



Business Plan 2025-2028
An Arts Centre as a Garden

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction.....	2
Purpose.....	2
History.....	2
Key Creative Achievements	2
Key Strategic & Operational Achievements.....	3
Guiding Principles.....	6
Vision.....	6
Values.....	6
Aims & Objectives.....	7
Community Priorities	7
Annual Themes	8
Talking Forests	8
Ecology of Migration	8
Queering Nature	8
Activating the Themes.....	9
Artists-in-Residence	9
Producers	9
Impact: Place, People, Programme	10
Impact: Annual Activities	11
External Environment.....	13
People	13
Place.....	13
Resourcing	15
Board & Membership.....	15
Team	15
Stakeholders.....	16
Buildings & Grounds	17
Financial Planning.....	19
Key Assumptions	19
Key Changes.....	20
Financial Strategies.....	20
Oversight & Control	21
Forecast 2025-2028.....	22
Monitoring & Evaluation.....	23
Risk Register	24
Summary of Appendices	25
Authorship.....	26

Executive Summary

An Arts Centre as a Garden

This business plan describes the period 2025-2028 at Forgan Arts Centre. During this time the centre's activities and operations will be conceptualised as **An Arts Centre as a Garden**. This is an experiment: imagining an art centre as a garden where a multisensory and sentient ecology of plants, people, and creatures support one another through mutually beneficial relationships and reciprocity.

An Arts Centre as a Garden is an example of **social permaculture**, a concept by which communities look to natural environments to model co-existence and co-creation. Responding to community consultation and applying the social permaculture concept, we have identified three themes as the focus of our activity for the three-year period:

1. Talking Forests
2. Ecology of Migration
3. Queering Nature

Through these themes we will engage with local community concerns; wider social issues; our EDI and environmental aims; the National Performance Framework; and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, drawing inspiration from the intelligence and lifecycles of the natural environment.

Permaculture is a whole-system approach to land management and design that replicates existing patterns, behaviours, and relationships found in naturally flourishing ecosystems. It aims to create the highest possible yield, with the lowest environmental impact.
Social permaculture applies this methodology to people and place.

This programme will be led by artists-in-residence working collaboratively with communities. The artists-in-residence will extend this social permaculture practice beyond our artistic programme to the organisation as a whole, creating regenerative 'closed-loop' systems that care for people and planet. It will extend across our community and locality to cultivate a more environmentally sustainable, resilient, and equitable place to live.

This business plan begins with vital contextualising information about the centre, including:

1. The history of Forgan Arts Centre and the Leng Home.
2. Detail of previous and ongoing activities that contributed to the development this plan.
3. Description of our business model, operations, and successful mixed economy.

The business plan then explains how we will cultivate the conditions for An Arts Centre as a Garden to take root across our organisation and community. We do this by describing:

4. How we realise our vision through value driven aims and objectives.
5. How social permaculture has enabled us to identify the themes.
6. How an artist-in-residence programme will explore new ideas and embed learning.
7. The impact across place, people, and programme and external environmental factors.
8. How we will resource the centre to embed this ambitious concept.
9. Sound financial planning, control, oversight, and forecasts.
10. A strategy for research, monitoring, documentation, and evaluation of activity.
11. How we will mitigate for risk to ensure An Arts Centre as a Garden flourishes.

Everything outlined in this plan is qualified and supported by a suite of essential policies, plans, and information which can be found in the appendices index. This plan was a whole-team effort with centre staff, Board, artists, and our community contributing to its development.

Introduction

Welcome to Forgan Arts Centre

Purpose

Forgan Arts Centre sits on the edge of the village of Newport-on-Tay in the Tay Bridgehead Ward of North East Fife. It is a community-led arts centre delivering creative activities for the people of Fife, and beyond. Our programme includes art and craft classes, workshops, artist-led projects that respond to community need, artist commissions, residencies, placements, and public events. We provide allotments, artist studios, and professional making facilities. We have on-site accommodation in the Gardener's Cottage. Through diverse creative practices, we work with artists while listening to our communities to address individual and collective challenges that resonate locally and globally. We are a part of the local ecology providing access to creativity and a site for the exploration and understanding of the natural environment. We provide a warm welcome and take an approach to accessibility that supports individual need.

History

Forgan Arts Centre was established by members of the local community in 1974 to provide a place for creative learning. It is a membership organisation. We purchased the Leng Home in 2022 via Community Asset Transfer, with enthusiastic support from local people. The estate is the historic home of the Leng family, radically progressive philanthropists, and advocates of accessible educational reform through creativity. We proudly continue this tradition. The estate comprises three buildings, the Leng Home, the Gardener's Cottage, and the Kiln House, as well as over three acres of grounds including mature woodland, hedgerows, food growing plots, and accessible lawns. The site is an invaluable heritage asset, and the team are custodians of the grounds, stewarding the land and buildings for the benefit of our communities. Building on five decades of experience delivering creative education, we have developed our programme in relation to our new context at the Leng Home. We are cultivating a site that has people, place, and the planet at its heart.

Key Creative Achievements

Below is a small selection of projects implemented since our move to the Leng Home, which evidence positive impact for people and place.

Living Table

The Living Table was a publication and a series of free, public events inspired by the life that grows around a table: from the life of insects that pollinate crops to the cultural and political life made manifest in recipes, traditions, and dinner table habits; from micro-organisms to human-migration. The project was initiated by Fife-based, Ecuadorian artist, Désirée Coral Guerra, our first G.R.E.E.N. Artist-in-Residence, and included contributions from artists, activists, chefs, curators, environmentalists, farmers, and writers, from across Scotland, Europe, and Latin America.



The Gardener's Cottage Restoration

This detached cottage on our grounds was falling into disrepair having been uninhabited for decades. Funding from Scottish Government's Rural & Islands Ideas into Action Fund kickstarted a restoration project led by craftspeople Andy Slater and Andrew French. We used the cottage as a live site for teaching trade skills, restoration, and repair, as well as how to make a house more environmentally sustainable. In partnership with Madras College, a local

secondary school, a group of students experiencing school-exclusion worked with Andy and Andrew over a ten-week period. This led to the development of Alternative (art) School.

Alternative (art) School

This artist-led project is a partnership with Madras College and supports young people experiencing exclusion from mainstream education and labelled 'school refusers'. The reasons students are experiencing exclusion are multifaceted and exacerbated by our rural context. We work holistically with the young people and their families to get them back into the classroom. We do this through a programme they co-design with artist Jek McAllister. Artists including Hannan Jones, Sean Patrick Campbell, and Kate Harvey have delivered this programme of woodwork, gardening, pottery, photography, design, and music making. The young people's confidence, connection to other students, and creativity are nurtured, with everyone having experienced a positive impact including improved attainment, attendance, or mental wellbeing, as well as some students advancing to further education.

Gardening for the Future

Gardening for the Future began in response to a request from someone struggling with their mental health and has flourished into a welcoming meet up for people to learn how to sow, grow, and harvest food rooted in permaculture practices that protect the natural environment and sequester carbon. The group mutually support one another, sharing seeds, cuttings, and tools, with budding relationships blossoming into new support networks. Crops harvested from the community plot fill our community fridge and are free for anyone to take home.

Seasonal Festival Days

We hold four annual Festival Days on the four Gaelic seasonal festivals, Lughnasadh, Samhain, Imbolc, and Beltane. These are pay-what-you-can and open to all. Each event draws around 500 people from across Scotland. Each event is programmed by a guest curator, invited to share an idea or their enquiry with our community. In 2023 these included, storyteller and artist Owen Pilgrim, choreographer and director Fleur Darkin, and the emerging curatorial duo Saoirse Amira Anis and Laura McSorley. From 2024, this paid curatorial opportunity will be awarded through an open call for proposals. We will present our first music festival on Lughnasadh in partnership with local record label, Big Rock.

Community Consultation

We commissioned [tialt](#) to carry out a 'human-centred' community consultation in 2022. The findings have informed our programme, board representation, and our vision, values, aims. We are working with [tialt](#) to design new and generative practices for community consultation, monitoring, and evaluation that will allow us to respond to the needs, individual or collective, of local people. *See [tialt Community Consultation, appendix 8](#).*

Partners & Network

We have further developed our network of artists and critical friends. We took part in the Rural Arts Network programme in 2023 and maintain relationships with the participating organisations. New membership to SCAN and Future Arts Centres ensure we are involved in critical national conversations, from art-form development to fairer working conditions, which positively impacts our practice and ability to realise our vision. Our development has included conversations with leading rural arts organisations including Wysing Arts Centre, Grizedale Arts, and consistent support from Deveron Projects founder Claudia Zeiske.

In 2023, 1,039 students attended 138 courses and workshops.
1,129 children joined Children's Arts Clubs with over 150 free places used.
We hosted 142 free community events for 2,033 people with food and travel provided.
111 artists were engaged to deliver these activities hailing from all over Scotland.

Key Strategic & Operational Achievements

Below is a summary of some of the positive changes we've implemented since our move to the Leng Home and how they've improved the organisation's resilience.

Board of Trustees

Our organisational composition has changed, moving from an operational Management Committee to a strategic Board of Trustees. In 2023 our Board Chair and four long-serving Trustees stepped down enabling the organisation to reflect on its governance approach. Drawing from decades of collective experience in the charitable sector, we recognised a pressing need for innovation in governance structures and a more inclusive and adaptive model. We have implemented a dual leadership co-Chairing model, which enhances the efficacy of decision-making, fosters a culture of inclusivity, and shares the often-heavy responsibility of chairing a Board. Sharing leadership has fortified our capacity to navigate complex challenges with agility and foresight. *See Board of Trustees Statement, appendix 18.*

Team

We are led by a Director who holds chief executive and artistic leadership responsibility, as well as supporting a team of employees, freelance arts workers, and artists. We have increased core staff from two (1.2FTE) to nine permanent employees (~5FTE). The scoping of roles and responsibilities was undertaken collectively, and recruitment was based on a skills and operations matrix. We have onboarded new team members slowly over the two-year period with the final appointment, a communications role, to be integrated in 2024/25. Change is challenging, and the fact that we have retained all staff through this process is testament to our positive person-centred practice.

