



ANNUAL REPORT

2023/24

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As we reflect on 2024, it is clear this has been a year of both challenge and opportunity for the North West Glasgow Voluntary Sector Network (NWGVSN). The ongoing cost-of-living crisis, coupled with the continued ripple effects of post-pandemic recovery, has placed immense pressure on our communities and the voluntary sector organisations that tirelessly support them. Yet, in the face of adversity, our members have demonstrated remarkable strength, adaptability, and a renewed commitment to serving the people of North West Glasgow.

Our Coffee and Catchup sessions have continued to be a key element of our membership activities, providing a supportive space for organisations to share experiences, challenges, and innovative solutions. These sessions, alongside our in-person and online meetings, have bolstered the sense of unity across the network, ensuring that no member feels isolated in navigating the complexities of our current climate.

Our Plugged-In IT project has continued to be a shining example of how collaboration can bridge gaps in digital inclusion, and in the process achieved national recognition and support. By sourcing and distributing devices and access to those in need, we have empowered individuals, families, and organisations to access essential services, education, and employment opportunities. This project's success is a testament to the collective efforts of our members, partner organisations, and the dedicated leadership of our Network Manager.

Our training activities, bespoke support, and ward-specific initiatives, have equipped our members with the tools and knowledge to thrive in a rapidly changing environment. The continued growth of our newsletter and the success of our regular events underscore the value of effective communication and shared learning.

Listening to our members has been a guiding principle in our advocacy work. Whilst this takes time and effort we see the impact this has on both those whom are listened to and those whom need to listen!

As we move into 2025, we remain steadfast in our mission to be a collective voice for the voluntary sector in North West Glasgow, to support our members, and to influence the community planning process. The challenges ahead are significant, but so too are the opportunities to innovate, collaborate, and deepen our impact. All this can only be achieved thanks to the dedication and efforts of our staff team, whom we greatly appreciate and rely on.

I also extend my heartfelt thanks to our trustees, funders, supporters, and, most importantly, our members. Your resilience, creativity, and commitment inspire us every day. Together, we will continue to navigate uncertainty and build a stronger, more connected community.

With warm regards,

Mark McRitchie FRSA
Interim Chair



NETWORK MANAGER'S REPORT

The network works to provide a place of belonging for third sector organisations that are based and/or deliver services in the North West of Glasgow. We provide opportunities to meet, update knowledge and skills, share information and collect and share the ideas, issues and opinions of members.

Network staff work hard to build relationships with organisations, providing opportunities for them to share their concerns, innovative work and experiences. This work means we are able to make connections between organisations, areas and wards. We believe that local knowledge and connections are what makes the network unique and best placed to support third sector organisations and community groups locally.

This last year has again shown how hard our members work, how crucial their services are and how passionate they are about alleviating poverty and its effects on the people they work with and for.

Whilst reading the network's achievements this year - scan the QR codes to listen to some carefully chosen music.

Martina Johnston-Gray
Network Manager

With a little help from our friends (The Beatles)

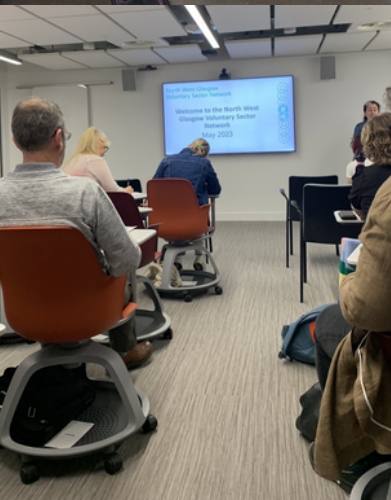


This year we have continued with online **Cuppa & Catchups**, as well as **in-person Network meetings**. We had 7 Cuppa & Catchups, as well as 2 in person meetings. We discussed funding, especially Glasgow City Council's Glasgow Communities Fund. Organisations wanted to discuss the impact of not only the funding decisions but the process and how it felt to be part of it. We met as a network to discuss this so we could pass on our issues and ideas for improvement for the next iteration.

Our working groups continued with our Menopause support group providing a valuable space for network members to get support and share what works for them. We continued to attend local networks to make sure we continued to understand issues and pressures on organisations at a local level. DRC local Network, Drumchapel Breakfast & Blether, Lambhill, Milton & Cadder Connects allowing us to be part of your meetings. We continued to facilitate the Maryhill Together local network that we set up.

