

CLYDESIDER CREATIVE MORE THAN A MAGAZINE

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT
2018 - 2021



Our Mission

To provide a solution-focused creative space where people in West Dunbartonshire can learn new skills, share positive stories which inspire change and challenge the negativity and stigma often associated with poorer communities.

Background

Clydesider Creative Ltd is a community media and creative training social enterprise based in West Dunbartonshire.

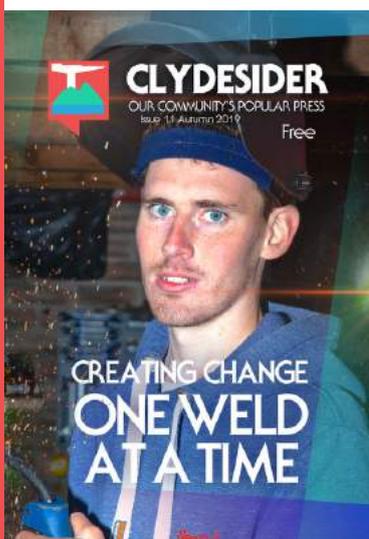
Clydesider community magazine, was launched in 2016. It is a free, quarterly publication which promotes the positives West Dunbartonshire has to offer in terms of people, place, scenery and history. It also showcases the creative talents, ideas and personal experiences of local people.

Over the past five years Clydesider Creative has become much more than a magazine, as we developed a range of projects, networks and collaborations with our community.

In 2018 we received a three-year grant of £73,720 from the National Lottery Community Fund. We planned to use the funding to:-

- Recruit and train volunteer community journalists to contribute content to the Clydesider community magazine, website and social media
- Run quarterly Creative Café events to engage more people and encourage them to try a variety of creative activities while also finding out more about their local community
- Increase our social media presence so our volunteers had multi-media platforms to share their creative work and positive news stories

This report details how we have used the funding and the impact it has had for our readers, volunteers, partners and our organisation.



Our Why

'If it bleeds, it leads'.

This is a philosophy which governs much of the media industry. It is an ethos which damages both individuals and communities, creating stigma, division and mistrust.

Clydesider community magazine was established to amplify and showcase local voices and talents, be a source of reliable and useful information and create a space to build positive community connections.

The magazine shines a light on the positives that West Dunbartonshire has to offer, because if all we read/see about our neighbourhoods are negative stories, it creates feelings of disempowerment and helplessness.

In contrast solution-focused journalism challenges stigma by informing and engaging local people in sharing their experiences and developing positive change.

By publishing stories which focus on local solutions and inspirational individuals who live here, we felt we could start tackling some of the negative stereotypes connected to West Dunbartonshire - and places like it.



"A wonderful magazine celebrating everything positive and creative in West Dunbartonshire. In a world of bad news this publication is a ray of sunshine. The community spirit leaps from every obviously lovingly put together page. And it's free! You couldn't ask for more. Totally recommend."

Dhyani Crawford, Clydesider Reader



Our What

Clydesider magazine & digital media spaces

The magazine is a free, quarterly publication covering the community of West Dunbartonshire. We publish positive, solution-focused stories, poetry, photography and creative guides, most of which are written by volunteers from our local community.

Pre-Covid we had a 10,000 print run with copies of the magazine distributed to +200 community centres, libraries, shops, cafes, care homes, surgeries, pubs and businesses across West Dunbartonshire.

During the first lockdown we switched our format to an information-focused monthly Mini Mag which highlighted the many community groups and organisations providing support as well as sharing inspirational stories and creativity. We reduced our print run to 2,000 and by working with +25 local third sector organisations we ensured the magazines were delivered directly with food parcels and care packages to those most likely to be digitally excluded and socially isolated.

With many people spending more time online during the pandemic we focused our attention on putting more content on our website and social media. This included:-

- Short Zoom video interviews with local support services
- Crowdsourced information posts eg local delivery services; local virtual physical activity classes
- Community Spotlights on local community organisations
- Community Business Spotlights on local businesses
- Poem of the Week by local writers
- Virtual photography and art exhibitions by local creatives
- Inspirational videos and stories about hidden heroes
- Photo news stories and personal experience blogs

Community media training & community newsroom

In Year 1 of this project we ran four sets of 6 weeks citizen media training workshops for volunteers and potential contributors. This included community journalism, photo journalism and video journalism.

Participants came from a wide range of backgrounds and age groups, from school age to pensioners. Of the 22 participants only two had previous media experience and the majority had life experiences often misunderstood or stigmatised by traditional media.

These were practical sessions where participants learned a range of skills and used them to create content for the magazine, website and social media as well as making a short film about Clydesider.

We also hosted a weekly community newsroom where we used a solution-focused story planner to work with volunteers on developing story ideas for each issue. At the start of the pandemic we trialled a Zoom Community Newsroom but had little uptake. At the start of 2021 we re-branded it as a 'Community Catch-up' which is proving successful engaging new volunteers who are helping develop the sessions.

