



The National Lottery Heritage Fund - Great Place Scheme Nations

Programme Evaluation Case Study 2

Frae Greenock; Stories from the Street

*The power of a networked approach
during the pandemic*

“Use every opportunity that comes your way.

Innovate and stay relevant.”

Project Coordinator

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Penny Mills, Chief Consulting Officer, The Audience Agency

Research delivered by Charlotte Wilson Research Services



Image sources: Icecream Architecture 2019.
Bottom right: Inverclyde Council, February 2019

Context

- Lead partner: Inverclyde Council
- Grant expiry extended to: July 2021, extended from September 2020 (project start May 2018)

- The Fund grant awarded £200,000
- Full project budget £229,000

Project activity (approved purposes)

- Heritage Outreach Officer - engage with the public and partners, utilising the pop-up heritage hub and exploring new heritage contexts from the perspective of diverse groups.
- Artists' Residencies in Greenock Town Centre - commission three artists to animate spaces and places, celebrate 'lost' heritage and input into proposed public realm improvements.
- Inverclyde Heritage Strategy - produce a long-term strategy for the development of heritage in Inverclyde to help the Inverclyde Place Partnership plan effectively for the future.
- Young Heritage Apprentices - recruit two young apprentices to support the Heritage Outreach Worker.
- Heritage Events - engage large numbers of people in heritage activities through a collaboration of the Heritage Hub team, commissioned artists and Heritage Apprentices.

The programme was oriented around two events in the first instance - James Watt Bicentenary 2019, coinciding with re-

opening of the Watt Institution following its refurbishment, and the street spectacular around the traditional Galoshans Play as part of the Galoshans Festival 2018.

Partnership approach

‘The Inverclyde Cultural Partnership’s vision for the future is of a strong, sustainable heritage infrastructure operating across the public, private and third sectors.’

Stories from the Street Project Progress Report

The project was positioned through a new partnership approach which connected its work into the existing infrastructure ensuring it sat strategically within Inverclyde. The work of ‘Stories from the Street’ was to embed a new approach moving Inverclyde away from a siloed way of working. As a result, the sector recognised the shift, ‘pre Great Place project era’ to post.

‘Stories From the Street’ responds directly to the [outcomes of the Greenock Town Centre Charrette](#), held in 2016, which set the objectives for the regeneration strategy and masterplan for the town centre including building on the significant heritage assets of Inverclyde and integrating with arts and culture. The project was delivered by Inverclyde Cultural Partnership and the Heritage Sub-

Group led by the Heritage Outreach Officer along with new partners including Riverside Inverclyde and the Greenock Town Centre Regeneration Forum. The project engaged with creative businesses through the Inverclyde Cultural Partnership - specifically the Watt Institution, housing the McLean Museum and Art Gallery and Watt Library. It was related to the visitor economy through the Inverclyde Tourist Group which sits on the Cultural Partnership and has a close relationship with heritage in Inverclyde.

The project was also tied into the local Community Plan ambitions via the Cultural Partnership which is strategically embedded in the Local Authority. The achievements of the Great Place Scheme Nations were reported to the Inverclyde Outcomes Improvement Plan Programme Board and to the Inverclyde Alliance Board (the local Community Planning Partnership) and there were regular updates provided to Inverclyde Council’s Elected Members through the Committee structure.

Embedding the principles of Networked Heritage

The National Lottery Heritage Fund’s Great Place Scheme was born out of the concept of Networked Heritage¹, which sets out

¹ <https://medium.com/networked-heritage>

how, on a local level, heritage organisations can work together and learn from each other while also fulfilling the ambitions of wider local strategies. Further, that such work is strengthened when the voice and influence of local volunteers, community leaders and activists impact on decision-making.