We facilitated a Listening Event with elected members and our members where we explored the impact of the Glasgow Communities Fund 2, not only the effect of not being funded or experiencing a cut, but also the stress and uncertainty.

We were also fortunate to have the first exhibition in the new Byres Hub at the Glasgow University Clarice Pears building. Our members got to showcase art and pieces of work that the people they serve had created. We are very fortunate to have Byres Hubs support for the network and our members.



NETWORK MANAGER'S REPORT

A change is gonna come (Sam Cooke)



Advocacy is a large part of what the network strives to do, along side the reps we call for fair funding for organisations, equal power in decision making structures, citizens to be included in any decisions that affect them & for the sector to be recognised for the crucial role its plays in communities.

Alongside our committed Area Partnership reps, network staff attended 34 Area partnership meetings this year. Our reps meet to review the AP report as well as sharing insights into the meetings and offering each other support. We have reps (and some substitutes) in each ward who represent the views, issues and good practice of local organisations. Each rep comes with a lot of experience in the sector, strong local relationships and an understanding of the challenges vulnerable citizens face. We are very fortunate that they give their time to represent the sector in their respective wards

One of the main issues over the last year has been the Neighbourhood Infrastructure Fund, and the need to have meaningful community engagement for it to work. We took this message to all Area Partnership meetings and beyond to highlight the National Standards for Community Engagement and the support meeting members would require to carry out the work.

The network manager also sits on the Community Planning North West Sector Partnership, and has pushed for more links between this meeting and the area partnerships, recognising trends across the wards and requesting that solutions be identified with citizens and local organisations.

The network also has a place on the Glasgow Third Sector Interface Network (GTSIN) - a 'network of networks'- chaired by GCVS. Reps from Glasgow-wide networks come together, to make sure the voices of organisations are heard, to discuss common issues and identify solutions. GTSIN members decide on key messages, that all members will take to the decision making structures they sit on. This is an opportunity to find out about common issues in other areas of the city and learn from networks that represent communities of identity.

Through membership of GTSIN we have been the representative on the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee (WECCE). This committee develops policy, around the above and of particular interest to the sector is its responsibility for Community Planning, including community justice; Glasgow Communities Fund, Cost of living and financial inclusion, Community Engagement, Child Poverty and related community issues. As a rep, we are able to ensure that the voice of the third sector is heard and take issues back to GTSIN and our network.



NETWORK MANAGER'S REPORT

Knowledge is power (The Ethiopians)



Our **newsletter** is one of our main ways of informing our members and friends about, not only what we are up to, but also our members' events and activities. We also feature funding and vacancies and this year you have told us that these are the most useful sections. Members like having a free-of-charge space to advertise your job vacancies and a few of you have also had successful funding applications from funders you saw in our newsletter.



Our website is a good way to inform members and potential members about what we do and how we do it. This year we have given it a bit of a refresh adding new pages, pictures, a funding page and making sure people know where to find information about our Plugged-in project. Look out for more changes next year.

We use Facebook and X to communicate with our members directly, highlight issues and showcase members work. We, like others, have been considering alternative platforms to X, and will be trialling new ones over the coming year.

What difference does it make? (The Smiths)



Sometimes it seems difficult for a network like us to show our impact, as a lot of what we do is to support our members to do their work. This year, we have thought about how we can let you know what difference we have made.

Our work on Glasgow Communities Fund, advocating for a fair and transparent process, helped the council consider the process and how it could be fairer and work better for organisations.

We have supported organisations apply for funding and we know of some who got funding as a direct result of our work.

We also provided an 'all round service' for an organisation who were struggling. We fixed their WIFI, gave them a new computer, helped them transfer their files and updated their governance. That organisation is now able to apply for funding and work more efficiently for the people they serve.

NETWORK MANAGER'S REPORT

What difference does it make? (The Smiths)

We have run 6 free training courses for our members this year - including Emergency First Aid at Work, Wellbeing and online digital workshops.

Our training on 'Social Media strategy' and 'Introduction to Canva' have helped our members communicate more effectively with the people they serve and save money by designing their own marketing materials.



Our **Plugged In** project has continued to make an impact throughout the city, this year we had 246 individual referrals. Some of these were for multiple devices.

