festival:

www.dgartsfestival.org.uk

Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival runs a program of activity to bring high quality, world-class productions to audiences across Dumfries & Galloway. We support our communities to stage shows, invest in our performing artists, introduce young people to live performance and engage people of all ages and walks of life.

DG Unlimited:

www.dgunlimited.com

DG Unlimited (DGU) is a membership organisation that works with, and provides a voice for, the region's creative sector. We seek to create Scotland's leading rural arts network by supporting creative practitioners and organisations to help themselves and each other; providing a collective voice; celebrating and nurturing talent, and growing the next generation of creative practitioners.

Third Sector D&G:

www.thirdsectordumgal.org.uk

Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway is a membership organisation with charitable status that exists to promote, support and develop a strong third sector; develop social enterprise; develop volunteers and volunteering; and connect the third sector to community planning.

**Upland (Spring Fling):**www.weareupland.com

Upland is a bold, ambitious, rural-based visual art and craft development organisation based in Dumfries & Galloway, South West Scotland. We nurture, produce and promote visual art, design and craft, and raise the profile of the Creative Industries of our rural area.

Wigtown Book Festival:www.wigtownbookfestival.com

We run a vibrant annual book festival and year round program of activity to develop the literary and cultural wealth of Scotland's National Book Town and its wider region. We aim to be nationally and internationally renowned and to develop Wigtown into a hub for literary and artistic activity and a destination for cultural tourism.

National AGENCIES**Development Trust Association Scotland:**www.dtascot.org.uk

As a membership organisation, the Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS) uses its expertise to inform, support and represent this network of development trusts, facilitating the sharing of knowledge and expertise and encouraging mutualism and co-operation.

Skills Development Scotland:www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk

Across Scotland, we support individuals to build their career management, work-based and employability skills, throughout their career journey, from school, into further learning opportunities and employment.

Creative Scotland:www.creativescotland.com

Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and Creative Industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. We enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and Creative Industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life.



EMBERS - CREATIVE PLACEMAKING
FOR THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

Embers Glossary

The Stove describes itself as having a “Conversational Practice”. We believe that communication is key.

The importance of language and lack of common narrative in this creative place-based work emerged early on in our Embers research. This was particularly apparent when talking about placemaking and creative practice (participatory, socially engaged, co-created) and economic concepts (economies of place, wellbeing economies).

This Glossary started as a playful way to help define meaning within the context of this document using found and borrowed references to contribute to a wider conversation and more coherent narrative for this type of work.

Artist

An artist is someone who creates things with imagination and with skill¹. At the Stove, we believe that we can all practice art, and that art is a gateway for people to better understand their lives, their sense of place and their rights².

‘We have a tiny minority of people calling themselves artists. I am recommending that everyone should be an artist. I am not recommending in a spirit of dilettantism, but as the only prevention of a vast neurosis which will overcome a wholly mechanized and nationalized civilization.’ - Herbert Read 1955

Assets

Assets are the things we have that are valuable. An asset can be tangible or intangible, and can have economic, social or environmental value (or all three).

All people and communities are rich in assets. Working in an asset-based way means trusting that the unique mix of strengths within each community can be used to develop solutions best suited to the challenges they face.

Co-creation

Co-creation encourages every individual to activate their creative potential and realise their own ability

to make change. It is a co-operative process in which people with diverse experiences, skills and knowledge come together and work in non-hierarchical ways to address a common issue, and which enables people and communities to be actively involved in shaping the things which impact their lives.

It shifts power, resource and ownership towards the people the work is intended to benefit, as opposed to the traditional ‘top down’ approach³.

Collaboration

Collaboration involves dialogue between two or more parties who work together towards a shared goal. It is an open and creative process that draws on the strengths of all involved.

Meaningful collaboration can be defined as allowing for those involved to work together in an open and creative process where all engaged are able to shape the direction of the work with equal measure.