Creative events & activities

Our day-long Creative Café events were developed to engage and involve a more diverse audience than would participate with the media training or magazine alone. (see attached Appendix 1)

They offered participants a mix of learning experiences which encouraged creative storytelling and participation.

We recognised that many people in low income communities can face a range of barriers to participating in creative activities so each event was designed to be as inclusive as possible.

Working with local creative facilitators we hosted three Creative Cafes in 2019 offering free taster workshops in mindful photography, shadow puppetry, kids' stand-up comedy, laughter therapy, Tai Chi, candle-making, group poetry, song-writing and much more.

Alongside the creative workshops our Community Information Marketplace provided an opportunity for people to chat to both local third sector support services and local creatives and we commissioned Food for Thought, a local emergency food aid service, to run a Community Kitchen. This short video provides a taster of our first year creative events.

We also hosted our Focus on Change Community Gathering which was linked to Challenge Poverty Week 2019.

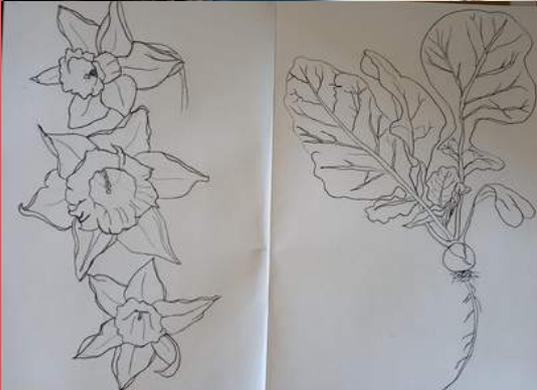
We had similar events planned for 2020 & 2021 but when the pandemic hit we had to adapt our way of working.

The Creative Cafes became Creative Cafes From Your Couch – these were multi-day themed virtual festivals across our social media platforms with a mix of creative activities, community stories, useful resources and creative content. Topics covered included nature, wellbeing, a homemade Christmas and mental health.

During 2020 and 2021 we also organised a variety of offline and online activities, providing the materials for participants to get creative at home. These included:-

- Pumpkin packs – collaboration with Outside the Box, OK Food Parcels, Food for Thought, Susan Laws Artwork, Suds & Spuds – 75 participants
- Community Knits x 2 - collaboration with Dalmuir Knit & Natter, Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels, Food for Thought & Clyde Shopmobility – 20 participants
- Community Canvas art packs – collaboration with DACA, Alternatives, ISARO, Stepping Stones, Neighbourhood Networks, Clifftop Projects, Skylark Recovery Trust, The Phoenix and Work Connect - 50 participants
- Group poetry workshops via Zoom – 6 participants
- Botanical illustration workshops via Zoom – 11 participants
- Open Mic night – 24 participants
- Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival virtual art exhibition – 24 participants

We are currently planning a variety of outdoor creative activities and walks for the summer.



Our Who

Volunteers

From an initial group of five volunteers meeting in the founder's living room, we've grown to 260+ magazine volunteer supporters/contributors who have helped with everything from editorial content and distribution, to web design, DIY, plumbing, home-baking and much more.

We also had 103 creative volunteers who supported our events and activities in a variety of roles.

All of our volunteers are from West Dunbartonshire, they come from a diverse range of backgrounds and age groups. Few have prior media experience, most feel traditional media does not represent them or tell their stories.

It is a truly intergenerational space - our volunteers include young people interested in careers in the media but the majority are older people, many with personal experience of life challenges common in poorer areas.

Most get involved in multiple ways, while others contribute a photo or a poem and have little direct engagement with the organisation. We believe in being flexible and creating a space where anyone in West Dunbartonshire can engage in whatever way best suits them.

Staff

We currently have four members of staff (3 FTE) all of whom started as volunteers with Clydesider. We have also employed 47 people on a freelance basis to provide creative workshops, film-making, IT support, photography and design.

We believe in investing in home-grown talent so 93% of our staff/freelancers are from West Dunbartonshire and the majority of our facilitators are experienced at working in community organisations.

Board

The organisation is governed by a board of five directors, one of whom (the founder and Clydesider's editor) is employed by Clydesider Creative Ltd. The majority of board members live in West Dunbartonshire and the two who don't have long-term connections with the area and/or specialist expertise which is of benefit to the organisation.



Our How

People-led

From the outset we have been guided by and involved our local community in everything we do.

In the magazine start-up stages we held regular meetings across West Dunbartonshire open to anyone interested in getting involved. From these we knew many people were uncomfortable with traditional written reporting methods. Instead they would bring poems, music and short stories to share, which spoke of their experience and knowledge.

So we were keen to ensure creativity was part of our process and developed a new method of storytelling and engagement - our quarterly Creative Café events.