We have a flat structure, which means all team members have agency and leadership roles. The Director ensures the team have the tools, knowledge, and budget to confidently undertake their work independently. All team members participate in the smooth running of the centre's operations. From scheduling maintenance, or feeding the wormery, to welcoming visitors, all work is valuable. All team members contribute to the centre's financial strategy, whether that's reducing expenditure, increasing income generation, or fundraising. A consistent and committed group of core volunteers work in the gardens and buildings daily. A broader group of regular volunteers participate at specific activities and events. *See appendices Team Organogram 13, RASCI Matrix 12, and Strategic Workplan 9.*

Policy, Pay & Benefits

We have developed an all-encompassing staff handbook and a new set of enhanced policies, procedures, and contracts that meet with our Fair Work commitments. We have implemented appropriate salary grading with a base rate of £24,000pa or £13.25ph (2023/24 rates). The average salary is £28,050. We are a Real Living Wage employer, though our base rates exceed their recommendations. We use Scottish Artist Union (or equivalent) recommended rates and annually assess salaries against UK averages (Arts Professional). As of financial year 2024/25, all team members will receive an annual salary increase of 2%, variable, in response to inflation. This work was supported by Creative Scotland's HR for Creatives programme with SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations) who we have retained as HR advisors. *See Staff Handbook and Fair Work Policy & Action Plan, appendices 10 & 11.*

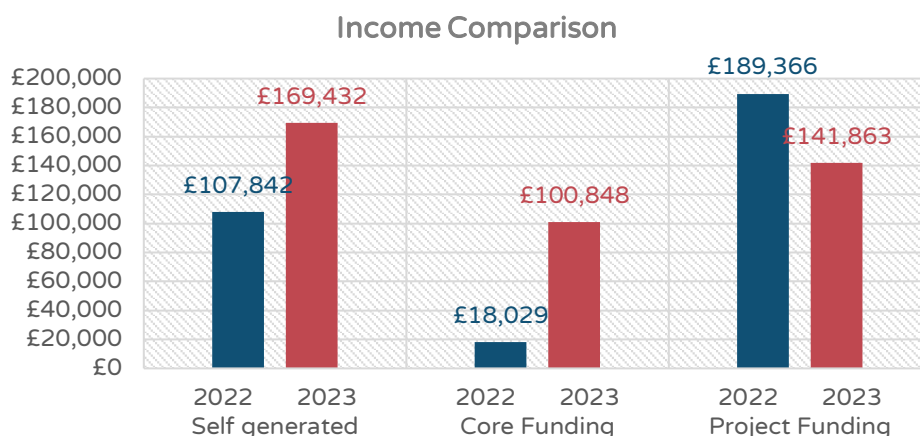


A tasting tour of the garden jiji by Dr Helena Simmons, Garden Facilitator discussing the provenance of plants, their uses, and climate conscious gardening practices

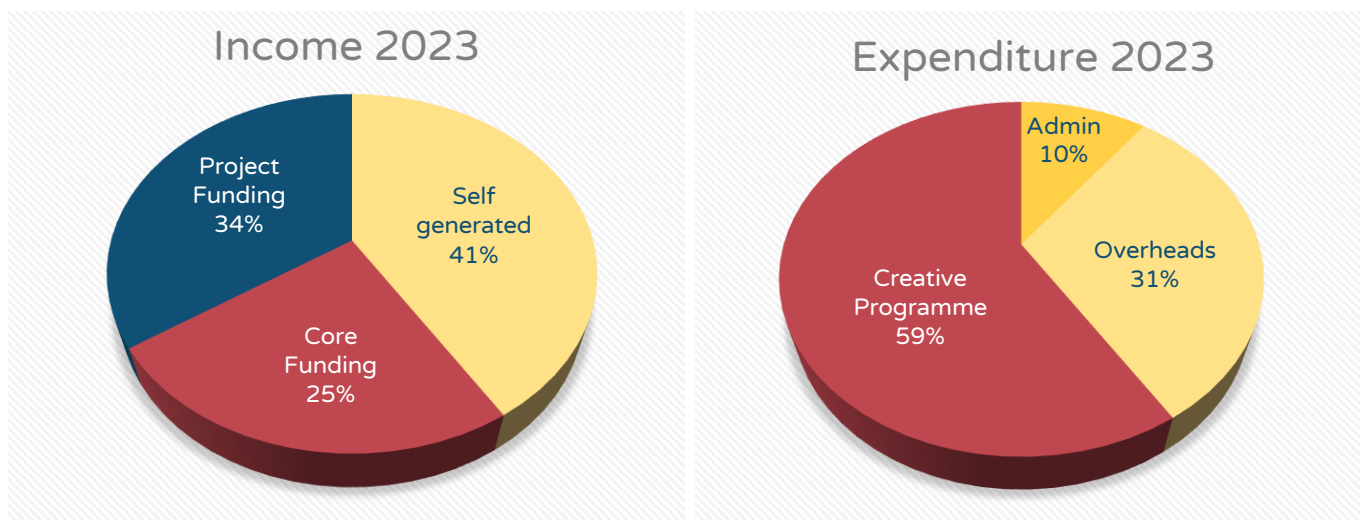
Business Model

We have changed the business model to allow for the maintenance of the estate, increased overheads, new staff, enhanced benefits, and an expanded artist-led creative programme. This new mixed economy structure includes fundraising activities, core subsidy, as well as earned income. In 2023, we secured multi-year core funding from Fife Council (North East Fife Area Committee) of £30k per year and Northwood Charitable Trust of £20k per year. We have new income generating activities including the provision of studios, allotments, and events. Our approach to income generation does not betray our commitment to economic accessibility and this can be seen in our equitable approach to pricing. *See Partners & Funders, appendix 4.*

The bar chart below shows the centre’s income sources for 2022 and 2023. Self-generated income increased by almost 60% from 2022 (£107k) to 2023 (£169k). The decrease in project funding demonstrates our shift from insecure short-term to long-term multi-year funds. Income from fundraising increased by 18% from 2022 to 2023. Self-generated income represents an average of 35% and fundraising represents the remaining 65%.



Below, the pie chart on the left illustrates the proportion of self-generated income versus that raised through fundraising. The chart on the right shows total expenditure. Expenditure is categorised as administration (finance and administration systems and staff), overheads (running costs, building maintenance, gas, electricity, etc.), and creative programme activity (all costs relating to its design and delivery). Self-generated income accounts for 41% of the total which equals the cost of overheads and administration. Therefore, all project and core funds were directed to the design, delivery, and evaluation of our creative programme.



Funding Relationships

We have developed a portfolio of funders as part of our mixed economy who also provide support, encouragement, and recognition for the quality of our creative programme. For example, in working with Inspiring Scotland, we were offered business development, legal and HR support. This is invaluable to an organisation of our scale and in this exciting period of change and growth. *See Funders & Partners, appendix 4.*

Guiding Principles

Vision

Nurture a connected, sustainable, and welcoming community through creative ways and means.

Values

Our values are based on continuous deep listening to our communities, artists, and team. They are carefully balanced in all our activity, from our vision building to creative programming, from our governance to our sustainable and fair working practices.

Creative

- Creativity is at the centre of everything we do.
- We take a broad definition of creativity and make space for exchange between different creative disciplines.
- We celebrate creativity's positive impact on individuals and communities, while promoting critical engagement, discussion, and a reflective approach to making.

Connected

- We bring people together to consider new and alternative forms of community cohabitation, in a globally connected world.
- We work in partnership with people, services, and organisations to develop an ecology of reciprocity and opportunity.
- We foster new relationships to build an interconnected community with a powerful collective voice.

Sustainable

- We are looking to the future in regenerative forms to sustain our work, our grounds, and our communities.
- Through the practice of social permaculture, we aim to embody permaculture principles in all facets of our work, including community engagement, operations, and finance.
- We aim to actively reduce our environmental impact, going beyond net zero.

Welcoming

- Everyone will be given a warm welcome, will feel accepted, and will be given the support they need to participate fully.
- We recognise individuality and difference, and we take an individual approach in providing equitable access to participation.
- Visitors, volunteers, participants, artists and staff — we build a sense of belonging by supporting people to get involved in all that we do.



Students, of all ages, working in the ceramic's studio.

Aims & Objectives

The ethics of permaculture are 'people care, earth care, and fair share' and these extend to An Arts Centre as a Garden, informing our aims.

Aim 1: Cultivate life-long creative practices.

Objectives:

- Provide space for interdisciplinary exchange, the sharing of ideas, innovation, and critical thinking.
- Provision of classes, courses, and workshops in a broad range of creative practices that are accessible, taught by experienced artists and master crafts people.
- Maintain excellent professional making facilities and tools, inside and outdoors, across creative disciplines.

Aim 2: Nurture a resilient, connected community rooted in reciprocity.

Objectives:

- Support local people to address local and global issues through creativity.
- Understand the needs of people locally and regionally through deep listening and developing generative, accessible activities.
- Embed the Place Principle as foundational and develop relationships across sectors and geographical borders.

Aim 3: Place the natural environment at the heart of our activities.