Commons

The commons refers to the assets and property of the people that we hold as a collective: our shared environmental (including the built environment), social and cultural wealth.

¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/artist>

² <https://thestove.org/programmers-report-the-outside-in/>

³ <http://www.cocreatingchange.org.uk/about/>

Community

Community means a group of people connected by a shared interest – it could be where they live, an aspect of their identity, or around a shared hobby⁴. We are all simultaneously part of many communities.

Community art

'Community art is the creation of art as a human right, by professional and non-professional artists and individuals, co-operating as equals, for purposes and to standards they set together, and whose processes, products and outcomes cannot be known in advance⁵.'
- A Restless Art by François Matarasso

This differentiates from participatory or socially engaged art specifically in that everyone involved has the same rights within the process, it is people learning to create art together.

Conversation

Conversation is an ongoing discussion between different groups in which ideas are informally exchanged⁶.

At The Stove, we consider ourselves to be taking part in, and stewarding, an ongoing local conversation about the purpose of the places we live and work in. We think the three ingredients of a good conversation are:

- collaboration
- a willingness to take risks
- to put people first

Creativity

Creativity is the use of imagination and original thinking to make something new or reimagine something differently⁷. It is part of everyday life, and can be applied in any field.

When we think and act creatively, we are taking a risk by expressing something original – creativity is what allows change to happen.

Culture

Culture means the ideas and practices that are particular to a place or to a group of people however small or large⁸.

The Scottish Government defines cultures as reflecting the past, challenging the present, and shaping in the future⁹. Their newly published Culture Strategy places creativity at the heart of community progress and recognises the value of thriving unique local cultures.

Cultural Democracy

'Let us tell the story...We believe that people have the right to create their own culture.'

- Campaign for Cultural Democracy 1984¹⁰

The term Cultural Democracy has a long history and has been coming back into recent use. The concept emerged in the 1970's though its story goes further back than that.

The definition of Cultural Democracy by François Matarasso in 'A Restless Art' states: 'Cultural Democracy is the right and capability to participate fully, freely and equally in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and create, publish and distribute artistic work.'¹¹

Development

Development refers to the support offered to places or sectors to encourage the best use of existing assets. Development can be led by the community itself through a process of internal reflection, organising and action, as well as being supported by external agencies and interventions.

Asset-based development is built on the belief that every community already has the assets it needs to thrive, they just might not be recognised yet¹².

Grassroots

Working on a grassroots level involves community action on local priorities. It relates to work that amplifies a community's voice, organising to increase community power, and championing the right of communities to take action on issues that affect them.

At The Stove we talk about grassroots work and activity coming from, and for, our communities rather than activities that are brought in, or done to, or even just with communities.

⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/section/1/enacted>

⁵ <https://arestlessart.com/the-book/download-a-digital-copy/>

⁶ <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/conversation>

⁷ <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/creative>

⁸ <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/culture>

⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/culture-strategy-scotland/>

¹⁰ Dickson 1995: 24

¹¹ <https://arestlessart.com/the-book/download-a-digital-copy/>

¹² <https://www.nurtureddevelopment.org/asset-based-community-development/>

Holistic

A holistic approach involves recognising and respecting the complex relationships that are at play within a system. It celebrates and seeks to support the whole system rather than individual parts or players.

Innovation

Innovation is the production of new ideas and new activities. These new ideas can progress thinking across any field – economics, social policy, technology¹³. Innovation disrupts the status quo and leads to new ways of working.

The Scottish Government has a statement of intent to become a world leading entrepreneurial and innovative nation¹⁴ through investing in economic enterprise.

Inclusion

Inclusion means that all people are able to share in positive outcomes, regardless of their socioeconomic status, race, gender, abilities, sexuality or other characteristics.

Inclusive practice means removing the barriers that stop people being able to make the most of opportunities.

Leadership

Leadership is a process of influencing people to act together towards a shared purpose, and is not about someone's position in a hierarchy. Leadership can often be found in unexpected places and emerge as a project progresses and confidence grows.