As Clydesider Creative has grown we have listened and learned from our local community, and adopted ways of working to encourage more people to get involved. These include: -

- Running a weekly Community Newsroom, where volunteers could pop in for 1-1 support/advice and work with us to plan each issue of the magazine. This was adapted to a fortnightly virtual 'Community Catch-up' this year.
- Offering a multitude of ways for volunteers and contributors to share ideas and experiences with the Clydesider team. These currently include a closed Facebook group, a monthly e-newsletter as well as 1-1 meet-ups and communications via text, e-mail, Whatsapp etc
- Running annual surveys to hear from our readers, volunteers, creative participants and community partners.
- Hosting Pop-up Community Newsroom stalls at community events, libraries, shopping centres and career fayres to gain a better understanding of what local people want from their media.
- Collaborating with community partners to try and make Clydesider magazine and creative activities as accessible as possible. This has included only using accessible premises for our events; commissioning Food for Thought to provide a 'pay-what-you-can' Community Kitchen at our events; working with Outside the Box to have our Mini Mags translated into Arabic during the pandemic; and we will be working with Rockvale Rebound to create audio files for their visually-impaired members.
- Creating space and providing support so our volunteers can help shape our Community Catch-ups and creative activities.



Strengths-based

While Clydesider Creative is a community media organisation our guiding philosophy has been strongly influenced by the recovery community.

This is due to our founder having worked in both the media industry and the local third sector, including eight years with Dumbarton Area Council and Alcohol (DACA).

It was here she learned about asset-based recovery, co-production and the value of creating safe, supported environments for personal growth - ways of working almost diametrically opposed to the competitive, deadline-driven, negativism that prevails in some elements of the media industry.

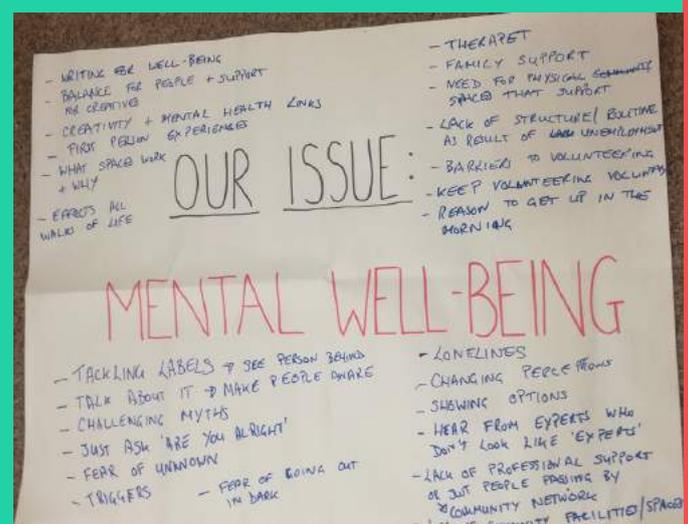
And it was these working practices she adopted when setting up Clydesider Creative and Clydesider magazine.

As a result many of the people who got involved with Clydesider come from under-represented backgrounds and have personal experience of the challenges and barriers common in a low-income community. We have volunteer contributors who have struggled with mental and/or physical health problems, addiction, isolation, loneliness, discrimination and poverty. Others who are often excluded because of their age, race or gender.

Our asset-based approach means we don't monitor individual challenges, as we want to work with participants to focus on their skills and talents. However as they recognise they are in a safe, supported environment and start to trust our team most will share aspects of their life stories with us. Also over time, some will also feel confident to share their experiences with our readers as a means to help and inspire others on similar journeys.

We put this strengths-based ethos into practice in a variety of ways. Some examples include:

- providing volunteers with bespoke training in a range of media practices, these are designed to encourage creativity and confidence rather than conformity.
- devised a 'solution planner' reporting model to explore complex topics such as poverty and mental well-being. We started using this in 2019 to plan the magazine with our volunteers.
- encouraging participants, volunteers and staff to try new activities/ways of working so they can gain confidence in their abilities.
- recognising the assets that exist in our community and highlighting them in the magazine, across our social media and at our community events.
- supporting volunteers to gain employment, education and work experience.
- recruiting local staff and facilitators experienced at working in community-based organisations.
- using our social media to showcase local creativity.
- working with community partners to encourage people who feel ignored or stigmatised by traditional media to share their stories, experiences and creative talents.



Connected

As Clydesider Creative is 'People-led', it is very much connected to our local community.