Objectives:

- Create opportunities for artists, participants, and visitors to study and explore nature through creative practices.
- Use the land as a site for accessible climate action, learning, food production and biodiversity improvement, building a pathway beyond Net Zero 2045.
- Protect the natural environment through the care and maintenance of the land, investing in adaptations that will safeguard it from extreme weather and a changing climate.

Aim 4: Provide a sustainable home in the community.

Objectives:

- Offer an open house, a warm welcome, and equity of opportunity for community, artists, and team.
- Foster organisational and financial sustainability to ensure long term security through collaboration and collectivity.
- Prioritise Net Zero 2045 and planning for *beyond* this target to land cooling and carbon extraction and sequestration, long term.

Community Priorities

We take a place-based approach to our work. This means working collectively with our community to achieve better outcomes. To understand our communities' priorities and concerns, we commissioned a broad community consultation. As part of this work, we issued an online survey which presented respondents with a list of pressing social issues from which they could select. 76% selected **mental health and wellbeing** and 67% selected the **climate crisis** as the most motivating issues, by far the most popular choices. In the in-person workshops that complimented our digital activity, this was underscored by stakeholders, community members, and partners such as Fife Council. This has strongly informed the development of An Arts Centre as a Garden and the aims and objectives described above.

Annual Themes

In researching local and global issues and through community assessments, we identified three protected characteristics that are pertinent to our community: **age**, **race**, and **sex**. Through the practice of social permaculture, we look to nature for inspiration in how to explore these characteristics, observing and replicating the process or lifecycles that exist in flourishing ecosystems. This process has generated three themes.

Talking Forests (age)

2025-26

Inspired by the mycorrhizal networks ancient trees use to care for saplings we will nurture mutually beneficial intergenerational relationships.

The world's ageing population will bring about the most significant social transformation of the 21st century¹. Older people in our community are experiencing isolation and loneliness, and their exclusion means the loss of experience and knowledge in the community. In looking to nature, we understand that the most resilient and effective forests are intergenerational, where there are mature mycorrhizal networks connecting root systems in the soil. These networks pass messages and nutrients from tree to tree, ensuring vulnerable saplings are supported in their growth. Inspired by these multigenerational forests and rooted in the research of anthropologist Tim Ingold, we will explore how intergenerational relationships build a connected community. We will develop accessible activities that allow older people to participate meaningfully in our communities. We will integrate generations to engender reciprocal learning across ages, combining the wisdom of community elders with the curiosity of the young.

Ecology of Migration (race)

2026-2027

Replicating the diversity of flourishing ecosystems in our communities to build resilience in a changing climate.

As the climate crisis and multiple volatile geopolitical situations unfold, more people will cross borders, finding themselves as New Scots here in Fife. In 2022 the world hosted 35.3 million refugees and 281 million international migrants.² Our community consultation evidenced a curiosity in how our communities are changing because of migration. Sociobiologist, futurist, and 'expert of adaptation' Rebecca D. Costa observes that in nature, successful ecosystems rely on diversity to enhance their resilience, adaptability, and productivity, and that these ideas can and should be directly applied to community. A diverse ecosystem is better equipped to withstand climate change, disease outbreaks, or habitat destruction - when one component of the ecosystem is affected, another can step in, reducing negative impact. We will cultivate a resilient community by harnessing the power of the diverse cultures living here.

Queering Nature (sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation)

2027-28

Explore queerness in nature to broaden our understanding of the naturally diverse ways of being in the world.

We have been educated to believe nature is binary. The idea was cemented by Carl Linnaeus in his 1735 taxonomy, *Systema Naturae*, where all plants were identified as either male or female, in fact, he used the terminology 'bride and groom'. Our consultation and work with schools evidenced a concern and fear of the erosion of traditional binaries in sex and gender. Through explorations in nature and the work of queer garden-designer Patrick Featherstone, we will unlearn the idea that nature is binary and celebrate nature's place in queer culture. Seeing queerness in nature is validating, only 5%³ of plants reproduce in the binary way we were taught in school, it is in fact the fluid non-heteronormative ways of being that are most common. Through explorations in the natural world, we'll expand our capacity for understanding diverse identities and question our own misconceptions.

¹ [UN Global Issues: Aging](#)

² [UN Global Issues: Migration](#)

³ [Kew Gardens: Exploring sexual diversity in nature](#)

Activating the Themes

To bring these themes to life we will resource six artist-in-residence opportunities. Their roles will be to meet the aims and outcomes of An Arts Centre as a Garden and its themes. The artists-in-residence will be supported by the team, especially the Director and Producer: Environmental Futures and Producer: Community Connection & Access.

Artists-in-Residence

We will welcome two artists-in-residence per year whose enquiry will resonate with the annual theme (Talking Forests, Ecology of Migration, Queering Nature). They will commit to addressing our aims and the outcomes of An Arts Centre as a Garden during their time in residence. The artists can live on site in The Gardener's Cottage to widen opportunities for engagement. Depending on their own artistic and personal commitments, they may choose to be in-residence continuously or one-two days a week over a year. The artists-in-residence will be supported by the team who will establish processes to further the depth and reach of their activity. The artists-in-residence will also be supported by the centre's network of artist tutors, who can facilitate use of our professional arts and crafts facilities. The outcomes of the residencies might include artworks, performances, publications, and public events. The residencies should also generate knowledge and research that will inform the organisation more widely, provoking organisational change and encouraging new ways of working.

The artists will demonstrate strong experience and interest in socially engaged practices and community collaboration. Recruitment will be guided by our Equitable Recruitment Policy and assessed by an independent panel that will include community representation. The kind of artists we would be keen to work with are Rory Pilgrim, an interdisciplinary artist who is recognised for their leading socially engaged practice, Jack Ky Tan, an interdisciplinary artist and activist, and the textile artist Natalie Taylor.

Producers

The artists will sow and share the seeds of new ideas, cultivating opportunities for community connection. To provide a fertile bed for the sprouting of these ideas, two new Producer positions will nourish community relationships long-term, Producer: Community Connection & Access, and Producer: Environmental Futures. The Producers will have a strong track record in community engagement, environmental sustainability, accessibility, and place-based practice. They will fulfil all administrative activity to support the residencies, build new connections with community groups across Fife, and embed the artist-in-residence activities. This programme will be free to participate in and the producers will extend our individualistic approach to support and access to participants.

The producers will play a key role, with tialt, in the monitoring and evaluation of activity. They will extend their expertise to our existing annual activities, delivering and further developing Alternative (art) School, the Care and Queer Makers Clubs, Seasonal Festival Days, On The Table, and our weekly arts and crafts classes to ensure the artists-in-residence's ideas weave their way through all parts of the programme. The Producers will extend impact beyond the programme, to operations, governance, and finance. The Producers and will have consistent support from the core staff, especially the Director.

Impact: Place, People, Programme

The table below outlines a few examples of outputs (the type of activity that may take place) and potential outcomes (the impact we'd like to achieve) across the categories place, people, and programme.

		Place	People	Programme
Talking Forests Age	Output	Whole community engagement in how we make our centre, high street, community spaces & greenspaces accessible to all ages. Fife-wide opportunities for participating in this project, especially in sharing the learning and impact in partnership with Local Area Committees.	Bring together older and younger people through creativity and art to develop mutually beneficial activities, from an all-generations forestry school (currently it is divided by age) to integrating community elders in Alternative (art) School as mentors or pupils.	Artistic responses made by the two artists-in-residence in collaboration with the community may include artworks, performances, talks, events, publications, and screenings.
	Outcome	Greater understanding between older people & young people especially regarding mental health, 'anti-social' behaviour, & lived experience. A more cohesive, less isolated community that better understands one another.	Harness the generative, restorative effects of intergenerational connection, especially in reducing isolation & loneliness for older people, & improving the resilience and confidence of younger people.	A greater understanding of age and the associated accessibility needs for the youngest and oldest with processes and resource to embed the policies and procedures that make access easy for all ages.

		Place	People	Programme
Ecology of Migration Race	Output	With Newport's twinned town, Zolotar'ovo, Ukraine, as a starting point, we will explore how communities in Fife are welcoming New Scots & what we can learn from them to build a resilient community during a climate crisis.	Bring together diverse communities to create opportunities to share and learn about different cultural practices through art, creativity, food, nature, and conversation.	Artistic responses made by the two artists-in-residence in collaboration with the community may include artworks, performances, talks, events, publications, and screenings.
	Outcome	A welcoming place for New Scots that integrates and celebrates different cultural practices and stewards a collective future where the diversity of our community enables us to be adaptable, resilient, creative and productive.	A resilient creative community that welcomes diversity. An appreciation and curiosity in other cultural practices. A creative programme that is vibrant, representative, and relevant to the many communities live here.	A whole community understanding of the real reasons people risk crossing borders, what anti-racism work is and why it's necessary, an appreciation of migration and how it builds empathy, understanding, & compassion.

		Place	People	Programme
Queering Nature Sex	Output	Make changes to our processes, building, and natural environment to make clear our support for the queer community. Take this learning beyond our centre, across the village, to the shops, services, and our communities. From satellite projects across Fife to sharing reimagined policies.	An exciting programme that embeds queer theory practices & replicates queerness in nature to experiment with art making, community engagement, and the environmental and finds new ways for people to work with one another that are non-hierarchical & non-binary.	Artistic responses made by the two artists-in-residence in collaboration with the community may include artworks, performances, talks, events, publications, and screenings.
	Outcome	A safe(r) art centre, community, and place for marginalised and queer communities that loudly expresses its solidarity with LGBTQIA+ people. A garden that shares its queer nature to create a biodiverse site for climate justice.	An understanding of the inherent queerness in nature & knowledge of how plants, animals, & ecosystems function through re-education that eschews binaries. A community of practice inclusive of queer theory.	Open mindedness to the many ways of being in the world, an understanding of nature as an educator. Critical insight into non-heteronormative practices & alternative perspectives. Acceptance and support for the queer community.

