Pathways:

Getting Connected in the Voluntary Arts

A report by Kirkhill Associates for Voluntary Arts Scotland

July 2015

CONTENTS

Kirkhill Associates

Executive Summary

Pathways: getting connected in the voluntary arts was commissioned by Voluntary Arts Scotland with the participation of Perth and Kinross Council and the support of Creative Scotland. The research was undertaken by Kirkhill Associates between April and June 2015. The brief for the research summarised the context:

> As part of the Voluntary Arts Strategic Plan 2014-17, Voluntary Arts Scotland is campaigning for renewed national policies to sustain and develop local cultural infrastructure. By 'local cultural infrastructure' we mean the venues, networks, training and funding that supports creative cultural activity. We are also interested in the interconnections between voluntary, community and professional arts practice in local place.
>
> We have identified a number of strategic issues to be addressed within this campaigning work, including improving the availability, quality and affordability of local venues, improving and expanding our connection with diverse communities and developing our engagement with digital creative cultural activity.
>
> In order to inform long-term plans for a national mapping of voluntary arts groups in Scotland and the building of a searchable and signposting directory of voluntary arts groups, we want to examine how voluntary arts groups are connected to the local cultural infrastructure of one geographic area. We are also looking for creative ideas about how the information can be gathered for a nationwide directory and to keep voluntary arts groups engaged in the upkeep of such a directory.

Kirkhill Associates undertook the research through a series of interlinked activities: collating from a large range of existing sources a directory of active groups and available venues in Perth and Kinross; surveying those groups and venues with online and hard copy questionnaires; holding a series of workshops in Birnam, Perth, Crieff and Blairgowrie; undertaking a series of one to one interviews; reviewing past research into the voluntary arts in Scotland and UK, and examining comparable databases both in other parts of the UK and in related community sectors.

Data on voluntary arts groups and venues in Perth and Kinross proved to be **fragmentary and unreliable.** Indeed, new sources of contacts continued to be uncovered, often through extensive online searches, throughout the progress of the research. The final outcome was a database of 198 groups and 290 venues, although this figure is certainly incomplete and, particularly for the groups, a significant underestimate of the actual number active in Perth and Kinross. Within those numbers, 141 email addresses and 105 (unconfirmed) postal addresses were identified for the groups, and 94 and 226, respectively, for the venues.

In all, 27 completed survey forms were returned. Although numerically small, this result compares favourably, in percentage terms, with previous, much more extensive, attempts to survey the voluntary arts sector across Scotland and England. Of those 27 groups which responded, half had some form of affiliation to a national umbrella body, but only 5 were registered with Voluntary Arts Scotland.

In terms, therefore, of the first three questions posed by the research brief, which were:

- What is the profile of voluntary arts groups in the area? This should include the artform they cover, which membership or umbrella bodies they are members of, the spaces they use to meet, rehearse and perform and their lead contacts
- How much do creative citizens, local authority staff, representatives of venues, volunteer centre staff, festival programmers and relevant funders know about local voluntary arts groups and how do they engage with them?
- What communication networks are currently used by VA organisations in Perth and Kinross?

the answer must be that **it has not proved possible to establish an inclusive and reliable profile of voluntary arts groups in Perth and Kinross**. This is not just due to the incomplete and inaccurate nature of the available contact data. It is clear from the workshops and interviews that many participants did not think of their personal input as being that of a 'volunteer', nor do they think of the group to which they belong as being part of something called 'the voluntary arts'

There is therefore **a significant issue of *visibility***. On the one hand, the sheer scale, diversity and ubiquity of the voluntary arts may be underestimated and undervalued by public bodies and public policy, because the groups and their activities are insufficiently visible, and therefore not fully understood, nor evaluated. On the other hand, many groups, perhaps considering themselves to be largely self-sufficient, are in a position of *not knowing what they don't know* and thus may be missing out on opportunities that might increase their membership, expand their activities, or enhance their sustainability. This challenge of *visibility* is further complicated by the extensive range and number of creative activities provided by groups whose prime purpose is not artistic, such as the University of the Third Age and the Scottish Women's Rural Institute, both bodies highly active in Perth and Kinross.

Communication networks, as a result, are largely informal, and often very local in their coverage. Although social media tools such as Facebook are being used extensively, much, if not most, contact within and between groups is informal, person to person, and by word of mouth. This is helped by such factors as: the same people sitting on a number of different committees; smaller communities which have regular social gatherings, such as weekly coffee mornings; community venues which act as 'hubs' for the dissemination of information. In this context, therefore, there is so far little evidence that such centrally initiated and managed resources as the website *Perthshire Creates*, launched in April 2015, will be seen by voluntary arts groups as an appropriate means of communicating and sharing knowledge amongst themselves. The value of such central initiatives may rather lie in their ability to present the strengths and diversity of regional cultural activity to the rest of the community and to shapers of policy.

Venues are of course of central importance for voluntary arts groups, and almost half of respondents to the survey complained that there was a lack of facilities available locally,

while more than a fifth described facilities which lack disabled access. A large number of the spaces being used in Perth and Kinross are either informal, from living rooms used by some U3A groups, to pubs and even, in one example, a local fire station, or not specifically intended for arts use, including churches, and meeting rooms bookable from Voluntary Action Perthshire. A frequently voiced concern was that the six school campuses established across Perth and Kinross were largely unsuitable for use by many voluntary arts groups, because of location, cost, access, or restrictions on opening hours and types of use. In contrast, a number of community – run venues, such as the Birnam Institute, the Birks in Aberfeldy, and Strathearn Artspace, were viewed by many groups as important 'hubs', offering learning opportunities, workshop, rehearsal and presentation spaces and a means of networking and keeping informed.

The next three questions posed by the brief focused on wider issues in the voluntary arts:

- How might voluntary Arts Scotland engage and communicate with the people that run voluntary arts groups?
- What is the best way for this group to communicate with voluntary arts groups and how would voluntary arts groups like to be communicated with?
- How can we best map and maintain an up to date record of groups in the area to enable people interested in taking part to find out details about them?

Treating Perth and Kinross as a pilot sample, and taking into account also the results of previous research on the voluntary arts, led to the following conclusions:

- **The 'voluntary arts sector' in Scotland is almost certainly much larger, and more diverse, than indicated by previous estimates**, especially once informal groups (eg knitting circles, writing groups, garage bands), and those groups which do not have the arts as their primary focus, are taken into account.
- **Many of those active in the voluntary arts do not think of themselves as 'volunteers'** even when, being active as committee members or organisers, they meet the Scottish Government definition of 'donating their time freely...to benefit others'.
- Similarly**, many groups do not recognise the term 'voluntary arts'** as applying to their activities, and hence do not consider themselves part of the wider voluntary sector, nor take advantage of the services available to that wider sector.
- The term 'voluntary arts' may be misleading if taken as referring to a distinct and separate sector. If viewed in terms of 'access to, and opportunities for, *creative participation*, rather than in terms of organisations and structures, it becomes possible to paint a much more inclusive picture, featuring a high degree of mutual interdependence between commercial bodies, funded arts organisations, community groups, and creative individuals.
- From this perspective, *creative participation* can be seen as sitting at the heart of the wider cultural ecology, and the **local and regional *networks*,** by which such participation is made possible, are therefore of vital importance.
- Within such networks **certain organisations, venues or individuals act as *critical nodes***, ensuring a free flow of information, facilitating cooperation and encouraging participation. The loss of such a 'node', whether it be a funded arts

organisation, a community venue, a Local Authority post, or a particular individual, can therefore have a disproportionately damaging impact on the wider network.

From these observations a number of recommendations can be drawn:

1. The most inclusive, and effective means of sustaining local cultural infrastructure is likely to be through a **regional network** which is built from, and managed by, the voluntary arts sector itself, with officer support from public bodies where possible, and recognising a key role for local 'nodes' as the focus for and driver of purposeful networking between groups and national and regional stakeholders.

2. Voluntary Arts Scotland could communicate with voluntary arts groups most effectively through **a series of such *regional* networks** which parallel and complement the range of *national* umbrella bodies with which it already works.

3. A **rolling programme of facilitating the development of regional networks** could start by focusing on selected individual Local Authority areas, perhaps including those which are or have been part of Creative Scotland's Place Partnership programme.

4. This model could also form the basis of the most effective means of **making the voluntary sector visible online**, again through regional networks complementing what national umbrella bodies already do for their own memberships.

An important element in implementing these recommendations will be **a single, inclusive, easy-to-access and reliable source of data**: to document and communicate with groups; to promote their activities, and to enable individuals to find the right routes to creative learning and participation.

To establish such a resource from scratch could be very costly in terms of both time and money, and would require significant commitments to ongoing management and maintenance. The closest parallel within the UK Voluntary Arts network, the *Art Take Part* online resource set up by Voluntary Arts Ireland, was only made possible by linking with the existing Culture Northern Ireland site, and would otherwise require at least one dedicated post to maintain its content.

In Scotland, however, the **ALISS programme delivered by the Health and Social Care ALLIANCE Scotland**, and funded by the Scottish Government, offers what the organisers describe as an 'index' for Scotland. Once a group's details are entered on the ALISS database, they can be accessed, and made publicly available, by any other ALISS account holder, via their own websites and search engines. This is already happening in Perth and Kinross through the Well Connected programme.

Although still a work in progress, and with some issues of duplication and compliance still to be resolved, ALISS almost certainly offers the most suitable tool to meet Voluntary Arts Scotland's needs, for the following reasons:

- ALISS avoids the need to create a new database architecture from scratch, which would be both costly and resource-intensive.
- ALISS potentially removes the need for groups to enter their information on more than one database, if appropriate bodies can agree to use the ALISS index as the means of populating their own directories.
- ALISS locates the voluntary arts where their activities will be most valued, as part of a continuum of community and social resources.
- As a Scottish Government-backed initiative ALISS can perhaps be assumed to have a more certain longer term future than any new initiative that would be dependent on grant aid to be set up and maintained.

Voluntary Arts Scotland, working with local networks, can encourage the use of ALISS as a largely invisible but comprehensive source of data, and, also through the networks, ensure that the data held by ALISS remain up to date and accurate.

This leads us to a fifth recommendation:

5. Directories, whether printed or online, have consistently proved ineffective as a means of engaging with the voluntary arts sector, or of making it more widely visible. ALISS, at least, offers an already developed means of enabling data on voluntary arts groups to be gathered in one place, and then made readily accessible to those seeking information, or wishing to promote aspects of the sector.

Although the **Pathways** research has been specific to Scotland, it has been undertaken in the UK context of the development of the programme entitled **Our Cultural Commons**, led by Voluntary Arts and Arts Development UK. In that context, the report offers for consideration two conceptual approaches that may be useful in shaping 'renewed national policies' (as envisaged by the **Pathways** brief).

The first is the concept of **conversive communities** which describes the kinds of fluid and informal interactions that the research observed in individual communities in Perth and Kinross. The second, already referred to above, is of **creative participation**, a way of thinking that moves away from the objective structures of groups, memberships and programmes, to focus instead on the subjective experience and engagement of the individual.

Our Cultural Commons, and the role of the Voluntary Arts Network in promoting discussions under this theme, is an open, and non-partisan, opportunity to have a serious and inclusive debate about the issues raised by the **Pathways** research, with the hope that such debate will lead, in time, to a new paradigm for our 'cultural ecology'.

Part I: The Voluntary Arts in Perth and Kinross
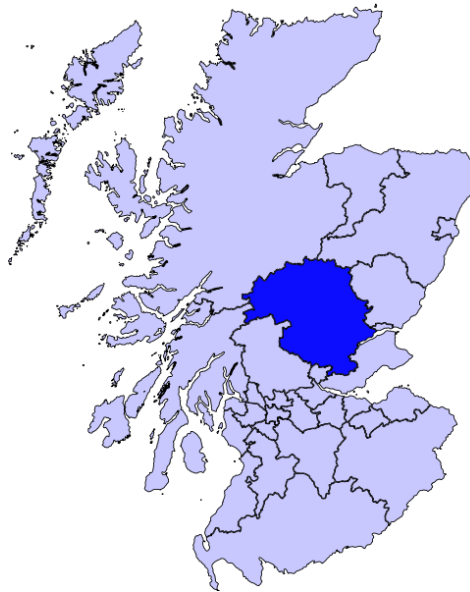
1. Introduction and Methodology

1.1. The Brief

As part of the Voluntary Arts Strategic Plan 2014-17, Voluntary Arts Scotland is campaigning for renewed national policies to sustain and develop local cultural infrastructure. 'Local cultural infrastructure' means the venues, networks, training and funding that support creative cultural activity. Voluntary Arts Scotland is also interested in the interconnections between voluntary, community and professional arts practice in local places.

Voluntary Arts Scotland is seeking to examine how voluntary arts groups are connected to the local cultural infrastructure of one geographic area and whether and how this might aid the building of a searchable and signposting directory of voluntary arts groups. They are looking for creative ideas about how the information can be gathered for a nationwide directory and how voluntary arts groups might be kept engaged in the upkeep of such a directory.

This project was devised to provide an independent overview and a study of the picture in the Perth and Kinross area, providing the potential to scope out how the communications networks used by voluntary arts groups within Perth and Kinross might point to ways of sustaining the engagement of voluntary arts groups in the building and maintenance of a future directory of such groups.

The brief posed a number of questions:

- What is the profile of voluntary arts groups in the area? This should include the art form they cover, which membership or umbrella bodies they are members of, the spaces they use to meet, rehearse and perform and their lead contacts.
- How much do creative citizens, local authority staff, representatives of venues, volunteer centre staff, festival programmers and relevant funders know about local voluntary arts groups and how do they engage with them?
- What communication networks are currently used by voluntary arts groups in Perth and Kinross?
- How might Voluntary Arts Scotland engage and communicate with the people that run voluntary arts groups?
- What is the best way to communicate with voluntary arts groups and how would voluntary arts groups like to be communicated with?
- How can we best map and maintain an up to date record of groups in the area to enable people interested in taking part to find out details about them?

The report is required to provide recommendations:

- For how local cultural infrastructure within Perth and Kinross could be sustained and strengthened to better support voluntary arts groups.
- to Voluntary Arts Scotland for engagement and communication with the people that run voluntary arts groups.
- for rolling the project out on a nationwide scale, including creative ways of engaging voluntary arts groups.

In addressing these questions and arriving at our recommendations, we have had to examine a number of issues which relate to the voluntary arts in Scotland as a whole, and indeed are of relevance to Voluntary Arts' UK-wide programme *Our Cultural Commons*. For this reason the report is in two parts: this first part focused on the Perth and Kinross Council area, the second on the Scottish context, and using examples from Perth and Kinross to illustrate wider themes.

1.2. Approach

As the brief acknowledges, from the outset the project required equal weight to be given to quantitative and qualitative methods and outcomes. That is, the mapping needed to be as comprehensive as could be achieved in the timeframe, to provide a robust basis for shaping national models. At the same time, however, the approach needed to drill down, through group and individual consultations, to gather a rich understanding of the particular and generic issues at play and how they might be addressed.

The research, which was undertaken over the period April-June 2015, was constrained by some familiar challenges. The budget and timeframe available, combined with the patchy nature of local data on voluntary arts activity, required some changes to the project plan. The data available from the project partners, our early findings from interviews about the interconnectedness of groups and the challenges of engaging them, brought us to increase the number of consultative workshops from 3 to 4 and develop a series of 3 area

case studies based around 3 of the workshop locations – Blairgowrie, Crieff and Aberfeldy. This, combined with the narrow range and quality of the data available, enabled a shift of emphasis, so that the compilation of a detailed snapshot directory became much less important than a comprehensive understanding of how and why people link up in their pursuit of the arts.

We used mixed methods to undertake this project, as illustrated by the model in the table, below. Thus, the key questions of the brief set the framework within which interviews, workshops, questionnaires and media communications were shaped. A key communications hub was established at the project's website www.pathwaysvas.com .
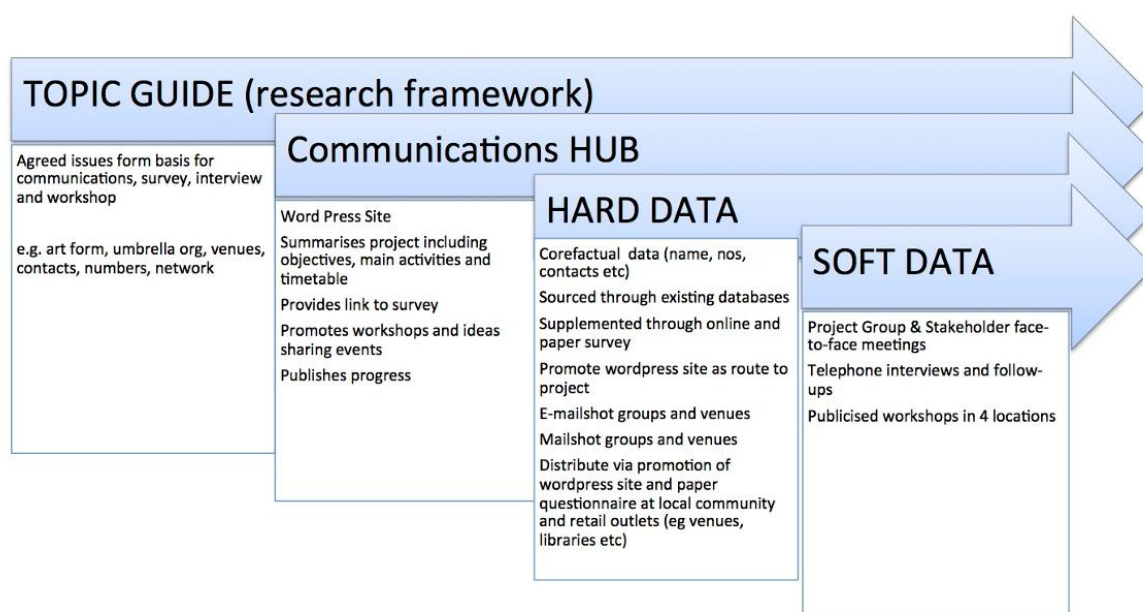
We conducted 23 interviews with key stakeholders in the cultural infrastructure (see **Consultees**), and a series of four exploratory workshops hosted alongside Voluntary Arts Scotland with stakeholders including voluntary arts groups. The workshops were made available to all groups active in Perth & Kinross and were held in Birnam, Perth, Crieff and Blairgowrie at weekends and evenings in a range of settings: arts and community centres, a concert hall and library. In all, 29 people representing 27 organisations participated. An online and hard copy survey was widely distributed and resulted in 27 responses.

1.3. Disclaimer

Unless specifically attributed to an existing document, a survey response, or a consultee, all opinions and views expressed in the report are those of Kirkhill Associates, and should not be read as representing the views of Voluntary Arts Scotland, as the commissioning body, or of Perth and Kinross Council, or Creative Scotland, as members of the project Steering Group.

2. *Context for the Project*

Mapping the voluntary arts sector is largely uncharted territory. The last Scotland-wide independent research into the voluntary arts was undertaken by Bonnar Keenlyside in 2004 as part of the Cultural Commission process, and although that report provides a valuable benchmark for our work, it was the result of a rapid and modestly costed exercise that did not claim to be comprehensive. The other key national report was undertaken in 2007 for the Department of Culture Media and Sport. *Our Creative Talent* only covered England, but its findings can, with some reservations, be extended to Scotland.

Voluntary Arts Scotland have undertaken, internally, a number of surveys between 2004 and 2012, but these have mostly generated low response rates, and so the outcomes should be treated with caution.

Nonetheless, the common factor in all these reports and surveys is that the voluntary arts sector is not only very large, but much larger than any one survey is able to quantify.   The Bonnar Keenlyside report in 2004 identified 4,500 groups in Scotland and estimated that these had over 250,000 members. That, proportionately, fits reasonably with the DCMS report which estimated 49,000 groups in England with almost 6 million members. But the reality is that both these sets of figures are extrapolations from a limited number of survey returns and from data from national umbrella bodies. The true scale of the sector, once informal and unconstituted groups are taken into account, is likely to be far larger. This is an important point that we will return to.

Another common factor is that the key issues identified by the groups themselves have remained consistent over the last decade (see Appendix 2): an aging membership (especially on managing committees); how to involve young people; access to venues; rising costs and reducing funding sources; increasing bureaucracy and 'red tape'. Above all, the most recurrent issue is a lack of recognition for the voluntary arts within the policies and strategies of national and local government and public bodies. It is no criticism of the considerable efforts of Voluntary Arts over this decade, both in Scotland and the rest of the UK, that this remains such a prominent concern, and this must surely relate to the absence of reliable and comprehensive data on the actual scale and nature of the sector.

Although this present study is focused on Perth and Kinross, it is intended as a pilot and as a means of informing Voluntary Arts' policies and activities, at both a Scottish and UK level. As such it is fully in accord with the aims of the Voluntary Arts Strategic Plan 2014-17 http://www.voluntaryarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/VA-Strategic-Plan-2014-17.pdf

Across Scotland Local Authorities have had to make large staffing and budget cuts, not least in the non-statutory area of arts provision, and Perth and Kinross Council is no exception. Taken together with the lengthy development of Creative Scotland as the new national cultural agency, this may have led to an unintentional gap in provision of support to the voluntary arts. As one consultee put it, there had been in the past an assumption

that support for the voluntary, and especially amateur, arts was something that could be left to Local Authorities to supply. Not now.

As Creative Scotland therefore now exercises a much wider, tripartite function across the arts and the screen and creative industries, compared with the previous remit of the Scottish Arts Council, and as Local Authorities concentrate diminishing resources on maintaining statutory services, is there a risk that the voluntary arts might fall between these two stools? And is the consequence of that risk that neither Local Authorities nor Creative Scotland are able to assess or understand how the activities of voluntary arts groups contribute in significant ways, and could contribute further, to their respective objectives?

At a UK level two initiatives may help to mitigate this risk. Voluntary Arts has partnered with Arts Development UK to develop the programme *Our Cultural Commons*, the website for which states that:

> *The rapid pace of change surrounding all our local cultural spaces, including changes to local government, and the rapidly increasing digitization of the wider cultural world, means that previous models of local cultural planning are no longer effectively providing support. However there are new and emerging models, building on local cultural assets and making links with education, healthcare, the voluntary and community sector, and local government.* http://ourculturalcommons.org

This programme was launched with a series of national 'conversations' which have taken place at the same time as we have been working in Perth and Kinross and throughout this report we'll be noting where our findings coincide.

Voluntary Arts is also a partner in the BBC's UK-wide *Get Creative* initiative, *a year-long celebration of British arts, culture and creativity* which has launched its own 'national conversation' about the value of culture and creativity http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3P7n390cZc3VBpn7cPn0F5T/about-get-creative

Common to both these initiatives is recognition of the pace of change in digital technologies, as ways of making, sharing and experiencing the arts, and also as a means of disseminating information, whether through databases, websites, or the various forms of social media. Concurrent with this project, Perth and Kinross Council launched *Perthshire Creates* http://perthshirecreates.co.uk as *a network to shine a spotlight on contemporary creative activities happening across the Perth and Kinross area.*

Several contributors expressed their fears that young people's intense involvement with the digital world, through computer games and social media, would act as a barrier to engaging them in cultural activities in the 'real world'. One contributor, however, who works with 10-25 year olds, made the interesting point that, while for older people the Internet is a *tool*, for young people ('digital natives' he might have said), the Internet is a *place,* where they go to interact with their peers--as previously they might have hung out

at a youth club, or the nearest bus shelter. He argued persuasively that, if offered the right kind of *activities*, young people will respond and the levels of participation in feisean, mods and competitive music festivals certainly bear that out. Moreover it should be noted that the largest projected increases in the population of Perth and Kinross in the coming decades are in the 65 to 75, and over 75 age brackets:

http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/perth-and-kinross-factsheet.pdf .