Participatory art

Is an approach to making art which engages public participation in the creative process, letting them become co-authors and editors of the work.

As defined by François Matarasso in 'A Restless Art': 'Participatory art is the creation of art by professional and non-professional artists'. It has two defining characteristics: that participatory art involves the creation of art, in many varied forms, and that everyone involved in the artistic act is an artist. 'Everyone involved is an artist because an artist is defined by the act of making art.' ¹⁵

It demands that we think, feel, talk and share with other people.

Permission

Permission means receiving approval to act¹⁶. We think of permission as a process. Rather than a one-off decision, people involved in regeneration require the ongoing permission of the community in order to make changes. Research has shown that community-led approaches to regeneration which prioritise the permission of local people, bring benefits to social cohesion including perceived social support, community esteem and self-esteem¹⁷.

Place-based

Place-based approaches bring together a range of partners and programmes to improve outcomes for an area¹⁸. We understand place-based working to be about coming up with locally specific solutions to societal challenges.

What Works Scotland describes place-based working as: 'A community of people bound together because of where they live, work or spend a considerable proportion of their time, come together to make changes to that place which they believe will improve the physical, social or economic environment and in doing so tackle issues of inequality.'¹⁹

Place-based economies

Place-based economies build on the particular characteristics of a geographical area, drawing on its unique assets and making the most of its strengths. Creating place-based economies enables regional cohesion by supporting places to design solutions best suited to them, rather than a one-size-fits-all model.

Placemaking²⁰

Placemaking means developing spaces that work for communities, encouraging connection and creativity for the common good²¹.

Placemaking can be used to refer to good urban design²², but while placemaking includes good urban design, it also refers to the creation of places that encourage strong and vibrant community interactions.

¹³ <https://www2.gov.scot/resource/0043/00434672.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/supporting-business/innovation-and-entrepreneurship/>

¹⁵ <https://arestlessart.com/the-book/download-a-digital-copy>

¹⁶ <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/permission>

¹⁷ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ejsp.2296>

¹⁸ <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/topics/place-based-approaches/>

¹⁹ <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/RationalesforPlacebasedApproachesinScotland.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/community-placemaking>

²¹ <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

²² <https://www.thedeveloperlove.com/places/why-does-every-article-about-placemaking-begin-with-a-definition-of-placemaking>

Planning (community)

Planning is about making the best use of land for housing, business, industrial, agriculture and recreation. It is about making places where people want to live, work and play, places which are safe and inviting, and places which are sustainable.

In Scotland, community planning encourages collaboration between public services and communities, built on shared targets for local priorities. There is a Community Planning Partnership for each local authority area. Local Outcome Improvement Plans ('LOIPs') are the strategy for the whole area, and Locality Plans target more specific places²³. Local Place Plans are also soon to be introduced in Scotland which will give communities more statutory powers in planning."²⁴

Socially-engaged

Socially-engaged relates to participation in collective activities which relate to the identity, challenges, of a place or community.

Socially-engaged arts practice, also referred to as social practice or socially engaged art, is described by the Tate as one that can include any artform and which involves people and communities in debate, collaboration or social interaction.²⁵

The participatory element of socially engaged practice, is key, with the artworks created often holding equal or less importance to the collaborative act of creating them.

Social enterprise

Social enterprises are businesses with a social mission, who use their profits for the common good.

Sustainability

Sustainability means meeting the needs we have today without compromising our ability to meet the needs we will have tomorrow. In regeneration, sustainability means creating communities that are inclusive, diverse, well-serviced and future-proofed.²⁶

Regeneration

Regeneration means the development of a local area, including the activities that happen there, to improve the outcomes of the communities that use it.