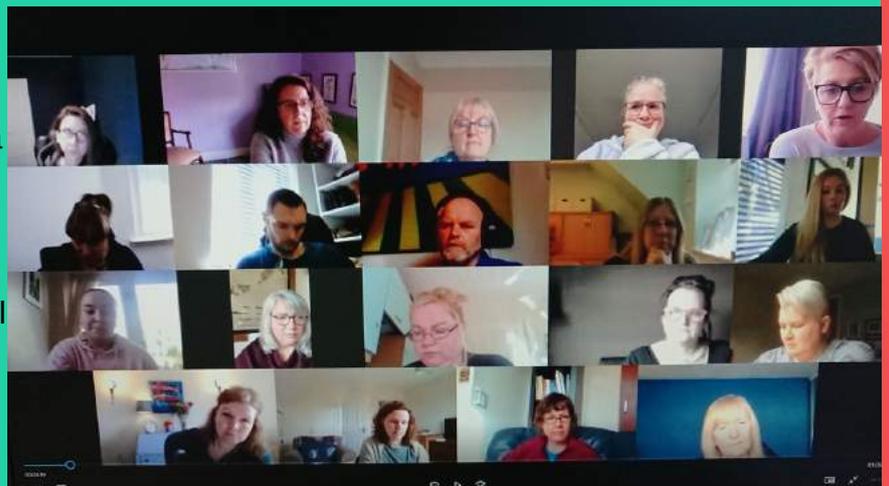
The overwhelming majority of volunteers, freelance facilitators and staff live in West Dunbartonshire and those who don't live locally have connections via work or involvement with other community organisations.

From the outset we had an excellent network of community connections and have developed these over the three-year funding period. We have worked particularly closely with community organisations supporting people who are often under-represented in the mainstream media and whose voices and stories are rarely heard.

We have also increased our connections with other community media organisations in the UK, Europe and the USA— where there is growing investment and value placed on grassroots media.

Some of the connections and collaborations we have developed or participated in over the past three years include:-

- Developed and hosted quarterly Creative Café events which include a Community Marketplace (community venue full of community information stalls) alongside creative workshops.
- Developed a solution-focused approach to community collaboration for our 'Focus on Change' Community Gathering which was linked to Challenge Poverty Week 2019
- Piloted the Clydesider Club Card to encourage our readers to 'shop local'
- Developed 'Creative Café From Your Couch' which included a virtual community information space alongside online creative activities.
- Set up a Community Response Network in March 2020 offering an informal space for local organisations to share information, advice and resources.
- Throughout the lockdowns we worked with 25 community partners to ensure a print magazine was distributed to those most likely to be digitally excluded.
- Provided mentoring advice and support to several new start social enterprises/charities and community publications.
- Delivered training workshops showcasing how we use creativity to engage with our community at media conferences in Berlin and Manchester also participated in several engaged journalism studies/collaborations/events with researchers and academia in USA, Europe and UK.
- Organised a collaboration with five local organisations to ensure West Dunbartonshire was represented in the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival for the first time in 2021.
- Hosted a Resilience Hub for West Dunbartonshire Health & Social Care Partnership showcasing how local creatives and creative opportunities can help tackle trauma and amplify voices of people often excluded from or stigmatised by mainstream media.
- Partnered with Seeds of Hope social enterprise to deliver 500 packets of wildflower seeds to vulnerable readers during the first lockdown.



Volunteer Impact

Our volunteers are the life blood of our organisation, allowing us to punch well above our weight.

For most contributors we are the first place to publish their work, sometimes we are the first people to see their work. This is in part due to a long-standing cultural snobbery attached to both the creative and media industries and in part a legacy of an education system which didn't encourage creativity in working class communities.

This has resulted in many talented people feeling excluded and lacking the confidence to share their skills. It is a privilege to watch both skills and confidence grow as people who had been told they "couldn't write" or "weren't creative" get the recognition they deserve by being part of Clydesider's community.

All our staff team started as volunteers, as did some of our freelancers. As we grow we have continued to invest in our homegrown talent, creating a team passionate about the future of our area and our organisation.

And as a direct result of volunteering with Clydesider at least 38 of our volunteer contributors/creatives have gained employment, gone on to further education or even set up their own social enterprise or charity.

A few comments from our volunteer contributors:-

"Clydesider encouraged me to try get back outside to take some local photographs as I can't travel far and I've had 3 featured already in the magazine which was great for my mental health and anxiety problems."

"I love the ethos of the magazine, to promote and showcase the positive stories and talents within our community. An ethos which is missed by local media which is all doom and gloom."

"Watching the growth of the team over the last few years has been great, seeing the magazine grow from strength to strength. The events and ideas are always fun and inclusive."

"Enjoy the ability to be creative and see the results in print."

"Feeling part of something really useful. Helping me and fellow citizens find a sense of connection and maybe inspiring some to take part in more local events and activities."

"I have improved my writing and my confidence. Been a super experience."

"Meeting new people, learning more about my area, and boosting my confidence."



Organisational Impact

From the start we focused on our Why and let it lead the way. It has taken us on an exhilarating and exciting journey for each individual team member and for the organisation as a whole.

In 2019 Clydesider was chosen to participate in two funded Accelerator programmes in one year.

We were one of just eight media organisations from across Europe selected to participate in the European Journalism Centre's funded training programme. Of this cohort we were the only organisation which focused on a local community – the others had national or international reach.

This resulted in two staff members and two volunteers travelling to Amsterdam, Birmingham, Berlin and Budapest, working with and learning from other community media organisations from across Europe and the United States.