Like many Local Authorities across the UK, Perth and Kinross is currently considering whether to outhouse Cultural Services as part of a culture and leisure trust. Experiences from other such trusts vary as to whether such a move may improve on, or reduce, the current support which the Council can offer to voluntary arts groups, for example through the two posts of Cultural Coordinators. It is possible, for example, that an independent trust might find it easier to engage with a range of relevant Council departments than is currently possible through internal structures.

3. *Mapping the Voluntary Arts*

3.1. Perth & Kinross

An annex to the Project brief set out this summary of the region:

Perth and Kinross is the fourth largest Council area in Scotland, in the heart of Scotland. It covers a geographical area of around 5,286 km² (Highland Perthshire, Eastern Perthshire, Perth City, Strathearn and Kinross-shire) and has an estimated population of 149,520. Over the past 10 years, the area has experienced the second highest population growth in Scotland (9.5%), which is more than 3 times the national average.

Despite increased demand on public services, levels of economic deprivation within Perth and Kinross are relatively low. In 2012, six areas were considered to be within the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland. These are located in North Perth City and Rattray in Blairgowrie.

The economy of Perth and Kinross is dominated by small businesses, which account for around half the workforce. Tourism supports 13% of employment and is worth over £400 million a year to our economy. Over 2 million visitors a year are attracted by the environment and the historic heritage of the area.

The Perth and Kinross population has an average life expectancy of 79.1 years which is higher than the national average and older people aged 65+ make up 20% of the total. The number of older people has increased by 14% since 2001. This trend is projected to continue and the needs of this age group have become more complex. (Source: project brief annex)

Scotland's oldest repertory company was based at Perth Theatre, and together with Pitlochry Festival Theatre the area is now home to two producing houses. Perth Museum and Art Gallery has art collections of National Recognition Status and is part of the UK Artists Rooms network supported by The Art Fund, National Galleries of Scotland and Tate. The Birks in Aberfeldy was a community led cinema refurbishment now run as a social enterprise and the Birnam Institute is home to Birnam Arts a vibrant volunteer led organisation.

The Council's Cultural Strategy sets out three key aims which are being delivered through collaboration with Horsecross Arts and other organisations represented in the Place Partnership with Creative Scotland:

- Culture as the means of extending learning in its broadest sense, including the principles of Curriculum for Excellence
- Culture as integral to vibrant and sustainable local communities
- Cultural tourism and creative industries as integral to a growing and diverse local cultural economy

Perth & Kinross charity PKAVS partners Perth & Kinross Council and others as part of the Community Planning Partnership in Perth & Kinross. Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service (PKAVS) improves the quality of life for the people of Perth & Kinross through four main service areas: Carers; Mental Wellbeing; Minority Ethnic Communities and Voluntary Action Perthshire, which fulfils the function of the Third Sector Interface. The work of the Third Sector Interface is funded in part by the Scottish Government and Perth & Kinross Council.

3.2. Accessing data

On the face of it then, Perth and Kinross possesses a burgeoning population supported by a flourishing arts establishment and with a purposeful public and third sector infrastructure. As is attested to elsewhere though, this does not guarantee a simple route to detailed mapping of the voluntary arts. At best, the clarity of the overall map serves to emphasise the less distinct picture revealed by our efforts to quantify the number of voluntary groups and their membership.

Starting with the information held by the key cultural and voluntary sector partners in Perth and Kinross (P&KC, PKAVS and VAP) we attempted to build on that by reaching out through the networks revealed in this data and by enlisting the help of cultural hubs (venues) and community newsletters. This information provided us with a list of 298 organisations which we cleansed of duplicates and some defunct organisations and supplemented by further internet searches. Internet searches were resource intensive but particularly fruitful where local organisations we identified had created their own small directories of nearby groups.

The data identified – both that held by project partners and available on-line – were inconsistent in both content and accuracy. So, although we finally compiled a list of 198 groups and 290 venues, this contained patchy information about them. Random searches confirmed that resources beyond those available to this project would be required to complete the population of up-to-date contact details for each organisation. As it was, we identified 141 email addresses and 105 unconfirmed postal addresses for groups. We found just 94 email addresses, but 226 postal addresses for venues.

In approaching community venues and newsletters we sought to encourage an organic response to our research, inviting whoever we contacted to pass on our request, in the shape of the questionnaire or the survey link, to those they knew were also involved.

To facilitate the process, we made it as easy as possible for individuals to respond:
- The questionnaire was kept short and sought information which would readily be to hand (22 questions)
- The questionnaire was made available on-line on the project's website
- 198 paper copies of the questionnaire were distributed to 8 key venues in the NW, SW, SE and NE/E regions of Perth & Kinross.
- Project partners were asked to circulate information about the project together with project website url and on-line survey link through on their websites and social media sites as well as their networks

We endeavoured to make participation in the survey as attractive as possible, both by keeping the message as simple as possible and pointing respondents to the project website or the survey on-line link and by offering a prize draw reward to those completing the survey.

We sent out regular reminders to those for whom we had email addresses and made follow-up visits and phone calls to the venues handling paper copies of the questionnaire. We sent repeat e-mailshots to the 118 voluntary groups for whom email addresses were confirmed as valid and did the same with the 68 venues for whom validated email addresses were identified. We sent a postcard mailshot to a further 226 venues for whom postal addresses but no email address were held.

3.3. Results

The result of our efforts was, as is noted below, better than most broadly comparable research studies and as good as the best. We cannot be certain how many groups simply did not respond, rather than never learned of the survey, but it is striking that despite repeated efforts, we received no paper questionnaires through the venues we asked for help. This is not to say we had no help from networks such as theirs, for we do know that two thirds of the on-line survey was accessed via the weblink, rather than directly from email or the project website. This could have been the consequence of activity by the venues to point groups to the link. Moreover the project Wordpress website, at pathwaysvas.com, received over 300 individual visits in April and May, with an average of 3 page views per visitor, implying that there was interest in finding out about the project.

Of the 198 groups identified we received on-line survey responses from 27 (14%), pretty much evenly divided into charities and constituted bodies, with a handful of Community Interest Companies and a single, un-constituted mutual support group (respectively 11, 12, 3, 1).

The range of cultural activity represented in our sample is enormous, with many of the organisations engaging in multiple art forms: dance, drama, the panoply of music, heritage and literature, film and photography. The largest number listed visual arts as an interest (see Appendix 4 for the breakdown). Our sample, just as the participants at the workshops, also included some of the smallest membership (2 or 3) to very large: Community Interest Company Ad-Lib, Perthshire Voluntary Art Forum, Royal Scottish Dance Society and U3A all boast membership between 200 and 450, and mostly across all of Perth & Kinross, not simply restricted to the main conurbation. With one exception, all

those groups organised around membership (around three quarters of the respondents), are keenly interested in recruiting new members.

We asked a series of questions attempting to piece together the interconnection of voluntary arts groups. This revealed even in our small sample a complex web where almost half held affiliations with national organisations (such as umbrella bodies Traditional Music and Song Association and the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society) and of these a much smaller number also held affiliations regionally, such as with PVAF or Perthshire Open Studios.

We asked whether groups were registered with Voluntary Arts Scotland to receive its regular newsletter. Of the 27 respondents, 5 had registered, 18 had not and 4 reported that they had never heard of the organisation. Our questions also revealed an over-layered web of connections with local groups – with other groups interested in other art forms, with groups engaged in the same activity in other areas and with community groups pursuing altogether different economic, social or health interests.

The relationship with venues, for meetings, exhibitions, practice, rehearsal and performance is clearly important and something we wanted to explore as a route to local networks. The survey responses reflected this. The largest proportion are satisfied with the venues available to them, but this is tempered by a sense of dependence and reluctant compromise, and perhaps not unexpectedly informal arrangements – like the group that meets in their local fire station because a room is made available by the fire service and a committee member learned of its availability from a friend. Almost half of respondents complained that there was a lack of facilities available locally, while more than a fifth described facilities which lack disabled access. Cost, highlighted as an issue particularly with community campuses during the workshops, is seen clearly as an obstacle by a third.

The survey also offers some clues about why and how voluntary groups take the trouble to network. Asked about what they look for, the largest proportion (two thirds) sought news and information, almost half practical support and similar proportions expertise and funding. Much lower numbers considered mutual support (kindred spirit) or training as significant purposes for connecting with others.

When asked how they went about finding out about other organisations two thirds cited "word of mouth" and around a half both the internet and social media.

The more rewarding element of our research was the workshops held in Birnam, Perth, Crieff and Blairgowrie. Though numerically small in terms of the number of attendees, these meetings provided some of the richest insight into the extraordinary range and quality of local activity in the arts, especially the extent to which lines are blurred between professional and amateur, paid and voluntary; the way in which voluntary arts activity is hidden from the umbrella and third sector interface bodies; and the way in which the informal networks in communities disguise the numbers involved (workshop participants are listed in the *Consultees* section, below).

On this basis, we agreed part-way through the project that, to complement and inform our efforts at compiling a region-wide list of groups and venues, we should also attempt more detailed examinations of three communities of different sizes and in different parts of the region: Aberfeldy, Crieff and Blairgowrie. Our aim was to get a sense of the sheer number and diversity of voluntary arts groups within a single community. We shared the lists we had ourselves compiled for those three communities with the people we had met through workshops and attending meetings, and asked them to add to the lists any groups we had missed. Once again, responses to this request were small, but the end result was still startling: it would appear that those three towns alone were home to more groups than we had been able separately to identify for Perth and Kinross as a whole! In Blairgowrie, in particular, with an overall population, including the hinterland, of about 16,000, the ratio was: one group for every 200 inhabitants.

4. An online map

4.1. Defining the Map

As we've described, our experience of attempting to build a directory of voluntary arts groups for Perth and Kinross was beset by multiple challenges. We have no reason to believe that our experience would have been markedly different in any other part of the country; indeed part of the problem may be that Perth and Kinross has almost too many sources of information, given the extensive network of community newspapers and websites.

When considering the question of an 'online map' we're really talking about three different kinds of digital entity: a database, a directory and a website.

A *database* can, and perhaps, should, be invisible to the end user. It can be hosted anywhere or by anyone, and can provide on demand the data required to populate any number of directories or power any website's search engine.

A *directory* often exists in both a print and online form, though multiple examples demonstrate how print directories, though undoubtedly still popular, are usually out of date even before they are published. However, a directory can be either a 'snapshot' of the information drawn from one or more databases, or it can be the means by which regularly updated database content is promoted to an end user.

A *website* is often intended as the 'portal' to a database, or the home of a directory, with a built-in search engine able to access those resources, either by a drop-down set of categories, as in the Voluntary Action Perthshire directory of local groups, or by a key word search (eg 'dance', 'Blairgowrie', etc). However, as the *Art Take Part* example, below, shows, the bulk of searches to a database or directory tend in reality to come through Google and other major search engines, and not via a website's own search facility.

Crucial to all these entities are the issues of, first, gathering the initial data to ensure that a database or directory can be seen to be sufficiently comprehensive as to be useful, and then, even more importantly, ensuring that the data are kept accurate and up to date. That also applies to website content: unless a website regularly adds new content, and especially refreshes its front page, it will not climb the rankings for the major search engines, and will not be made visible to potential users (what's known as *Search Engine Optimisation* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_engine_optimization)

The Internet is of course now a far more fluid environment, where static websites are becoming much less important in comparison to interactive social media. Wordpress and other platforms do in any event make it very easy to construct a simple web presence at little or no cost, as we did for this project. But while the important issue of a fear, or at least wariness, of social media did come up more than once in our discussions, it's also clear that voluntary arts groups, and particularly the key activists among their members,

already use Facebook, in particular, as an effective means of communication and ensuring an online presence.

The conclusion we drew from our discussions is that Facebook and other social media tools are increasingly seen as an online equivalent of the kinds of informal networking and communication (word of mouth, social gatherings, local media) that groups already use as their chief means of keeping in touch and promoting their activities.

4.2. Managing the data: resources and controls

Art Take Part in Northern Ireland (considered in more detail below) is the most recent, and relevant, effort by a member of Voluntary Arts to produce an online directory of arts groups for a large region. It was only made feasible by being able to piggy-back on an existing online resource, that of Culture Northern Ireland, and even then it required considerable resource to compile the data, and will require ongoing staff time to ensure that that data is maintained and kept up to date.

Even with that background, there are a number of reservations about the site to be considered. By being inclusive, it risks searches being swamped by the extensive activities of large, funded organisations (eg a search for 'visual arts activities' in Belfast is overwhelmingly dominated by the programme of Crescent Arts Centre, for 'drama' in Derry, by the Waterside Theatre) or by individuals offering services (a search for 'visual arts groups' in Belfast returns, among other entries, a life model, four individuals offering teaching skills, and only two entries that could be described as a 'voluntary arts group'). On the other hand, a search made on 16 June 2015 for 'music' groups and activities in Derry and Co Londonderry returned no activities and only three groups, despite the fact that later in June the Music City festival was being held in Derry/Londonderry.

As in so many other areas of the Internet, this is perhaps a case where simply using a major search engine such as Google will return more useful results, without the risk of sending a misleading message, such as implying that there's no music happening in Derry or Co Londonderry.

The new *Perthshire Creates* website may face similar challenges. It is notable that, on 16 June 2015, the home page contained five items, out of 13, that were out of date, and all entries were being made by Perth and Kinross Council staff, with no mechanism for items to be submitted directly to the site by external parties.

Our own experience with maintaining a directory for the Highlands and Islands over many years, as part of HI~Arts, and the examples of both *Art Take Part* and AVA Wakefield, strongly suggest that, if operating at a Scotland-wide level, a minimum of one dedicated full time post would be required to maintain regular contact with the providers of data, and to play a highly proactive role in ensuring that they keep their information up to date. We've seen from some of the umbrella bodies that this process can be difficult enough even when a subscribing membership is involved; it is very much harder when the information is being sought from an open and undefined community who have no overt reason or responsibility for providing their data in the first place, or ensuring that it remains accurate and up to date thereafter.

One issue for providers of data is that they are often required to enter exactly the same details on several different websites or databases. This is particularly the case with information on events and activities. Efforts, first by VisitScotland, and then by The List magazine, to establish a single central database for Scottish events data, from which other websites could draw content, have both been unsuccessful, largely because both were predicated on an income-earning model. However, the important issue may be less a single source of *events* data, than a single source of access to the bodies organising and promoting those events.

4.3. A Possible Model

There is now one possible Scotland-wide solution to the problem of a single source of data on groups and organisations. The ALISS (A Local Information System for Scotland) programme http://www.aliss.org is funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by the Health and Social Care ALLIANCE Scotland. As its website states: *The programme works closely with existing ALLIANCE programmes, membership and networks as well as public services and communities in Scotland to make information about local sources of support more findable*. Although starting out from a health and social care context, ALISS is developing a much wider role as an 'index' of community resources in Scotland, recognising that any community group or facility can contribute to positive health and wellbeing.

The essence of the ALISS model is that all the data it holds is 'open source'. Therefore, any body, from a national institution to a local voluntary group, can apply for an ALISS account, and can then compile a 'collection' of relevant data (a 'directory', so to speak) from all the ALISS data, either by using keywords, or postcodes. A programme initiated by Perth and Kinross Council, *Well Connected*   http://www.pkc.gov.uk/wellconnected is aiming to do exactly that for all the ALISS-held data that covers Perth and Kinross.

The key point about ALISS is that it does not take central responsibility for the accuracy of the data; that is the responsibility of the 'account holders' who enter the data in the first place, although ALISS will pass on to those account holders any data problem that is reported to them.

We are conscious that the ALISS model, and local counterparts like Well Connected, are still very much 'work in progress' with a number of issues still to be resolved. At present, it would appear that ALISS's 'open source' approach perhaps relies too much on the scrupulous attention of those 'account holders' who are entering data: we have encountered duplicate entries with differing content, and cases where the account holder has entered personal contact details without the individual's permission, and when more generic contact details were already available. Such errors only get picked up if a user submits a 'report' to ALISS. That is, the principles are sound, but there may be a need for greater oversight and policing, or more stringent briefing of potential account holders.

Nonetheless, we would stress the following points:

- ALISS avoids the need to create a new database architecture from scratch, which would be both costly and resource-intensive.
- ALISS potentially removes the need for groups to enter their information on more than one database, if appropriate bodies can agree to use the ALISS index as the means of populating their own directories.
- ALISS locates the voluntary arts where we believe they should be placed, as part of a continuum of community and social resources.
- As a Scottish Government-backed initiative ALISS can perhaps be assumed to have a more certain longer term future than any new initiative that would be dependent on grant aid to be set up and maintained.

Underlying this discussion is a more basic question: what is an online map *for*? The key word is *visibility*—for those seeking 'pathways' to creative involvement, and for the voluntary arts as a whole.

These 'pathways' might be needed by an individual wanting to develop their own creativity, or by any organisation, local or national, with an interest or remit in serving communities: from the NHS and the Scottish Prison Service to a local youth or mental health support group.

For us, all the evidence suggests that if an individual is looking for a creative opportunity in their area (eg someone has just moved to Perth and Kinross and wants to find a singing group) they will search for local sites which can be assumed to have local information, rather than go to a national directory. That those local sites might be supplied by a national *database*, such as ALISS, largely invisible to the searcher, is another matter. The problem is that, at least as far as Perth and Kinross is concerned, locally-gathered information is currently far too fragmented to give any assurance that the searcher would find what they want. We propose, therefore, that a concerted campaign is needed to encourage more consistent sources of local and regional information. This does not imply a *uniform* model to be imposed on each Local Authority or TSI area, just the obligation to clarify and simplify sources of information.

In making the voluntary arts *as a whole* more visible, we would argue that it is more valuable to have voluntary arts groups shown in the wider context of other community facilities, so that they are made visible both to potential partners (eg in health, social care, or community development) and to those who shape and influence policy (eg politicians, local media, Community Planning partners), than it would be to gather them separately under the banner of a 'voluntary arts directory'.

5. Findings for Perth and Kinross

The Project Brief set out a series of questions which the research should address. In this section we set out to answer those questions in the specific context of Perth and Kinross. In the second part of our report we aim to draw out more general findings and conclusions about the Voluntary Arts, as a whole and across Scotland.

5.1. The profile of voluntary arts groups in the area

Our survey, in both hard copy and online, resulted in just 27 responses. While that figure is numerically small, when seen as a percentage of the 198 groups we identified it is actually, at 14%, almost as high as the response rate of the most successful of all the previous surveys we've looked at, that for the Cultural Commission in 2004. But we have no sense of what percentage those 198 represent of the *total* number of groups active in Perth and Kinross. This is in part because the information base is so fragmented and incomplete. Part of the problem appears to be, not too *few* sources of information, but too *many,* most of them not checked, maintained or updated on a regular basis.

A recurrent theme in meetings and interviews was that there are often one-off efforts to compile some form of address list or directory for a particular area (such as the apparently comprehensive 2008 venue directory) and then no further updating takes place. The area case study research brought this into sharp relief: existing directories combining to form one listing, then supplemented by internet searching, added to by discussions with individuals. Workshops in Crieff, Blairgowrie and elsewhere helped add a further layer, as participants reeled off the names of yet more obscure yet vibrant groups. Our attempt to produce a truly comprehensive list just for the Blairgowrie, Rattray and Alyth District resulted in a list of no less than *eighty-two* arts-related voluntary groups based, or active, in the area; that, for a population of around 16,000.

Our attempts to identify, contact and communicate with voluntary arts groups were, of necessity, focused on the address lists, databases and personal contacts held by LA officers, venue managers, funders, and umbrella bodies. Our conclusion must be that, even when the most exhaustive efforts are made to compile a central set of contacts from such sources, the result is far from complete, and, without each entry being individually checked, cannot be relied upon.

However, if Perth and Kinross is in any way typical of Scotland as a whole, then the voluntary arts sector is very much larger than indicated by previous estimates. Our research identified some 198 groups, and on a per capita basis, the population of Perth and Kinross would suggest that, if scaled up to a national level, there may be as many as 8,000 or 9,000 voluntary arts groups in Scotland, which is at least one third more than previous estimates. Those figures of course exclude both less formal groups, and those groups whose prime purpose is not artistic, such as the SWRI or U3A, but which nevertheless include a substantial proportion of arts activities in their programme.

5.2. The communication networks currently used by VA organisations in Perth and Kinross

The role of national umbrella bodies (at a Scottish or a UK level) is clearly very important for the members of those bodies, as we have seen in such examples as the Scottish Community Drama Association, Making Music, the Traditional Music Forum, or Film Hub Scotland. But those umbrella bodies only cover a relatively small proportion of the sector as a whole—from our surveys, only 6 out of 27 respondents identified their links to umbrella bodies as 'mattering a lot to them'.

Within Perth and Kinross there are strong regional networks for individuals active in the visual arts, whether defining themselves as professional or amateur, but few, if any, that connect *groups* across the region. Within a given community, however, **informal networks can be very strong and effective**, as we saw in the three towns on which we focused, Crieff, Aberfeldy and Blairgowrie, but with the emphasis on the *informal*, whether that be through individuals sitting on more than one committee, or regular opportunities to bump into one another at Saturday Coffee Mornings (as in both Blairgowrie and Alyth).

At a local level, therefore, networking can be very effective, especially when, as in Birnam, Crieff and Aberfeldy, there is a local arts venue which acts as some form of 'hub' for the creative community. And it may be—though it is very hard to prove—that many smaller, less formal groups are entirely self-sufficient and see little or no benefit from participating in networks. But there is a danger here: that those groups 'don't know what they don't know'. Not only might they miss out on opportunities to sustain or enhance what they do, their voices may not be heard when funding cuts or policy changes might have a direct impact on them, eg in closing a venue they use, or substantially raising hire charges. It is significant that our survey respondents placed 'news and information' and 'practical support' above 'funding' when indicating what they looked to professional organisations to help them with.