According to the Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum, successful regeneration comes from the unique identity of a place and its people; involves those people meaningfully in planning; is based on long-term partnerships over many years; and links local assets with wider national agendas.²⁷

Regenerative

Regenerative processes are the social and economic practices that restore and replenish natural and human systems, in contrast with extractive processes which extract and use up resources.²⁸

Wellbeing

Wellbeing means living well, and living well together. Societal wellbeing is about encapsulating all the things we need to have a good society now and in the future. It brings together environmental, social, and democratic outcomes.

Societal wellbeing means that the economy and public services are to the goals of societal wellbeing, not ends in themselves.²⁹

²³ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/community-planning/>

²⁴ <https://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/community/community-place-plans/what-are-place-plans/community-action-plans>

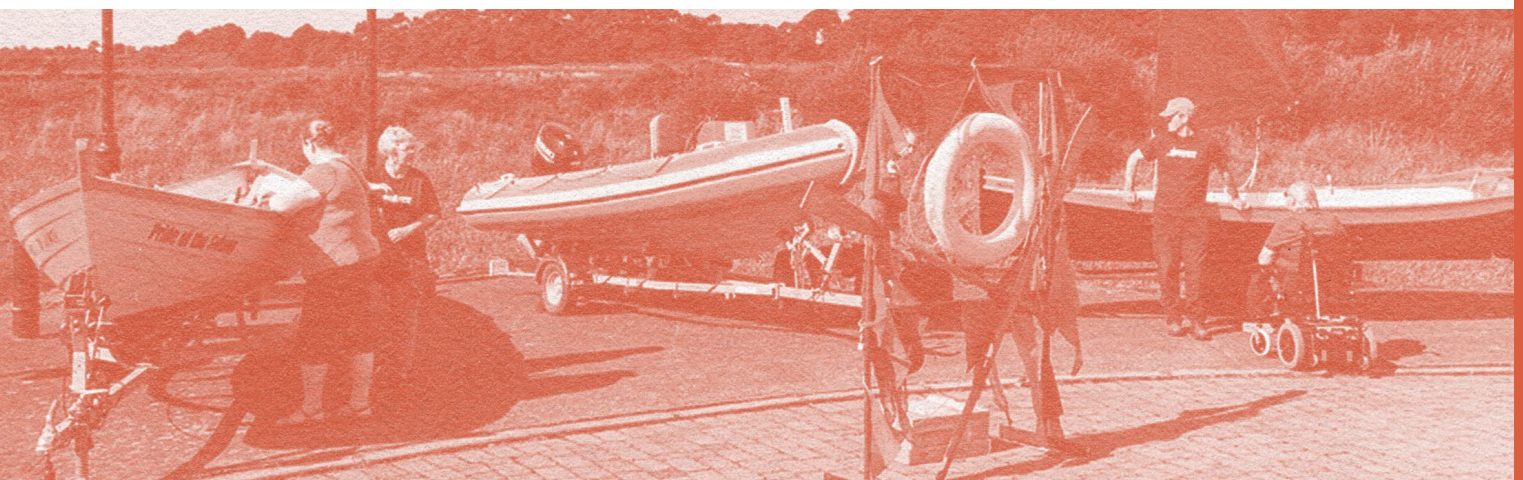
²⁵ <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/socially-engaged-practice>

²⁶ <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/42799/1/42799.pdf>

²⁷ <https://www.surf.scot/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/SURF-2016-Manifesto-Final-Draft.pdf>

²⁸ <https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/reports/rsa-ffcc-our-future-in-the-land.pdf>

²⁹ <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/what-should-be-in-a-wellbeing-law-infographic/>





EMBERS - CREATIVE PLACEMAKING
FOR THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

MidSteeple Quarter Case Study

This case study is an expanded version of a chapter of the Turnaround Towns UK report¹, which draws together nine stories of towns around the United Kingdom who are transforming their futures. The Carnegie UK Trust has been supporting the Stove (an artist-led community hub and Development Trust in Dumfries) to share their learning about community and town development. At the Carnegie UK Trust, we believe towns are home to vibrant and innovative communities, and we are working to support towns and regional bodies to develop strategies to improve the wellbeing of their places.