Impact: Annual Activities

Feedback from programme and project participants was fundamental in the development of An Arts Centre as a Garden. Below is a list of those existing annual activities, rationale relating to organisational aims, and assessment of how social permaculture may affect, extend, or further develop them. *See Annual Activities, with milestones & KPIs, appendix 5.*

Aim 1: Cultivate life-long creative practices.

Aim 2: Nurture a resilient, connected community rooted in reciprocity.

Aim 3: Place the natural environment at the heart of our activities.

Aim 4: Provide a sustainable home in the community.

Project	Aims				Rationale <i>How it meets our aims & public benefit</i>	Outcomes & outputs <i>What achieving our aims looks and feels like</i>	Target Audience
	1	2	3	4			
Art & Craft Classes & courses					Supports all skill levels, from novice to established artist, across diverse creative practices. Strong 50-year track record of sustained income and consistent attendance.	Improved diversity of tutors across age, race, and sex. Improved accessibility of facilities to create an inclusive studio experience.	Local people, artists & makers
Art & Craft Workshops					Extends one's practice, supports experimentation and innovation. Brings new tutors/artists to the centre, developing their teaching skills through training.	Experimenting & embedding new innovative, cross cultural approaches to arts & crafts and how they intersect with ancient traditional methods to spearhead new ways of working, rooted in the protection of the environment.	Local people, artists & makers
Professional facilities					Accessible art & craft facilities providing income, deepening of practice, & demonstration of environmentally sustainable production methods.		Local people, artists & makers
Children's Art Club					Free & paid for holiday club utilising creativity & natural environment. Provides childcare for resident artists, consistent revenue, and employment locally.		Local people: families
Alternative (art) School					Targeted activity responding to local need supporting 'school refusers.' Initiates long-term creative practice, improves quality of life for young people and their families.	Engage older volunteers as mentors, intergenerational relationships improve resilience & confidence.	Young people aged 13-18 years
Queer Makers Club					Targeted activity responding to local need for safe spaces and accessible creative activities for rural LGBTQIA+ adults and allies.	Explore queer theory & culture & how it intersects with race & age. Create opportunities for intergenerational activity and/or combine activities. Diversification of lead artists.	LGBTQIA+ people, artists & makers
Young Queer Makers Cub					Targeted activity responding to local need for supported, creative activities for young queer people aged 11-18 years.		LGBTQIA+ young people
Care Makers Club					Targeted activity responding to local need for judgement free, accessible creative activities for adult unpaid carers.		Unpaid carers, artists
Young Care Makers Club					Targeted activity responding to local need for supported, creative activities for young people who are carers aged 11-18 years.	Appraise accessibility esp. in reference to race and sex. Explore cross cultural approaches to care.	Young carers 11-18 years
Green Bike Borrowing Scheme					Electric bike borrowing programme for the community responding to chronic public transport issues. Users schedule time using an app and can check it in/out freely.	Ensure this is open to all people, without barriers which could be digital or relate to accessible information sharing across languages.	Local people, artists, team members
Gardening for the Future					Weekly meet up for climate conscious gardening, food growing, carbon sequestration, and improving biodiversity with free refreshments.	Formalise the opportunity for cross generational learning, explore indigenous practices that protect the land from extreme weather effects.	Local people, activists, artists

Coorie Community Café				Free creative activities, coffee, snacks, and refreshments every weekend responding to a community request for family friendly activities.	Formalise opportunity for older volunteers to support delivery of activities. Ensure people are met at point of need & the invite is accessible.	Local people
On The Table				Annual summer outdoor free community meal with food donated from local people, farmers, and our garden. Just bring a plate.	Theme meal to annual themes creating a cross cultural, cross generational celebration.	Local people
Annual General Meeting				Members meeting. Food, drinks, and childcare provided alongside talks from community and Trustees, and discussion about the centre's future.	Themes play an important role in how we develop the membership and accessibility of the AGM.	Members, volunteers
Visiting self-funded residencies				When The Cottage isn't in use with our own residencies, it will be available for self-funded visits. Users can access facilities and tools.	Self-funded residencies will relate to the annual theme, providing another touchstone for collaboration.	Artists & makers
MA Curatorial Practice Placement				DJCAD Masters student placement. Students undertake a discrete project and shadow all team members to achieve a rounded view of the centre's programmes and operations.	Student placements will be selected based on their enquiry's synergy with the annual themes.	Students
Commissions				Each year we commission an artist to respond to a theme and create a work for our grounds.	The brief will request proposals respond to the annual theme.	Artists, makers, designers
Seasonal Suppers				Fundraising dinners where artist/curators are commissioned to create a menu using food grown on site. Donations & ticket sales provide income.	Proposals from chefs/curators will be required to respond to the annual themes, obliquely or directly.	Artists & visitors
Seasonal Festival Days (Imbolc, Lughnasadh, Beltane, Samhain)				A free at the point of access community event with supported transport. Four large scale out and indoor events in winter, spring, summer, and autumn with live music, food, drinks, arts and crafts! Events are designed by selected curator and themed. Provides local employment.	As a point in the programme for mass audience engagement, this is a crucial place to share the effects of social permaculture beyond our borders. Events will embody the annual themes.	Artists, local people, and visitors
tialt Commission				Strategic partnership with tialt to research and evaluate centre activities and undertake community consultation through generative non-extractive programmes and activities.	tialt will research, monitor, and evaluate the impact and effects of the themed years.	Fife people & partners
Kingspark School Partnership				Research and development for a new mutually beneficial partnership with a primary school for children with complex additional needs.	Artists selected to undertake annual R&D activities will be expected to respond and connect with themes.	Disabled children aged 5-17



Bee's wax and hive installation by Rita Valencia for Living Table 'Flora', curated by Désirée Coral Guerra.

External Environment

The internal and external factors that have influenced this business plan have been identified in detail in our risk assessment and SWOT and PESTLE analyses. Below are key themes that have repeatedly arisen during this assessment process as well as contextualising information pertaining to our community, both people and place. *See Building & Grounds Risk Assessment, appendix 22, SWOT and PESTLE analyses, appendices 20 and 21.*

People

Our community is made up of the people of North East Fife and beyond who engage with our programme; the artists (Scottish and international) that we collaborate with; the team who ensure the smooth running of the centre; freelance artists and arts workers who deliver creative activities; and casual staff, Trustees, and volunteers. As the organisation has grown and developed over the last two years, this community has expanded.

We have tutors travelling from across Scotland to deliver workshops and our artistic programme has created opportunities for over 100 artists and curators from Fife, as well as Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Dundee, England, and internationally, France, Germany, Mexico, Brazil, and Ecuador

We have observed and recorded an increase in people visiting and participating in our activities. Since 2019 there has been a 75% increase in members and 37% increase in the total number of class participants. As community events and targeted projects are a new programme addition, we welcomed new people to the centre. Our Seasonal Festival Days draw 500 people per event approx. 68% audiences from Fife, 18% from Dundee and Angus, and 14% from the rest of Scotland (primarily Perth & Kinross, Edinburgh, and Glasgow). We are also engaging with vulnerable and marginalised groups. We work closely with unpaid carers of all ages and queer and LBGTQIA+ people. Through our free ticket schemes to events, Children's Art Club, and other activities, we are supporting low/no income families and those accessing benefits or Universal Credit.

As our community has grown and become more diverse it has been important to hold onto the deep roots we have in the local area. Generations of families have moved through the centre and, even as we evolve, this has not changed. For example, Christine Wade, one of the centre's founders, is entering her sixth decade volunteering. Christine's daughter is now our Garden Facilitator, and her granddaughter who attended our Kids Club 20 years ago, is now a Play Worker at Children's Art Club.

Place

Local

Newport-on-Tay is a vibrant and diverse village for its size and rural location. Its proximity to three universities (Dundee, Abertay, and St. Andrews) has brought people from all over the world to settle here. It is twinned with the Ukrainian village of Zolotar'ovo, which like Newport is known for its production of fruit, and history of art and craft. Newport has long been home to a creative community, the north-west facing Tayside position providing a remarkable quality of light for some of Scotland's finest painters.

North East Fife is the most rural part of the local authority area and the communities we serve are considered 'accessible, remote and very remote rural' as per Scottish Government's Urban Rural Classification. The lack of affordable reliable transport is a key issue cited in our community consultation. Working with our community and with our environmental commitments in mind, we are initiating a Green EV-Bike Borrowing Scheme and capital plans to make local active travel routes safer and more accessible. *See tialt Community Consultation, appendix 8.*

Regional assessments and community feedback provide insight into the challenging lives of the year-round communities of North East Fife who experience services erosion. Over-tourism has contributed to a housing-emergency, food insecurity is rife, and the disappearance of culture

and community provision continues (for example, North East Fife's only cinema will close in 2024 to become a golf themed pub). Effects of this include a declining population, rise in unemployment and unpaid carers, chronic mental ill-health, loneliness, and isolation. We are tackling these issues directly through artist-led community projects in our annual programme and through An Arts Centre as a Garden we will cultivate a place-based response that improves life experiences and opportunities for the people of Fife.

