

North West Glasgow Voluntary Sector Network



ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20



8 Wards in
North West
Glasgow



OUR MISSION: The network works to provide a coherent and collective voice for the voluntary sector in North West Glasgow and to make sure power is shared more equally and that the citizens of North West Glasgow are able to access the services they require.

OUR MEMBERSHIP: NWGVSN is a membership organisation of around **200** voluntary sector organisations in North West Glasgow. It is open to all voluntary sector organisations that deliver services and/or support local people in that area. We also have **100** friends of the network, those interested in the work of the network; we especially want to offer a warm welcome to community groups and local people.

OUR GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT: The Network is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, (SCIO) managed by an Executive Committee of 9 individuals who are experienced voluntary sector workers who share their knowledge and wisdom with the network to help it progress and grow. The Committee meets regularly to support and advise the network manager, and staff, plan and steer the direction of the network and use its skills and experience to forward plan. Dougie Taylor kindly offers his time to manage the network manager and for this he deserves a medal....

OUR COMMITTEE: **Liz Atkinson** -Secretary Drumchapel Community Business and KCEDG, **Joyce Bell** G15 Youth Project, **Audrey Edmonds** West Glasgow Childcare Forum, **Jill McKay** North United Communities, **Sandy Busby** Yoker Resource Centre, **Gary Gentles** Knightswood Community Centre, **Peter Lavelle** Glasgow Wood Recycling Project, **Mark McRitchie** Community Central Hall, **Dougie Taylor** Development and Regeneration Drumchapel Life, **Tam Munro** -Chair Peterson Park Tenants Hall

OUR STAFF **Martina Johnston-Gray**, Network Manager, Development Officers, **Amanda Brown**, **Lynn Lovelock**.

Late this year we said goodbye to Rebeka Rodrigo, who contributed so much of her time at the network, our loss is the Yoker Community Campus gain as she is now working in the Included Project. We recently welcomed Amanda Brown, who brings a wealth of experience in youth work, working with asylum seekers & refugees, mentoring and supporting volunteers. Lynn Lovelock continues development work for the network, providing her considerable knowledge of social media, communications and marketing development. She is developing a package of support to help members with their social media.

Network Manager, Martina Johnston-Gray remains in post and mainly focused on advocating & supporting members with Glasgow Community Fund issues this year. Used digital technology to keep in touch with members during lockdown and developing solutions to digital exclusion issues

We would like to thank the staff for continuing to work hard for members over the lockdown under challenging circumstances

CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT

If 2018/19 was eventful, then 2019/20 was even more so, and the Network became a more and more important resource for its members as the year went on.

Clearly a key theme throughout the year was the progress towards the launch of Glasgow City Council's Glasgow Communities Fund, which moved slowly towards a proposed launch date of 1st April 2020, but was eventually delayed until 1st October with the existing Integrated Grant Funding being extended to fill the gap. The uncertainty generated by this process put a huge strain on all of our members, whether they were existing IGF holders, or whether a Glasgow Communities Fund bid was their first funding application to the Council. Throughout the year we kept our members as fully informed as we possibly could, we gathered our members' views on the situation and passed those views to Glasgow City Council.

Throughout the period the Network continued to provide a full, and often bespoke, programme of capacity building and training for our members. Our Newsletter continued to grow in popularity throughout the year, as did our regular Network meetings and events. Now a new threat has emerged, and we move into 2020/21 in the process of redesigning our services to our members in order to keep them informed and, more importantly, included, as we face the Covid-19 pandemic and the social and economic ills that are emerging with it.

I congratulate and thank Martina, Lynn and Rebeka for their sterling efforts throughout the year, and thank my fellow trustees for their continued support and commitment. Finally, I would extend best wishes to all our members as we enter a period unlike anything we have seen before

WHAT DID 2019/20 LOOK LIKE?

North West Glasgow Voluntary Sector Network has been in operation for over 3 years now and we have really enjoyed building stronger relationships with members, working alongside them and providing training to support their staff and volunteers.

It was another year of funding uncertainty, with detail about the new fund to replace the Integrated Fund emerging. From the outset, the Glasgow Communities Fund caused issues for members, with changes in funding criteria, amounts of funding reduced and uncertainty and delays in the application process.

We spent many hours in discussion about the GCF, in network meetings and facilitated events, gathering members views and making sure Glasgow City Council heard their concerns. Looking back on our newsletters and social media it is clear that funding dominated our work last year.

COVID-19 struck in March and the third sector did what they do best, quickly devised ways of supporting the people they serve, offering food, mental health support, clothing, activity packs, online support groups & activities, digital equipment, toys and most importantly someone to talk to.

I believe this challenging period has been an example of the strength, ingenuity and selflessness of our members and the third sector in general.

Martina Johnston Gray

WHAT WE ACHIEVED.....