The Carnegie UK Trust has offered in-kind support to the Stove in the Embers project, which seeks to map, advocate for and support the burgeoning movement of creative place-makers in Dumfries and Galloway. As part of this partnership the Carnegie UK Trust have created a case study of the Stove's approach to town regeneration.

Introduction

Dumfries is a town of just over 30,000 people in Dumfries and Galloway in the south of Scotland. The town is bisected by the River Nith, which then runs on to the Solway Firth. Dumfries is a Royal Burgh and market town, and was once home to the poet Robert Burns. The town hosts the Crichton university campus, shared by the University of the West of Scotland, the University of Glasgow, and Dumfries and Galloway College.

What the situation was

Dumfries town centre grew around a thriving market, a busy port, and a high street that was home to many residents. The combination of commercial, industrial and residential use bought vitality to the market town known as 'The Queen of the South'.

Through the latter decades of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, the town centre of Dumfries suffered. Residents moved out of the town centre, shopping habits changes, and then a recession challenged the viability of the retailers who dominated the high street.

In 2010 a headline proclaimed Dumfries had changed 'from clone town to ghost town', transforming from a street dominated by chain retailers to a street with increasingly empty shop fronts². As independents had given way to chains, the chains themselves appeared increasingly vulnerable. There were no longer people living on the high street. In the evening, the formerly vibrant town appeared deserted.

What it became

Today Dumfries high street is home to The Stove Network, the first artist-led Community Development Trust in the UK. The Stove Network (aka The Stove) is working with the community and using creativity to reinvigorate public life in the town centre.

Based at 100 High Street - which incorporates a ground floor café and outdoor area, first floor exhibition space and third floor workspace - The Stove has been an engine of creativity in the town since 2011 when it secured its premises.

In 2016, The Stove won a Scotland's Regeneration Forum (SURF) Award in Creative Regeneration for

¹ <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/project/turnaround-towns/>

² NEF (2010) Reimagining the High Street. Available at: https://b3cdn.net/nefoundation/1da089b4b1e66ba2b3_v8m6b0c0w.pdf

its work in renewing the town centre of Dumfries. The Network has now given rise to plans for a new town block called the Midsteeple Quarter: a project to regenerate the town centre by bringing homes and affordable enterprise space back to the high street. The Midsteeple Quarter project outlines an alternative purpose for town high streets, where creativity and culture complement the commercial role of the town centre.

Although for now there are still 'To let' signs and empty windows in Dumfries town centre, there is also a regular programme of cultural and community events, opportunities for creative employment, and soon there will be homes on the high street.

How it happened

The Stove supports the local creative economy and network of creative practitioners in the region. It also acts as a forum to involve the community in planning and the development of Dumfries as a thriving town to live in.

Stove as town artist

The Stove began in 2011 as a collective of local artists who came together to take on responsibility of a high street property.

The Chamber of Commerce had bought 100 High St to provide a cultural showcase for Dumfries. The plan did not reach fruition, and faced with the prospect of losing the chance of a centrally located cultural hub, the Stove Network presented an alternate plan to the Council. The property would become a public arts centre, bringing life back to the town centre by anchoring creativity and community activity in the high street.

The property was transferred to Dumfries and Galloway Council free of charge, who now lease it to the Stove Network long term. Since reopening the hub in 2015, 100 High Street provides The Stove with a high street building from which to encourage conversations within the community.

Supporting the creative economy

The Stove offers employment and career development opportunities to artists and creative professionals within the region. It provides direct employment to a team of curators and staff, offers opportunities for one off commissions and acts as an incubator to creative young people in the area. Since 2011, it has been responsible for supporting the development of three new arts organisations: Environmental Arts Festival Scotland, Dumfries Music Conference, and D-LUX Festival of Lighting.