We are conscious of national concerns and how these affect local people. For example, the crisis in school attendance has strongly informed our programming with rural young people being disproportionality affected as detailed in Scottish Government's and Education Scotland's report [Improving Attendance: Understanding the Issues](#). Attainment levels in Fife are below Scotland's average. With closures at Fife College, opportunities for Further Education are dwindling. The mental health, education, and opportunities available to young people is a pressing issue. We understand our context through research including Fife Council's [Plan 4 Fife](#), [Strategic Assessment](#), [Local Transport Strategy](#), [Climate Fife: Sustainable Energy & Climate Action Plan](#), and the [Rural Poverty Action Plan](#) as well as demographic analysis. An Arts Centre as a Garden contextualises local need, nationally, and will inform our objectives and programming. We assess plans against the 4th National Performance Framework's 11 National Outcomes and 81 indicators. Using these national frameworks ensures our activities relate to Scottish Government's vision for collective wellbeing while addressing global concerns and targets in relation to the climate emergency.

Global

An Arts Centre as a Garden's place-based approach to EDI and environmental sustainability will increase opportunity for change felt at a global level. In developing An Arts Centre as a Garden, we assessed plans against the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and in the future. Using a framework and specially designed deck of cards from Coalfield's Regeneration Trust, we assessed activities against the SDGs and NPF intentions and outcomes. All 17 SDGs can be found in our programme, processes, or operations. SDGs number 3 (Good Health & Wellbeing), 11 (Sustainable Cities & Communities), 13 (Climate Action), and 15 (Life on Land) relate most strongly to our community priorities. **All** centre activities and processes are designed to meet the targets and indicators of these SDGs. *See Annual Activities, appendix 5, Environmental Sustainability Action Plan and EDI Action Plan, appendices 6 and 7.*



A Table for our Ancestors installation as part of Seasonal Festival Day, Samhain, curated by Two of Cups, a.k.a. Saorise Amira Amis and Laura McSorely.

Resourcing

To ensure we're able to welcome change, new ideas, and the effects of the themed years, we are resourcing new areas of the organisation, improving procedures, and making the site sustainable, long-term.

Board & Membership

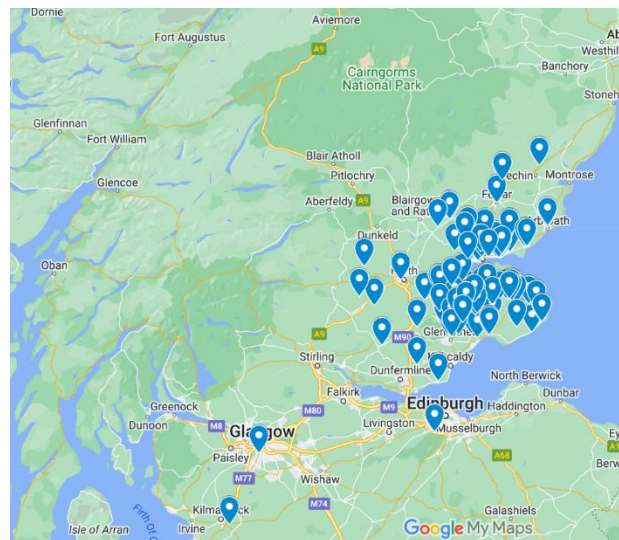
Board of Trustees

The dual leadership model of the Board has galvanised a commitment to taking a pluralistic approach to governance. Led by co-Chairs Judith Winter, curator, writer, and lecturer at Gray's School of Art, and Kate Smith, Professor of Pluralism in Mental Health at Aberdeen University, we will take action to make the Board both diverse and accessible. This will include a programme of mentorship for aspiring young Trustees to ensure we are nurturing the next generation as part of our succession planning. The Board will create an ecology of care that fosters inclusivity and participate in a programme of training to ensure this forum is a safe space. In assessing representation, the Board will make effort to recruit to the protected characteristics centred by the An Arts Centre as a Garden: age, race, and sex.

The Board will continue to be an observant and critical friend to the organisation, providing strategic leadership, stewardship, and financial oversight. An ongoing review of skills identifies legal and creative economics as areas of expertise to onboard. The existing sub-committees, Finance & Audit and Capital will continue with the latter expanding to include a new team member to lead the capital development, 2027/28. The existing working groups, EDI and Environmental Sustainability will continue to have Trustee representation. An Arts Centre as a Garden sub-Committee will include Board, participants and stakeholders. *See Trustees Statement & Biographies, appendix 18.*

Membership & AGM

In 2025/26 we will undertake a campaign to reinvigorate the membership. It is free and a constitutional right for anyone over 15 to be a member. We currently have 393 members (75% increase since 2021). This map illustrates our current membership, which comprises 218 Ordinary, 172 Associate, and 3 Junior. Members will have a powerful role within An Arts Centre as a Garden, and we intend to ensure there is lived experience pertaining to the themes within our membership. This activity will be led by a new communications role we will integrate in 2024/25, supported by the team and tialt. This consequential campaign will support the development of the Annual General Meeting.



Team

By 2025/26 we will have appointed all core team members to the roles identified in the organisation restructure matrix. The period 2025-28 sees the team take root and naturalise in this new structure. An Arts Centre as a Garden's effect on the organisation will mean increased activity, so we have reassessed resource, funded by our own earned income and core funding.

Creative Programme & Administration

Five core staff roles will grow to meet the demands of increased activity, Housekeeper, Studio & Operations Coordinator, a communications role, and Duty Supervisor. In addition, we have increased the budget for casual self-employed staff who support event delivery.

Communications

We are developing a new role to lead the design and delivery of our communications that resonates with the An Arts Centre as a Garden themes. We will eschew a traditional marketing and communications position, in favour of a flexible and innovative approach with an artist or designer is 'in-residence'. This would suit an early to mid-career artist or designer with a strong interest in community engagement. As well as a salary and budget, they will have a free studio, access to facilities, and broader support from our team. The aim is to have an artist led approach to our communications, broaden our network of artists and designers, and provide an essential learning and experimentation opportunity with secure salary and benefits. This approach is inspired by the work of artists like Neil McGuire (After the News). *See Communications Role draft, appendix 17.*

Capital

We are scoping for a new role to lead capital development with recruitment planned for 2027/28. The aim is to connect the local community with capital activity. They will identify and deliver a fundraising programme in collaboration with the Director and Funding Development Officer rooted in environmental sustainability and accessibility, supported by the Producers. This role will be funded by Crown Estate with whom we have a long-standing relationship for funding positions. By 2027/28, the test site, The Gardener's Cottage, will have had green energy for 1-2 years providing valuable data that will inform our plans and projections.

Volunteers

Volunteers are a part of the team. The addition of the Producer roles will mean we can further develop our volunteer programme, providing them with training to support the centre's operations and activities. Organically, volunteers have created areas of specialism, maintenance, gardening, events/projects, and community welfare. Investment in this part of the team will see volunteers have more agency, participating in meaningful work that aligns with their interests. There is a strong appetite and request for this level of engagement.

Succession Planning & Onboarding

Since 2023 we have been developing the Staff Handbook (employed), Team Handbook (self-employed), Operations Manual, and Health & Safety Manual in line with our Fair Work commitments. These four documents, along with this business plan, will provide new team members with a smooth on-boarding process. Additionally, a key risk is the loss of team members with whom specialised knowledge sits. These documents mitigate for that risk and will be signed off by the Board in 2024/25. *See Staff Handbook, appendix 10.*

Training

In 2025/26, all team members will be provided training including the use of the handbooks, business plan and forecast budgets, so that everyone is confident in our processes and operations. Statutory training is delivered by partners and will include first aid, safeguarding, and equalities. Specialised training will support our understanding of the protected characteristics that inspire our annual themes. Potential training partners include Luminate, Scotland's Creative Aging organisation, Scottish Refugee Council, and LGBT Youth Scotland. Tutors and artists who use our professional facilities will participate in continuing professional development opportunities to further develop their arts & crafts practices. This might include residencies, symposia, and workshops.

Stakeholders

Community

The social permaculture practice will create positive change beyond our immediate locality. Data collected from events shows an increase in audiences travelling from across Fife and beyond to visit us. Additionally, we are addressing travel and economic barriers by providing free transport to activities to improve Fife-wide engagement. In 2025-28 we will take some of our activities out of the centre and deliver them across Fife in community settings. To support this, the Board and Director will visit and present to the Local Community Area Committees in the South, Central, and West of Fife to raise awareness.

Partners & Network

We will lead the development of a new Fife-wide creative and cultural forum for sharing resource and strategy. We will leverage our Tayside location to connect with Dundee, Angus,

and Perth & Kinross where agencies such as Creative Dundee exist and can offer advice and support. The aim will be to connect the growing numbers of creative organisations and collectives, to strengthen our voice to increase investment, demonstrate our impact, and to create a tessellating network of opportunities for artists and the people of Fife, and beyond.

Funders

2025-2028 sees us report to long-term partners such as Fife Council and Northwood Charitable Trust on their multi-year support as well as germinating new relationships with some of the UK's most progressive funders such as Esmée Fairbairn, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and Garfield Weston Foundation. The Funding Development Officer will lead on nurturing these relationships with support from the Director. In addition, we will broker new relationships with local trusts and foundations, such as the Leng Charitable Trust with whom we share a namesake. To improve awareness across Fife Council's funding directorates we will establish relationships with the Local Area Planning Committees.