NETWORK MEETINGS

“Nothing brings people together like good food” Camille Styles, Lifestyle author

We continued with our **bi-monthly network meetings**, providing a space for members to meet, share lunch and discuss the issues important to them. Many of the meetings were taken up with funding discussions and members’ anxiety around the potential consequences.

We also met members in the **‘mini networks’** that are running in some local areas. *Maryhill Together* achieved so much this year and even managed to get Maryhill its own flag! Neil at Glasgow Eco Trust, continued with the *Dumbarton Road Corridor Network*, bringing together local organisations, to share ideas, issues and work together to identify and work on local priorities.

Since COVID-19 we have had to change our meetings and used technology to maintain relationships with members. We began weekly **Cuppa and Catchup zoom meetings** in March 2020, which were well attended as members and network friends wanted a place to catch up, share information, many told us it made them feel less isolated. These meetings will continue until it is safe to meet in person.

We look forward to the time we can share lunch with you again!

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

“Without community service, we would not have a strong quality of life. It is important to the person who serves as well as the recipient. It is a way in which we ourselves grow & develop”.

Dr Dorothy Height, American civil rights and women’s right activist

We are now well established on the agendas of 7 of the 8 area partnerships, ward meetings. With an average of 4 meetings a year, that’s around **28 reports a year!** Our member representatives (Reps) work alongside us to compile reports and let their local area partnership meeting know the current issues in that community.

Our Reps are crucial to the success of our work as they bring their local knowledge, experience and ideas to the meetings and the network. During lockdown the area partnership meetings did not take place, however the network members found other ways to keep in contact with the wider community, by continuing to engage and/or run local networks, identifying local issues and working together to tackle them. Many partnerships were strengthened and new ones created that will continue to benefit communities for years to come. Members formed partnerships with education, health, fellow third sector, community groups and in some cases private sector to provide the support local people needed during COVID-19.

Network members also decided to set up working groups during this time, to look at how community centres, halls and spaces could be opened safely for local people.

None of this work would be possible without the reps, who volunteer their time on top of very demanding 3rd sector jobs. A huge thank you to Tam, Dougie, Jill, Grieg, Jane, Adrienne, Neil, Maryanne, Sharon and Anna. At time of writing, we said goodbye to Greig, Adrienne and welcomed Gordon, Melanie and Julie.

COMMUNICATIONS

“Engage, enlighten, encourage and especially...just be yourself! Social media is a community effort, everyone is an asset”

Susan Cooper, Social media strategist

The network sends out newsletters fortnightly, (with the occasional extras when important information emerges). We have increased subscribers by **50%** this year and sent out over **100** newsletters and communications, containing your news, information, job & volunteer vacancies and network news and updates we wanted to share with you

During lockdown, we began sending out weekly newsletters, in direct response to members telling us that all the different COVID-19 information, sent from so many different sources was confusing. Lynn waded through it all, and sent out the important links, information and legislation in newsletters and on our website blog.

<https://nwgvsn.org.uk/category/blog/>

We also kept in touch on social media, in particular Twitter (and to a lesser extent Facebook) keeping you up-to-date with our news and retweeting your news. Particularly since the issues with GCF and then COVID-19 pandemic, we have also increased followers on twitter by **160%** with more people than ever seeing our tweets. Average monthly impressions (all the times tweets have been seen) has grown to **40,300**.

Thanks to Lynn and her hard work, especially during lockdown.

TRAINING

“It is what we think we know already that often prevents us from learning”

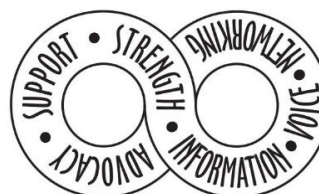
Claude Bernard, French physiologist

We provide two training timetables a year. In October 2019, we provided training courses that our members would best support their work. Training courses including, Stress Management, Funding applications, Finances, First Aid.

During COVID-19 lockdown, it became less about staff's personal development and more about the skills/qualifications/knowledge workers needed to deliver the right services to local people during lockdown.

We worked with Glasgow Clyde College, who devised a Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland, REHIS course, which allowed staff to undertake a basic food hygiene course to allow more workers to get involved with cooked food provision.

We also worked with City of Glasgow College to provide an introduction to COVID issues course, to help inform our members about some of the issues that might occur when trying to open their buildings and services again.



www.twitter.com/NWGVSN



www.facebook.com/NWGVSN



www.nwgvsn.org.uk

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

“I don’t believe in charity. I believe in solidarity. Charity is so vertical. It goes from the top to the bottom. Solidarity is horizontal. It respects the other person. I have a lot to learn from other people”.

Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan journalist, writer and novelist

Where we can, we like to practically support the work of the area partnership meetings, and 2019 offered a perfect opportunity to do so. Anderston/City/Yorkhill Area were looking to refresh their priorities, the issues and concerns they wanted to tackle as a group.