Creative, engaging, flexible work in the town gives people who may have moved opportunities to come home for, as well as giving young people looking for work experience in the Creative Industries a reason to stay. Blueprint 100 offers young people curatorial experience and support over a year, in which they develop the practical application of their skills and contribute to the Stove's programme of public events.

By offering varied employment opportunities with different amounts of time commitment and at different levels, people are able to work with The Stove alongside their own creative practice, alongside another job or education commitment. The network and the hub at 100 High Street anchors professional artistic practice in the town and the region. Retaining creative talent leads to a multiplier effect nurturing a vibrant local creative economy.

Revitalising Dumfries

From the outset, The Stove has been dedicated to revitalising the town through harnessing the strength of the local community and local artists. The Stove facilitates creativity in everyday spaces through public art and events in the town centre, as well as providing a hub for community activities at 100 High Street.

The role of the artist, and artistic skills, are vital in the way that The Stove connects with the community. Articulated as artist-led practice, The Stove uses the creative production of a curator to encourage the community-led development of ideas for the town.

The Stove Network brings playfulness, imagination, conversation and a willingness to take risks to community-led development, with curators acting as both an instigator and facilitator, hosting community discussions about the future of the town, and maintaining a focus on practical actions from the small to the substantial.

For example, as part of the 'Inbetween: Dumfries' festival in 2012, artist Hannah Brackston³ developed 'Nithscoping': a project that explored the relationship of people in Dumfries with the River Nith. Formed of a bespoke kit and facilitated by the artist, around 250 people took part in the project, which invited people to switch their view of a familiar feature of the town by opening up a close view of the riverbed. This challenged views on river management practices as well as the cultural significance of the Nith.

The approach the Stove uses draws on their own connection to the town – the artists who campaigned for 100 High Street in 2011, and the curatorial team (joint Creative Directors for The Stove) are rooted in the community. The Stove offers a model of artist-led regeneration that builds upwards from the community. It isn't a model of regeneration that is community consulted or community engaged, but instead it is

³ <https://www.hannahbrackston.co.uk/nithscoping>

created by the community itself.

The Stove's activities in the town are for their home audience, and reflect their understanding of their hometown, rather than for an external image of Dumfries. Together the community and the artists diagnose the problems, imagine solutions, and carve out opportunities to make change.

Housing for the high street

Since 2011, many of The Stove Network projects facilitated discussion with local people about the future of Dumfries town centre, recognising that retail no longer brings the vibrancy the community needs.

The absence of homes on the high street was a recurring theme in these conversations. Whereas now only one person permanently lived above the high street, people could remember when families inhabited the flats above the shops, creating a bustling community. The residents brought life to the high street as well as custom to the shops.

Vision – 'a beating heart for the town'

In 2016, The Stove commissioned 'A House on the High Street'⁴, a film that explored this change. A screening organised by a community member sparked the idea of a town centre block owned and regenerated by the community, bringing vacant and underused properties back to life. The audience involved local leaders including senior members of the local authority and nearby universities. They formed a partnership to scope out the practicalities of a community-owned high street block.

'A brighter future for the high street isn't all about shops and shopping. It's about people.'

'The future's definitely not in retail is it; I think that's fairly obvious. You should come here for the experience, you should be able to learn new skills, you should be able to try things out... It should be a unique experience that you come here for, not a new top, or sponges.'

The area of the high street the partnership identified is called 'Midsteeple Quarter' after the the Grade A listed Midsteeple building that dominates the town centre. Plans for the block will diversify the high street, combining homes with enterprise spaces for working, making and selling. The project's multiple uses will give the community control over commercial and creative opportunities in the high street, as well as giving them power to tackle the housing pressure faced in the town.

In 2018, the project launched as a Community Benefit Society, accompanied by the first outing of a new group of volunteers, the Doon Toon Army.