Communications & Marketing

We have excellent digital engagement and public attendance rates at activities, classes, and events. Currently we have 3,448 registered users on our booking software, of which 40% are from the DD6 postcode (our immediate community), 24% are from other parts of Fife, 18% are from Dundee, and 18% are from the rest of Scotland. Our newsletter is a key communications tool with 2,400 active subscribers. We have excellent engagement with a 70% open rate ([average open rate for arts organisations is 40-42%⁴](#)) and 44% click rate ([average is 2.79-4.2%](#)). We are investing in our digital platforms, working with marketing consultant Nicola Kenny. Our booking software is being upgraded to capture equalities monitoring information, access needs, and dietary requirements. Our website will improve its accessibility to meet WCAG (web content accessibility guidelines) level 2.1 level AA, modelling its approach on platforms such as Scottish Refugee Council's [crossborders.org](#) project and disabled artist support organisation [weareunlimited.org.uk](#) approach for D/deaf and visually impaired users. This reflects our approach to audience development, which is about diversity of audience, reflecting the annual themes and EDI aims. *See EDI Action Plan, appendix 7.*

Buildings & Grounds

Main building

Drawings from Nicoll Russell Studio have been approved by the community and team following a broad consultation process. Supported by Indigo Consultants, Community Ownership Fund and Development Trust Association Scotland, we are developing a capital plan which will launch in 2025/26. It will detail fundraising and community engagement plans. The building will benefit from (re)insulation incl. glazing, ground source heat pump, and solar panels. The proposal from NRS is sensitive to the community request for the building to retain its arts & crafts period features. The financing of the capital programme will include donations through crowdfunding, individual giving, and community bonds. *See Proposed Plans, appendix 23.*



Nicoll Russel Studio proposal showing future single entrance point and view through the community space to the gardens.

Studios

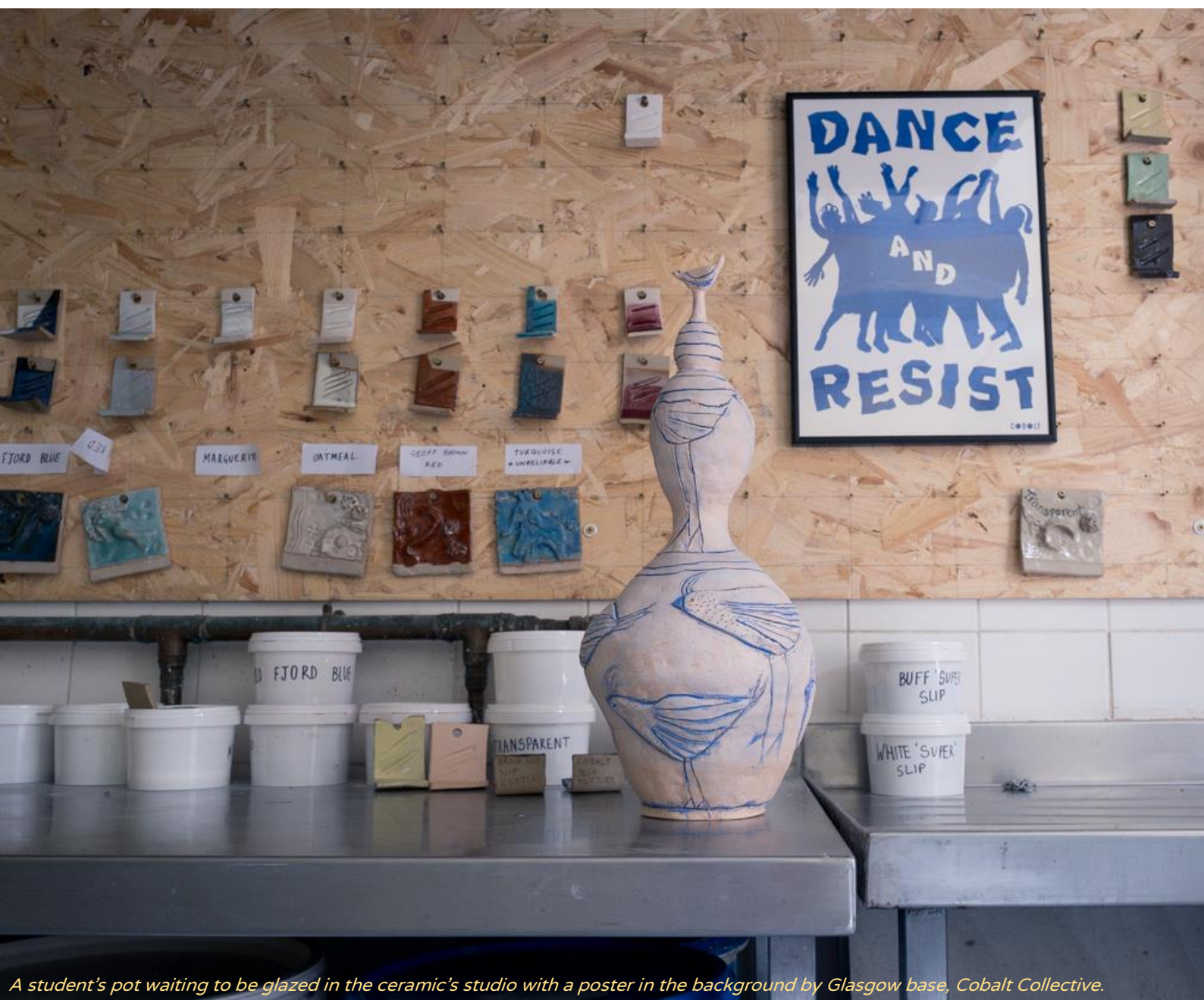
Through 2024/25-25/26, four rooms will be upgraded to create new studios. The investment will bring empty rooms back into use that could risk falling into disrepair and will increase rental income by 15% per year. A fifth room will be renovated to be used freely for artist and curator development activities in partnership with DJCAD and [In Session](#) (previously GRADJOB).

The Gardener's Cottage

The Gardener's Cottage restoration continues in 2025/26 with the installation of air-source heat pump, solar panels, storage cells and secondary glazing from Gecko, an Edinburgh based business. Providing the cottage with green energy acts as a test site for our plan for the main building. It will allow us to collect data and gain experience in using these new systems.

Gardens

Across 2026/27-2027/28 we will undertake capital works in the gardens to meet our environmental sustainability aims. In parallel to our carbon reduction efforts, we are mitigating for the impacts of climate change and actively extracting greenhouse gases to go *beyond* Net Zero. Supported by the Fife Environment Trust we will increase planting to reduce flooding, improve water storage and biodiversity, create accessible composting bays, add rock dust to the soil to sequester more CO2 (per tonne added, 300kg of CO2 is sequestered), build deer fencing to protect food production, and erect outdoor classrooms which will eventually have a solar panelled roof. With funds from Ian Finlay Paths Fund, we will establish a network of accessible paths throughout the estate increasing connectivity to public transport links and active travel routes. See [Environmental Sustainability Action Plan, appendix 6](#).



A student's pot waiting to be glazed in the ceramic's studio with a poster in the background by Glasgow base, Cobalt Collective.

Financial Planning

Social permaculture advocates for diverse ecosystems due to their strength, stability, and adaptiveness, eschewing the fragility of monocultures. We extend this idea and practice to our financial planning, cultivating a mixed economy of income and stakeholders that mitigates the risk of reliance on a single source. Financial permaculture embodies the same values as social permaculture, intending to create high yields without waste or ecological cost. We will continue to explore and embed financial permaculture and the practice of environmental accounting in 2025-28 to build a resilient and circular economy led by our Director, Finance Officer, Funding Development Officer, and supported by the Treasurer and Finance & Audit sub-Committee.

Key Assumptions

Self-Generated Income

We have a consistent track record in generating earned income. The highest proportion of earned income is from the sale of classes and workshops (72% of income in 25/26), followed by rental income (14% in 25/26). We forecast a steady increase in income from the sale of classes of 5% per year from £140k in 23/24, to £147 in 24/25, and £155k in 25/26. The number of classes and number of students are 80% and 89% of pre-lockdown levels, respectively. This means there is room to grow, and we intend to meet pre-lockdown levels by 2027/28. Revenue from studios and allotments continues to rise and we maintain growing waiting lists. Forecasts are based on actual income and agreed leases 2025-28 plus the addition of four new studios. Income from events increases steadily as we refine our pay-what-you-can system starting at £0, no questions asked.

Unrestricted Funding

Unrestricted funding supports our core operations. Northwood Charitable Trust's funding commitment extends to 2025/26 and we will apply for continued support for 2026/27-28/29. For the purposes of this business plan, we have assumed the same level of funding. Fife Council have confirmed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for 2024/25-26/27 and for 2027/28-29/30 we assume the same 10% increase as usual. Our current SLA from the Local Area Committee for North East Fife finishes in 2025/26, we have assumed the same level of support for the period 2026/27-28/29. We are confident in securing this income and this is illustrated as a % in our Budget Forecast. We have been invited to apply to The National Lottery Community Fund (Community Led) for unrestricted funding for the period 2024/25-26/27. Led by our Funding Development Officer, we are nurturing new relationships with the Leng Charitable Trust and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation amongst others for support for the period 2027/28-29/30. *See Letter of Support, 2 & 7, Fife Council, appendix 9, Funders & Partners, appendix 4, and Budget Forecast 2025-28, appendix 2.*

Restricted Funding

Project fundraising targets for 2025-28 are realistic, based on a sound track record and the strength of well-tended relationships. The total funding target (restricted & unrestricted) for 2025/26 is £271,211 of which 27% is contracted and 17% is from sources that annually support our projects - we are confident these applications will be successful. Of the remaining 61%, for some we have already submitted applications, and the rest are in development. We have strong relationships with funders, applications are never submitted 'cold'. We have an excellent track record in funding partners visiting the centre to see their investment at work. The chart below illustrates our mixed economy model for 2025/26. *See Funders & Partners as appendix 4.*

Inflation

All staff salaries and hourly rates increase by 2% per annum, with a base annual salary of £24,480 or £13.50 per hour in 2025/26. All fees to artists and arts workers meet or exceed Scottish Artist Union rates and we have predicted and budgeted for a 2% increase per year. Project budgets and costs are estimated to increase between 5-10% per year due to inflation, the increase in shipping and cost of the specialist materials and tools we use. These fees and budgets are subject to change, depending on inflation and recommendations from unions and Real Living Wage. We will adjust projections and budgets as these figures become known.