What these networks demonstrate is a picture of mutual interdepence. The funded, commercial, and wider community sectors need the voluntary arts and their participants as much as those involved in the voluntary arts need these bigger, or more generic, partners. We've tried to capture this in a diagram which represents both the overlapping areas of interest, and the 'fractal' way in which those overlaps can be traced at all levels, using the Scottish Women's Rural Institute as a notional example.
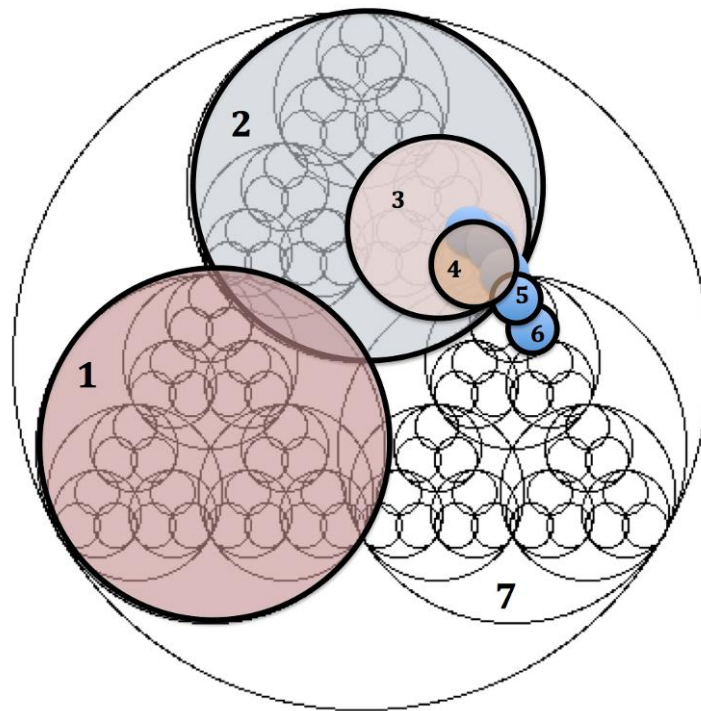
1. Voluntary Arts Scotland
2. Umbrella organisation: e.g. SWRI
3. SWRI Perth & Kinross
4. SWRI Arts activities
5. Local art or craft group with overlapping membership
6. Uncharted un-constituted local group
7. Uncharted voluntary groups

What we mean by 'fractal' is that the same kind of light-touch, informal networking functions at the national level, facilitated by Voluntary Arts Scotland, at the level of individual communities (assisted by existing social structures), and even at the level of inter-acting individuals. The gap, in this model, is at the *regional* level, especially where there has been a loss or reduction of Local Authority posts able to facilitate such regional networking.

From our surveys, there was an even spread of responses suggesting that groups value more or less equally their links with national and regional bodies, independent funded arts organisations, independent private or commercial arts organisations, and similar groups in the area.

5.3. Engaging and communicating with the people that run voluntary arts groups

The present arrangement by which Voluntary Arts Scotland maintains close and regular links with national umbrella bodies, sharing issues, information and ideas that are of relevance and interest to the members of those bodies, is clearly an effective mechanism

for communicating *with those groups which are members of such umbrella bodies*. But, as we've seen, our research implies that such groups are a minority within the sector as a whole.

As we've suggested, what is lacking, at least in Perth and Kinross and, we suspect, in much of Scotland, are *regional* networks that can act as intermediaries for a national body such as Voluntary Arts Scotland, as the umbrella bodies can do for their members. The regional networks that do exist for the generic voluntary sector, such as the Third Sector Interfaces, are not, in most cases, able to play such a role. Our illustration below, on AVA Wakefield, demonstrates how such a regionally-based network *could* operate, but if that particular body is functioning successfully for its members, it is doing so because it has evolved *within* the sector and has not been imposed top-down.

In the last decade, the best response from members of the voluntary arts sector was for the research conducted as part of the Culture Commission in 2004, although even that was only a 15% response rate from the identified contact list. But it does suggest that groups are most likely to be engaged, from a national perspective, when there is some larger object or campaign in view to which they can feel they are contributing—that their contribution *will make a difference*. In this respect, the *Our Cultural Commons* campaign, as it gains momentum, may provide such a focus to galvanise individual groups, especially those currently 'under the radar', but only if the campaign gains some traction within the wider media, and is not reliant only on sectoral websites and newsletters to disseminate its discussions and findings.

Although 'fear of social media' was raised several times, and is undoubtedly a real issue, there is evidence that, once appropriate training or support has been offered, many groups see the use of Facebook, email and other methods as an online equivalent of the informal means of communicating and disseminating information that they're used to using. Making Music have been encouraging those member groups which have Facebook pages to link them to the Making Music Scotland FB page https://www.facebook.com/MakingMusic.ScotlandNIreland?fref=ts to increase their profile, and Voluntary Arts Scotland are already doing this extensively with their own FB page.

A consistent finding was that most people active in the participative arts do not think of themselves as 'volunteers', and this no doubt to some extent explains the consistently low response rates in attempts to survey the sector, and also the commonly perceived lack of interaction between arts groups and those bodies, such as Third Sector Interfaces, which exist to support the generic voluntary sector.

The 2007 DCMS study *Our Creative Talent* concentrated on *formally organised voluntary and amateur arts groups*. We believe that such a narrow focus leads to a misleadingly narrow outcome**. By focusing instead on opportunities for *voluntary creative participation*, it becomes possible to see a much more inclusive picture that takes into account the significant contributions of both the funded professional and the commercial arts sectors in a continuum that ranges from, say, Horsecross to a self-employed dance teacher.**

Voluntary arts participants do not constitute a separate segment of society. They include many who, in other parts of their life, are professional artists, artsworkers, public sector workers, educators, and community workers. As just one example, all three of the cultural officers whom we interviewed from Perth and Kinross Council were also active as volunteers, and also as practitioners.

5.4. Enabling people interested in taking part to find out how to start

To summarise the above section, 'An Online Map', we would distinguish between, on the one hand, the need for a single, reliable *database* which would require groups to only enter their data once, and on the other, the means by which that data can then be *accessed* (and filtered) through a diversity of websites and search engines. **Though there are undoubtedly still operational issues to be resolved in practice, the *theoretical* model for ALISS seems to us the most appropriate**: data are collected and entered by regional or sectoral bodies and groups that can take some devolved responsibility for keeping such data up to date and accurate, and any other body or group can then collate that data for their own purposes.

The key question is then: *Who takes responsibility for collecting data, and who for disseminating, and drawing attention to, that data?*

We attempt to answer this in the next section.

However, access to data is only one element in the wider issue of *making visible* the scale and nature of creative participation throughout communities. We therefore offer **two related examples of achieving that visibility through collective activity.**

The first is the *Culture Day* organised annually in the Findhorn Bay area (including Forres) since 2013 http://www.findhornbayarts.com/culture-day/ . The first such event was a crucial stage in the development of the Findhorn Bay Arts Festival, by which it was organised, and together the Culture Day and the Festival were significant components in securing a 2015 Creative Place Award for the area.

The second has a much wider focus on community action and participation in general, but nonetheless may have elements that can be transferred to a specific voluntary arts focus: *Dumfries and Galloway Day of the Region* http://www.dayoftheregion.co.uk/about

What these two examples have in common is a 'light touch' framework in which groups themselves decide on the nature and level of their involvement, and an emphasis on celebration and inclusion.

A more specific issue around visibility is **that most of the groups we spoke to have great difficulty in recruiting new members for their committees and boards**, and report that the same people either remain in post for many years, or circulate around the committees of different groups. In this respect the toolkit created jointly by Volunteer Scotland and Voluntary Arts Scotland, *Volunteering in the Arts*, deserves the widest

circulation. One caveat should be mentioned, however: the toolkit adopts a definition of 'volunteer' used by the Scottish Government: '...anyone who donates their time freely to an organisation *in order to benefit others* [our emphasis] is a volunteer.' This risks further confusing the definition of 'voluntary arts', apparently excluding from the definition those who participate primarily for their own pleasure and development.

5.5. Overall

Our *Findings* for Perth and Kinross can therefore be summarised as:

- There is insufficient information to build a comprehensive and accurate picture of the voluntary arts sector in Perth and Kinross, but even on the basis of the available data, it is almost certainly **much larger and more diverse** than any previous estimates.

- Most groups communicate through, and rely on, **informal networks** which can be highly effective at a local level, but may do little to contribute to the wider visibility of the activities involved.

- Many participants, even those involved as organisers and committee members, **do not think of themselves as volunteers**, and many groups (especially the less formal ones) do not think of themselves as part of 'the voluntary arts'. This leads to a low take-up of the services offered both by Voluntary Arts Scotland and by more generic voluntary agencies.

- If viewed in terms of the *creative participation* of individuals, voluntary arts is not a distinct and separate entity, but instead sits at **the very heart of the wider cultural ecology**, relying on a complex web of interdependency between commercial businesses, funded arts organisations, community and voluntary groups, and creative individuals.

- Many groups have great difficulty in **recruiting new members** for their committees and boards, leading to a high dependence on the same individuals either remaining 'in post', or circulating around different groups, and a consequent risk of 'burn out' and insufficient succession planning.

6. Recommendations

The brief asked for recommendations as to how to address the following issues:

- For how local cultural infrastructure within Perth and Kinross could be sustained and strengthened to better support voluntary arts groups.
- to Voluntary Arts Scotland for engagement and communication with the people that run voluntary arts groups.
- for rolling the project out on a nationwide scale, including creative ways of engaging voluntary arts groups

- The most inclusive, and effective means of sustaining local cultural infrastructure is likely to be through a **regional network** which is built from, and managed by, the voluntary arts sector itself, with officer support from public bodies where possible. We envisage a key role for local "nodes" (enabling venues or individuals in communities) as the local focus for and driver of purposeful networking between groups and national and regional stakeholders.

- Voluntary Arts Scotland could communicate with voluntary arts groups most effectively through **a series of such *regional* networks** which parallel and complement the range of *national* umbrella bodies with which it already works.

- A **rolling programme of facilitating the development of regional networks** could start by focusing on selected individual Local Authority areas, perhaps including those which are or have been part of Creative Scotland's Place Partnership programme.

- This model, we believe, will also form the basis of the most effective means of **making the voluntary sector visible online**, again through regional networks complementing what national umbrella bodies already do for their own memberships, with the ALISS database underpinning a range of online means of access, and the regional networks envisaged above ensuring data collection and maintenance.

- Directories, whether printed or online, have consistently proved ineffective as a means of engaging with the voluntary arts sector, or of making it more widely visible. ALISS, at least, offers an already developed means of enabling data on voluntary arts groups to be gathered in one place, and then made readily accessible to those seeking information, or wishing to promote aspects of the sector.

Part II: The Voluntary Arts: the wider picture

7. The National Context

Those of us who work in cultural policy perhaps have a tendency to use terms like 'the voluntary arts *sector*' too freely, as that word 'sector' can all too readily create the impression of something separate and distinct. It can imply for example, that *the voluntary arts sector* is a subset of the much larger *Voluntary sector*, which then defines itself as the 'Third sector' alongside the Public and Commercial sectors—so, the 'voluntary arts' become just a subset of a subset, and, therefore, perhaps, all too easily marginalised.

Our research and consultations in Perth and Kinross, and our past experiences working in other parts of Scotland and the rest of the UK, have brought us to two very different, and paradoxical conclusions, that:

> **the 'voluntary arts' are in reality at the very heart of our cultural ecology**,

and

> **the term 'voluntary arts' itself is one which would not be recognised by most of those whom it is intended to describe**.

Public bodies and policymakers began to favour the term 'voluntary arts' because more widely familiar words such as 'amateur' and 'community' had become devalued by being too often associated with work and activities that were perceived as conservative, conventional or mediocre. As Voluntary Arts Scotland's Communications Manager wrote, in an article for the Guardian to mark Voluntary Arts Week in 2012:

> *The term 'voluntary arts' is a relatively new one, but growing in popularity all the time. However the word 'amateur' – despite its roots in the word 'to love' – has taken on some negative connotations. So while we don't shy away from using it (we're proud of the amateur arts) we feel the word 'voluntary' sums up the sector pretty well.*

> http://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2012/may/15/voluntary-arts-crafts-week

Yet many people we spoke to during the course of this project do not think of themselves as 'volunteers' just because they participate in artistic activities; not even those who are involved in organising and managing such activities. It's hardly surprising, therefore, that, over the years, there has been considerable uncertainty as to what 'the voluntary arts' actually includes, and we examine this point in more detail in Appendix 1.

This is the environment that we have explored across Perth and Kinross: in reality there are no clear-cut boundaries between the professional, the public, the commercial, or the

voluntary and community, 'cultural sectors', or between those and individual artists. Instead there are just huge numbers of individuals who come together formally or informally to share, develop and apply their skills for pleasure and personal satisfaction and for the benefit of the wider community. And many of those individuals play an often quite bewildering array of roles simultaneously: artist, teacher, committee member (often on two or more bodies at once), participant, audience member. Moreover they can be, at one and the same time: employed by a public body, selling their artwork, sitting on a voluntary committee, and enjoying the cultural offerings provided by others.

It may be that the requirements of policy structures, funding mechanisms, and statistical measurement drive public agencies to concentrate on *structures*--groups, organisations, venues—when what really matters are the *participative experiences* which individuals share. As a result, we concern ourselves with what are in fact false dichotomies: amateur/professional; funded/commercial; volunteer/career-orientated; participant/audience member. If we switch to thinking in terms of *experiences*, and the availability and quality of those experiences, then we are more likely to see these apparent oppositions as in reality just stages on a single continuum.

In 2004, and 2007, just as now, the voluntary arts sector was seen as facing substantial social and political change. But given the paucity of evidence, it is very hard to come to any conclusion as to how well the sector has weathered the challenges of the past decade, and whether the rate of emergence of new groups, and new opportunities for participation, matches or exceeds the rate at which groups are disbanding or being wound up. To take one example, the huge growth of the feis movement, over the last twenty years and across much of Scotland, does not appear, from anecdotal evidence at least, to have in any way reduced the number of young people taking part in local mods and regional competitive music festivals. What we don't know is whether the same young people participate in all three activities, or has the feis movement tapped into a segment of the young population that was hitherto not attracted by competitions? Making Music's Scotland Manager estimates that the organisation is seeing a slow and steady increase in membership, and is offering help with setting up to a number of new groups.

For the voluntary sector as a whole, this is a period of considerable change. The Scotland-wide network of Third Sector Interface (TSI) organisations is still new and settling down. In Perth and Kinross the local TSI, *Voluntary Action Perthshire*, includes 'arts and culture' as a category in its directory of local voluntary groups, but doesn't have a particular focus on the voluntary arts as such. Neighbouring TSIs either have no directory at all, or do not include the 'arts' in directory search categories.

The Community Empowerment Bill has just been passed by the Scottish Parliament (June 2015), and will have significant implications for the transfer of community assets, and for the active participation of community groups in working with Local Authorities to deliver services, and to meet the Scottish Government's national outcomes as defined through Single Outcome Agreements. One example of this that is already evident in Perth and Kinross, as elsewhere, is how the voluntary, and the wider independent, sectors are

taking up the slack caused by the decline of Council-organised 'evening classes', which were once the conventional means of trying out or developing new skills in the arts.

At a more fundamental level, the prevention agenda is one of the main drivers of the Scottish Government's plans for Public Service Reform, and there is therefore scope for a better informed understanding of how the voluntary arts already contribute to that agenda, simply through their existing activities, and could do much more with appropriate guidance and support.

8. *Reading the Map*

All the best stories include maps, and all the best maps can tell many stories. Both *Perthshire Creates* http://perthshirecreates.co.uk and *Cateran's Common Wealth* http://commonculture.org.uk are already developing online maps of creative and cultural resources, though with definitions which extend well beyond the 'voluntary arts'. Our own mapping efforts in Perth and Kinross have introduced us to many stories, and prompted us to tell several of our own, or to draw on stories that others have already told. Here are some of them, and we've grouped them under a number of key words that have been recurrent throughout our research.

8.1. Visibility

If, as we've argued, it's not possible to set limits on, or even to accurately describe, something called the 'voluntary arts sector', then how can we ensure that the work of those involved in the voluntary arts is properly understood and valued? We'll discuss the specific question of databases and directories below, but, in essence, we believe that there's no quick fix. We've already described the challenges we faced in trying to compile an inclusive and robust list of groups active in Perth and Kinross, but what we've learned while doing this, is that lists are not the right place to start.

We need instead to identify and trace the relationships, interdependencies and lines of informal communication by which people really collaborate—and not just in the voluntary arts. And this complex web is indeed 'fractal', as it is just as evident at the national levels of umbrella bodies and their relationships with each other and with other relevant agencies, such as Voluntary Arts Scotland or Creative Scotland, as it is *within* a single, informal arts group with just a handful of participants. In Blairgowrie, for example, we were told that the best means of disseminating information were by way of two weekly events: the Saturday coffee mornings, organised by a different group each week, and the Wednesday morning 'health walks', which can involve up to 50 people from the surrounding communities. In another community, the specific methods might be quite different, but the principle would be the same: use the places and activities where people gather anyway to get the word out.

In most cases, it seems, these kinds of informal methods, alongside online links by Facebook or email, and simple word of mouth, work perfectly well for most groups, especially when, in smaller communities, any one individual is likely to be involved in a

number of different groups. One attendee at the Blairgowrie meeting was on the committees of four different groups.

For some groups, of course, greater visibility *is* important, even if only at certain times: to recruit members, to attract audiences, or to gather support for a particular initiative, such as developing a new venue. But very many groups are clearly self-sufficient—or believe themselves to be—and see little benefit from being 'on the radar' of public bodies. Many may simply be too informal to be registered as a 'group' as such, whether it be a knitting circle or a band rehearsing in a garage.

Umbrella bodies, such as Making Music, or the Scottish Community Drama Association, can, of course, do an excellent job of making visible the activities of their members, but even within their specific artforms, their coverage may be far from comprehensive: an officer of the SCDA estimated that there are more active drama groups which are *not* members of SCDA than are, as, if they were not interested in the annual competitive Festival, these groups might see little benefit in membership.

But if the voluntary arts are, to use another metaphor, more like an iceberg, with nine-tenths largely invisible below the waterline, how can an effective case be made for their value and importance? This is not just of academic interest: a grant scheme cut, a venue closed, a set of hire charges increased—all these might have disastrous consequences for an eco-system of groups whose activities are barely visible, if at all, to those making such decisions.

We've therefore explored existing initiatives which help to make the voluntary arts more visible. One example is included later under Pathways. Our first example looks to Northern Ireland.

Art Take Part

Art Take Part is a web resource initiated by Voluntary Arts Ireland (VAI) http://www.arttakepart.org . It derives from VAI's wish to set up a directory of voluntary arts groups for Northern Ireland, but in practice it was realised by partnering with the already well established web resource, Culture Northern Ireland http://www.culturenorthernireland.org While that website provided an online 'what's on' for Northern Ireland, largely drawn from professional and funded companies and venues, it was not able to include participatory activities. To create *Art Take Part*, Culture NI adapted the 'back end' of its site to allow participatory activities to be entered and

---

tagged, and then exported the relevant data to the new *Art Take Part* site. At the same time, VAI compiled a directory of voluntary arts groups to complement the listings of activities. That proved a highly resource-intensive process for a small organisation, as it involved making connections with, and talking to, a large number of groups to gather their information.

Art Take Part is now being fully integrated within the larger Culture NI site, on the basis that, for the individual searching for something to do, it's largely immaterial whether the provider is a professional arts organisation, or a voluntary group. It's the opportunity to take part that matters. Moreover, the Culture NI site is itself promoting its directories through editorial content rather than simple listings—reviews and features that actively promote the organisations, events and activities that are listed. This is very similar to the approach previously taken by HI~Arts in the Highlands and Islands, where the online arts journal *Northings* sat in front of a directory of arts organisations, and chiefly attracted users through its editorial content http://northings.com.

VAI continues to promote *Art Take Part* and Culture NI to voluntary arts groups, and encourages them to use the sites, and enter and maintain their information.   But VAI estimate that if they were continuing to have responsibility for maintaining a stand-alone directory of groups and activities, that would require a full time post, once the ancillary activities of promotion, especially through social media, are taken into account.

For both sites, most search results probably come through Google and other major search engines rather than through the search functions embedded in the sites themselves.

A number of possible conclusions can be drawn from *Art Take Part*: that a directory of *opportunities to participate* is more relevant to the average user than a directory of groups and organisations; that the use of such a directory is best driven through high quality editorial content; that the important issue is to have a single reliable source of data, regardless of how it's accessed via other sites and search engines, and that, in line with the intentions of *Our Cultural Commons*, access to such information could best be thought of as a 'public utility'. In the context of the BBC's *Get Creative* initiative it is perhaps worth considering the case of the BBC's web resource *Your Paintings* http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings which was set up in partnership with the Public Catalogue Foundation and, although not directly related to the BBC's role as a public service broadcaster, serves a very important function of ensuring public access to publicly-owned assets.

8.2. Holistic

If there is a single over-riding message that we'd wish people to take from this report, it's that the so-called 'voluntary arts' sit at the very heart of our cultural ecology. The

web of interconnections is far too dense to permit the voluntary arts to be considered in isolation as a distinct 'sector'. This is true even of those groups which have traditionally formed the core of the 'amateur' arts: the membership-based national guilds, societies and associations out of which Voluntary Arts, as we now know it, originally emerged.

Two examples: we heard of two different drama groups, in each of which a professional actor played a central role as director and tutor, even though, under SCDA rules, they could not actually perform in competitive productions. The Strathearn Music Society not only delivers the usual role of such societies, in making it possible for their communities to enjoy the highest quality of touring professional performers, but also organises two workshops annually in local schools and for its 50th anniversary year is commissioning a new work from a professional composer.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to compiling a comprehensive directory lies in tracing the very many groups whose prime focus is *not* artistic, but who nonetheless include the arts regularly in their activities. The Scottish Women's Rural Institute has 80 groups in Perth and Kinross alone, many of whom organise crafts classes for their members. The East Perthshire Action of Churches Together group http://www.epacts.org.uk organises ceilidhs for the summer berry pickers, many of them migrant workers. The Alyth Youth Partnership http://www.alythyouthpartnership.com , which provides youth work opportunities, is looking to collaborate with artists on the Cateran Trail (see under 'Trust', below)

If we move from a focus on *organisations*, to talking instead about *creative and participatory experiences*, then the need to think holistically becomes paramount. The largest funded arts organisation in Perth and Kinross, Horsecross, runs several participatory groups directly, not least Perth Youth Theatre, one of the oldest youth theatres in Scotland. Also in Perth, Ad-lib Theatre Arts http://www.ad-libperth.co.uk, constituted as a Community Interest Company, and paying its tutors, has 350 participants attending its classes on a weekly basis, 80 of them adults, and also offers careers opportunities in the form of apprenticeships and internships. Pitlochry Festival Theatre, in addition to its own extensive artistic programme, and among many other links with local community groups, provides all the ticketing, and some of the marketing, for the annual Enchanted Forest event, which attracts a total audience of over 45,000 and is otherwise run by a voluntary charity, and in doing so PFT earns valuable additional income for the Theatre. As noted above, this is a model of mutual interdependence, potentially all the stronger for the complex interactions involved.

Aberfeldy Arts, the Birks Cinema, and Heartland Film Society

Birks cinema cafe area

Aberfeldy is a small market town of less than 2000 inhabitants. Normally, a community of that size would not be considered capable of supporting a fulltime dedicated cinema. But Aberfeldy *had* had a cinema, though it closed 30 years ago, and the building itself had sat derelict for many years at the very heart of the town. Thanks to considerable and prolonged community effort, it has now been successfully rebuilt and reopened, and is owned for the community by a Trust http://www.thebirkscinematrust.org.uk .

But the Birks aims to be much more than just a cinema, it also sets out to be a cultural hub for Aberfeldy and the surrounding area. In that role, members of the Birks Trust have helped to coordinate a bid to the 2015 Creative Place Awards organised by Creative Scotland. The aim was to use the award to create Aberfeldy Arts – a year-long campaign, with a focus on a specific artform each month during the campaign. It was intended that Aberfeldy Arts would become self-sustaining, and able to continue after the end of the Creative Place Award project. This bid was successful in being shortlisted, though in the end it lost out to Moniaive in Dumfries-shire, for a roughly similar proposal. Nonetheless, the process of developing the bid has proved invaluable in encouraging a range of voluntary groups and individual artists to work together, and the proposal for the campaign could well form the basis of an application to Creative Scotland's Open Fund.