Simultaneously we were one of 20 Scottish social enterprises chosen to be part of the School for Social Entrepreneurs Trade Up programme.

We were also invited to deliver presentations at events in Germany and in the Scottish Parliament and had a motion passed at Holyrood to commend our work.

It was an extraordinary time for the personal growth of all the team and we were looking forward to 2020 when we planned to take our learning and use it to consolidate our organisation's sustainability.

The impact reaches beyond our immediate team as most of our freelance creative facilitators have gained additional employment with our community partners as a direct result of working with us.

And despite pandemic we continue to build on connections made in 2019 and have been asked to participate in several research studies and learning projects in the UK, Europe and the USA.

Clydesider's ways of working and new approach to media also helped us secure funding from a variety of other funders including Corra Foundation, West Dunbartonshire Community Fund, UnLtd, Firstport, Foundation Scotland and West Dunbartonshire Council's Social Enterprise Challenge fund.

We have also been featured in the National, Third Force News and the Scottish Recovery Network.



Coping With Covid

Last year was difficult for everyone the world over but some people faced a bigger set of challenges with fewer resources than others.

This was particularly true of low income communities such as West Dunbartonshire, which had one of the highest Covid mortality rates in Scotland and high case rates throughout. It's also one of the most deprived communities in Scotland and the pandemic will have long-term impacts, particularly on the mental well-being of people already struggling with the multiple challenges poverty brings.

Our creative activities and solution-focused magazine are designed to keep people connected with each other and the wider community while also keeping their minds, and sometimes their bodies, active.

We had our own challenges to face last year with advertising income disappearing overnight, most of our distribution outlets closed and while our team worked from home the virtual world did not suit some of our volunteers who had struggled with loneliness, poor mental and physical health, substance issues and poverty long before Covid and the pandemic magnified these problems.

So we looked at how we could do things differently to best meet these needs.

During the first lockdown we moved to monthly information-based Mini Mags, reduced the print run and with the support of over 25 local community organisations distributed the magazines with care packages and emergency food aid, ensuring they reached those most likely to be digitally excluded.

We knew our community partners faced similar or greater challenges while providing essential services.

So we set up a Community Response Network which met weekly via Zoom throughout the first lockdown. It was an informal space to share information, resources, ideas and proved very popular. We now run it monthly and an increasing number of statutory partners and some funders have joined these calls.

Our in-person events and meetings moved online and we stayed in contact with volunteers via our Clydesider Creatives Facebook group, a fortnightly virtual Community Catch-up and a monthly e-newsletter.

For our volunteers who found it hard engaging in a digital world we did our best to stay connected via text and phone, with the occasional 1-1 meet-ups when allowed.

Our theme for the magazine and creative activities for 2021 is 'resilience and recovery' and in print, online and in person we are trying to create positive spaces for our community to share their stories and experiences of coping through a very difficult time.

“These are dark and depressing times and this has given me something to look forward to and given me the drive to start writing again, I started a book years ago and I’m going to go back and finish it this time.” **Robert**

Our Learning

Doing Digital

One of our goals for 2020 was to increase our digital footprint and reach new audiences via our virtual space. Our team had little more than basic digital skills and we had intended to develop these during the year but as a result of the pandemic we all had to learn fast.

Our Community Engagement worker took on this remit and having a dedicated worker to focus on the social media has made a huge difference to our output.

At the start of this project we had 1,600 followers across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram this has increased to 4,200 and we have also set up a Clydesider Creative Youtube channel, a closed Facebook group for our creative network and a 700 strong e-newsletter mailing list.

All of our Creative Café events were delivered online in 2020 and the first half of 2021. They were designed for our audience to engage with at a time and place that suited them. On the plus side this has resulted in a much greater reach than anything we could have imagined for our in-person events. In 2020 the reach was 53,556 with 4,797 engagements across four platforms and to date in 2021 the reach stands at 34,379 while engagement is at 2,725.

Although our numbers have increased it is much more difficult to measure how many people actively participated in or learned from the creative content we shared online. Therefore we have only counted participants who got involved directly with one of our creative workshops or activities.

Providing a mix of in-person, learn-at-home and virtual activities has been much more time and resource intensive than the one-day Creative Café events we offered in Year 1.

While all of our team has become more proficient in using digital marketing tools such as Mailchimp, Hootsuite, Canva and Tweetdeck, it has become apparent we need a dedicated worker to concentrate on this work.

To this end we have successfully applied for a Kickstart funded post for a Digital Communications worker which will free up our Community Engagement worker to focus her attention back on developing connections with community partners and supporting with our volunteers.

Going forward we aim to make this a permanent post and continue to increase our digital output.



Community Connections

The past 18 months has seen us working much more closely with local community organisations in a variety of ways.

Although all our staff team have worked in community organisations prior to joining Clydesider the close collaborations during Covid have helped improve the understanding of how we can best serve those most at risk in our community.