‘Networked heritage means having sufficient connections in a place for heritage to be understood as and treated as a common public resource – drawn upon and enhanced by the full diversity of citizens and organisations. The role of the heritage sector will still include facilitating access to heritage assets, but it is by enabling others to integrate heritage into their thinking and their actions that networked heritage can have a transformative impact on people and places, helping communities create heritage for themselves.’²

The Inverclyde Great Place Scheme Nations project, developed this networked approach. Partners who had been engaged in the project by the Heritage Outreach Officer, identified that the project had, *‘opened doors that are normally closed’* and they

had explored ideas that they had not previously considered, and commented that, *‘Some [projects] would not have happened, others would not have been as successful or as well connected.’*

The Heritage Outreach Officer summed up how they set the ball rolling on this approach in the first instance, I am, *‘Just making connections - I’m really sitting down and talking to people and getting their trust.’*

Delivery from pre-Covid pandemic to post

Inverclyde attracted the title of ‘Coronavirus Capital’ in 2020, and Greenock is in an area which has one of the highest levels of deprivation in the population out of all the GPS Nations projects in Scotland.

In this context, ‘Stories From the Street’, had to adapt its approach in response to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in the second half of its delivery period. Where it had started out using the Heritage Network’s town centre hub and outreach work in different communities to gather stories, a new kind of digital ‘networked’ approach had to be developed over 2020.

² Article on the principles of networked heritage
<https://medium.com/networked-heritage/networked-heritage-f89130ee643f#.am237ar0g>

Prior to lockdown, the town centre hub had attracted over a thousand visitors and had sold 400 pen drives of 900 images of Greenock from the Watt Institution in the space of a week. An approach to gathering ‘Stories From the Street’ had already been established prior to lockdown, by going out to talk to people and gain their trust and a Digital Storytelling project had already started.

With the foundation of its partnership model, the project was able to reach different people and communities through the work of the Heritage Outreach Officer, volunteers, cultural and community organisations and with the assistance of the Heritage Apprentice.

Lockdown Life

The networked approach and the work collecting ‘Stories From the Street’ laid the foundations for adapting delivery in response to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. At the beginning of lockdown, the Heritage Outreach Officer built a social media following based on the collections of the [Watt Institute](#) - which represented a range of local stories. However, it became clear that the project could serve its community in a more relevant way by collecting the stories of lockdown.

The resulting project was called ‘Lockdown Life which gathered a total of 412 items of tangible and intangible heritage and attracted 28,000 Twitter impressions. The Lockdown Life collection is housed at the Watt Institution for the long-term.

‘The Lockdown Life collection consists of events, people, activities, meals, food deliveries, volunteers, staff, bingo games, Elvis, views of Inverclyde, poems, written stories, recorded stories, video interviews, signs, posters, photographs and records valuable information from people 5 years - 82 years.’

Stories from the Street progress report

“This weaves an incredible picture with brightness and darker sad stories. Lockdown has united us, we are connected by a common cause.”

from a Lockdown Life interview

The ‘call out’ for stories went out through multiple social media channels, and the project gathered momentum requiring more support on the ground to deliver it.

A call went out to community organisations to support the project, through Inverclyde Heritage Sub-group (part of the Cultural Heritage Network) and three member organisations came forward - Belville Community Gardens, Beacon Arts Centre and

Creative Inverclyde - organisations which were already supporting their communities through the pandemic. This group formed a working group with the Heritage Outreach Officer.

“kind of making the community more connected, that all comes as a result of connecting the groups and connecting the organisations that are delivering that activity to the communities”

Project Outreach Officer

Twitter and Facebook were used to promote the project, shared by the working group, Inverclyde libraries, Watt Institution and Inverclyde Council.



This prompted a range of stories shared through social media platforms. However, the project went further.

“but there were also reports that many households could not access digital technology to share their story, therefore it was imperative to have volunteers out and about photographing and recording stories at grassroots level and 2 volunteers were instrumental photographing and capturing the everyday experiences and the many ways in which they’ve adapted and responded as lives are transformed by Covid-19.”