Due to the complexities of high street ownership, many of the vacant properties that first inspired Midsteeple Quarter were out of reach – not on the market or valued beyond the community's financial means. Instead, they worked with the council to secure an Asset Transfer of the one publicly owned property in the block – 135-139 High Street, which is now known as The Oven.

With ownership of their first property, the Midsteeple Quarter launched a national architectural competition to propose how the site would look and work, in partnership with Glasgow School of Architecture. The winning design, voted for by the community, uses The Oven as the flagship property.

Right now – 'creative caretaking'

As the site is pending development, the building is in a phase of 'creative caretaking'. This uses the downstairs space to continue the conversation about the town centre through hosting events and exhibitions.

As part of the D-LUX light festival in 2018, and supported by Dumfries and Galloway Council, an installation called 'Whose Hoose is This?' projected films into the upper windows of the building, controlled juke-box style by passers-by. The title of the installation adorns the shop front still, provoking passers-by to reconsider the use of the building.

As well as directly addressing the future of the Midsteeple Quarter project, the Bakers Oven works as a flexible space for community use, such as hosting the Dumfries Women Signwriters Squad and a pop-up flea market.

In 2019, a crowdfunding campaign to purchase two additional properties raised over £23,000 in 28 days. Though ultimately unsuccessful at auction, the rapid reaction to the opportunity to buy these properties demonstrated the commitment of the community to the project.

Lessons: Midsteeple Quarter...

...uses different funding pots to build community wealth

Midsteeple Quarter (and the Stove Network that first developed the project) has enjoyed a positive relationship with local and national government who are keen to see the town centre revitalised. Following the Midsteeple Quarter proposition, the council created a Town Centre Living Fund of £1 million pounds, and the project successfully bid for funds to create the Community Benefit Society that would deliver the overall project and the initial design stage of Phase 1 'The Oven'. The Midsteeple Quarter project

⁴ <https://vimeo.com/160872735>

has also accessed funding from philanthropic trusts, Creative Scotland and Scottish Government, as well as the financial support of their community membership.

The broad appeal of the project – to restore the high street, to develop homes and space for the community, to offer affordable workspace and to support a cultural offer in the town centre – means a variety of funding opportunities can be accessed.

The initial public investment has secured a lasting asset owned by the community. This will become a financially sustainable source of community wealth providing homes and enterprise space and contributing to a thriving and creative high street.

... influences local and national policy to secure support and create opportunities

The Midsteeple Quarter project demonstrates many of the principles promoted by the Scottish Government – localism, community empowerment and ownership, inclusive growth, and place-based working.

However, due to the innovative nature of the project – the first community-owned development of a high street – the project is navigating a legislative and policy landscape not necessarily built for the challenge. While Community Asset Transfer allowed The Oven to be transferred to the Community Benefit Society, as the rest of the town block is owned privately, application of the existing Community Right to Buy legislation is presenting a challenge in an urban context.

By harnessing the interest shown in their work by politicians and policymakers, the team have been able to advocate for the needs of their pioneering project.

... acts with the permission of the community

The Midsteeple Quarter project is rooted in the deep listening undertaken by The Stove Network within their own community over many years. While clear about the question – what is the purpose of our town centre? – the answers were not pre-formulated. Instead, they grew out of the different events, projects and conversations over five years of development, and continue to grow.

When the idea for Midsteeple Quarter was formulated, the consent of the community was ‘formalised’ in a local survey. The survey asked local people for their opinions about the use of the high street, and the potential development of housing. The response was overwhelmingly positive with a significant response rate. The growing membership (now over 400) and regular open meetings of the Midsteeple Quarter project show the continued momentum of the project.

The Stove Network set out to empower their community to respond to the challenges facing the high street, aided by the skills of the creative community. The project that resulted – the Midsteeple Quarter and The Oven – remains community-led.

... stewards an ongoing, local conversation

The Midsteeple Quarter project grew out of the Stove’s commitment to a cycle of questioning, listening, and responding. The practice of public conversation requires facilitation – a space, information, provocation, recording, and reiteration. The outcome has been the transfer of The Oven and the beginning community-led renewal of the high street.