We have built up trust with these organisations which has resulted in us working directly with more people experiencing difficult life challenges. This is both in participating in creative activities and in contributing their stories and experiences to the magazine, social media and video.

These partnerships with support services are helping challenge the stigma often associated with vulnerability as people feel comfortable to share with our readers and audience their personal experiences and journeys, helping ensure underrepresented voices are heard by wider audiences.

We are also becoming a place where people in our community turn to for information and advice about local support services.

The connections have also been beneficial for our community partners as we have helped create a community space for them to meet and collaborate which didn't really exist before in West Dunbartonshire.

Our Community Engagement worker post is not part of this project funding, instead it has been funded via three one-year funds (Engaged Journalism Accelerator and twice by Corra Foundation's #ShiftThePower fund). During this time it has become integral to our way of working and one we believe is essential to going forward as our volunteer numbers continue to increase.

To this end we will include this post in future multi-year applications.

Feedback from Community Partners

"Just want to say a massive thank to everyone, including the Clydesider Team who have been a real lifeline throughout the year, I for one really appreciate the support you have provided and the work you put to coordinating this group – THANK YOU!!!!" **Gillian Y Sort It**

"I would just like to say thank you for letting me come along to your Community Response Network meeting – it's really a wonderful network you've set up and would put some much more well-oiled projects to shame. Lovely to see such a united community presence, it's absolutely what West Dunbartonshire needs." **Lucy, WDC**

"The platform allowed unprecedented collaboration between community organisations in West Dunbartonshire. Information was a key to make community response efficient and successful. The platform made it happen." **CRN survey respondent**

"Fantastic way to keep in touch with our local community. Really useful and if we can't make it the minutes help us to see developments and share how we are responding to our community in this time of need." **CRN survey respondent**

Creativity & Well-being

The Creative Cafés and creative activities were originally designed to engage more people with Clydesider and encourage them to try creative storytelling activities while also finding out more about the community – an in-person version of the magazine.

However, from our first Creative Café it was clear the impact experienced by participants went much deeper with many people commenting on how trying something creative also helped their wellbeing.

This became much more apparent in the feedback and comments throughout the pandemic as creativity seemed to provide a positive distraction and several of our participants shared that it helped reduce their anxiety.

For the creative workshops delivered via Zoom or via our video and print guides we provided participants with an art pack containing everything they would need. These were appreciated by participants many of whom were trying a new creative activity for the first time and may not have the budget to buy the necessary equipment.

We also recognised that many of our audience were not comfortable engaging in a virtual world so where possible we also published some of the creative activities in the magazines.

During the first year we employed local creative facilitators to deliver the workshops and activities at our day-long Creative Café events. This was harder for our virtual Creative Cafes from your Couch as not all facilitators had the resources or ability to create visual/video guides so this often required our team to do some of this work, making it much more time intensive than the day events.

Going forward we plan to continue our collaborations with community partners and offer a blend of in-person and virtual activities while also including creative activities in the magazine for our wider audience.

Feedback from Creative Participants/Audience:

“I have been inspired by articles about people doing craftwork and using textiles. This has led me to try my own crafting project on a small scale. I have used the ideas to help others in a self help group which I have helped to lead during lockdown.” **Survey respondent**

“Really therapeutic and quite an unusual feeling to just go with the process and not worry about anything and see such a positive result of a wee collage.” **Jade on process painting art pack**

“Thank you so much for running such a wonderful course, it really boosted my confidence (and my artistic competence!) hugely! It made such a difference having quality materials to work with. **Steven on the Beautiful Botanics workshops**

“This was very insightful I know these feelings. I’m 37 and when I was seventeen I witnessed my uncle being kicked to death in the street. I found a sense of release in creative writing. In particular poetry.” **John on Johnny Dale’s video story**

“I suffer from panic attacks and depression and lockdown has been really hard for me but this has given me something to look forward to, there’s been some weeks I haven’t want to come but I’m always so glad I did.” **Maureen on Zoom Group Poetry workshop**

Our Volunteer Stories

Mags & Kenny

Mags first got actively involved with Clydesider Creative when she attended our first Creative Café event in Dumbarton. Prior to this she was a regular reader of the magazine and would occasionally comment on our social media.

At the first event she took part in the Mindful Photo Walk workshop commenting that it had helped her relax after a stressful morning.

After that first connection she became more involved, volunteering to distribute the magazine to her neighbours and knitting group.

As we got to know Mags better we learned she was a full-time carer for her two adult sons, in her spare time she ran a Knit & Natter group which met in Dalmuir Library (and now in her garden). We featured a story about Mags and the Knit & Natter group in Issue 12, our Mental Wellbeing special.

Throughout 2020 and 2021 we had regular contact with Mags, collaborating with the Knit & Natter group we put together knitting packs for her members to first make chocolate pudding decorations to go on top of chocolate oranges and then Easter chicks to go hold a crème egg. The knitters made over 200 decorations which were donated to the local Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels group and we donated chocolate oranges and crème eggs to go with them.