One group has a particularly close relationship with the Birks Cinema. The Heartland Film Society http://www.heartlandfilmsociety.org.uk kept an interest in cinema alive in Aberfeldy during the long process of restoring the Cinema, and now works closely with the Cinema management, and programmes a monthly Sunday afternoon slot in the Cinema schedule. The Society also organises and programmes the Aberfeldy Film Festival, held each November, which includes a competition for short films which, being organised in conjunction with the local distillery, is able to award the *Palme Dewar* prize to the best submitted film. Heartland is a member of Film Hub

> Scotland and values the opportunities this provides for training, information, and networking at a national level.
>
> Crucial to the financial viability of the Birks Cinema is its catering operation, and this successful example has encouraged the opening of other new cafes in the town, greatly enhancing the offer for visitors. Aberfeldy was already unusual in that one of its main cultural facilities is wholly commercial: the Watermill http://www.aberfeldywatermill.com , as well as housing a bookshop, cafe and homeware shop, has a gallery which presents exhibitions of international quality by such artists as Elizabeth Blackadder, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, and John Bellany. The Watermill also hosts regular writers' events, including some as part of Pitlochry Festival Theatre's *Winter Words* Festival.
>
> Aberfeldy is a microcosm of the positive interactions of the community, funded professional, and commercial arts sectors, creating an environment and a range of activities that enhance life for local residents but also act to attract visitors to this tourism-orientated town.

8.3. Valuing

On the one hand, there is mounting evidence globally of the benefits, both to the individual in terms of skills and wellbeing, and to the wider community in terms of health and cohesion, of *creative participation*. It was as long ago as 2002, after all, that an article in the British Medical Journal proposed diverting 0.5% of the healthcare budget to the arts, and received overwhelming online support for the idea from GPs. http://www.bmj.com/content/325/7378/1432. As recently as March 2015 a report for the Culture and Sport Evidence programme in England found that:

> *Studies in general testify that cultural participation can contribute to social relationships, community cohesion, and/or make communities feel safer and stronger. A majority of studies also supports positive links between arts participation and social inclusion, suggesting that cultural participation results in an improved capacity for cultural citizenship, boosting confidence and developing social skills which lead to more effective engagement with the community at large.*
> *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-review-of-the-social-impacts-of-culture-and-sport*

But on the other hand it can be very difficult to relate these broad lessons to specific cases at a local level. For example, recently one Scottish Local Authority axed its entire discretionary grants budget of £600,000pa on the basis that the impact of the cut would be minimal—yet this was the budget on which a host of small groups relied for their activities, as well as being a (modest) match for Creative Scotland funding for a number of volunteer-managed professional arts organisations.

Since 2010 Local Authorities in Scotland have had access to a Quality Improvement Framework entitled *How Good is Our Culture and Sport*

http://www.gov.scot/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/arts/Archive/CulturalPolicy/workinggroup/ HGIOCS but this can only measure and assess those activities which are already known to a Local Authority undertaking the exercise. We think it's highly likely that there is nothing unusual, nationally, in the extent to which much voluntary arts activity in Perth and Kinross is not visible to Council officers, and so is neither assessed nor valued. A similar pattern can be observed in other parts of the UK. As one contributor to this project put it: 'Unless the value of the sector is recognised, it is more fragile than it needs to be'.

There are interesting parallels to be drawn from volunteering in the heritage sector. 2009 research by Museums Galleries Scotland found that *90% of respondent museums have volunteer staff and nearly a quarter are entirely run by volunteers*, http://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/about-us/news/news-article/217/volunteering-in-museums-research-results-published and the centrality of the role of volunteers is recognised in relevant strategies and training programmes. The situation in the voluntary arts can be complicated by the assumption that most participants get involved for their own pleasure or to further their own creativity or self-expression, that is, their motivation is seen as less *altruistic.* This was highlighted for us by a case we were told of, where a heritage body had downgraded the estimated number of 'volunteers' in a funding application, seeing most of those taking part as only 'participants' and thus not able to be counted as 'volunteers' for National Lottery purposes.

Participants in the voluntary arts will seek recognition for their efforts in various ways: through the applause of an audience, the sales of artwork, the critical approval of a judge, the achievement of an external standard (eg the 'grades' of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music), or just the endorsement of their colleagues. At the other end of the scale we've seen in the previous example how the challenge of a national scheme, the Creative Places Award, can galvanise a wide range of groups across a community to work together. Our next example focuses on an awards scheme that is specific to the voluntary arts.

Voluntary Arts' Epic Awards

Epic Awards Scotland winner 2015: Kikrcudbright Art and Crafts Trail

As we were working on this project the winners were announced of the 2015 Epic Awards http://epicawards.co.uk . Set up by Voluntary Arts in 2010, the annual Voluntary Arts Epic Awards recognise and award innovation and creative excellence in the voluntary arts across the UK and Republic of Ireland. In addition to national award categories, there is a Peer Award and People's Choice Award which help give groups greater visibility amongst fellow voluntary arts groups. Previous winners and runners up from Scotland include the Barra Bunting project, the Braemar Creative Arts Festival, the Kirkcudbright Arts and Craft Trail, Stornoway Pipe Band and DD8 Music in Kirriemuir. The groups have fed back to Voluntary Arts Scotland that winning an Epic Award is valuable recognition for the people that set up and run groups and helps put voluntary arts on the 'map' across Scotland. The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Fiona Hyslop MSP, has shown her continued support:

> *The Voluntary Arts Epic Awards showcase excellent examples of inclusive and local participation in the arts and the initiative and drive of many dedicated volunteers across the country who set up and run thousands of arts and cultural groups. Voluntary arts contribute much to Scotland's rich and varied cultural life and Voluntary Arts Scotland's support helps enable more people to get involved in creative activities. Congratulations to Kirkcudbright Arts and Craft Trail for winning this year's Scotland Epic Award. This cross-art form event each summer has involved the whole community and attracts new visitors to the local area to see for themselves the stunning and vibrant town. The Runner Up of the Scotland Epic Award, DD8 Music- a music recording and rehearsal facility- is led by some truly inspirational young people in the town of Kirriemuir. I wish them all continued success*. [Epic Awards press release, 21 March 2015]

In the present context, it's worth noting how many of the Scottish-based nominations and awards, in particular, go to smaller communities, most

notably the 2013 Scottish Awards, which went to a project on the islands of Barra and Vatersay. A member of the 'Barra Bunting' project stated at the time:

> *The Epic Award has given us an excellent start to the project and is something we are extremely proud of. It has given us excellent publicity and the prize has allowed us to promote the project better, in our local area and further afield. We really enjoyed the trip to the beautiful City of Derry for the Winners' Reception, to find out about all the other winning projects and make connections. Recently we were visited by some of the Welsh winners and it was super to have that link.*

8.4. Networks

The growth of the Internet has driven an increasing interest in understanding the operation, and power, of networks, whether virtual or in the 'real world'. However, as John Holden's January 2015 report on *The Ecology of Culture* (for the Arts and Humanities Research Council) illustrated, even attempting to produce a visual map of the network connections of just *one* cultural organisation http://ourculturalcommons.org/2015/03/the-ecology-of-culture can result in something that is very hard to read. Network theory is a complex and rather bewildering branch of science, but the crucial observation is that, in any network there are a number of *critical nodes*, and the removal of these nodes can cause the network to become fragmented into small and disconnected clusters.

In Perth and Kinross we have seen a number of different 'critical nodes' at work. Some are venues, and we talk about these in the 'Spaces' section. Others are people, whether in employment or volunteers, and we talk about some examples in the 'Individual' section. The significant point is that these 'nodes' are not necessarily found where they would be expected. Many groups spoke to us of how important Local Authority-employed Arts Development posts had been in the past, but cuts in staffing, in Perth and Kinross as in many other Scottish Local Authorities, have reduced the number of such posts, and those posts which remain are often over-stretched, while in Local Authorities as a whole staffing reductions have increased the 'silo' effect, with departments often becoming less well linked and less able, or likely, to share information and intelligence.

National voluntary arts umbrella bodies have also had to absorb funding cuts and staff reductions, and may therefore be less able to offer the broader support and advice that their members had become accustomed to. Despite its considerable importance as a national voice for the voluntary arts, and as a source of extensive practical and targeted online resources, few of the groups that we spoke to had any great awareness of, or direct engagement with, Voluntary Arts Scotland.

There's no doubt that there are valuable, though mostly informal, networks at the level of individual communities (see Aberfeldy and Crieff examples), or within individual artforms (see Perth Visual Arts Forum example). But if there are no 'nodes' which connect these networks to the wider worlds of arts and community funding, education, community planning and engagement, health and wellbeing, and the criminal justice system, and if many groups believe themselves to be so self-sufficient that they don't even participate in these local networks, then there is a serious risk that many groups 'don't know what they don't know'. Our survey respondents rated 'access to news and information' and 'practical support' above 'funding' when asked what mattered to them in their links with professional organisations.

At two of our meetings we were joined by a member of the Voluntary Arts Scotland Advisory Group, a highly-experienced theatre professional, who was able, quite incidentally, to suggest a number of potentially valuable links and opportunities for the groups we met with. How, then, can effective networking ensure that groups are made aware of what will be to their benefit, by the methods that they themselves appreciate—by word of mouth, personal contact, informal conversations—rather than through websites and newsletters?

Perth U3A

Perth U3A 2014/15 Committee

The University of the Third Age exists to provide 'life-enhancing and life-changing opportunities' for those who are retired or no longer in full time employment.   It is a UK-wide movement supported by its national organisation, the Third Age Trust.   Local U3A groups are separately constituted, in whichever form they find useful or relevant. There are three U3A groups in Perth and Kinross, the largest of which, Perth U3A, was founded in 1985, not long after the movement was launched. It currently has over 470 members.

The essence of the U3A movement is self-help. Within a local group such as Perth U3A, members form different interest groups, and unless a specialist is needed to start a new group off, or provide particular training, all groups rely on sharing the skills of their members. Of the 60 interest groups currently active in Perth U3A, about half can be described as involving the arts, from book clubs to music groups, and French Play Reading to Ukulele for All.

Many groups simply meet in members' houses. Where a group is too large for such a venue, or there are practical considerations, venues are found which are either free or as low cost as possible. One group gets free access to a pub in Scone, provided they buy coffees and teas. A church in Letham is used for the monthly meetings of Perth U3A as a whole. As members of Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Services, Perth U3A get discounted hire rates for their rooms. Council premises are considered to be too expensive, although U3A groups in some other Council areas have access to discounted Council rates. Members' subscriptions (£18 a year) are chiefly used for venue hires.

Perth U3A is a member of Age Scotland, which has an interest in 'creative aging', and they have taken part in the Creative Scotland-developed 'Luminate' Festival of Creative Aging, but such links are largely a matter of 'happenstance' and they do not receive regular information from outside agencies.

Research undertaken by the then Perth U3A Chair three years ago indicated that almost every member contacted had a range of other voluntary organisations that they were involved in, and there's anecdotal evidence that individual U3A groups can act as 'pathways' for people to develop an interest or skill and become aware of, and involved in, other groups and activities.

Perth U3A would not consider itself as a 'voluntary arts group'. It did not feature on any of the lists of such groups that we have been working with. Yet it has a much larger membership involved in arts activities than almost any other group we encountered, and its extensive membership themselves form an important network across the region: open meetings are held monthly and can involve up to 100 members.

8.5. Trust

In this picture we are building of informal networks--and even within groups which are formally constituted, whether it be a U3A group or a drama club--the single most significant factor is undoubtedly *trust*. As we noted in the First Part, most of the groups we spoke to have great difficulty in recruiting new members for their committees and boards, and report that the same people either remain in post for many years, or circulate around the committees of different groups. That is only to be expected: most people just want to get on with enjoying their activity and enhancing their skills, and *trust* their friends and fellow participants who are on the managing committees to keep everything running smoothly.

That trust becomes even more critical in very informal groups, which are likely to have no formal committee, no constitution, indeed no separate bank account. That is surely an absolutely critical factor in any community: that its members feel able to trust each other, and it is one significant way in which participation in the voluntary arts can contribute to a community's wider health and cohesion, by fostering that climate of trust.

It is understandable, therefore, and a source of considerable frustration on both sides, that many voluntary arts groups are wary of the level of bureaucracy imposed, as they see it, by public bodies. There are of course unavoidable legal requirements in fields such as health and safety, child protection, and the handling of money, but many groups are resentful of, for example, the amount of information required to apply for, account for, and report back on, even small sums of public funding. Many also complained of the administrative complexity of booking spaces in the new 'campuses' (see below under Spaces). In contrast, some groups praised the ease of applying for the Voluntary Arts

Scotland Voluntary Arts Week expenses grants of £100. Processes of Public Tendering make it increasingly difficult for voluntary organisations to provide even modest services, as some Local Authorities move from a grant aid to a commissioning model for cultural provision. The issue at stake here is that increasingly groups have little or no access to someone whom they can trust to advise them on, and support them through, these bureaucratic minefields.

We also found evidence of a wariness where large, funded arts organisations are concerned. One of the very small group who came to our workshop in Perth Concert Hall said that she had been reluctant to come to a meeting in such a 'formal' and 'corporate'setting, and thought that the location might have put off other possible attendees, and certainly our two best attended meetings were in the much less formal settings of Strathearn Artspace and Blairgowrie Library. One venue Chief Executive spoke of what they thought was the 'gravitational pull' of large arts organisations, resulting in independent groups being nervous of being drawn in to the bigger body's priorities and programmes.

Cateran's Common Wealth

The Cateran Trail is a fully waymarked walk of 64 miles (103 km) that lies at the heart of Scotland, approximately 60 miles north of Edinburgh, 17 miles north west of Dundee and 21 miles north east from Perth. *Cateran's Common Wealth* http://commonculture.org.uk is an ambitious new project which aims, first, to map the 'cultural assets' of the Cateran Trail by identifying all the people and organisations working with arts and culture around the trail. So far, 136 contacts have been listed. The project then aims to develop a series of events and activities along the trail and over the next two-three years.

In the context of our Pathways research, *Cateran's Common Wealth* exemplifies the interdependence that we have been describing. It is the initiative of an experienced arts professional who has moved to the Alyth area for family reasons, and who is now building a confederation of interested parties that involves: professional arts organisations based in

---

Dundee, Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, tourism businesses along the Trail, artists based in the area, and an observer from Perth and Kinross Council. As we've so often seen in this project, many of the individuals involved have multiple professional and voluntary roles in the area.

In this model, there's no clear-cut distinction between 'voluntary' and 'paid' work. At this development stage, the 'professionals' involved (whether from the arts, community or tourism sectors) are being paid for some specific elements of work, but are contributing substantial amounts of voluntary time to discuss, plan and develop what is an innovative approach to linking arts, heritage, community and tourism interests.

Coincidentally, this project has close parallels with a project which contributed to one of the 2015 Creative Scotland *Creative Place* Awards, which went to Forres. The successful Forres bid was built on the development of an annual Forres 'Culture Day', itself linked to a biennial Findhorn Bay Arts Festival, held for the first time in 2013. Both of those events were the initiative of a highly experienced professional festival organiser, who had returned to Findhorn, where she grew up, with the aim of developing a paid creative role for herself while also bringing benefit to the wider community.

Cateran's Common Wealth and *Forres Culture Day* have many parallels. Both are the initiative of an 'outsider' who began by taking a low key and long term approach to working within the community they had joined: first making social links, then building more formal voluntary roles on committees and thereby establishing their personal credibility. Both individuals contributed substantial voluntary time over a long period, but were open about their hopes that this would lead to paid work for them in the future.

In both cases, the active involvement of existing voluntary groups has been held back until the plans have real substance. That is, there is a strong belief in not creating false expectations, that can lead to disappointment—and, above all, *distrust*—if the necessary funding is not then achieved. It was at the point at which the funding was in place that groups were approached to contribute to the first Forres Culture Day, and the same will be the case for Cateran's Common Wealth.

This does not mean that such events have to be planned in isolation or even secrecy. We selected Cateran's Common Wealth as an example precisely because a number of the representatives of voluntary groups who attended our Blairgowrie meeting spoke highly of the project, and insisted we should engage with it.

> *Trust* can be a hard quality to demonstrate, especially to individuals and organisations not closely involved. Funding bodies can require, even at the development stage, 'letters of support' to demonstrate a degree of community involvement that may be premature for the project concerned. In such development stages, all the partners—paid, unpaid, professional, voluntary—need to come to the table as equals in order to successfully realise such ambitious proposals, where the rewards for success can be high (the Forres Creative Place Award brings £100,000 of Creative Scotland funding) but where, as in Aberfeldy Arts' unsuccessful bid for the same Award programme, creating a climate of trust in collaborative working can still deliver real dividends for the community.

8.6. Individuals

'Leadership' is a much used—and abused—term in both the cultural and voluntary sectors, and in both those areas there are high level courses, such as the Clore Leadership Programme, to train the 'leaders' of the future. On the other hand, there is a tendency, when talking about the voluntary arts, to place the emphasis on the *group*, and on shared activities, pooled skills, communal aims and achievements. The reality, we believe, lies somewhere between these two extremes. Of course large organisations with substantial budgets and responsibilities require effective *management* although, in the voluntary sector at least, the 'leadership' may often be expected to come from the voluntary board or committee to whom the professional management report.

In the context of the voluntary arts, however, we would like to offer an alternative concept, that of 'animateur'. That is, an individual who plays a *leading role* in developing or running a group or activity, but who achieves their results through promoting collaboration, participation, delegation and consensus, rather than through strong 'leadership', with all the ego-driven baggage that that term can imply. Our examples focus on a number of such figures: the Chair of the Birks Cinema who has coordinated Aberfeldy's bid for a Creative Place Award; the two individuals who rescued the building that houses the Strathearn Artspace from the developers; the artists who set up Perthshire Visual Arts Forum; the experienced arts professional who is building the Cateran Commonwealth, and we met several others at our four regional meetings, such as the woman who is the driving force behind the new Crieff Arts Festival, or the worker with Alyth Youth Partnership who is linking young people with artists.

To put it rather crudely, the distinction to be made might be between those who hold on to a position of authority largely to satisfy their own *amour propre* (often disguising this under the cloak of a sense of responsibility—'no one else can take on the job', etc) and those who act to be inclusive and collegiate, and through consensus. That distinction will be more readily apparent if the role of 'animateur' is better understood, promoted and fostered. The *Fiery Spirits* network of community activists hosted by the Plunkett Foundation http://fieryspirits.com does exactly that, though from past experience the network has little engagement with the cultural sector. Nonetheless, the model may be worth considering; as the website describes:

Fiery Spirits is a network of people, now numbering over 1,300, with an interest in making a difference in rural communities across the UK and Ireland through community-led approaches. Fiery Spirits is hosted by the Plunkett Foundation, an organisation that campaigns for community-ownership in rural areas.

Members may be interested in making their community a better place to live, have a problem they want to share to see how others have approached it, or they may have done something amazing that they'd like to share with other rural people across the UK and Ireland.

Fiery Spirits is an open network which anyone is free to join. You can join groups having discussions on a range of issues or you can start new discussions of interest to you. You can invite people to join too if you'd like to use Fiery Spirits to connect up in a new way with others.

Local communities often think that the solution to their perceived difficulties would be some form of paid, professional coordinator; an eloquent argument for just such a post was made at our Blairgowrie meeting. Such 'community enablers' can indeed prove effective, but there are also many cases where such posts become bogged down in procedures and achieve little that is concrete—everything depends on the mix of community and individual. In the present and future funding climate, however, such posts are likely to be at a premium and in our view it is far more important to value and support the roles of voluntary animateurs, especially for the communities within which they're active. It is very often the case that, when viewed from outside, a given community is working far more effectively and collaboratively, and achieving far more, than its own members recognise, caught up as they are in daily challenges and obstacles.

Nonetheless, where such paid posts do exist, their impact can be significant. In recent years, some Local Authorities have abolished all arts-related posts. Perth and Kinross is fortunate in still retaining a culture team which includes two area-based Cultural Coordinators. We were able to see at first hand how much the contributions of these two individuals are valued by the groups with which they work, although both, it is clear, are active well beyond their defined remit, including 'out of hours' voluntary input. Umbrella bodies can face similar cuts: loss of Creative Scotland 'Regular' funding has reduced the hours for the Scotland manager of Making Music and meant that the umbrella body has to compete with its own members for funding from the 'Open Projects' pot.

There is of course another category of individual who is crucial to the voluntary arts: the professional artist. This is very much a matter of two way traffic. Of course, participants in voluntary arts activities call on the skills of professional conductors, soloists, directors, writers, artists, tutors and trainers. But engagement with voluntary participants can also be vital for an artist's creative and professional development. As is the case with two groups currently active in Inverness, working regularly with an ensemble of amateur musicians can give a developing conductor invaluable experience—and profile--that would be hard to acquire by any other means. Teaching an art or craft skill can help a

professional to evaluate their own practice, and can spark new ideas and suggest new directions. Working collaboratively with a particular community on a new piece of work—in dance, or drama, for example—can result in a particular fusion of creativity that is only possible in such circumstances.

In the recent national conversations, *Our Cultural Commons* identified, as the first factor on which the health and strength of local culture depends: *Local people who inspire and lead – those 'creative citizens' who, beyond their own participation and beyond any remuneration, give their time to make such activity more available within their communities (of locality and interest) and to improve the quality and range of those opportunities and activities,* and recommended: *A programme of skills development for creative citizens (voluntary and paid) to build capacity in relation to asset management, regulatory compliance etc.*

Perthshire Visual Arts Forum

In trying to define 'the voluntary arts', how does one pigeon-hole a body such as the Perth Visual Arts Forum www.pvaf.org.uk , which has 275 signed-up members, from which its organising committee is drawn? On the one hand, its members define themselves as 'career orientated' (which we find a useful term for avoiding the unhelpful amateur/professional divide), but on the other hand none of its organisers are paid, yet it is an important source of shared knowledge and support, and from it grew the successful Perthshire Open Studios, which last year had 140 members, and which is an important annual event both for promoting sales (for both amateur and professional artists) and encouraging tourism.

PVAF is also a good example of how a synergy between grass roots initiatives and Council support can lead to a long term legacy. Council officers played a crucial role in supporting Perth and Kinross-based artists to get the Forum started, and one of the Council's Cultural Coordinators still plays an active role as Perth and Kinross Council's representative, and thereby able to help the Forum with access to free meeting space.

Although the Forum distinguishes itself from the more traditional focus on amateur artists of the Perthshire Art Association (with which there is very

little overlap in membership) by its emphasis on 'career orientated' artists, there are no actual barriers to membership, not even a subscription. Half of the membership is local to Perth and Kinross, the other half, from further afield, have signed up for the networking benefits of being part of the Forum. PVAF organise members' exhibitions, showcases, training events, masterclasses and Forums, and in that respect it could be seen as a form of support organisation for professionals. Yet PVAF participated in the 2015 Voluntary Arts Week and indeed received one of Voluntary Arts Scotland's £100 grants to help them to do so, and many PVAF members also apply their skills in undertaking voluntary work, for example, working with Remake Scotland in Crieff http://www.remakescotland.co.uk

Venues are very important to PVAF. In addition to having access to free meeting space, they have an ongoing relationship with the Birnam Institute, which is seen as the best venue for exhibitions in the region, and they are missing the space that was available to them in Perth Theatre, currently closed for major redevelopment. There is no 'hub' for the contemporary visual arts in the region, there is a significant lack of studio space, though WASPS are currently working with local contacts to explore the possibility of a new facility in Perth, and there is the constant problem of finding spaces for classes and workshops: the campuses, even if affordable or accessible, cannot accommodate any 'messy' activities. The development of Strathearn Artspace in Crieff, a more informal and accessible venue, is therefore valuable for PVAF.