Our top referral wards were Drumchapel/Anniesland, Garscadden/Scotstounhill and Canal. Almost 40% of the devices this year went to asylum seekers and refugees. With our devices and free WIFI, they are now more able to contact services for support; their legal representatives; learn or improve their English and importantly contact loved ones back home. We also know that people are now using devices to do their DWP job search, apply for benefits, learn new skills, get support online, communicate with their child's school and many more besides.

The impact of having WIFI and a device cannot be underestimated. We will continue to strive to tackle digital exclusion one device at a time.

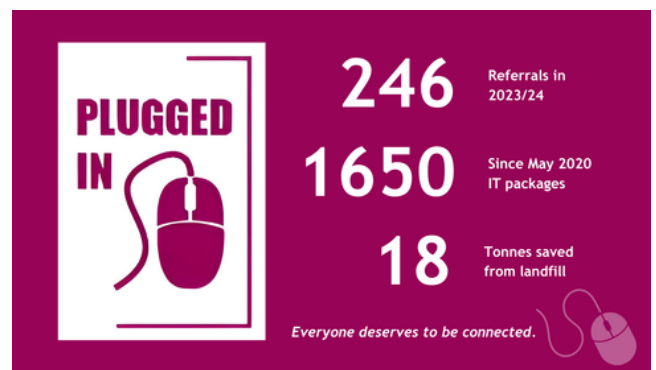
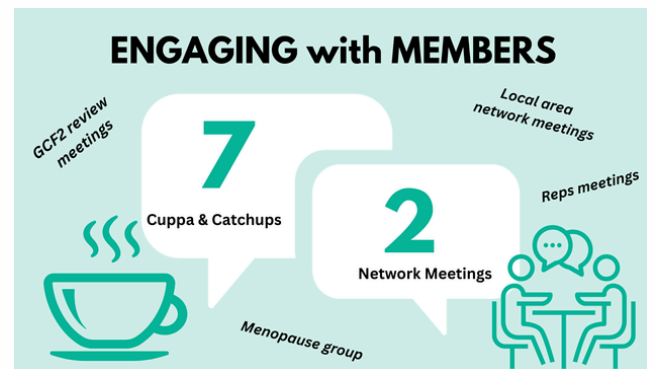
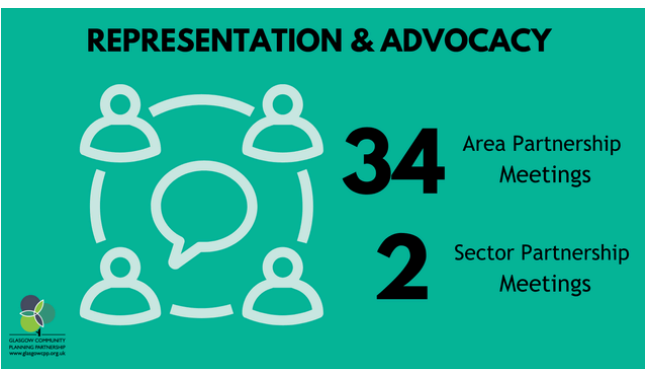
Our relationship with the **University of Glasgow School of Health & Wellbeing** has helped make sure that citizens voices are always considered in research. More practically, our members have access to free meeting rooms and are regularly asked to get involved.

Our relationship with SCVO has strengthened this year and we have been asked to speak about our experience of digital inclusion and how refurbishment could be one of the solutions to the digital divide.