This year Mags and her son Kenny took part in our do-at-home Community Canvas process painting activity. These will be displayed in community venues and feature in the magazine and social media.

This is what Mags had to say:

"I must stress that I can't draw to save myself but I gave this a try with my son Kenny early on Saturday morning .

We both found it such a mindful experience & loved just going with the flow with no pressure of what our creation had to look like....

It took us both into our own wee zone . it was great to see my son so engrossed in a lovely creative space. It's inspired Kenny so much that he's not stopped painting since.. even had an art session in the garden with his care worker ...he's been colouring in & made a lovely get well card for his carer , done some scrapbooking with the Clydesider magazines that were included in the pack too.

We loved the process Art & were so surprised & chuffed with the artwork we created .

.it really gave us such a boost & set us up for the day ahead, which continued to be a very productive and creative day for us. Many thanks for inspiring us, we are now addicted & have even had our own art canvas ordered & delivered to do more sessions together" .. □□□□□□ ..



Emily

We met Emily through our partnership working with Work Connect and Stepping Stones. Two of our team attended the Big Chat event they organised in 2019 to showcase mental health recovery.

Emily shared her struggles with depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts and her personal recovery journey. After the event Emily agreed to be interviewed for an article in Clydesider magazine. She came along to our Community Newsroom for the interview and her story was included in Issue 12 - our Mental Wellbeing Special.

In 2021 when we set up our Community Catch-ups Emily joined the online sessions. We then discovered that as well as being a talented musician, she also wrote beautiful poetry and we published one of her poems in Issue 15.

After attending a couple of sessions Emily invited several of her peer network from Stepping Stones to the Catch-ups, they are now regular attendees and have helped shape the sessions and contributed to the magazine.

When we started planning Issue 16 Emily asked if she could write her own peer support story. We were more than delighted to share it in the magazine and on our website. We felt it was so powerful we also included a photo story version, created by Emily, for our Creative Café From Your Couch Mental Wellbeing festival, part of Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival 2021. Emily also with the editing of that issue.

We also hosted a live Open Mic night during SMHAF and Emily joined the event reading both her poem and singing a song she had written.

After the event she commented: *"I'm still recovering from how good Wednesday night was... feels like a really good hangover! A 'creativity hangover' congrats on such a success!"*

In May Emily applied for a part-time Peer Support worker post with Stepping Stones. She emailed us to let us know she had been successful saying: *"Look forward to keeping this connection with Clydesider going and getting stronger. I would definitely want to encourage people I'm supporting to get creative somehow and I know [my colleague] will be the same. Thank you for all your support, my interview panel were definitely impressed when I showed them what I'd been doing with you guys!"*



Aidan

Aidan approached us about volunteering opportunities with Clydesider in 2018 while he was completing his Highers. He was interested in a career in journalism and liked Clydesider's approach to news.

He came to our office once a week and worked on several stories which we published in the magazine and on our social media.

As he was particularly interested in sport we identified stories that matched this interest for him to work on and he was delighted to see his work in print.

He also took part in one of our media training workshops and joined our Walkin Talkin event in Dumbarton, contributing ideas to the group article about the potential of local heritage to regenerate the town.

When Aidan applied to Glasgow University to do a degree in multi-media studies we were delighted to provide a reference and he was able to use his experience with us and his published articles at his interview.

His application was successful and he has just completed the second year of his studies.

We stayed in contact with Aidan via our e-newsletter and during lockdown he contacted us to ask if he could write a piece about the experiences of fellow students. We were delighted to include this in Issue 15 our Coming Out of Covid special.

After publication he sent me an email to say: *"Thanks for posting me the latest edition of the Clydesider. I was really happy with how my article turned out and thanks again for the opportunity to write it. I will put a post up on my Twitter about it."*



Pictured above left - right : Fraser Nicoll, Murray Grayston & Robbie Gardner

Student Solutions By Aidan Macdonald

The last 12 months have been a struggle for everyone. From those who work in the NHS to those who have had to shield. It really has been a year to forget.

One group significantly impacted by the pandemic is young people.

From the constant stop-start of sectors opening and closing, causing many in this age group to become unemployed, to the moving of university and college teaching online, taking away a significant part of my generation's social contact. It is clear those who are medically cited as young and healthy have suffered as well. As someone who is a student, I thought it important to talk to others in a similar position and try to get some perspective on the struggles of the last year and the hopes for some normality in the near future. I decided to speak to a few pals to get their thoughts on how things have been.

My friend Fraser Nicoll (20) told me what he found most challenging during the pandemic.

He said: "I think not being able to see friends and family in person has been really tough for students, like it has for the wider population."

"Away from university work and your studies, it's so important to have that downtime and turn off for a bit to keep yourself ticking over. Over the pandemic, it's been a case of sitting at your laptop all day and there isn't that balance between work and socialising."