Without a process of annual subscriptions, keeping members' information up to date can be a challenge, but PVAF's circulation of monthly newsletters is used as an opportunity to remind members to update their database entries.

PVAF exemplifies the continuum model which we are advocating: a voluntary body made up of professionals, interacting with other voluntary groups, and relying on access to a wide range of venues and spaces.

8.7. Spaces

Spaces and places for people to meet and do things were identified by the *Our Cultural Commons* national conversations as the second factor on which the health of local culture depends.

In trying to reach and identify as many voluntary arts groups in Perth and Kinross as possible, we initially hoped to be able to work through the venues which they used, for meetings, performances, exhibitions, classes and workshops. But we soon found that (a) there is an enormous number of venues (one list alone contained details of 134 village and community halls in the region); (b) many such venues have no one individual who could provide details of the groups which use them; and (c) many groups use informal

spaces that are not on any lists, such as the pubs and members' living rooms cited by the Perth U3A group.

In the sports sector it is often possible to define an appropriate set of facilities for a given size of community. Nothing so clear cut is possible in the voluntary arts. Blairgowrie, for example, with a population of around 8,000, might be said to have an appropriate size of venue in the Town Hall, which can accommodate up to 350 for performances. But voluntary arts groups must compete for its use with the wider community, and the very full calendar for June included, alongside dance classes and tea dances, birthday parties and a large number of fitness classes.

A recurrent theme at all our meetings, and in many interviews, was the range of issues associated with the six 'campuses' established by Perth and Kinross Council. We were told that they were developed according to a template, and without sufficient consultation with those groups likely to make use of them; that they are much too expensive for many groups; that access is difficult between the schools' use of the spaces, and the early closing times which many operate; that an edge of town location is hard to get to for those without cars; that the environment (eg carpeted floors) militates against many arts uses; and that the administrative processes of booking a space are often arduous. While we can't comment on the accuracy of these views, they were repeated often enough across different locations that we can't ignore them either.

In Aberfeldy, for example, there are no less than four community venues in the centre of the town which are seen as both cheaper and more readily accessible than the Breadalbane campus: the Birks Cinema, the Town Hall, the Locus Centre, and the home of the Aberfeldy Drama Club. We have referred earlier to the idea that a venue can be a 'critical node' within a wider network. This is certainly the case for the Birnam Institute, a venue which came up in several contexts as being supportive and welcoming, in a good location with good facilities. It clearly serves a much wider geographic area than its proximity to Perth might suggest. And although the Institute may not see itself as a proactive hub, it provides groups with an important service, not just as a venue but through a range of courses and classes delivered by paid, professional artists.

Our next example, however, quite definitely sees itself as having a 'hub' role within its community:

Strathearn Artspace

Exhibition in Strathearn Artspace by the Association of Blairgowrie Craftworkers

Strathearn Artspace is a new community based arts and leisure venue in the heart of Crieff, in the town's former library. The library building has, for some centuries, played a significant role in the Crieff community. It was formerly a Masonic Lodge, Number 38. In 1737 the first Free Masons Lodge was built in Crieff by James Drummond, Duke of Perth who was its first Master.

The current building at the library site dates from 1816 with additions at later dates. From the early 20th Century much of the building was given over to be Crieff's municipal library which it remained until November 2009 when its functions were moved to the Community Campus on Pittenzie Road to the south of Crieff.

Crieff town centre is currently the subject of an exercise to plan and raise funds for its regeneration, as the town has seen a steep decline in recent years, with many empty or derelict public buildings and retail premises, and so the development of the Artspace is seen as an important contribution to High Street regeneration. Although Strathearn Artspace is properly constituted as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with a board of trustees, it is effectively the initiative of, and depends crucially on the continuing input of, just two men.

Although there are ambitious plans for improving the venues' facilities, for example by installing movable and retractable bleacher seating, the Artspace is already very well used for classes, workshops, exhibitions and performances, and there is a case to be made that its present somewhat 'rough and ready' and informal state is more conducive to a range of voluntary arts activities than would be a more pristine or 'professional' space.

> Even in the two years that it has been operating, it is clear that Strathearn Artspace is already functioning as a 'hub', not just for the immediate Crieff community, but for the wider region, for example through links with the Perthshire Visual Arts Forum, and by our illustration of an exhibition from a group from the opposite end of the region.. From our visit, is seemed to us to be a space which community groups felt comfortable with, and in which they had a sense of 'ownership'.

8.8. Pathways

We called this project 'Pathways' both because we were being asked to trace the routes by which voluntary arts groups connect with each other--and with the wider community--and get the support and advice that they need, and because Voluntary Arts Scotland, as a strategic aim, is keen to understand, and facilitate, the means by which individuals find out about opportunities to participate in the voluntary arts, and the routes by which they develop that participation.

It will be clear by now that we believe that *networks***, of all kinds and scales, are the crucial means by which these pathways can be traced.** To outline how we see the 'bigger picture' of networking:

- Voluntary Arts Scotland itself works through two main networks: national umbrella bodies, and individual groups registered for its newsletters.
- National Umbrella Bodies are broadly of two kinds, each one with their own network, either of formal members or of more loosely defined 'users': *generic associations* which undertake a range of activities, including the arts, eg the Scottish Women's Rural Institute, the University of the Third Age, Rotary; and those which *specialise in particular art forms*: Scottish Community Drama Association, Making Music, Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.
- Local Authorities such as Perth and Kinross Council have various networks related to individual departments: Cultural Services, Community Capacity, Community Learning
- Local/regional groupings each have their own networks: some of which include networkers from the above. examples include Perthshire Visual Arts Forum, East Perthshire Action of Churches Together, Cateran Trail.
- Venues and community newsletters have their own local networks of audiences, users and subscribers, some of which include networkers from the above.

For each of these networks' 'owners' there may be a different motivation for maintaining the network:

- The NHS: routes to health and wellbeing, both as preventive and as convalescent measures
- Social Care (both Local Authorities and the Third Sector): routes to reduced isolation among the vulnerable and at risk
- Prison service: finding routes to re-integrate offenders

- Voluntary Arts Scotland: enabling the strategic roles of representing, supporting and signposting the voluntary arts sector
- The National Umbrella bodies: adding value for their members, through supporting and advising, and generating resources
- Local hubs: to ensure venues and facilities are used to their full, to support the communities in which they're based.

We can trace all these networks, and we can interrogate how effective they may be, individually and collectively, and the temptation would then be to say that, in an imperfect world, and in a rough and ready way, this network of networks does somehow *work*. But, as we've noted, it would take a much more ambitious exercise than this to address the question of the overall *health* of the voluntary arts, and it also begs the question of those groups which are not networked, or only within their own closed circles and who, as we've said, *don't know what they don't know*. Above all, as it stands, these networks are not making the central role of the voluntary arts *visible*.

We have already addressed the issue of databases, directories and other means of disseminating information. Here we wish to propose that there is a missing element in the 'bigger picture', a form of *critical node* that, at least in Scotland, does not yet exist: **a regional, ground-up, member-managed means of connecting up all these different networks, and reaching out to those not yet engaged.** As our last comparative example in this section, therefore, we offer:

Wakefield Alliance for Voluntary Arts

Kate, Jameel and Dave, some of AVA's volunteer team with the AVA Directory

The Alliance for Voluntary Arts (AVA) http://wakefieldava.weebly.com is a network of voluntary arts groups from across the Wakefield district. This network includes choirs, drama groups, photography clubs, crafts groups, bands, writers groups, festivals, painting groups and more. Wakefield District has a population of over 300,000, or more than twice that of Perth and Kinross, and like Perth and Kinross it is a wide area geographically, with many distinctive communities. AVA was only launched at the start of 2015, but emerged from previous groups that had been active in the area for some 18 years. It has an updated and overhauled Directory of some 120 groups, most of them formally constituted. They're currently working on a

---

print version of the Directory. They currently have funding for a part-time Coordinator, whose role is crucial in gathering and maintaining members' data and in facilitating linkages.

Although the directory and website can be promotional tools for members, many groups don't need such tools, but they do like the idea of being part of something bigger. AVA gives the wider network of groups a voice, and a means of lobbying collectively, eg when hire rates for Council venues were substantially increased. It's somewhere groups can go with a problem; historically, the more generic voluntary bodies don't appeal to arts groups. It's also a way of making links for groups and individual artists, for example with the local Mental Health Trust. In such cases AVA can act as a stepping stone, as well as helping to measure and understand the wider social impacts of such partnerships.

AVA's predecessor body was an early member of Voluntary Arts, and AVA is involved in Voluntary Arts Week, which is typical of the kinds of showcase events which the AVA makes possible.

There is nothing equivalent to AVA in the five district neighbouring Wakefield, and AVA are not aware of any exact equivalent elsewhere in England. While it has emerged from a specific set of historical circumstances, AVA may nonetheless offer a model that's transferrable to comparable regions.

9. Conclusions

As the Project Brief noted, *as part of the Voluntary Arts Strategic Plan 2014-17, Voluntary Arts Scotland is campaigning for renewed national policies to sustain and develop local cultural infrastructure*. We would argue, on the basis of our research, that such campaigning may benefit from taking on board some of the issues we've highlighted above, and in this final section we describe two conceptual approaches that we believe may be useful in shaping 'renewed national policies'.

9.1. Conversive Communities

Alasdair Foster, who was the Director of the Scotland-wide *Fotofeis* photography festivals in the 1990s, and is now based in Sydney, Australia, has developed a model that he terms *conversive communities*, by which he means:

> *The word 'conversive' has two subtly different usages derived from slightly different etymologies. The first sense, derived from 'conversation', means ready to converse. Its second sense, deriving from 'conversion', means capable of change. It is also closely related to 'conversant' suggesting a knowledgeable familiarity born of being inside or among. A 'conversive community' is one that is communicative, adaptive and interconnected. [correspondence with Kirkhill Associates]*

That is exactly what we observed in Aberfeldy, Crieff and Blairgowrie: groups with different purposes and areas of interest that were freely communicating with each other, and that were building stronger interconnections with the aim of benefitting their wider community.

In past work in the Highlands and Islands, the Scottish Borders, and indeed in rural Wales, we've come across many communities operating in this way, and have grappled with finding ways of describing this model. The advantage, we believe, of the concept of *conversive communities* is that it is purely descriptive: it is not tied to a particular agenda, campaign or ideology, though it can of course easily lead to such initiatives as Transition, Fairtrade, Slow, or Powerdown communities.

If we then apply this concept of *conversive communities* to the set of themes we've explored in this report, there is a close fit. In a conversive community, certain key **individuals** will act as *animateurs* or, to use a term offered us by a contributor, *mediators*, but not, on the whole, as 'leaders' in a conventional sense. Certain **venues** will act, and be seen as, *hubs* which facilitate cooperation through being welcoming and proactive and engendering a sense of 'ownership' in their community. **Networks** are paramount, but they are largely informal, (eg weekly coffee mornings) except when a focus is required on a particular project or campaign, such as reopening a cinema. In this **holistic** view, even those groups which are wholly self-sufficient and informal still contribute to the conversive community, because they enable people to interact positively in a supportive environment. Above all these conversive communities rely hugely on mutual **trust** and respect, a trust which is often strengthened by *not* operating through overly formal or structured procedures.

Except when a particular challenge arises, whether it be the threatened loss of a venue, the opportunity to bid for a national award, or the chance to raise funds for a collaborative project, these conversive communities operate largely under the radar. That means that, without greater **visibility** there's a risk of public bodies not **valuing** the contribution which these groups make to social cohesion, health and wellbeing, and even local economic growth.

Almost by definition a *conversive community* will develop organically, and function informally, and it is likely that any attempt to formalise, structure, or even overly define, its activities may cause it to collapse in on itself.

9.2. Creative Participation

Creative participation is a more fundamental re-imagining of what is thought of as *the voluntary arts*, by moving away from thinking in terms of groups, memberships, and structures and towards thinking instead of **opportunities for, and access to, *creative participation.*** This leads to a conceptual continuum that runs from the informed and engaged audience member to the fully professional artist. It may also lead to a different way of thinking about matters of *quality* and *excellence*, two terms which recur throughout the strategies of public funders. If quality resides, not *objectively,* in the artwork itself, but *subjectively*, in the experience of the participant/viewer/audience

member, then understanding and evaluating that process of engagement becomes paramount.

In discussions, we used an analogy with sport: in football, there's an absolute continuity between a bunch of dads having a Saturday morning kick-about, and the SFA Cup final. Indeed, goal-scoring dads may *play act* as if they were indeed taking part in that final: high-fiving team members, victory laps of the pitch, and so on. It's time to think of the cultural ecology in this inclusive way.

In a provocative essay published in Cultural Trends in 2013, David Stevenson of Queen Margaret University argued that:

> *If the "problem" was understood as a need to provide equality of access to culture rather than state funded culture, then those who implement policy would be free to focus less on maximising access to those organisations and activities which, for other valid reasons, the Government funds, but that the majority of the public are not interested in attending. They would be able to think creatively, instead, about how to facilitate the deepening of an already present cultural democracy.* http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2013.783172

and a year earlier, in his book on West Bromwich Operatic Society, *Where We Dream,* François Matarasso made the case that:

> *A further difficulty with assessing the extent of amateur arts practice is that it does not have neat boundaries. Contrary to what some people would wish, [...] the arts are not divided into two separate and antagonist worlds: the amateurs and the professionals. It is better understood as a complex ecosystem in which people may play different roles at different times or in different aspects of their career.*

And he included this quote:

> *Citizens are increasingly spending significant amounts of their leisure time engaged in serious creative pursuits. These pro-ams are people who have acquired high level skills at particular crafts, hobbies, sports or art forms; they are not professionals but are often good enough to present their work publicly or to contribute seriously to a community of like-minded artists or creators.*
> *Stephen J. Tepper, 2008* http://regularmarvels.com/2012/04/30/where-we-dream-book

It is not just the professional/amateur divide that is damaging: even within the 'voluntary arts' as a whole, divisions exist that militate against a properly inclusive view. Many of the groups we spoke with were concerned about how to engage young people in cultural activities (in general, that is, and not necessarily in their specific group). Yet no account, or survey, of the voluntary arts that we have seen includes the thousands of young people who come together to form bands, many of whose members almost certainly display a dedication and commitment to match that of any drama club or choir member. There may even be a case to be made for seeing certain kinds of online gaming as creative participation. After all, now that geekiness is cool, a remarkable number of today's prominent creatives are 'coming out' as having been avid role players in their youth, devoting all their spare time to such pursuits as 'Dungeons and Dragons'.

Two caveats: first, we are not arguing for a reversal of existing hierarchies, which can be perceived (eg by David Stevenson) as privileging one area of arts activity over another, but for a removal of those hierarchies and their replacement by an *integrated* approach to our cultural ecology. Nor are we arguing for abandoning all attempts at aesthetic judgement, only for a recognition that such judgements are contingent and subjective, shaped by context and personal taste and experience.

Our Cultural Commons*, and the role of the Voluntary Arts Network in promoting discussions under this theme, is an open, and non-partisan, opportunity to have a serious and inclusive debate about these questions, with the hope that such debate will lead, in time, to a new paradigm for our 'cultural ecology'.*

10. Consultees and bibliography

10.1.   Pathways Steering Group

Voluntary Arts Scotland
Jemma Neville (Director)
Catherine Robins (Chair)
John Cairns (Advisory Group Member)

Perth and Kinross Council
Helen Smout (Service Manager, Culture, Cultural and Community Services)
Kirstie Bailey (Cultural Coordinator)

Creative Scotland
Caroline Docherty (Portfolio Partnership Manager)

10.2.   Consultative Meetings: groups represented

Birnam Institute

Perthshire Visual Arts Forum
Birks Cinema
Aberfeldy Arts
Heartland Film Society
Perth and Kinross Council
Voluntary Arts Scotland

Perth Concert Hall

Perthshire Visual Arts Forum
Ad-Lib Theatre Arts
Check In Works/Giraffe
Voluntary Arts Scotland

Strathearn Artspace, Crieff

Festivals Crieff
Strathearn Music Society
Crieff Arts Festival
Crieff Community Band
Grace Notes Scotland

Grace Notes (Publishing)
Strathearn Artspace
Voluntary Arts Scotland

Library, Blairgowrie

Blairgowrie Players
Blairinbloom
Association of Blairgowrie Craft Workers
Embroiderers Guild, Dundee
Cally Crafts
Strathmore and Glens
Blairgowrie Community Market
Scottish Women's Institute
Strathmore Centre for Youth Development
Lyric Choir
START Festival
Alyth Youth Partnership
Perth and Kinross Council

10.3. Interviews (by phone or in person)

Perth and Kinross Council
Kirsty Duncan, Arts Manager
Kirstie Bailey, Cultural Coordinator
Suzie Burt, Team Leader, Customer and Community Engagement Team

Creative Scotland
Caroline Docherty, Portfolio Partnerships Manager

Voluntary Arts
Robin Simpson, CEO

Gwilym Gibbons, CEO, Horsecross
Mark Da Vanzo, Deputy Chief Executive, Pitlochry Festival Theatre
Lidia Dye, Volunteer Development Manager, Voluntary Action Perthshire
Stuart Flatley, Manager, Birnam Institute
Muriel Dunbar, member of Board of Birks Cinema and Coordinator of Aberfeldy Arts project
Richard Bowden, Chair, Heartland Film Society

David Campbell, Project Leader, Strathearn Artspace

Kevin Murphy, Chief Officer, Voluntary Arts Ireland

Alicia Chapple, Manager – Scotland, Making Music

Carole Williams, National Drama Advisor, Scottish Community Drama Association

David Francis, Executive Officer, Traditional Music Forum, and TRACS

Brian Gall, Chair, Perth University of the Third Age

Kay Hood, Committee Member, Perthshire Visual Arts Forum

Stephen Plunkett, Partnership and Development Manager, ALISS Programme

Maria Bottomley, Coordinator, AVA Wakefield

Anne Bonnar, Bonnar Keenlyside and Chair, Culture Counts

Alan Arundel, Head of Offender Outcomes, HMP Perth

Clare Cooper, Co-Producer, Cateran's Common Wealth

10.4.   Bibliography

Cultural Commission: Study of the Input of the Voluntary Sector to Culture in Scotland, Bonnar Keenlyside, 2004

Our Creative Talent: the voluntary and amateur arts in England DCMS 2007

Cultural Strategy, Perth and Kinross 2011-16 Perth and Kinross Council

Strategic Plan 2014-17, Voluntary Arts

The Ecology of Culture, John Holden for the Arts and Humanities Research Council, 2015

Fun Palaces Evaluation Report, 2014

Our Cultural Commons, http://ourculturalcommons.org

David Stevenson (2013) *What's the problem again? The problematisation of cultural participation in Scottish cultural policy*, Cultural Trends, 22:2, 77-85, DOI: 10.1080/09548963.2013.783172

François Matarasso: *Where We Dream*, Multistory, 2012

Acknowledgements

Appendices

Appendix 1

How big is the 'Voluntary Arts Sector'?

This section amplifies the points discussed in the report section 2 ***Context for the Project***

The brief for the *Pathways* project included the requirement to:

> *provide an independent overview of where voluntary arts groups are located within the Perth and Kinross area and how these voluntary arts groups are connected to local cultural infrastructure within the local authority area*

which begs the immediate questions: *what is a 'voluntary arts group'* and *what are 'the voluntary arts'?*

The website of the UK-wide Voluntary Arts network, of which Voluntary Arts Scotland is a part, states that:

> *The voluntary arts are those arts and crafts that people undertake for self-improvement, social networking and leisure, but not primarily for payment*.

On the face of it, this is helpfully clear-cut, but in reality it is both limiting and too wide. Limiting, because it does not include those many individuals who give their voluntary time to serve on the Boards and Committees of professional, and often publicly funded, arts organisations, such as theatres, arts centres, festivals and performing arts companies--and Voluntary Arts also acts to support those people. Too wide, because this definition would fit individuals who paint, embroider, write, or play an instrument entirely in isolation and for their own satisfaction, and do not need the resources or support of being part of a group.

The 2004 *Study of the Input of the Voluntary Sector to Culture in Scotland* undertaken by Bonnar Keenlyside as part of the consultation for the Scottish Government's *Cultural Commission* was set the task of auditing:

> *the contribution of the voluntary/charity sector to arts and culture provision across Scotland*

and in doing so included those involved with heritage organisations and museums as well as the arts, but did not focus on *those professional organisations managed by a voluntary board*.

A similar, but much larger, exercise carried out in 2007/8 for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Arts Council of England, *Our Creative Talent* adopted a definition which clearly informed that used now by Voluntary Arts, but with a significant addition, here highlighted:

> *Voluntary and amateur arts groups **that are governed or organised by those also participating in the activities**, which members attend for reasons such as self-improvement, social networking or leisure, but primarily not for payment.*

Creative Scotland, which is a partner in the *Pathways* project, now has just one large scheme for all forms of project and programme funding, known as Open Projects. The guidelines on eligibility for that scheme do not define, or even use, the term 'voluntary arts' at any point, but they are laid out in such a way that no group, not even one without a formal constitution, would be automatically barred from making an application.

If there is therefore a degree of inconsistency in how to define the 'voluntary arts', it is hardly surprising that there is therefore no reliable estimate of how many active voluntary arts groups there are, in Scotland or the UK. The Voluntary Arts website includes a frequently used statement that:

> *Over half the UK adult population is involved in the voluntary arts and crafts*

although it's not clear what the evidence base is for this statement.

More specifically, the 2007/8 DCMS study concluded that:

> *There are 49,140 groups across the country [England] with a total of 5.9 million members. An additional 3.5 million people volunteer as extras or helpers – a total of 9.4 million people taking part*

That is entirely consistent, proportionately, with the earlier, 2004 Cultural Commission report on the voluntary arts in Scotland, which identified some 4,500 groups, and warned that that was certainly an underestimate, and with subsequent pieces of research undertaken by Voluntary Arts Scotland, which have been undertaken on the basis of assuming a total for Scotland of somewhere between 5,000 and 7,000 voluntary arts groups.

At 146,652, the population of Perth and Kinross is roughly 2.7% of the Scottish population as whole. On that basis, and using the above figures, one might expect to find at most about 160 voluntary arts groups in the region. In fact, our extensive research has so far identified around 200 active groups in the region, and we are certain that that is far from being a comprehensive list. The implication, therefore, is that the 'voluntary arts sector' nationally is much larger than any previous estimates have suggested.

Moreover, the challenge of defining the scale of the voluntary arts sector is heightened by the often very low response rates for national surveys, whether Scotland- or UK-wide. The 2004 Cultural Commission report did best, with a 15% response rate, or 676

individual responses out of a database of 4,500, and that was probably due to its being part of the much wider, and high profile, Commission process.