Cost-Saving & Efficiency

We continue to work with brokers to source competitive quotes for example Keegan & Pennykid for insurance and Touchstone Energy Management Solutions for utilities renewal.

Key Changes

Access

In 2025-28, budget lines for accessibility for team and participants/visitors, are part of our core expenditure. Just under half of the core staff are disabled or have a long-term physical or mental health condition and we have developed individual support packages and adjustments for absence, home working, and support facilities. How to request support is outlined in the Staff Handbook. Childcare is considered an access issue, and we provide a variety of approaches, including free places on our school holiday programmes. These benefits extend beyond core staff, to artists and arts workers, whose travel is also supported. This cost is accounted for in forecasts.

Self-Generated Income

We have trialled hiring the centre to generate income. As a learning studio environment with hazardous machinery and tools, to transform the centre requires significant resource with little reward after costs. Hires will continue to represent a small % of our income for 2025 onwards accommodating small events or meetings, such as Fife Community Climate Action Network.

In 2025-2028 we will host Summer and Winter Suppers to increase earned income. This is in response to community feedback that evidenced a strong appetite for making donations, crowdfunding, or fundraising events. The Suppers are opportunities for artists whose enquiry relates to food and the environment, to curate a meal which we serve in the gardens in summer and in our candlelit classrooms in winter. Food for the meal is grown in our gardens and donated to the centre by local farmers with whom we've had established relationships with for decades. In 2025, The Gardener's Cottage will provide rental income from self-funded residencies. This income will be reinvested into the building for maintenance and upgrades.

Capital Funding

Expenditure to maintain, improve and adapt the building and facilities increases from £800 to £1,000 per month due to the impact of extreme weather (for example, in 2023/24 tree maintenance costed more than £2,000). Capital activity will increase as we continue our journey to Net Zero 2045. In 2025, funding from CARES will transform The Gardener's Cottage installing green energy. In 2026 Fife Environmental Trust will fund the community co-designed Garden Strategy which improves carbon and water storage. In 2027 we will design and establish a new network of accessible paths around the grounds to support active travel and access to public transport. The main regeneration project (main building, kiln house, and artists' yard) as of 2024 is costed at £3.9M. The central aim of capital works is to make the estate more environmentally sustainable and accessible. Capital activity is closely monitored by the Capital sub-Committee and fundraising will be supported by Fife Council, DTAS, and the Community Ownership Fund.

Financial Strategies

Full cost recovery

We have piloted using a toolkit designed by The National Lottery Community Fund that calculates the core contribution the centre makes to any project as a % of our staff costs and overheads. This is then included as a budget line to project funders so that they contribute to core costs as well as the project itself. A full cost recovery method ensures that project funds contribute proportionally to overhead or administrative expenses.

Time Bank

Embracing social permaculture's ethos of reciprocity and in building a community grounded in mutual support, in 2025 we will introduce an alternative economic system called Time Bank. We intend to reduce the increasing cost of maintaining the estate through the deployment of the skills and experience of our community. Time saved chasing quotes for small repairs and improvements will be used to nurture the volunteer programme. This will build our community of volunteers, engendering a feeling of guardianship for the centre, creating new relationships

and friendships, and strengthening a network of support and mutual aid. We have piloted this approach with our allotmenters. They could either pay their monthly fee for them allotment or subscribe to Time Bank with 25% choosing to do the latter, and 50% choosing to do both.

Reserves

Our reserves policy outlines a total target of £200,000 to be held as designated reserves, the breakdown is:

- Personnel reserve for unexpected employee costs.	£25,000
- Programme reserve to mitigate against unachieved funding targets for core and one-off projects.	£50,000
- Studio deposits and rent reserve.	£4,000
- Artists and arts worker reserve for projects and classes.	£20,000
- Deposit reserve for students (1.5 terms).	£56,000
- Capital reserve for site improvements and maintenance.	£45,000

In 2024/25 our designated reserves stand at £16,000. Over the course of this business plan, our reserves are forecast to increase to £106,780. Per year, we have budgeted for a 5% contingency, which if not spent, will be moved to the designated reserves. *See Reserves Policy, appendix 3 and Budget 2023-2025, Narrative & Summary, appendix 2.*

Oversight & Control

Board Oversight

Financial oversight sits with the Board of Trustees, supported by our Treasurer. They are responsible for the organisation meeting its legal and statutory obligations. We have been a registered charity since 1980 and SCIO since 2016 and our processes for meeting our obligations are well embedded. The Treasurer receives monthly reports and analysis from the Director which they discuss and interpret against multi-year forecasts and projections at regular informal one-to-ones. Quarterly Finance & Audit sub-Committee meetings allow for formal interrogation and information sharing. The accounts are independently audited by David Johnstone (CIMA) before submission to OSCR and publication.

Processes & Policy

We have practised mechanisms to ensure fiscal prudence. We use Liberty software to keep detailed financial records in addition to a hardcopy archive. Liberty issues project budget reports, helpful year-on-year analyses and year-end reports. The Financial Controls Policy includes instructions for delegated authority, cash handling, credit/debit card management, details of who the bank signatories are and how/when to prepare year-end accounts for submission to OSCR. It also signposts to associated policies such as Ethical Procurement Policy and Ethical Fundraising Policy.

Budget & Milestones

All projects have detailed budgets for which spend is attributed, variance assessed, and key milestones. Projects with high risk have discrete dedicated contingency which requires discussion and approval by the Director before use. The Director approves all project budgets and milestones and reviews them quarterly with the project lead. All invoices require the Director's signed approval before being assigned to the correct fund. A project is complete when the funder(s) and partner(s) have received a project end report, documentation (film and photography), and financial reports evidencing spend through invoices, receipts, and in some cases, transaction reports or bank statements. Some projects require reporting throughout the life of the activity, which is managed by the project lead. Where this is not a formal requirement, we issue informal email updates. *See Annual Activities, appendix 5.*

Analysis & Projections

The Finance Office issues a monthly report, including income/expenditure, details of restricted and unrestricted funds, and cashflow forecast. The Director interrogates these and with the Finance Officer they annotate anomalies, resolve issues, and create projections related to changes in pattern. Data from these reports inform annual and multi-year forecasts which are presented to the Board at the first meeting of the year in January for approval. With two years of consistent data from our time at the Leng Home, we have a sound understanding of its running costs. This combined with 50 years of data in our previous premises, we make accurate forecasts and various projections in response to risk.

Forecast 2025-2028

The forecast budget for 2025/26-2027/28, appendix 2, is a whole team effort, with everyone participating in identifying realistic and achievable income targets and calculating the cost of activities. This process is essential as all team members are budget holders with income generation targets either through fundraising or earned income. In co-developing forecasts the team have insight into the whole-organisation finances. Understanding their budget and targets in context improves cohesion and team working.

A detailed forecast for 2025-28 is [appendix 2](#). It shows a consistent and steady increase in income and expenditure relative and proportional to the organisation's growth. The table below shows this information in brief.

Key details

Earned income steadily rises in proportion with our unrestricted and restricted funding targets. The biggest increase is in restricted funds from 2026/7 to 2027/8 which is due to an increase in capital funds from the Ian Finlay Paths for All fund. Total capital expenditure, inclusive of it the capital project manager position, is £194,088. This includes building maintenance and investment in the Gardener's Cottage and grounds (fixed assets only).

Contingency & Reserves

Financial contingency is held at a global level at 5% per year of the total expenditure. Unspent contingency will be moved to designated reserves each year. We estimate by 2031 we will meet our designated reserves total. We begin the period 2025/26 with £16,000 of designated reserves and end in 2027/28 with £109,702, which is 55% of our total reserves target. Our new reserves total reflects the growth of the organisation and our aim to be financially sustainable. We begin the period 2025/26 with projected unrestricted or free reserves of £50,000 which means we should end the period 2027/28 with the same amount. [See Reserves Policy, appendix 3, Pro Forma, appendix 1, and annual accounts 2022 & 2023.](#)

The above sections, Financial Planning and Forecast 2025-2028, demonstrates strong fiscal management. New funding enhances the mixed economy model, strengthening our financial position and allowing social permaculture to permeate all facets of Forgan Arts Centre.