He then went on to speak about what had helped him personally over the last year, saying: "I think I've been quite lucky to have university work and a job to keep my mind busy for the majority of the year."

"There was a period during the first lockdown when I had neither for about 12 weeks, and that was really tough because it felt like I was living without a real purpose. I think also the feeling of collectiveness has helped me through a lot of it - that everyone is making sacrifices and that we're all going to reap the benefits when we can see each other again."

To try and find out views on universities' support networks over the course of the coronavirus crisis, I talked to my pal Murray Grayston (21).

He said: "I feel like this really differs from module to module."

"Some lecturers have definitely got to grips with it well and their online content can be particularly engaging. On the other hand, I feel some are particularly set in their ways

Our Numbers

Publications: 16 quarterly magazines; 3 monthly Mini Mags; 1 Creative Special

Media Training Courses: 4 x 6 week sessions

Community Newsroom sessions: 48

Community Catch-up sessions (via Zoom): 14

Community Response Network Sessions: 28

Creative Café Events: 5 in-person & 3 virtual

Zoom & Do-At-Home Creative Workshops/Activities: 9

Readers: approx. 25,000

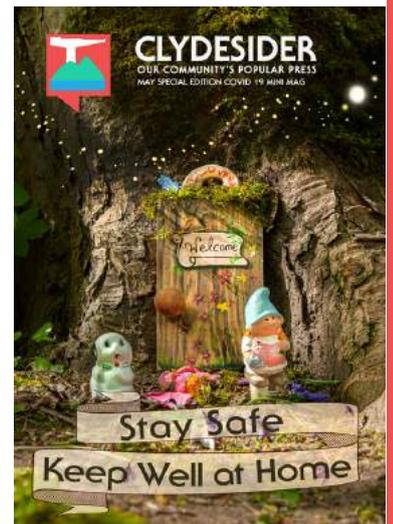
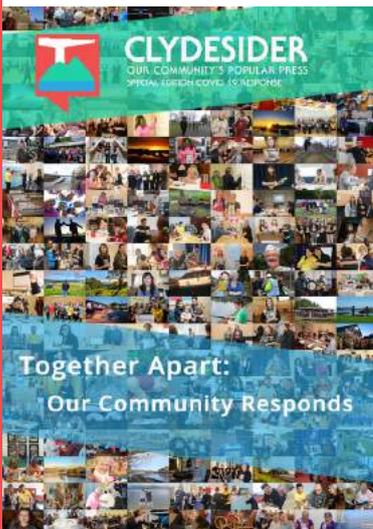
Volunteer Media Contributors: 260+

Creative Participants: 380+

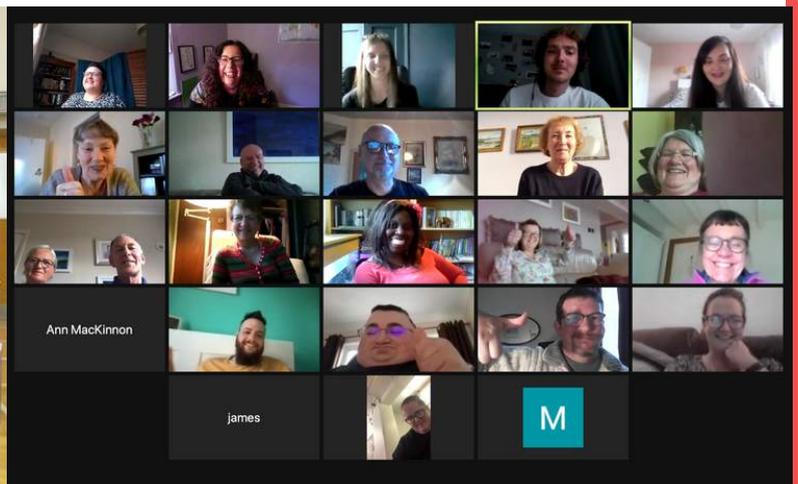
Creative Volunteers: 103

Freelance Facilitators: 47

Community Partners: 60+



People Engaged Digitally With Creative Cafes From Your Couch: 7,522





CREATIVE CAFE FROM YOUR COUCH

Live Christmas cook-along zoom workshop with The Buffet Lady
Sunday 29 November at 12 o'clock

Join Colette for a FREE festive zoom cooking session as part of our Homemade Christmas Creative Cafe.

Ingredients costs will be covered.
 If interested please email clydesidercomp@gmail.com
 A member of the Clydesider team can help you set up Zoom on your phone or laptop ahead of the workshops if you haven't used it before.

HOMEMADE CHRISTMAS
 DEC. 5/6 ACROSS OUR SOCIAL MEDIA









Pumpkin Recycling
 Make a bird feeder with used lambton

Video by Susan Laws Artwork for Clydesiders Magazine



HOMEMADE PAPER CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS
 Step by step guide