Stories from the Street Progress Report

praised by one partner as, *'It brought together a multitude of agencies, organisations, businesses, schools and members of Inverclyde Community'*. The project involved the Friends of Coves, a nature reserve, working in partnership with the Inverclyde GPS Nations project to engage with schools on a competition to design a new area within the reserve (The James Watt Wander), which would benefit the health and well-being of the whole community. The project was able to broaden the scope of the work of the Friends of Coves by connecting them with schools, through tours for schools of the area, and into communities and on to other supporters. This has increased the number of volunteers and visitors to the nature reserve and resulted in volunteers developing skills in oral history. As a legacy, there is the suggestion that the community is taking ownership of this project evident in their solidarity against anti-social behaviour which arose around the project.³

Winning design for the James Watt Wander, Coves Community Nature Reserve

³ Case study included in the Inverclyde Great Place Scheme Nations evaluation report by Claire Gilchrist

Looking ahead

Local stakeholders feel that the Great Place Scheme has developed connections across Greenock and shown the way for further joined up working.

"I feel a bit more connected to it [local strategy] and understand that seems really positive, I feel a bit more empowered to try and change, which if you asked me that maybe a year and a half ago... as I would say this is a culture partnership, that channel where you're sitting at the table, at least, yeah, that's good. I think it's a positive thing"

Stories from the Street Stakeholder

The Inverclyde Heritage Strategy (produced in 2019 as part of the Great Place Scheme Nations project) articulates this networked approach, as it concluded that a single partnership would not be workable given the quantity and diversity of heritage across Inverclyde.

'Fundamentally, the Leadership Framework and Network delivery model sets out the mechanism for decision making and taking forward actions whilst providing flexibility for the sector to determine how this is done and by whom. As

well as working in partnership, organisations will also continue to pursue their own projects and individual funding applications.'

Inverclyde Heritage Strategy 2019-2029

The project evaluation reinforces the necessity of the networked approach which can lead to more effective partnership working. Inverclyde Great Place Scheme Nations was described as a 'first' for getting people to collaborate, with one respondent commenting, *'Individually we are small but as a collective we become bigger, more diverse and stronger.'* The infrastructure which supported the project was considered vital, i.e. The Heritage Sub-Group and the Heritage Outreach Officer. As one

partner indicated, this meant, *'I know who to contact for partnership opportunities, the groundwork is already done.'*

Looking ahead, there is a feeling that greater integration between the arts and heritage strategies would be beneficial. However, a concern was raised that without the Heritage Outreach Officer, a networked approach and partnership working will be more challenging, despite the new commitment to supporting this way of working within the Heritage Strategy.



Kings Oak Family Hub @KingsOakFH · Jun 10, 2020
 Would you like to tell your story about life during lockdown??
 Want to get involved in recording what's been happening during a
 unique time in history?? 🌈👉 Get involved - get in touch 🌈👈
 @KingsOakSchool @kingsoaknursery @KingsOakPC

@GreatPlaceInverclyde @GreatPlaceInve2 · Jun 19, 2020
 We're extremely fortunate to have shared personal and emotive stories
 about #inverclydelockdownlife "I hope people won't forget all that we've
 done. How much we appreciate all the little things, the acts of kindness that
 we used to take for granted" #Inverclydecares

@GreatPlaceInverclyde @GreatPlaceInve2 · Jun 10, 2020
 "Volunteering @Belvillegarden has given me more than I was able to give
 back. I've been privileged to see the coming together of a great community"
 An #inverclydelockdownlife story today full of positivity and compassion.
 #peopleneedtotalk @InverclydeCARG @beacon @inverclyde

@GreatPlaceInverclyde @GreatPlaceInve2 · Jun 26, 2020
 During a Lockdown Life conversation today an interviewee commented "This
 will weave an incredible picture through Inverclyde of all the lighter and
 darker stories." Could you share your story? #inverclydelockdownlife
 #reaction @InverclydeCARG @Belvillegarden @thebeaconarts

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