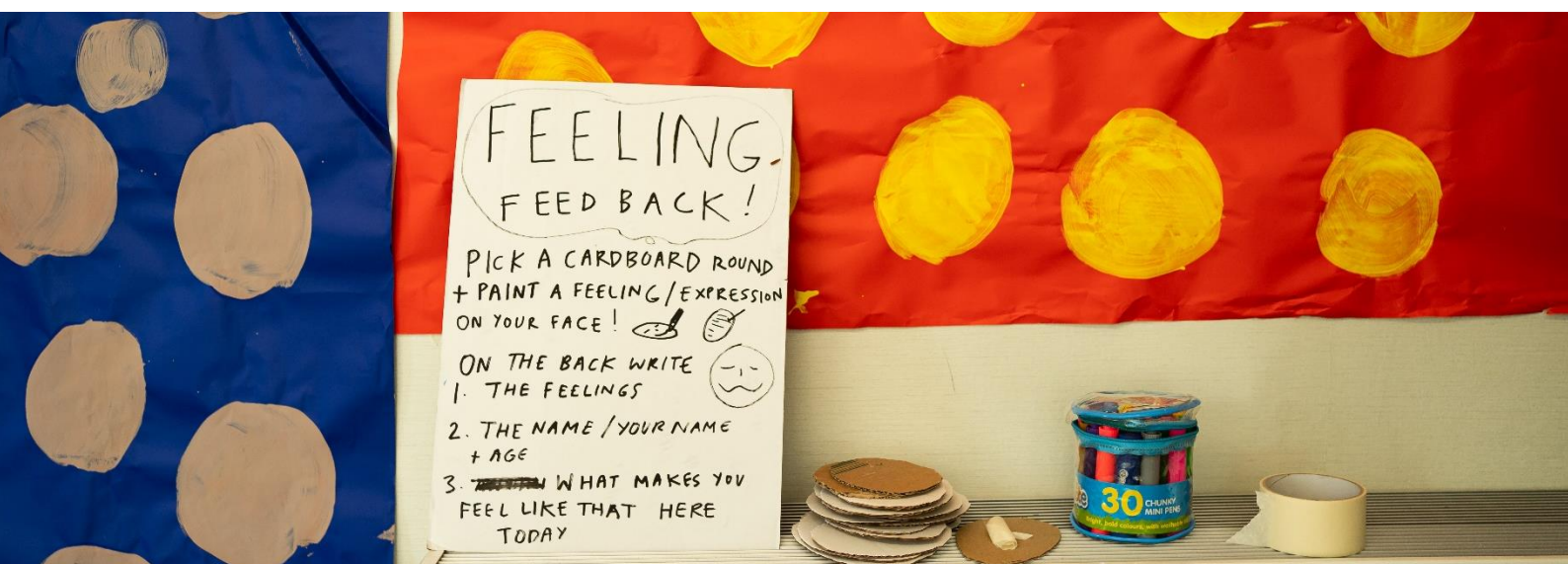


Monitoring & Evaluation

In collaborating with tialt, we have expanded our consultation methods to be more accessible, inclusive, and responsive incorporating both online and in-person activities. tialt's process of analysis provides insight we would not have extracted independently and proves the data to be an ongoing rich source of information. We use it to inform our actions, decision making and activities. It means we're better able to effectively address the diverse needs of our evolving community. Building on this success, we will continue to work with tialt in 2025-28. tialt is an acronym for 'there is an alternative' and in embracing their ethos, we are co-designing a new, more generative community consultation and evaluation process. This will be led by Dr Douglas Lonie, Director of tialt, and will involve his colleagues, as well as a broader Working Group. We will co-create a toolkit for research, monitoring, and evaluation, establishing detailed milestones and outcomes, both tangible and intangible.

The Working Group will be responsible for funding reporting obligations, providing qualitative and quantitative information and multimedia documentation. Below is an example of the programme of research, monitoring, and evaluation:

<p>1. Preparing the ground</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify co-design team for each themed year. This may include partners. - Research and consultation to identify measurable core indicators, milestones, and refine outcomes, for each thematic year with reference to the UN's SDGs, SG's NPF, and the aims, objectives, outcomes, and resources within this business plan. - Establish baselines and share update with stakeholders.
<p>2. Propagation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collate and analyse consultation work with co-design team to finesse the plan, toolkit, and methodologies. - Establish process of monitoring milestones with co-design team. - Feedback sessions with stakeholders and update to stakeholders.
<p>3. Nurturing & growing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide activities space to develop and grow, providing nourishing support and encouragement. - Participate in 'deep hangs' to be immersed in activities and meetings employing deep listening and collecting/sharing direct and non-direct feedback. - Document activities through film, photography, and in conversation.
<p>4. Harvesting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schedule in-person meetings including 'deep hangs'. - Share data collection processes for collecting anonymised feedback. - Identify 1-2 participants to take part in more in-depth case studies. - In considerations of findings, design how to embed learning so far.
<p>5. Seed collection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-design process for sharing feedback and impact with stakeholders which may include a publication, screening, event, or meal. - Create output and outcome sharing opportunities with co-conspirators, funders, and Board for future planning and celebration. - Define processes for the long-term implementation of outcomes and learning. - Provide comprehensive project report to stakeholders.



Risk Register

We assess risk at operational level, which is managed by the staff, artists and arts workers, and at a strategic level which is managed by the Board. The Director has oversight of all risk.

Operational Risk

A suite of over 100 individual risk assessments ensures the health, wellbeing, and safety of our team and community. Our activities, especially some craft processes (raku pottery, stain glass, and oil painting) use hazardous chemicals and equipment that requires careful training and oversight. Therefore, all artist, tutors or arts workers must complete a rated risk assessment which is reviewed by the Studio & Operations Coordinator and signed off by the Director. *An example of one of our risk assessments is Building & Grounds RA, appendix 22.*

The index of risk assessments is categorised under these headings:

Area	Description	Review
Building	All classrooms, publicly accessible areas & storage, bathrooms, landings & stairs, lift, fire escapes, Cottage & Kiln House.	Each new term
Building Services & Maintenance	Fire Alarm and process for escape, asbestos. Legionella, electrics, roofing, plumbing.	Annual
Estate	Car park, driveway, all external entrances/exits, nature paths, sensory garden, allotments.	With the change in season (Autumn/Spring)
Processes	Upholstery (compressor), glass, pottery, life drawing, printing, painting, and gardening.	Each new term
People	Event management processes, safeguarding vulnerable adults and children, independent visitors (dog walkers etc.), volunteers, 3 rd party workers or trades people, lone working, and hires.	Per event or activity

Instructions of how to complete a risk assessment, the health and safety legislation we adhere to, and manuals for operating equipment are detailed in our Health & Safety Manual and Operations Manual.

Strategic Risk

The Board manage a register that encapsulates high level risk. Over the past year, Trustees have undergone a thorough review of their risk management approach, with a concentrated focus on reputational, operational, strategic, and artistic risk. Trustees have enhanced their process by using tools such as SWOT and PESTLE analyses to identify areas of risk in these categories. Risk is standing item on Board agendas, ensuring ongoing scrutiny and discussion. The Board continue to explore new models of risk management, especially in conversation with organisations who have undertaken major capital projects. Below is a broad-brush stroke table outlining risk items that pertain to 2025-28.

Politics	Changes to local authority administration/elected officials could result in a change of key contacts. We have strong relationships with multiple elected members and across council directorates.
Economics	The cost-of-living crisis and changes in public finance directly impact on our income. For 50 years we have weathered these storms by fostering loyalty with participants and funders.
Society	There is a mental health epidemic and pressure on community services is immense. Our activities support good mental health, delivered in partnership with services, across sectors.
Technology	Moving to digital risks limiting access for our community. We will embrace digital in our organisation's administration and new technologies in our creative programme and craft processes, without forgetting our roots and multiple pathways, online and in person, to our activities.
Law	We have invested in creating new policies, procedures, and ongoing, qualified HR support and scheduled annual reviews of these documents.
Environment	The climate crisis is real and urgent. Reaching Net Zero 2045 and planning for beyond this goal, with our community through a place-based just transition is central to all activity.

Summary of Appendices

The following appendices are referenced in the business plan and are necessary supporting or interpretive documents:

Area	#	Appendix
Finance & Fundraising	1	Finance Pro Forma
	2	FAC Budget 2025-2028
	3	Reserves Policy
	4	Partners & Funders
Programme & Partners	5	Annual Activities 2025-2028
	6	Environmental Sustainability Action Plan
	7	Equalities Diversity & inclusion Action Plan
	8	tialt Community Consultation 1-Pager
	9	Strategic Workplan
Team	10	Staff Handbook
	11	Fair Work & Effective Voice Policy & Action Plan
	12	RASCI Matrix
	13	Team Organogram
	14	Equitable Recruitment Policy
	15	Artists-in-Residence Brief (draft)
	16a	Producer: Environment & Producer: Community Connections &
	& b	Access Role Description (draft)
	17	Communications Role Description (draft)
	18	Trustee Statement & Biographies
Risk & External Environment	19	Safeguarding Policy
	20	SWOT Analysis & TOWS Strategies
	21	PESTLE Analysis
Capital	22	Building & Grounds Risk Assessment
	23	Nicoll Russell Studios Proposed Plans (capital)

The following documents are also available upon request:

Marketing	Audience Development Strategy
	Branding Guidelines
	Marketing Strategy
Finance & Fundraising	Forecast 2024/2025
	Ethical Fundraising Policy
	Year End Accounts (draft) 2023
	Financial Risk Management
	Ethical Procurement Policy
	Fundraising Strategy
	Financial Controls Policy
Operations	Operations Manual
	Health & Safety Manual
	Index of Risk Assessments and individual RAs (100+)
Team	Capability & Flourishing Action Plan, Policy, and CPD Plan
	Equal Opportunities Policy
	Dignity at Work Policy & plan
	Flexible Working Policy and Request Template
	Grievance Policy
	Leave (holiday, sick, maternity, paternity, parental, carers) Policies
	Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy
Programme	Garden Strategy
	Artists & Art Workers Network

Authorship

The concept at the heart of this business plan was co-developed by Forgan Arts Centre's Director, Jennifer White, with artists Rowan Lear, Désirée Coral Guerra, Tom Varley, and Claudia Zeiske.

This business plan was written by Director, Jennifer White, with support from artists Tom Varley, and Claudia Zeiske and Forgan Arts Centre's Trustees, Kate Smith, Judith Winter, and Ailsa McKenzie, and staff, Kenny Christie, Lorna Hunter, Anna Ferris, Helena Simmons, Alana Peden, and CJ Izatt.

Version #	Change or update	Owner	Date
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2.0	Updated for publishing publicly	Jennifer White	12.12.2024

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