Much more typical is the response rate for the England-only 2007/8 DCMS study, which attracted only 1600 responses from a catchment of almost 50,000 groups. That percentage return of just 3.2% is mirrored consistently by several Voluntary Arts Scotland surveys over the last decade. Therefore, on a database of 200 groups, our own response rate of 14% , though small in sheer numerical terms, nonetheless matches the heights of the 2004 Cultural Commission.

While it is always dangerous to speculate about non-respondents, it is perhaps reasonable to assume that, with such low response rates, those groups which do respond are likely to be those which are more formally constituted, more organised, and with a greater capacity to complete survey forms. The corollary of this is that it is likely that the *informal*, unconstituted proportion of the voluntary arts sector will be very much larger than the 8% figure that has sometimes been quoted, and, by their very informality, these groups are of course the hardest to contact and quantify.

Appendix 2

Consistency of findings

This section illustrates a point made in the report section 2 ***Context for the Project***, regarding the consistency of findings, over a decade, about the voluntary arts sector and its needs.

From: Cultural Commission - *Study of the Input of the Voluntary Sector to Culture in Scotland* (undertaken by Bonnar Keenlyside, 2004) (our emphases in bold)

2.29. The subject of recognition was further explored in the individual consultation and development sessions. The main issue identified was that **the contribution of the sector was not valued or appreciated especially by public bodies.** There was felt to be both a need for a strategic recognition of the importance of the sector as well as tangible evidence that the contribution of the sector was valued equally to that of the professional cultural sector.

2.30. The research process identified the **fragmentation within the sector** and the lack of consistency. While some sector bodies had gathered information about their particular sector this was not consistent and had not been consistently shared; **some areas of the cultural sector (in particular voluntary groups) do not have a sector representative body**; while some local authorities have developed databases and resources and invested in the development of the cultural voluntary sector, this is not the case for each council.

2.31. The result of this fragmentation and variance is that there is no single voice for the cultural voluntary sector in Scotland. This **minimises the opportunities for the sector to achieve recognition of its contribution** and to make a strategic impact.

2.32. The participants at the development sessions identified the importance of **gaining understanding and strategic support** at the highest levels of government in order to achieve positive change.

2.42. The main problem identified in the consultation was the imbalance between income and expenditure with the **costs associated with venues, administration and insurances continuing to rise year on year** while the groups feel they are unable to generate an increased level of income from their activity. The limit to income relates to the nature of the activity being provided and the value placed upon it by potential participants and audience members. Also the charitable motivation of many groups creates an ethos where higher charges would be inappropriate.

From: *Our Creative Talent – the Voluntary and Amateur Arts in England*, prepared for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in 2007 (emphases in bold in original)

- The **relationship between the amateur and professional sectors** is of vital importance and the two sectors are mutually supportive. Groups spend £125m employing professional artists, either on a long term or ad hoc basis. Professional artists benefit not only in terms of employment but also developing their creative practice, experiencing new ways of working and deepening their understanding of audience development.

- **The amateur/professional relationship is changing**, particularly with the development of new technology. It has not been possible to explore this in detail in this study, and we recommend further research should be done into this rewarding area.

- Access to **good quality venues**, at a reasonable cost that is suitable for the artform, is a key issue. Groups spend £67m on venue hire for performances and £26m on venues for rehearsals/meetings. There is widespread concern about the rising cost of venue hire.

- **Other issues** affecting the sector are the complexity of grant application processes, the need to raise profile and attract new members and advice and guidance on compliance with legislation.

- The **sector has tremendous potential**, but there are constraints on the extent to which any one group can expand. There are significant challenges involved in moving to a larger venue and taking on additional management burdens, and individual members can have less opportunity to contribute in larger groups. This might lead to people establishing new groups or sign-posting new members to other groups.

- There is a view that in some areas the professional sector has been unduly prioritised by policy makers, perhaps in part because of the belief that the voluntary sector is low quality. However, policy makers need to engage more effectively with the voluntary and amateur sector if they are not to **miss a major opportunity** to increase opportunities for participation in the arts

Appendix 3

Questionnaire

Pathways: getting creative in the voluntary arts

Part 1: Some basic facts about you and your group or organisation

Thank you for taking the time for this. We want to build a picture of the voluntary arts groups in Perth and Kinross, and how they make links across the area. To find out more go to www.pathwaysvas.com

With support from Creative Scotland and Perth and Kinross Council, Voluntary Arts Scotland (http://www.voluntaryarts.org) has contracted Kirkhill Associates to undertake a pilot research project in the Perth and Kinross area between March and June 2015. We will be asking the people that run voluntary arts groups, cultural venues, community newsletters, art form umbrella bodies and local amenities about how the voluntary, or amateur, arts link in with the broader cultural 'ecology' and what more can be done to help support voluntary arts groups…and this questionnaire is a key part of that project.

We believe it should be easier for people to locate opportunities to 'get creative' in their local area - and for arts groups to share details of their activities, venues and tutors. Such information could eventually take the form of a searchable directory of voluntary arts groups. Please do take the few minutes needed to complete the 19 questions that follow. Ideally, if you are completing this on paper, please hand it straight back to the venue where you've picked it up.

The first part is looking for factual information about you and your organisation. If you are concerned about providing personal information, please read the note below*. Even if you are unable to provide contact details, please do complete the rest of this part of the questionnaire as it's important that we get as full a picture as possible of all the groups active in Perth and Kinross.

If you would like to receive this survey in larger text, audio format, or another language please contact us on 0131 561 7333 or at info@vascotland.org.uk

1. Who is the lead person in your group/organisation?

*2. Please provide contact details for your organisation/group

Organisation Name:	
Address 1:	
Address 2:	
City/Town:	
Post Code:	
Facebook, Twitter:	
Email Address:	
Phone Number:	

*3. What kind of organisation are you? Choose only one of the following, even if more might apply:

◯ mutual support group   ◯ club, group or society with a constitution

◯ charity   ◯ community organisation (interests wider than the arts)

Other (please specify)

Pathways: getting creative in the voluntary arts

*4. What art form is your group interested in? Select any that apply.

☐ dance	☐ festivals	☐ language
☐ drama	☐ craft	☐ film
☐ circus	☐ gaming	☐ photography
☐ classical music	☐ visual arts	☐ cooking
☐ traditional music	☐ digital art	☐ gardening
☐ popular music	☐ heritage	
☐ choirs	☐ literature	

Other (please specify)

[   ]

*5. Some more facts please...:

How many members do you have?

Where are you based (just name the village/town)?

Where do you pursue your activities (venue)?

*6. Name the organisations or associations you are affiliated to, if any?

National Association (eg Scottish Community Drama Association)

Regional agency (eg Voluntary Action Perth, Perthshire Visual Arts Forum)

Other

None

*7. Which other groups or organisations are you in touch with?

Other voluntary arts groups

Other community groups

Other

None

8. Is your group linked up to Voluntary Arts Scotland - e.g. signed up for the newsletter?

○ yes   ○ no   ○ hadn't heard of them

9. Are you looking for more members?

○ yes   ○ no   ○ n/a

* We are asking for the contact details of the lead person in your group/organisation. We understand that for many groups those contact details will include a home address, or a personal phone number or email address. All such information will be held by Voluntary Arts Scotland and Perth and Kinross Council, under their respective Data Protection policies, and Kirkhill Associates will destroy any such data that it holds at the conclusion of the project, currently scheduled for the end of June. One aim of the project is to include these contact details in a searchable database likely to be published on-line through the newly launched Perthshire Creates website, and thereafter possibly in a national database to be set up by Voluntary Arts Scotland. We will only use this information for this purpose.

Pathways: getting creative in the voluntary arts

Part 2: About your experience of making connections in the arts world

This second part is seeking your views on the things that matter for your group: the venues you use; the sources of funding you go to; the providers of services, advice, or support that you make use of, whether national associations or local businesses. We want to understand how things link up, and where those links may be under stress or threat in the current and foreseeable environment.

10. How easy is it to find a suitable venue for your activity?

Simply enter a score between 1 & 5 (where 5 is easiest)

Feel free to add a comment

11. What are the obstacles or challenges to arranging a venue? Tick as many or as few as you like

☐ location difficult to get to   ☐ lack of facilities available

☐ inadequate disability access   ☐ cost

☐ booking terms & conditions

Other (please specify)

12. Which professional organisations matter to your activities? Tick as many or as few as you like

☐ National (eg Creative Scotland, Enterprise Music Scotland)

☐ Regional (Council departments, teams and venues)

☐ Independent/funded arts organisations (eg arts centre; festival)

☐ Independent/private or commercial arts organisations (eg gallery/music promoter)

☐ Non-arts (eg local media)

☐ Based outside Perth and Kinross

Other (please specify)

13. What do you look to them for? Tick as many as you like

☐ practical support   ☐ training   ☐ advocacy

☐ kindred spirit   ☐ funding

☐ news & information   ☐ expertise

Other (please specify)

Pathways: getting creative in the voluntary arts

14. How do you find out about other organisations?

☐ word of mouth   ☐ newsletter   ☐ internet

☐ local paper   ☐ social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube...)   ☐ mailshots

Other (please specify)

15. How much do these sorts of networks and links matter to you?

	not at all	not much	a little	a lot	N/A
Supporters/members/audiences, etc	○	○	○	○	○
Regional or national umbrella body (eg Making Music, SCDA, Perthshire Visual Arts Forum)	○	○	○	○	○
Similar groups to yours, in area or elsewhere	○	○	○	○	○

16. If you need training, advice, support...:

how do you get it?

who from?

where do you get it?

17. How do you raise funds? Enter your best guess at the proportion raised by each method. Enter 0% where the method doesn't apply.

Subscriptions %

Ticket fees %

Public collections %

Grant funding %

Donations/sponsorship %

Other (please specify)… %

18. What are the obstacles to getting the funds you need?

19. Funding aside, what are the main issues for you now and in the foreseeable future?

*20. I am happy that Voluntary Arts Scotland hold the personal information I have provided for the purposes of the Pathway project

○ yes   ○ no

Thank you for completing our questionnaire. Why not sign up for Voluntary Arts Scotland's newsletter. You can find out more at http://info.voluntaryarts.org/enews/#.VRmpw1y5fzl
Please return paper copies to the venue you got it from.

Appendix 4

Selected Survey Results

A full set of raw data is available to the commissioning organisations. Questions selected here are made up primarily of quantifiable responses

Q3 What kind of organisation are you? Choose only one of the following, even if more might apply:

Answered: 27   Skipped: 0
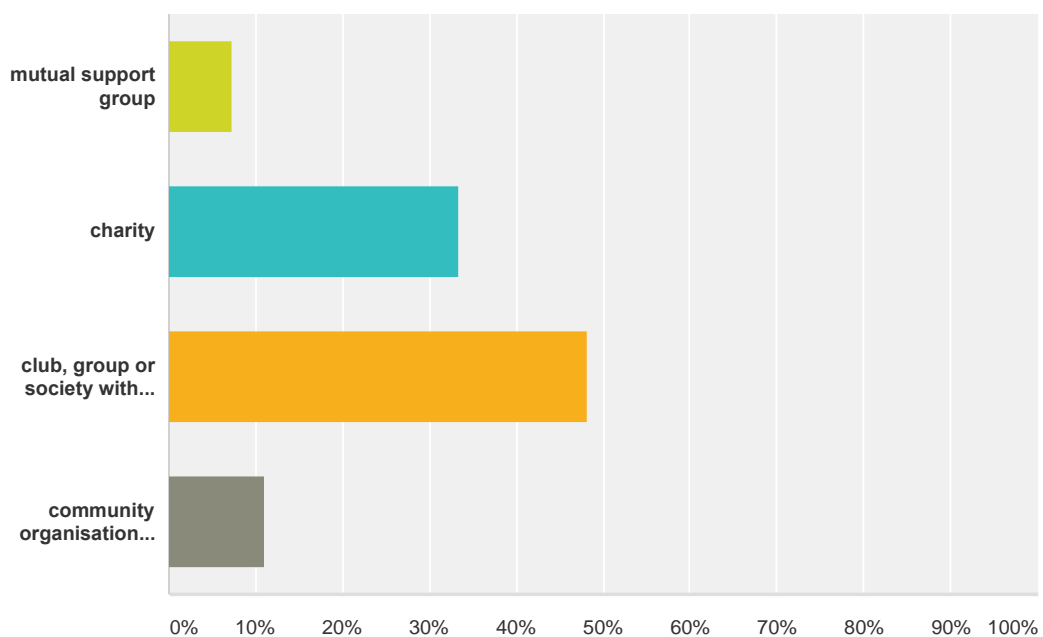
Q5 How many members do you have?

Lowest membership reported	2
Highest membership reported	350
Average across 27 respondents	82
Total membership of respondents	1966

Q4 What art form is your group interested in? Select any that apply.

Answered: 27   Skipped: 0
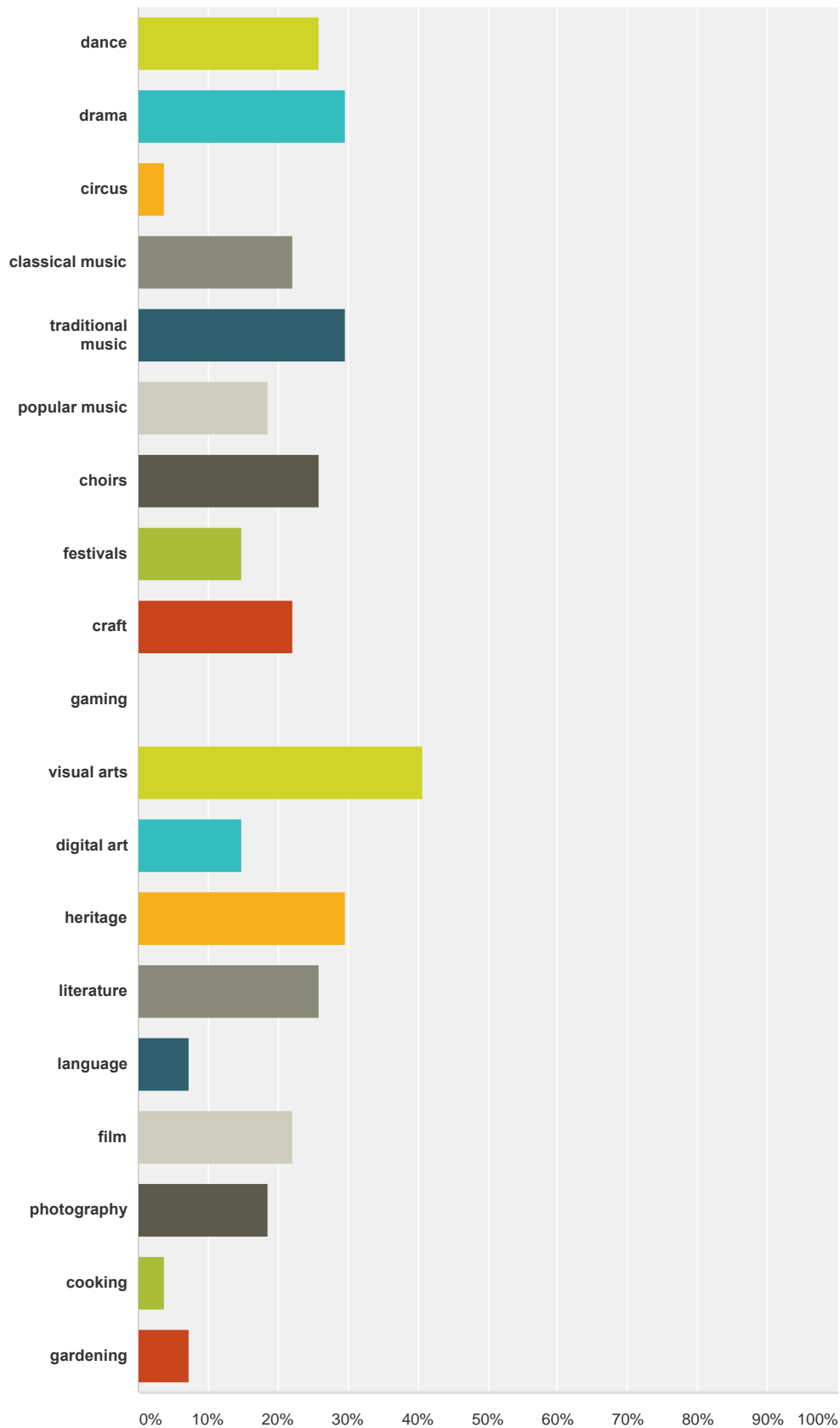
Q6 Name the organisations or associations you are affiliated to, if any?

Answered: 27   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
National Association (eg Scottish Community Drama Association)	**51.85%**	14
Regional agency (eg Voluntary Action Perth, Perthshire Visual Arts Forum)	**18.52%**	5
Other	**14.81%**	4
None	**40.74%**	11

Q7 Which other groups or organisations are you in touch with?

Answered: 27   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Other voluntary arts groups	**62.96%**	17
Other community groups	**40.74%**	11
Other	**22.22%**	6
None	**18.52%**	5

Q8 Is your group linked up to Voluntary Arts Scotland - e.g. signed up for the newsletter?

Answered: 27   Skipped: 0
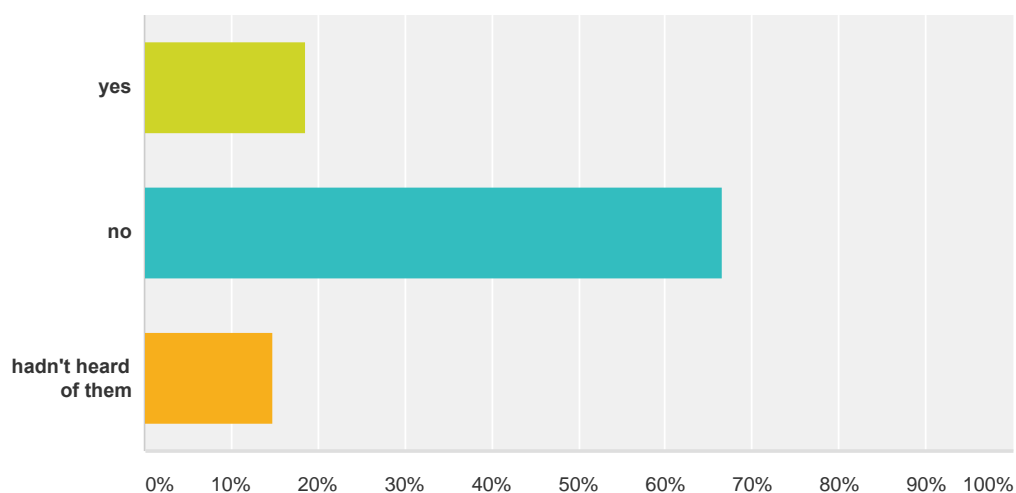
Q9 Are you looking for more members?

Answered: 26   Skipped: 1
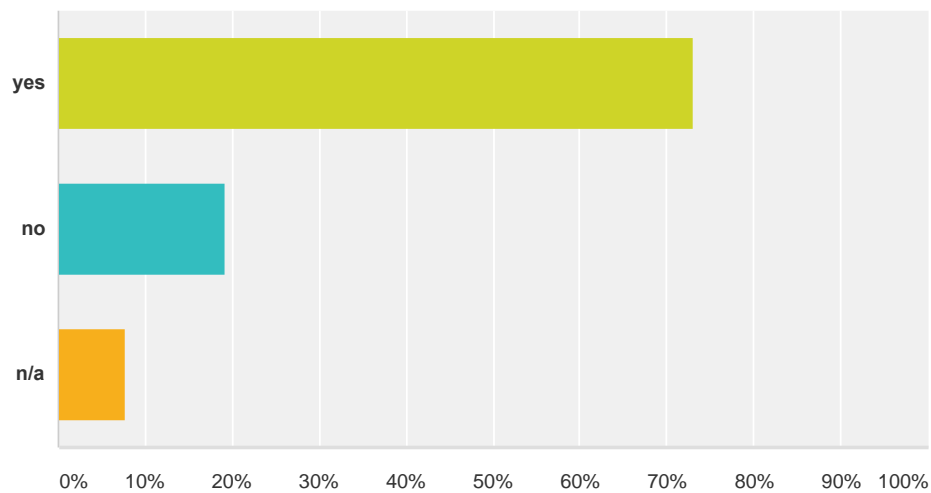
Q11 What are the obstacles or challenges to arranging a venue? Tick as many or as few as you like

Answered: 15   Skipped: 12
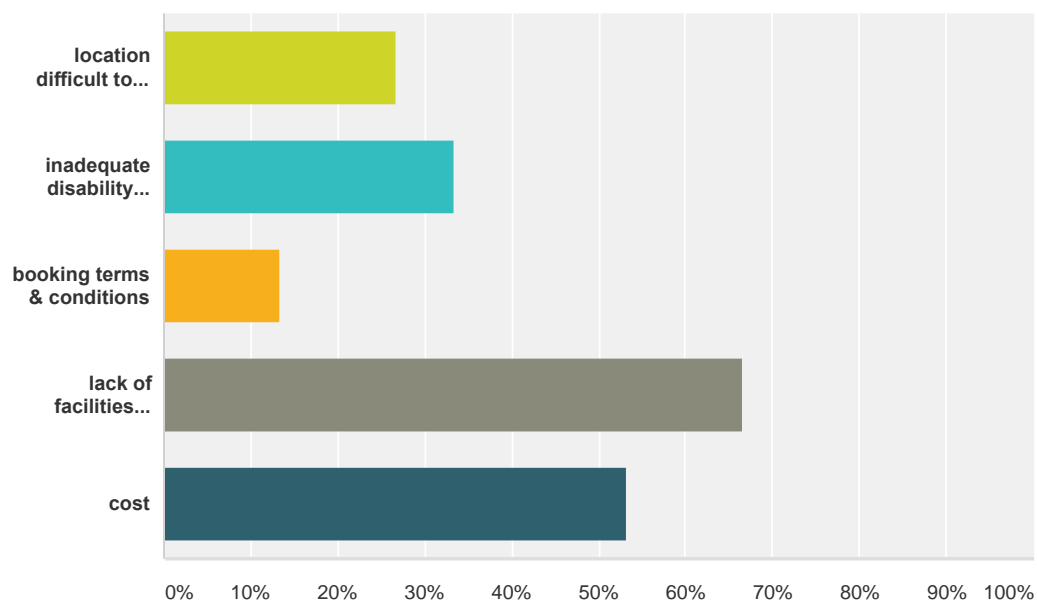
Q12 Which professional organisations matter to your activities? Tick as many or as few as you like