The network was keen that the ideas, concerns and issues of local people were heard, so offered to carry out some community engagement in communities in the ward; Anderston, Townhead and a community of identity - people experiencing homelessness.

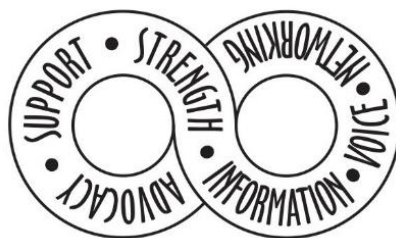
We attended the *Anderston at Christmas* event (thank you to the Pyramid for the warm welcome) where we offered Christmas refreshments, a raffle and a chance to design a Christmas card and asked people about their issues and ideas. We spoke to around 70 people, with the main issues being transport, the environment and lack of shopping and other facilities.

In early 2020, we visited the Marie Trust, a day centre for people experiencing homelessness and other social exclusion (again many thanks for Frances & the team for the warm welcome, for the members for giving up their time to speak to us, and the kitchen staff for the brilliant soup!).

We spoke with around 30 people there, offering incentives to those who got involved, crucially people there wanted to be more involved with decisions and with the community but sometimes felt excluded. They also had concerns about the amount of litter in the city centre, as well as lack of facilities for people who are living in poverty in the city centre.

Lastly in February 2020, we visited Townhead Village Hall, with a pop-up smoothie and milk shake bar, and again opportunities to win prizes. We asked people about the issues in the area and their solutions, in a cold and windy day we still managed to speak to around 25 people. Their main issues were, lack of things for children & young people to do, lack of shops, transport and feeling cut off and environmental issues, including lack of green spaces, litter, lighting issues and road safety & maintenance.

These issues will still exist for the residents/members in these areas, but will have been exacerbated by issues caused by COVID-19, it remains to be seen the long-term interrelated effects of COVID-19 and areas that suffer the effects of poverty.



OUR FUTURE PLANS

- To continue with the development and support of local mini networks, using the great examples in Maryhill and Garscadden and Scotstounhill.
- Undertake a community engagement exercise in communities finding out what local people's priorities are, initially using digital resources until we are able to do it personally.
- Maintain our position in community planning structures and look for other structures that can support the member's work.
- Provide social media 'check in' for members providing advice and support to get the best out of social media.
- Provide training courses that support members as they work through COVID-19 issues and looking to the future, with reduced funding and a potential large increase in demand for services.
- To work with members and those who are/have been digitally excluded to create a long-term solution to lack of IT equipment for those experiencing poverty and other challenges.

SOME SPECIAL THANK YOUS

"Don't let the sun do down without saying thank you to someone, and without admitting to yourself that absolutely no one get this far alone." Stephen King, Novelist

Yoker Resource Centre for continuing to host the network and for the banter and Andrew McCourtney for managing our funding so diligently. Importantly to Sandy Busby, the Mayor of Yoker, who yet again with the creation of the G13/14 project, showed us what a true community activist is. Tam Munro our irrepressible Chair person, who despite the trials and tribulations of funding is supporting the network and so many other organisations. Yoker Community Campus for letting us invade their meeting room for the IT recycling project. To Dougie Taylor for his calm, unflappable, encouraging management and the rest of the board, Mark McRitchie, Peter Lavelle, Jill McKay, Joyce Bell, Liz Atkinson, who's wisdom and experience help the network flourish.

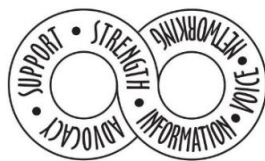
Councillor Michael Cullen, Councillor Eva Murray, Councillor Martin Rhodes, Councillor Jane Morgan, for supporting the network and providing a listening ear.

To Mismak catering, for providing the delicious food and providing catering, especially for community engagement events. Glasgow Clyde College, Sheila & Alan, Gift-tech project, Gary & Glen who have worked in partnership to provide PCs for people who need them. EE who have supported the IT recycling project, especially Wayne Ingram, who made it his mission to help us and get the best deal possible for internet provision. Not forgetting, Chris and Emma from the National Lottery Community Fund Scotland Awards For All for their support and funding for the project. Importantly to all the members and individuals who donated equipment to the IT recycling project, it truly has made a difference. To the Marie Trust, Townhead Village Hall & The Pyramid at Anderston for allowing us into their space and supporting our engagement work.

Our Reps for giving up their time and energy to attend area partnership meetings and every single member, who has given us tea, called in for a chat, offered us a room, saw we needed support, attended our meetings or filled out a survey and during lockdown, who attended our Zoom meetings and stood alongside us to challenge what we knew was not in the best interests of the local people of the North West. Finally thank you to Glasgow City Council Community Planning Partnership for their continued support and funding.

We appreciate and value everything you do and hope that we will be able to work with and for you over the coming year.

WHAT 2019/20 LOOKED LIKE IN PICTURES




North West Glasgow Voluntary Sector Network

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