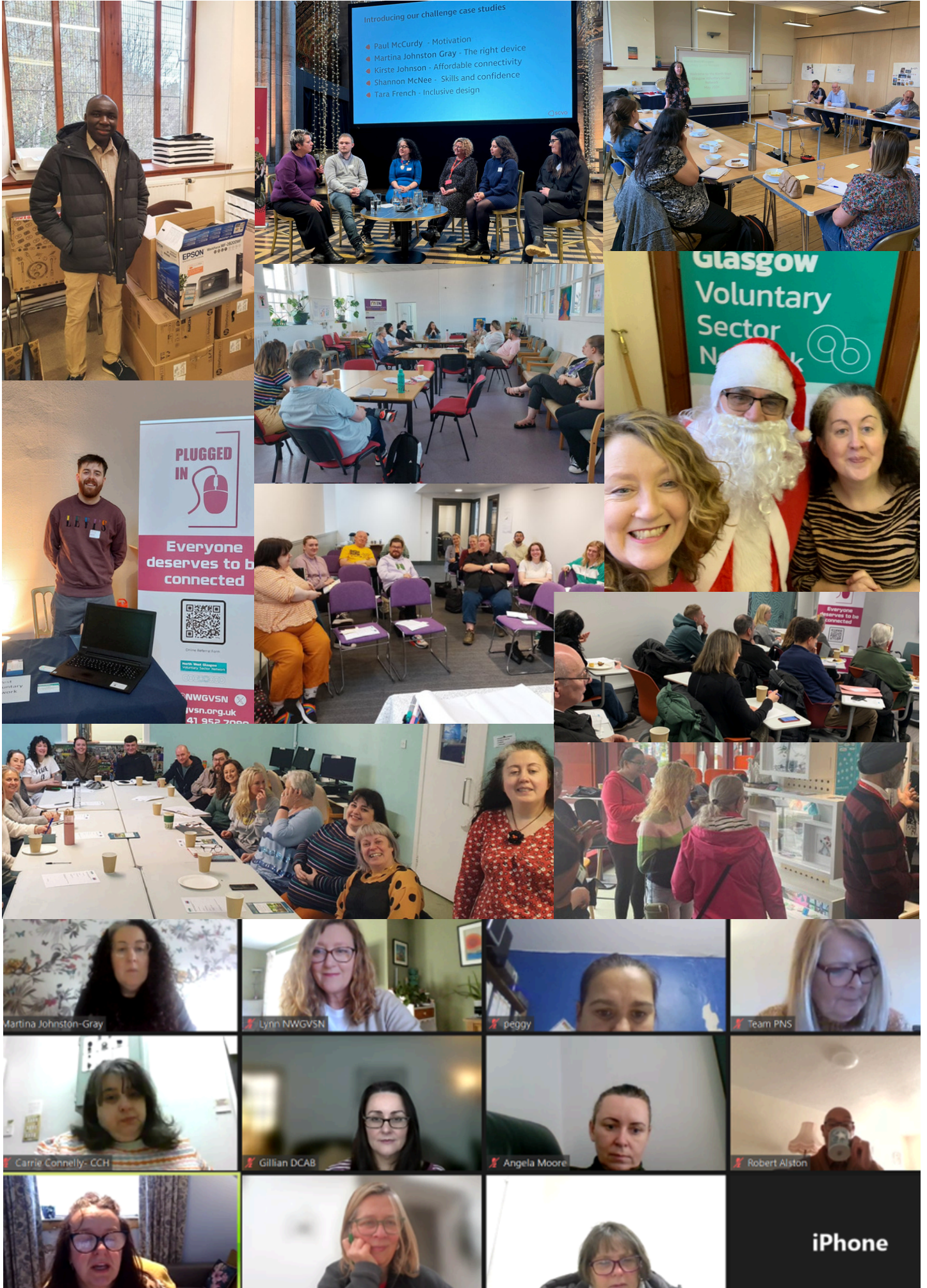
We have also been fortunate to continue to have a close relationship with GCVS, where we are able to make sure the issues of the North West are listened to and taken to the right places, as well as being kept informed of wider issues and opportunities for the city and beyond.



OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE



OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE



THANK YOUS

In this year we lost one of the founders of the network and a stalwart of the third sector- Tam Munro. The impact his work has had and the legacy he leaves behind cannot be underestimated.

Thanks to Andrew and Sandy for providing our finance support and hosting us in Yoker Resource Centre.

Thank you to our Voluntary Sector reps, Anna, Sharon, Jane, Melanie, Dougie, Julie, Kate, Susie, Jill, Marina, Jane and Lainy for your continued dedication & hard work on the Area Partnerships.

To the board Melanie, Gillian, Dougie, Sandy, Lainy, Mark, Gary, Jill and Yaa.

To Network and Plugged In staff staff, Lynn, Gordon, Matthew, Joe and Martina. Thank you to our donators and referrers.

To our funders Glasgow City Council, Garfield Weston, Flight Path fund HSPC. Glasgow University School of Health & Wellbeing, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations & Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector.

And to you members and friends of the network, thank you for sticking with us for another year.



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