Answered: 20   Skipped: 7

Category	Percentage
National (eg Creative...	~60%
Regional (Council...	~55%
Independent/funded arts...	~50%
Independent/private or...	~50%
Non-arts (eg local media)	~65%
Based outside Perth and...	~40%
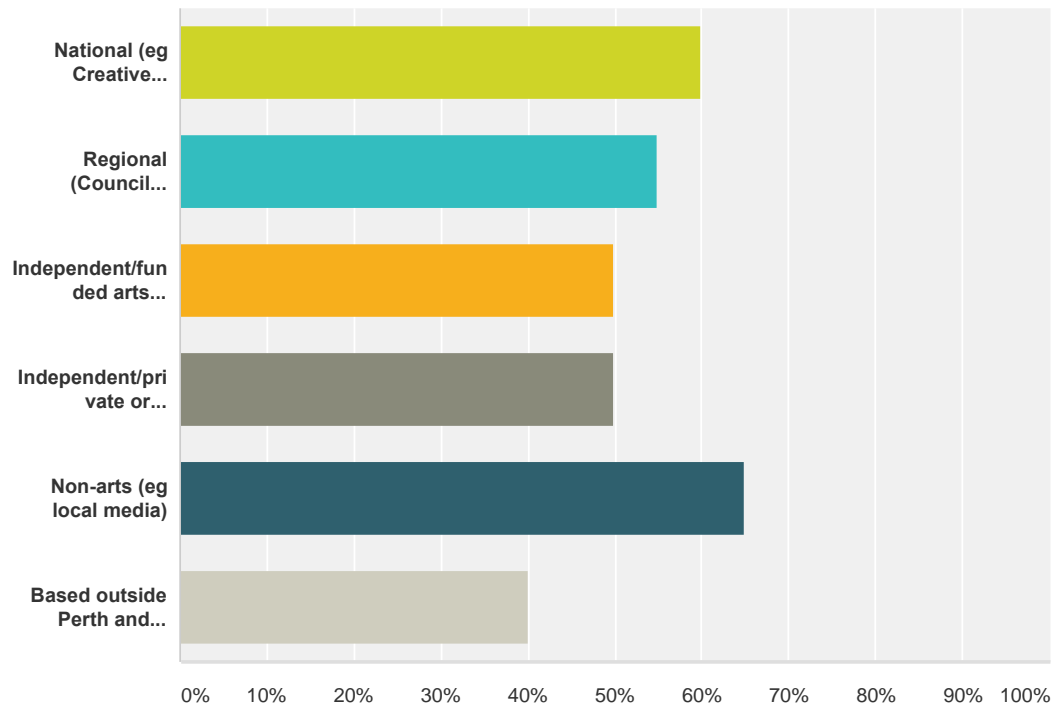
Q13 What do you look to them for? Tick as many as you like

Answered: 18   Skipped: 9

Category	Percentage
practical support	~66%
kindred spirit	~33%
news & information	~95%
training	~28%
funding	~61%
expertise	~61%
advocacy	~28%
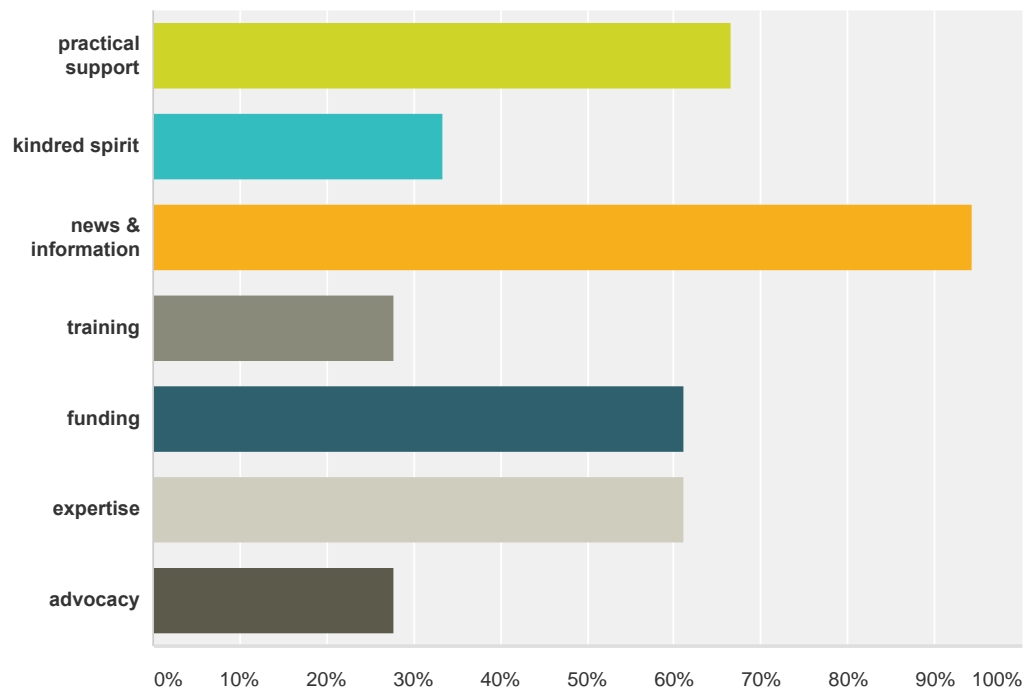
Q14 How do you find out about other organisations?

Answered: 21   Skipped: 6
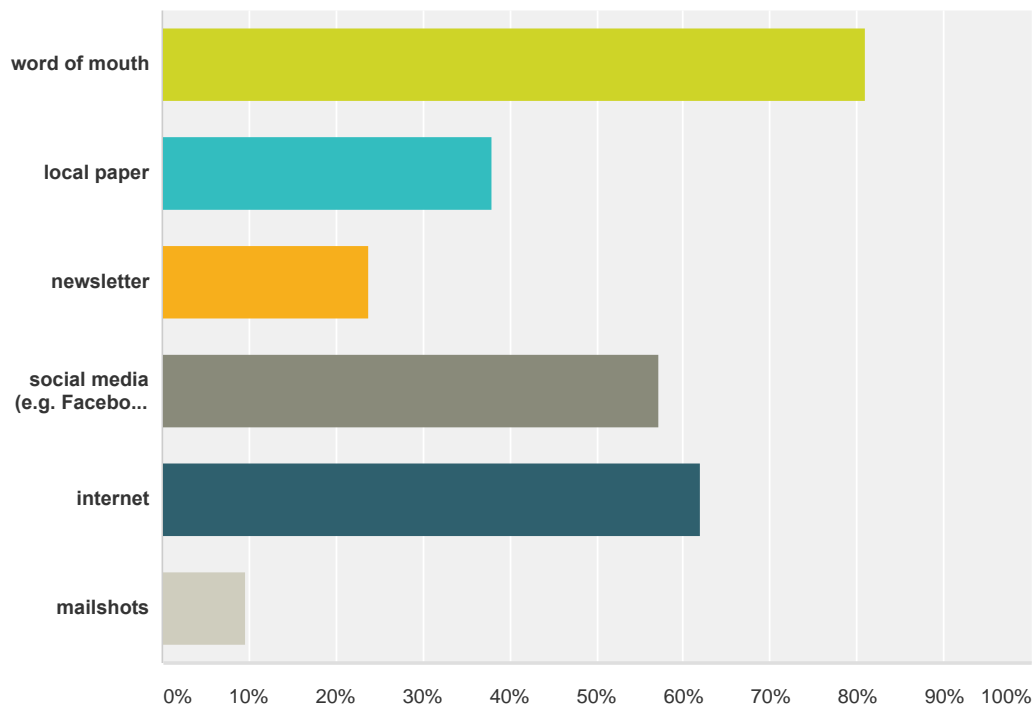
Q15 How much do these sorts of networks and links matter to you?

Answered: 21   Skipped: 6
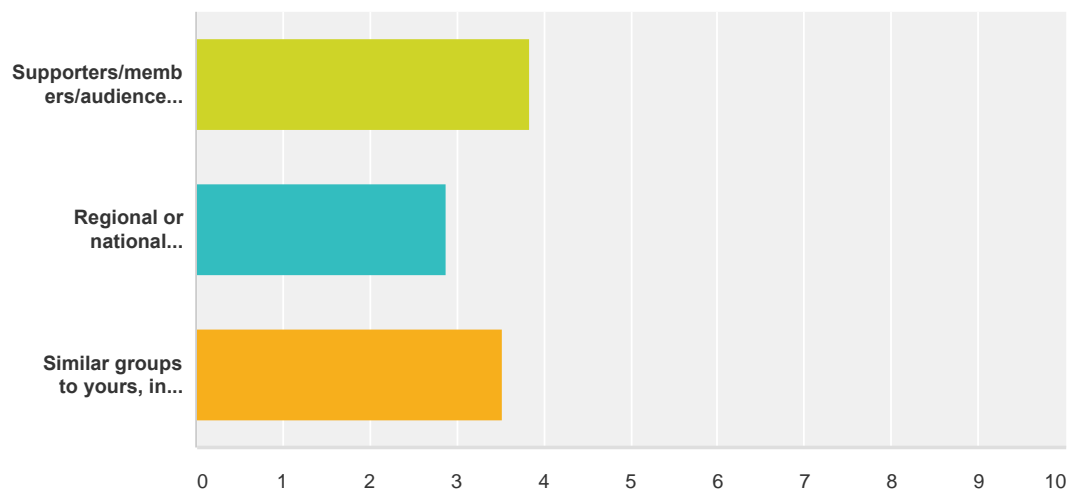
Q17 How do you raise funds? Enter your best guess at the proportion raised by each method. Enter 0% where the method doesn't apply.

Answered: 21   Skipped: 6
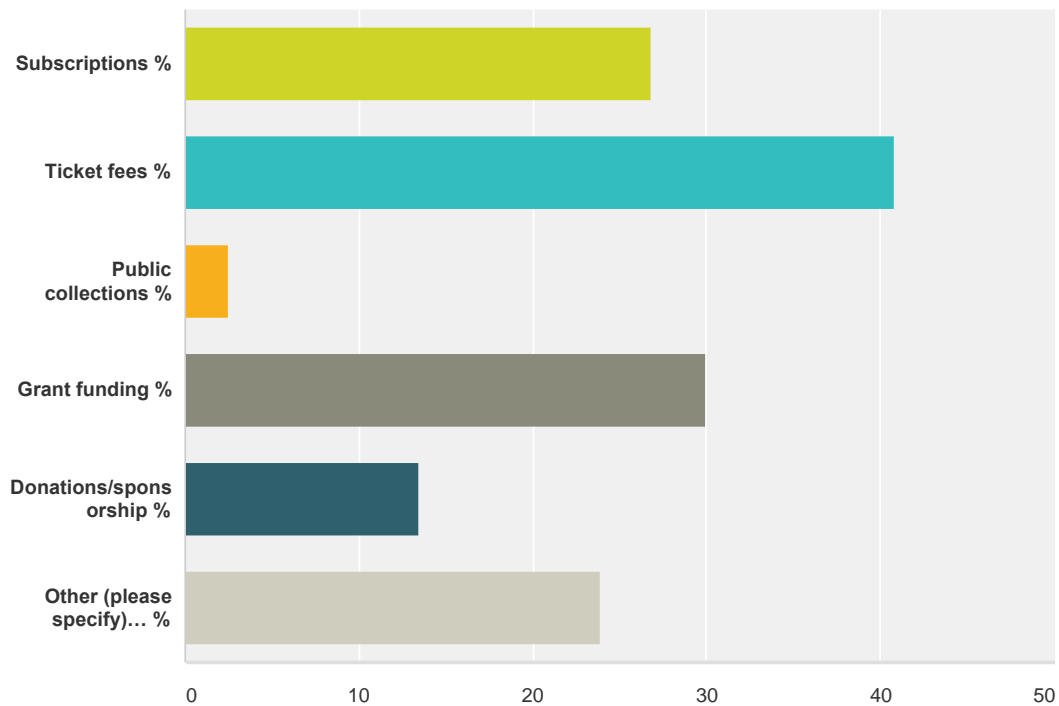
Appendix 5

List of venues

List compiled from data provided by Perth & Kinross Council AK Bell Library and PKAVS; supplemented by internet and other enquiries

Region	Town	Name	Facility Type
NW	Aberfeldy	Aberfeldy Community Library	Library
NW	Aberfeldy	Aberfeldy Recreation Centre	Health/Fitness/Sport/Activity Centres
NW	Aberfeldy	Aberfeldy Town Hall	Hall
NW	Aberfeldy	The Birks Cinema	Cinema
NW	Aberfeldy	Breadalbane Community Campus	Community Campus
NW	Aberfeldy	Church of Scotland	Place of Worship Christian
NW	Aberfeldy	Dunolly Adventure outdoors	
NW	Aberfeldy	Highland Adventure Safaris	Visitor Centres
NW	Aberfeldy	Kingdom Hall	Church
NW	Aberfeldy	Locus Centre	Centre
NW	Aberfeldy	Locus Centre	Business/Conference Centre
~~NW~~	~~Aberfeldy~~	~~The Watermill~~	Visitor Centre
NW	Tombreck, Aberfeldy	The Big Shed	Community & Music Facility
NW	Acharn	Comrades Hall	Hall
NW	Amulree	Amulree Hall	Hall
NW	Ballinluig	Mid Atholl Hall	Hall
NW	Bankfoot	Auchtergaven Church Hall	Hall
NW	Bankfoot	Kinglands Community Hall	Hall
NW	Birnam	Birnam Community Library	Library
NW	Birnam	Birnam Institute	Theatres/Arts/Community Centres Arts, community, conference centre, shop, café, art exhibition, Beatrix Potter Exhibition.
NW	Blair Atholl	Atholl Country Life Museum	Visitor Centres
NW	Blair Atholl	Blair Atholl Hall	Hall
NW	Blair Atholl	Blair Castle	Visitor Centres
NW	Blair Atholl	Church Hall (Main Road)	Hall

Region	Town	Name	Facility Type
NW	**Bridge of Gaur, by Rannoch Station**	**Georgetown Hall**	Hall
NW	**Butterstone, by Dunkeld**	**Butterstone Hall**	Hall
NW	**Camserney, by Aberfeldy**	**Camserney Village Hall**	Hall
NW	**Caputh, by Dunkeld**	**Caputh Village Hall**	Hall
NW	**Dalguise**	**Dalguise & District Public**	Hall
NW	**Dunkeld**	**Duchess Anne Hall**	Place of Worship
NW	**Dunkeld**	**Dunkeld & Birnam Golf Club**	Sports/Social Club Golf course. Private members club. Visitors welcome.
NW	**Dunkeld**	**Dunkeld Cathedral**	Place of Worship
NW	**Dunkeld**	**FreeMasons**	Hall
NW	**Dunkeld**	**Little Dunkeld Church**	Place of Worship
NW	**Dalguise, by Dunkeld**	**Dalguise Hall**	Hall
NW	**Fearnan, by Kenmore**	**Fearnan Village Hall**	Hall
NW	**Fearnan, by Kenmore**	**Loch Tay Pottery**	Pottery
NW	**Fearnan, by Kenmore**	**McLean Hall (Fearnan)**	Hall
NW	**Fortingall, by Aberfeldy**	**Molteno Memorial Hall**	Hall
NW	**Glen Fincastle**	**Glen Fincastle Hall**	Hall
NW	**Grandtully, by Aberfeldy**	**Grandtully Village Hall**	Hall
NW	**Kenmore**	**Breadalbane Reading Rooms**	Hall
NW	**Kenmore**	**Kenmore Sports Association**	Sports Association
NW	**Kenmore**	**Loch Tay Boating Centre**	Boating Centre
NW	**Kenmore**	**Perthshire Mountain Bikes**	Mountain Bikes
NW	**Killiecrankie**	**Killiecrankie Memorial Hall**	Hall
NW	**Killiekrankie**	**Killiekrankie Village Hall**	Hall
NW	**Kinloch Rannoch**	**Dunalastair Hotel**	Hotel
NW	**Kinloch Rannoch**	**Kinloch Rannoch Village Hall**	Hall

Region	Town	Name	Facility Type
NW	Kinloch Rannoch	Kinloch Rannoch Village Hall	Hall
NW	Kinloch Rannoch	Loch Rannoch Hotel	Hotel
NW	Luncarty	Luncarty F.C. Social Club	Social Club
NW	Luncarty	Memorial Hall	Hall
NW	Moulin, by Pitlochry	Moulin Village Hall	Hall
NW	Murthly	Murthly Village Hall	Hall
NW	Pitlochry	Atholl Baptist Centre	Baptist Centre
NW	Pitlochry	Atholl Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre
NW	Pitlochry	Atholl Palace Hotel	Hotel
NW	Pitlochry	Claymore Hotel	Hotel
NW	Pitlochry	Glenfincastle Hall	Hall
NW	Pitlochry	Green Park Ltd	Hotel
NW	Pitlochry	High Expectations	Courses/Centres
NW	Pitlochry	Moulin Hotel	Hotel
NW	Pitlochry	Moulin Village Hall	Hall
NW	Pitlochry	Pine Trees Hotel	Hotel
NW	Pitlochry	Pitlochry Church of Scotland	Hall
NW	Pitlochry	Pitlochry Community Library	Library
NW	Pitlochry	Pitlochry Festival Theatre	Theatre
NW	Pitlochry	Pitlochry Hydro Hotel	Hotel
NW	Pitlochry	Pitlochry Scout Hall	Hall
NW	Pitlochry	Pitlochry Town Hall	Hall
NW	Pitlochry	Pitlochry West Church Hall	Hall
NW	Pitlochry	Scotland's Hotel	Hotel
NW	Pitlochry	The Swallow Fishers Hotel	Hotel
NW	Stanley	St Columbas Episcopal Church Hall	Hall
NW	Stanley	Stanley & District Public Hall	Hall
NW	Stanley	Stanley & District Village Hall	Hall
NW	Stanley	The Tayside Hotel	Hotel

Region	Town	Name	Facility Type
NW	Tummel Bridge	Kynachan Village Hall	Hall
NW	Weem	Weem Hotel	Hotel
NE/E	Alyth	Alyth Community Library	Library
NE/E	Alyth	Alyth Town Hall	Hall
NE/E	Alyth	Ogilvie Rooms	
NE/E	Alyth	Hall (Airlie Place)	Hall
NE/E	Alyth	Hall (Airlie Street)	Hall
NE/E	Alyth	Hall (Mill Street)	Hall
NE/E	Ardler	Coronation Hall	Hall
NE/E	Ballintuim, by Bridge of Cally	Ballintuim Village Hall	Hall
NE/E	Blacklunans	Blackwater Hall	Hall
NE/E	Blairgowrie	Bendochy Church Hall	Hall
NE/E	Blairgowrie	Allan Street Hall	Hall
NE/E	Blairgowrie	Blairgowrie Community	Learning Centres Basic computing, Duke of Edinburgh, Art Activities, meeting place, photocopying for community
NE/E	Blairgowrie	Blairgowrie Community Campus	Community Campus
NE/E	Blairgowrie	Blairgowrie Community Library	Library
NE/E	Blairgowrie	Blairgowrie Town Hall	Hall
NE/E	Blairgowrie	Guide Hut (Blairgowrie)	Associations/Organisations Clubs - Rainbows, Brownies and Guides. Dancing, keep fit and fund raising events.
NE/E	Blairgowrie	Hall (David Street)	Hall
NE/E	Blairgowrie	Hall (Kirk Wynd)	Hall
NE/E	Blairgowrie	Hall (Lower Mill Street)	Hall
NE/E	Blairgowrie	Hall (Reform Street)	Hall
NE/E	Blairgowrie	Parish Church Hall	Hall
NE/E	Blairgowrie	Rattray/ Parish Church	Place of Worship
NE/E	Blairgowrie	YWCA (Blairgowrie)	Hall
NE/E	Braco	Braco Village Hall	Hall
NE/E	Bridge of Cally	Bridge of Cally Hall	Hall
NE/E	Bridge of Cally	Bridge of Cally Village Hall	Hall

Region	Town	Name	Facility Type
NE/E	Burrelton	Burrelton Village Hall	Hall
NE/E	Burrelton	Cargill-Burrelton Church Hall	Hall
NE/E	Clunie, by Blairgowrie	Clunie Hall	Hall
NE/E	Clunie, by Blairgowrie	Clunie Public Hall	Hall
NE/E	Coupar Angus	Coupar Angus Community Library	Library
NE/E	Coupar Angus	Coupar Angus Town Hall	Hall
NE/E	Coupar Angus	Hall (Causewayend)	Hall
NE/E	Coupar Angus	Masonic Hall	Hall
NE/E	Glenshee	Dalmunzie Golf Course	Golf Course
NE/E	Guildtown, by Blairgowrie	Guildtown Village Hall	Hall
NE/E	Kettins, by Coupar Angus	Kettins Church Hall	Hall
NE/E	Kinclaven	Kinclaven Church Hall	Hall
NE/E	Kinloch	Kinloch & District WRI Hall	Hall
NE/E	Kinloch	Kinloch Hall	Hall
NE/E	Kinrossie	Kinrossie Public Hall	Hall
NE/E	Kirkmichael	Kirkmichael Hall	Hall
NE/E	Kirkmichael	Kirkmichael Village Hall	Hall
NE/E	Meigle	Church Hall (Meigle)	Hall
NE/E	Meigle	Kinloch Memorial Hall	Hall
NE/E	Meikleour	Meikleour Hall	Hall
NE/E	Meikleour	Meiklour Village Hall	Hall
NE/E	Rattray	Church Hall	Hall
NE/E	Rattray	Kingdom Hall	Hall
NE/E	Spittalfield	Spittalfield Hall	Hall
NE/E	Stormontfield	Stormontfield Hall	Hall
NE/E	Stormontfield	Stormontfield Village Hall	Hall
NE/E	Wolfhill	Wolfhill Memorial Village Hall	Hall
Central	Perth	208 Hotel	Public House

Region	Town	Name	Facility Type
Central	Perth	A K Bell Library	Library
Central	Perth	Baptist Church Hall	Hall
Central	Perth	Best Western Lovat Hotel	Hotel
Central	Perth	Dewar's Conference & Centre	Business/Conference Centre
Central	Perth	Express by Holiday Inn Perth	Hotel
Central	Perth	Fairfield Neighbourhood	Learning Centre
Central	Perth	Fergusson Art Gallery	Museum/Gallery
Central	Perth	Fergusson Gallery	Gallery
Central	Perth	Gannochy Community Centre	Hall
Central	Perth	Glenearn Community Campus	Community Campus
Central	Perth	Grampian Hotel	Hotel
Central	Perth	Isle of Skye	Hotel
Central	Perth	King James VI Golf Club	Golf Club
Central	Perth	Letham Community Centre	Learning Centre
Central	Perth	Letham St Marks Church	Place of Worship
Central	Perth	Moncrieffe Arms Hotel	Hotel
Central	Perth	Moncrieffe Church Hall	Hall
Central	Perth	Moncrieffe Community Centre	Hall
Central	Perth	North Church	Place of Worship
Central	Perth	North Church Hall	Hall
Central	Perth	North Inch Campus	Community Campus
Central	Perth	North Muirton Community Centre	Hall
Central	Perth	Oakbank Community Centre	Hall
Central	Perth	Parklands Hotel	Hotel
Central	Perth	Perth & District Ex-Servicemen's	Sports/Social Club

