Grantee Q&A: the importance of collaborating



Blyth Tall Ship has created inspiring volunteer opportunities in the north east. Photo: Colin McLean Photography.

We asked grantees from the Highlands to the Midlands to share their reflections and advice on the different stages of their journey with us – from application, through delivery, to evaluation.

Meet the grantees and their projects

David Rounce, Project Director, Glencoe Folk Museum.
Our support is helping this unique museum overhaul and expand its buildings and exhibitions, while installing all-weather accessible visitor facilities.

Andrew Fearn, Churchwarden and Project Lead, St. Mary Magdalene, Newark.
Reawakening St Mary Magdalene: Supporting Newark's Communities has improved the functionality, accessibility and sustainability of the church, alongside external building repairs.

Clive Gray, former CEO, Blyth Tall Ship.
Blyth Tall Ship aims to reconnect Blyth with its seafaring past, providing maritime heritage courses for 400 people adversely affected by inequality – ranging from sailing and knotting to sea shanty singing and archiving.

The application

What did you find most challenging about your application and how did you overcome it?

David: In an incredibly competitive funding climate, it's tough making a compelling case for being worthy of funding. We achiev ns. These e needs



David Rounce, Project Director at Glencoe Folk Museum.

Clive: How do you predict impact and outcomes from a completely new and never-before-tried maritime heritage wellbeing programme? We had very little evidence beyond smiley faces after other courses. So, I researched other wellbeing programmes outside of heritage and spoke to members of the medical profession to marry their outcomes to our understanding of heritage impact.

What would you recommend organisations spend more time on when developing their application?

David: Try not to be disheartened if your first applications are unsuccessful. Focus on seeking and acting on feedback from all applications and remember that each process develops your experience – little by little turning you into a lean, mean, funding securing machine!



Glencoe Folk Museum is undergoing a transformative expansion of its facilities. Photo: Glencoe Folk Museum.

Andrew: Always take professional fundraising advice; it is invaluable. Locally, try and find two or three well-connected champions who will support and help to raise the profile of your effort.

Clive: Research is key. The development phase is essential for testing your theory of impact, particularly if you're breaking new ground. You have to be prepared to learn rapidly and iteratively as you experience things.

The project

What one thing do you know now that you wish you'd known before you began?

Andrew: With a structural project in a historic space, we hadn't realised how complex it would be to ensure different disciplines are all on the 'same page'. We've tackled this through our monthly project board meetings and since construction has started, we've also met monthly with all the professional teams on site.

Clive: There's been such a huge demand from people on our courses to continue to do things with the charity as a volunteer or participant afterwards – they want to maintain the improvements in their wellbeing.

David: While planning for every eventuality is important, you also need to expect the unexpected – something to keep in mind when plotting timetables and contingency budgets.



Churchwarden and Project Lead Andrew Fearn examines the work in progress at St. Mary Magdalene, Newark.

Looking back, and ahead

What’s been the most rewarding thing to come out of your project?

Andrew: We’ve brought people and groups together in support of the church’s restoration. I’ve discerned a genuine groundswell in our favour which is great to experience. Support from the council, the local college and community groups has been wonderful.

Clive: We recognised, as part of the evaluation research, that we had created our own community within the town’s community, including our new Sea Shanty choir and craft groups.



Clive Gray, former CEO of Blyth Tall Ship.

David: Watching the community and key stakeholder groups reacting to the plans we'd developed from their input. This gave us confidence that our project was heading in the right direction and would deliver a heritage asset that would benefit the whole area.

Following this project, what are you most looking forward to in your organisation's future?

David: I'm excited to watch our freshly redeveloped museum thrive as it engages with greater tourist and local audiences than ever before!

Andrew: We'll have a warm, dry and secure environment, which will enable us to better connect with not only our own congregation but also the wider Newark community.

Clive: I'm looking forward to employing some of the learnings from this project to develop new sustainable income-generating projects, which will help us to keep doing what we've developed so successfully.

This is part of a series of Q&As with successful grantees – helping to demystify the project application and delivery process and share experience across the sector.

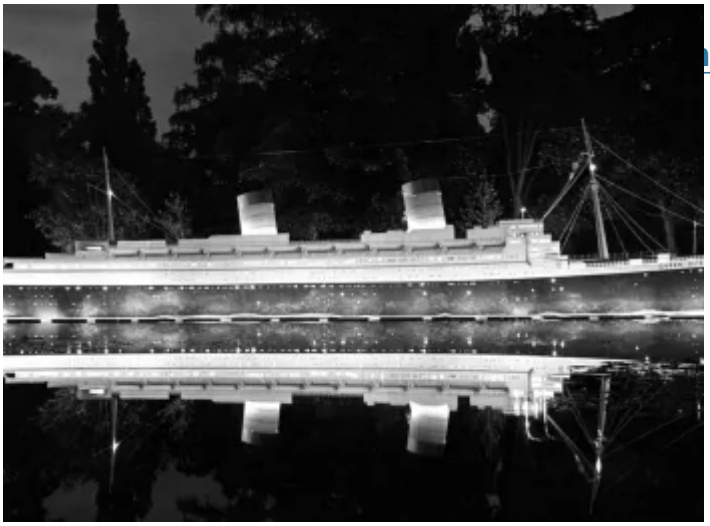


A community group build benches as part of the Lost Peatlands project. Photo: Neath Port Talbot Council.



ect narrative

A portrait of Twimukye Mushaka, by photographer Karen Gordon, featured in the project's exhibition highlighting migrant stories in Scotland.



unity's heritage

The original illuminations captured the imaginations of local people and visitors from around the UK. Photo: Whittle Productions.

Grantee Q&A: illuminating Leamington's festival of light