The creative skills that have allowed this conversation to flourish include a willingness to question the status quo; a commitment to flattening hierarchies; seeking out stories and experiences; close observation and attention; and an ability to speak both relationally and practically⁵. For Dumfries, the Stove Network have stewarded their local conversation into a tangible outcome – local ownership of the high street.

... is open to experimenting and committed to action

The Midsteeple Quarter project grew from a commitment to action. This requires a willingness to take risks and to experiment.

Instead of seeking a single silver bullet for the town, regular public interventions under the direction of the curatorial team allow the community to be surprised, for excitement to grow, and to spark other ideas.

The excitement of community events, which enliven public spaces and bring the community together, leads to the ambitious thinking needed for a local group to plan a new town quarter and take ownership of a high street building. It is the cumulative bustle of public creativity over a number of years that signals a change for the town centre.

Conclusion

The Stove’s model of artist-led practice combines creativity and community, and offers lessons for those seeking to engage people in the future of their town.

The work of The Stove has brought employment opportunities to Dumfries, and new assets into community control. Both 100 High Street, the home of The Stove, and The Oven in the Midsteeple Quarter have brought new civic infrastructure to the town centre, repositioning it as the centre for community conversations and cultural life, no longer only reliant on retail.

⁵ Unwin, J. (2018) Kindness, Emotions and Human Relationships; the blind spot in public policy. Available at: <https://www.carne-gieuktrust.org.uk/publications/kindness-emotions-and-human-relationships-the-blind-spot-in-public-policy/>



EMBERS - CREATIVE PLACEMAKING
FOR THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

National Placemaking & Policy References

National Agencies

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Built Environment Forum for Scotland <https://www.befs.org.uk/>

Community Land Scotland <https://www.communitylandscotland.org.uk/>

Creative Scotland <https://www.creativescotland.com/>

DTAS (Development Trust Association Scotland) <https://dtascot.org.uk/>

Electoral Reform Society <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/ers-scotland/>

Green Infrastructure Scotland <https://www.greeninfrastructurescotland.scot/>

Living Streets <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/about-us/scotland>

PAS (Planning Aid Scotland) <https://www.pas.org.uk/>

Paths for All <https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/>

SCDC (The Scottish Community Development Centre) <https://www.scdc.org.uk/>

Scotland's Town Partnership <https://www.scotlandstowns.org/>

Scottish Federation of Housing Associations <https://www.sfha.co.uk/>

Scottish Futures Trust <https://www.scottishfuturestrust.org.uk/>

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Scottish Land Commission <https://landcommission.gov.scot/>

Scottish Land Fund <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/scottish-land-fund>

SURF (Scotland's Urban Regeneration Forum) <https://www.surf.scot/>

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National Policy

Asset Transfer <https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/asset-transfer/>

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Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/18/contents>

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Scottish Government Culture Strategy <https://www.gov.scot/publications/culture-strategy-scotland/>

Scottish Government Housing Strategy <https://www.gov.scot/housing/>

Town Centre First Principle https://www.scotlandstowns.org/town_centre_first_principle

Transport infrastructure <https://economicactionplan.mygov.scot/investment/transport-infrastructure/>

"Where will we go from here? At the Stove we will continue to advocate for the value of our smaller community-focused parts and use activity to test and develop ways of working that invest and support the creativity and innovation around us to grow our local resilience." ¹

- written in response to covid-19 pandemic discussing the importance of the type of local infrastructure and systems Creative Placemaking grows

¹ <https://thestove.org/creative-repositioning-for-the-new-normal/>

A background photograph of a child's hands and feet as they draw on a sidewalk with white chalk. The child is wearing a light-colored jacket and dark shoes. The drawing on the ground appears to be a simple outline of a person or object. The overall tone of the image is warm and creative.

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With thanks to the projects who submitted images for this report.



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