Region	Town	Name	Facility Type
		Club	
Central	**Perth**	**Perth & Kinross Association**	Associations/Organisations
Central	**Perth**	**Perth Baptist Church Centre**	Place of Worship
Central	**Perth**	**Perth Congregational Church**	Place of Worship
Central	**Perth**	**Perth Grammar Community**	Learning Centre
Central	**Perth**	**Perth Leisure Pool**	Leisure & Sports Centre
Central	**Perth**	**Perth Museum and Art Gallery**	Museum/Gallery
Central	**Perth**	**Perth Theatre**	Theatres/Arts/Community Centres
Central	**Perth**	**Quality Hotel at the Station**	Hotel
Central	**Perth**	**Ramada Jarvis Perth**	Hotel
Central	**Perth**	**Rodney Fitness Centre**	Health/Fitness/Sport/Activity Fitness and Leisure Centres
Central	**Perth**	**Royal George Hotel**	Hotel
Central	**Perth**	**Salutation Hotel**	Hotel
Central	**Perth**	**Scottish Episcopal Church**	Place of Worship
Central	**Perth**	**Scottish Women's Rural**	Associations/Organisations
Central	**Perth**	**St John's Catholic Church**	Place of Worship
Central	**Perth**	**St Johnstone F.C. Ltd**	Facility Type Business/Conference Centre Private functions, meetings, exhibitions, funeral teas
Central	**Perth**	**St Mary's Pastoral & retreat**	Monastery Retreats and Conferences
Central	**Perth**	**St Matthew's Church**	Place of Worship
Central	**Perth**	**St Matthews Church Hall**	Hall
Central	**Perth**	**The Crypt at St Mary's**	Cultural Activities Centre
Central	**Perth**	**The New County Hotel**	Hotel
Central	**Perth**	**The Royal British Legion**	Sports/Social Club
Central	**Perth**	**The Salvation Army Perth**	Facility Type Place of Worship
Central	**Perth**	**Tulloch Community Centre**	Hall
Central	**Perth**	**Welcome Inn**	Public House

Region	Town	Name	Facility Type
Central	**Perth**	**West Mill Street Library**	Library
Central	**Perth**	**Woodlea Hotel**	Hotel
Central	**Perth**	**Youth Enquiry Service**	Learning Centres
E	**Balbeggie**	**Balbaggie Village Hall**	Hall
E	**Balbeggie**	**St Martins Public Hall**	Hall
E	**Errol**	**Bruce Hall**	Hall
E	**Errol**	**Errol Community Centre**	Hall
E	**Kilspindie, by Errol**	**Kilspindie Church Hall**	Hall
E	**Errol**	**Masonic Hall (Errol)**	Hall
E	**Errol**	**Victoria Hall**	Hall
E	**Glencarse**	**West Carse Public Hall**	Hall
E	**Inchture**	**Inchture Village Hall**	Hall
E	**Invergowrie**	**Bullionfield Recreation Hall**	Hall
E	**Invergowrie**	**Church Hall (Invergowrie)**	Hall
E	**Longforgan**	**Longforgan Church Hall**	Hall
E	**Rait**	**Annat Hall**	Hall
E	**Rhynd**	**Church Hall**	Hall
E	**Scone**	**Morris Leslie Ltd**	Business/Conference Centre
E	**Scone**	**Roberts Douglas Memorial**	Memorial
E	**Scone**	**Scone Community Library**	Library
E	**Scone**	**Scone New Church Hall**	Hall
E	**Scone**	**Scone Old Parish Church**	Church
E	**Scone**	**Scone Public Hall**	Hall
E	**Scone**	**Skylodge**	Hotel
E	**St Madoes**	**St Madoes Community Centre**	Hall
SW	**Aberuthven**	**Village Hall (Aberuthven)**	Hall
SW	**Auchterarder**	**Auchterarder Community Library**	Library
SW	**Auchterarder**	**Auchterarder Parish Church**	Hall

Region	Town	Name	Facility Type
		Hall	
SW	Auchterarder	Aytoun Hall	Hall
SW	Auchterarder	Guide Hut (Auchterarder)	Hall
SW	Blackford	Moray Institute	Hall
SW	Blairinroar, by Comrie	Blairinroar Hall	Hall
SW	Chapelhill, Logiealmond	Chapelhill Village Hall	Hall
SW	Comrie	Comrie Community Library	Library
SW	Comrie	Comrie Rural/Hall	Hall
SW	Comrie	Comrie White Church	Theatres/Arts/Community Centres
SW	Comrie	Comrie Community Centre	Community Centre
SW	Comrie	Comrie WRI Hall	Hall
SW	Crieff	Crieff Community Library	Library
SW	Crieff	Drummond Arms Hotel	Hotel
SW	Crieff	Fowlis Wester Village Hall	Hall
SW	Crieff	Gilmerton & Monzie Hall	Hall
SW	Crieff	Crieff Community Hall	Hall
SW	Crieff	St Fillans Memorial Hall	Hall
SW	Crieff	Seventh Day Adventists Church Hall	Hall
SW	Crieff	Ramsay Street Hall	Hall
SW	Crieff	Strathearn Artspace	
SW	Crieff	Strathearn Community Campus	Community Campus
SW	Crieff	Strathearn Terrace Hall	Hall
SW	Dunning	Dunning Community Hall	Hall
SW	Dunning	Dunning Parish Church Hall	Hall
SW	Dunning	Dunning Public Hall	Hall
SW	Findo Gask,	Findo Gask Public	Hall

Region	Town	Name	Facility Type
	by Auchterarder	Hall	
SW	Forteviot, by Dunning	Forteviot Village Hall	Hall
SW	Fowlis Wester, by Crieff	Fowlis Wester Hall	Hall
SW	Fowlis Wester, by Crieff	Monzievaird & Strowan Hall	Hall
SW	Logiealmond	Chapelhill Village Hall	Hall
SW	Madderty	Madderty Guild Hall	Hall
SW	Methven	Methven Community Centre	Hall
SW	Monzie, by Crieff	Gilmerton and Monzie Hall	Hall
SW	Monzievaird, by Crieff	Monzievaird & Strowan Hall	Hall
SW	Muthill	Muthill Public Hall	Hall
SW	Muthill	Muthill Village Hall	Hall
SW	Pitcairngreen	Pitcairngreen Hall	Hall
SW	Pitcairngreen	Pitcairngreen Village Hall	Hall
SW	St Fillans	Sandison Hall	Hall
SW	Tibbermore	The Bield Christian Co Ltd	Retreat Centre
SE	Abernethy	Masonic Hall (Abernethy)	Hall
SE	Abernethy	Williamson Hall	Hall
SE	Bridge of Earn	Bridge of Earn Institute	Hall
SE	Bridge of Earn	Dunbarney Parish Church Hall	Hall
SE	Carnbo	Carnbo Community Hall	Hall
SE	Carnbo	Carnbo Hall	Hall
SE	Cleish	Cleish Village Hall	Hall
SE	Crook of Devon	Crook of Devon Institute	Hall
	Forgandenny	Forgandenny Parish Church	Place of Worship
SE	Forgandenny, by Bridge of Earn	Forgandenny Village Hall	Hall
SE	Glenfarg	Glenfarg Village Hall	Hall
SE	Kinross	Gospel Hall	Hall

Region	Town	Name	Facility Type
SE	Kinross	Kinross Church Centre	Church
SE	Kinross	Kinross Community Centre	Learning Centre
SE	Kinross	Loch Leven Community Campus	Community Campus
SE	Kinross	Loch Leven Leisure	Leisure Centre
SE	Kinross	Masonic Hall (Kinross)	Hall
SE	Kinross	Millbridge Hall	Hall
SE	Milnathort	Milnathort Town Hall	Hall
SE	Milnathort	Orwell Church Hall	Hall
SE	Portmoak, Kinnesswood	Portmoak Hall	Hall
SE	Scotlandwell	Portmoak Village Hall	Hall
Ext	Dollar	Moubray Hall	Hall
Ext	Kelty	Tabernacle Hall	Hall
Ext	Keltybridge	Tabernacle Hall	Hall
Ext	Moncrieff	Head Hall	Hall
All	N/K	POS: Perthshire Open Studios	Studios (Group as well as Venue)
NW	Aberfeldy	Face Art Gallery	Gallery
NW	Aberfeldy	Temple Gallery	Gallery
NW	Bruar	Clan Donnachaidh Society & Museum	Museum (Group as well as Venue)
NW	Dunkeld	Dunkeld House Museum	Museum
NW	Keltneyburn	The Forge	
NE/E	Kirkmichael	Kirkmichael Session House & Open Learning Centre	Open Learning Centre
Central	Perth	Black Watch Castle & Museum	Museum
Central	Perth	Kinnoull Parish Church	Church
Central	Perth	Mindspace Recovery College	College
Central	Perth	PKAVS - The Walled Garden	
SW	Crieff	Library of Innerpeffray	Library & Charity
SE	Kinross	Backstage at The Green	

APPENDIX 6

List of Groups

Listing of Voluntary Arts and associated groups compiled from data provided by Perth & Kinross Council, AK Bell Library and PKAVS; supplemented by internet and other enquiries and using sources including www.Kinross.cc, www.hipshire.com, www.startfestival.org.uk, Aberfeldy Creative Place Team, participants at Crieff and Blairgowrie Pathways workshops and www.commonculture.org.uk

Region	Name of Organisation	Town	Type of Organisation
All	**Friends of Perth and Kinross Council Archives**	**N/K**	History & Heritage
All	**Friends of Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust**	**N/K**	History & Heritage
All	**Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust**	**Perth**	History & Heritage
All	**POS: Perthshire Open Studios**	**N/K**	Arts & Crafts
All	**Perthshire Arts Association**	**N/K**	Arts
All	**RSCDS, Perth and Perthshire Branch**	**Perth**	Dance
All	**U3A**	**N/K**	Learning network
Central	**Ad-Lib Theatre Arts**	**Perth**	Community org (interests wider than arts)
Central	**Artspace Scotland**	**Perth**	Arts
Central	**Christian Science Society**	**Perth**	Science
Central	**Perth Chamber Music Society**	**Perth**	Music
Central	**Perth Choral Society**	**Perth**	Music
Central	**Perth Flower Club**	**Perth**	Gardening and Agriculture
Central	**Perth Plus**	**Perth**	Heath and Wellbeing
Central	**Perthshire Visual Arts Forum (PVAF)**	**Perth**	Visual Arts
Central	**Perthshire Musical (Competition) Festival Association**	**Perth**	Music
Central	**Perthshire Woodcrafters**	**Perth**	Crafts

Region	Name of Organisation	Town	Type of Organisation
Central	PCCC (Perth Creative Community Collaboration)	Perth	Heath and Wellbeing
Central	PUSH	Perth	Working with people with learning disabilities
Central	Young Musicians Parents Association	Perth	Music
Central	Perform in Perth	Perth	
Central	Made in Perth (SCIO)	Perth	
Central	Tippermuir Books Ltd	Perth	Literary
Central	Perth & Kinross Music Foundation	Perth	Music
Central	Check-in Giraffe	Perth	employability/mental health
Central	Dance Officer PKC	Perth	mutual support group
Ext	THAT (Tayside Healthcare Arts Trust)	Dundee	Mental Health/Health/Recovery
Ext	Abertay Historical Society	Dundee	History & Heritage
Ext	Embroiderer's Guild	Dundee	Crafts
E	Perth Amateur Operatic Society (PAOS)	Scone	Drama & Music
E	Scone SCD Club	Scone	Dance
NE/E	The Blethers	Blairgowrie	History & Heritage
NE/E	50+ Art Group	Blairgowrie	Arts & Crafts
NE/E	Abbey Church Choir	Coupar Angus	Singing
NE/E	ABC (Association of Blairgowrie Craft Workers)	Blairgowrie	Arts & Crafts
NE/E	Alyth Arts Group	Alyth	Arts & Crafts
NE/E	Alyth Choral Union	Alyth	Singing
NE/E	Alyth Film Club	Alyth	Film
NE/E	Alyth Arts Group	Alyth	Arts & Crafts
NE/E	Alyth Choral Union	Alyth	Singing
NE/E	Alyth Community Youth Theatre Group	Alyth (New Alyth)	Youth Group
NE/E	Alyth Halls Committee	Alyth	Community
NE/E	Alyth Literary Society	Meigle	Literary

Region	Name of Organisation	Town	Type of Organisation
NE/E	Alyth Musical Society	Alyth	Music
NE/E	Alyth Photographic Club	Alyth	Photography
NE/E	Alyth Scottish Country Dancing	Alyth	Dance
NE/E	Alyth Voice Committee	Alyth	Singing, Voice, Music
NE/E	Alyth Youth Partnership	Alyth	Youth Group
NE/E	Alyth and District Pipe Band	Coupar Angus	Music
NE/E	Birnam Highland Games	Dunkeld, Birnam	Festival
NE/E	Birnam Youth Theatre	Birnam	Youth Group
NE/E	Blair Bells	Blairgowrie	Hand Bell Ringing
NE/E	Blairgowrie Accordion and Fiddle Club	Blairgowrie	Music
NE/E	Blairgowrie Lyric Choir	Blairgowrie	Singing
NE/E	Blairgowrie Players	Blairgowrie	Drama
NE/E	Blairgowrie and Rattray Blethers Group	Blairgowrie	History & Heritage
NE/E	Blairgowrie, Rattray and District Local History Club	Blairgowrie	History & Heritage
NE/E	Blairgowrie, Rattray and District Pipe Band	Coupar Angus	Music
NE/E	Blairgowrie & Rattray Highland Games	Rattray	Festival
NE/E	Blairgowrie Town Hall Association	Blairgowrie	Community
NE/E	Braco SCD Club	Braco	Dance
NE/E	Cateran's Common Wealth	Dundee	Community org (interests wider than arts)
NE/E	Children's story activities, Alyth	Alyth	Storytelling
NE/E	Children's story activities, Blairgowrie	Blairgowrie	Storytelling, History
NE/E	Coupar Angus AEA SCD Club	Coupar Angus	Dance
NE/E	Coupar Angus Country and Western Music Club	Coupar Angus	Dance
NE/E	Coupar Angus and District Heritage Association	Coupar Angus	History & Heritage
NE/E	Coupar Angus Line Dancing	Coupar Angus	Dance
NE/E	Coupar Angus Pipe Band	Coupar Angus	Music

Region	Name of Organisation	Town	Type of Organisation
NE/E	Coupar Angus Tea Dances	Coupar Angus	Dance
NE/E	Ericht SCD Club	Blairgowrie	Dance
NE/E	Ericht Spinning Group	Blairgowrie	Crafts
NE/E	Kirkmichael SCD Group	Kirkmichael	Dance
NE/E	Meigle and District History Society	Meigle	History & Heritage
NE/E	Meigle SWRI	Meigle	Arts & Crafts, Talks
NE/E	PKC Arts Development Service Life Drawing	Blairgowrie	Drawing
NE/E	PKAVS - Wisecraft	Blairgowrie	Mental Health/Health/Recovery
NE/E	Perth College (at Blairgowrie Learning Centre)	Blairgowrie	Arts & Crafts
NE/E	Perthshire Brass	N/K	Music
NE/E	Relax Group	Coupar Angus	Arts & Crafts
NE/E	Saturday Cool School	Blairgowrie	Singing & Dance
NE/E	Scraphappy Theatre Company	N/K	Drama & Dance
NE/E	Showcase the Street	Blairgowrie	Dance, Music, Drama, Singing
NE/E	Snowdrop Festival Coupar Angus	Coupar Angus	Gardening and Agriculture
NE/E	STARS (School of Theatre Arts in Rural Scotland)	Blair & C A	Music & Drama
NE/E	Strathmore Arts Festival (StART)	Blairgowrie	Multi art forms
NE/E	Strathmore Screen	Blairgowrie	Film
NE/E	Zumba Classes	Alyth, Blair, CA	Dance
NE/E	EPACTS (East Perthshire Action of Churches Together in Scotland)	Blairgowrie	Church & Community
NE/E	Community Tree Cycle (social enterprise)	Alyth	Arts & Crafts
NE/E	Alyth Crafts Group	Alyth (New Alyth)	Crafts
NE/E	Alyth Life Drawing Group	Alyth	Drawing
NE/E	Alyth Writers Group	Alyth (New Alyth)	Writing
NE/E	Blackwater Hall Art Club	Glenshee	Art
NE/E	Blairgowrie Life Drawing Club	Blairgowrie	Drawing

Region	Name of Organisation	Town	Type of Organisation
NE/E	Blairgowrie Youth Club	Blairgowrie	Youth Group
NE/E	Coupar Angus YWCA Girls Group	Coupar Angus	Youth Group
NE/E	Funky Style Dance Group	Blairgowrie	Dance
NE/E	Rowanbank Thursday Group	Blairgowrie	Literacy & Numeracy
NE/E	Strathmore Youth Forum	Blairgowrie	Youth Group
NE/E	Young Active Kids	Blairgowrie	Youth Group
NE/E	BCCA - Blairgowrie Centre for Contemporary Art (residency)	Blairgowrie	Mutual Support Group
NE/E	Bits & Bobs Youth Theatre	Blairgowrie	Youth Group
NE/E	50+ART GROUP Blairgowrie	Blairgowrie	Arts Group
NE/E	Blair in Bloom	Blairgowrie	
NE/E	TMSA - Perth Branch	Coupar Angus	club, group or society with a constitution
NE/E	Strathmore Screen	Blairgowrie	club, group or society with a constitution
NW	MADCAPS	Pitlochry	Drama
NW	Adult Education	Pitlochry	Arts & Crafts
NW	Adult Learning	N/K	Drama
NW	Aberfeldy Art Group	Aberfeldy	Arts & Crafts
NW	Aberfeldy Drama Club	Aberfeldy	Drama
NW	Aberfeldy Festival	Aberfeldy	Festival
NW	Aberfeldy & District Gaelic Choir	Aberfeldy	Singing
NW	Bankfoot SCD Group	Bankfoot	Dance
NW	Birnam & Dunkeld Film Society	Dunkeld	Film
NW	Breadalbane Art Dept	Aberfeldy	Arts
NW	Breadalbane Heritage Society	Aberfeldy	History & Heritage
NW	Breadalbane Quair	Aberfeldy	Community
NW	Chansons	Murthly	Singing
NW	Enerfoil Magnum	Aberfeldy	Community

Region	Name of Organisation	Town	Type of Organisation
NW	Fearnan Arts Club	Fearnan	Arts
NW	Fortingall Art Club	Fortingall	Arts
NW	Grandtully Art & Crafts	Grandtully	Arts & Crafts
NW	Highland Community Learning Partnership	Birnam	Community resource
NW	James Mclaren Society	Fortingall	Arts & Crafts
NW	Mother & Toddler group	Blair Atholl	Gardening and Agriculture
NW	Moulin SCD Club	Moulin	Dance
NW	Music in Blair Atholl	Blair Atholl	Music
NW	Atholl Players	Pitlochry	Drama
NW	Clan Macinnes Association	Pitlochry	Social
NW	Pitlochry and District Choral Society	Pitlochry	Music
NW	Clan Donnachaidh Society & Museum	Bruar	History & Heritage
NW	Aberfeldy MOD	Aberfeldy	
NW	Aberfeldy Community Choir	Aberfeldy	Singing
NW	Silver Branch	Aberfeldy	Storytelling
NW	Loose Tongues	Aberfeldy	Poetry
NW	Jotters	Aberfeldy	Writing
NW	Heartland Film Society	Aberfeldy	Film
NW	Loch Tayside Community Interest Company	Aberfeldy	Community org (interests wider than arts)
NW	Moulin and Pitlochry History Circle	Pitlochry	History Circle
NW	Pitlochry and District Tangent	Pitlochry	Social & Fundraising
NW	Pitlochry Gallery Association	Pitlochry	Non-profit to foster & encourage creative artists
NW	Age Concern	Aberfeldy	
SE	Kinross-shire Local Events Organisation	Kinross	Community
SE	Kinross-shire Partnership		Community
SE	ARK	Milnathort	Arts & Crafts

Region	Name of Organisation	Town	Type of Organisation
SE	Balbedie Aeromodelling Club	Dunfermline	Outdoor Activities
SE	Cleish Scottish Womens Rural Institiute	Cleish	Community
SE	Fossoway Youth Club	Fossoway	Youth Group
SE	Glenfarg Community Cinema	Glenfarg	Film
SE	Glenfarg Village Folk Club	Glenfarg	Music
SE	Kinnesswood in Bloom	Kinnesswood	Gardening and Agriculture
SE	Kinross Camera Club	Scotlandwell	Photography
SE	Kinross & District Art Club	Kinross	Art
SE	Kinross & District Pipe Band	Dunfermline	Music
SE	Kinross Floral Art Club	Kinross	Arts & Crafts
SE	Kinross in Bloom	Kinross	Gardening and Agriculture
SE	Kinross Potager Garden	Crook of Devon	Gardening and Agriculture
SE	Kinross SCD Club	Milnathort	Dance
SE	Kinross-shire 50 + Club		Social
SE	Kinross-shire Community Garden Group	Milnathort	Gardening and Agriculture
SE	Kinross-shire Historical Society	Kinross	History & Heritage
SE	Milnathort & Kinross Allotment Association	Kinross	Gardening and Agriculture
SE	Milnathort Filmhouse	Milnathort	Community
SE	Milnathort in Bloom	Milnathort	Gardening and Agriculture
SE	Milnathort Town Hall Association	Milnathort	Community
SE	Orwell Dramatic Society	Milnathort	Drama
SE	Portmoak Festival Committee	Portmoak	Community
SE	Portmoak Film Society	Kinnesswood	Film
SE	Powmill Quilters	Powmill	Crafts
SE	Scottish Handcraft Circle - Kinross Branch	Kinross	Crafts
SE	Thrifty Crafters		Crafts

Region	Name of Organisation	Town	Type of Organisation
SE	**SWRI**	**Kinross**	Community
SE	**Glenfarg & Duncrievie In Bloom**	**Glenfarg**	Gardening and Agriculture
SE	**Dance Connect**	**Glenfarg**	Dance
SE	**Knit & Natter**	**Kinross**	Crafts
SE	**Local Vocals Choir**	**Kinross**	Music
SE	**Accordian and Fiddle Club**	**Kinross**	Music
SW	**Blackford Burns Club**	**Blackford**	Social
SW	**Blackford Fiddle Group**	**Blackford**	Music
SW	**Blackford Games Committee**	**Blackford**	Games Committee
SW	**Blackford Historical Society**	**Blackford**	History & Heritage
SW	**Comrie Cinema & Events Club**	**Comrie**	Film
SW	**Comrie SCD Club**	**Comrie**	Dance
SW	**Comrie Youth Theatre**	**Comrie**	Youth Group
SW	**Crieff Drama Group**	**Perth**	Drama
SW	**Crieff High School Pipe Band**	**Crieff**	Music
SW	**Crieff SCD Club**	**Crieff**	Dance
SW	**Gleneagles SCD Club**	**Gleneagles**	Dance
SW	**Grace Notes Publications (CIC)**	**Crieff**	Publications
SW	**Grace Notes Scotland (Charity)**	**Comrie**	Gaelic culture
SW	**Remake Scotland**	**Crieff**	Arts & Crafts
SW	**Crieff Choral Group**	**Crieff**	Singing
SW	**Festivals Crieff**	**Crieff**	Festival
SW	**Strathearn Music Society**	**Crieff**	Music
SW	**Crieff Arts Festival**	**Crieff**	Festival
SW	**Crieff Community Band**	**Crieff**	Music
NW	**Acoustic Music sessions in The Birks Cinema**	**Aberfeldy**	

Region	Name of Organisation	Town	Type of Organisation
NW	Sing-a-long Sunday in the Birks Cinema	Aberfeldy	
NW	Ukelele and blue grass in the Birks Cinema	Aberfeldy	
NW	Trees Don't Travel	Aberfeldy	
NW	Crac'n'Craft	Aberfeldy	
NW	Cinema Chums	Aberfeldy	
NW	Baby Birks plus	Aberfeldy	
NW	Strung, Drawn and Quartered Youth Ceilidh Band	Aberfeldy	