



Report:

Evaluation of the Inverclyde Culture Collective

Final year of activity (September 2022 – August 2023)

September 2023

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About Ruthless Research

Ruthless Research is an Edinburgh-based independent research consultancy, through which Ruth Stevenson provides a range of qualitative and quantitative research solutions to organisations who work for the benefit of the community.

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Summarising the impact of Inverclyde Culture Collective 2021-2023

The Inverclyde Culture Collective Steering Group was awarded £275,000 from Creative Scotland to deliver 18 months of Culture Collective activities in Inverclyde, followed by an additional £198,000 for 12 more months of activity. The lead partners in this work were Inverclyde Council, CVS Inverclyde, RIG Arts, Beacon Arts Centre and Inverclyde Youth Theatre (Kayos).

The beauty of it is there's no one organisation that is doing it all and actually when they're placed together it does create something bigger. (Project team)

The various stakeholders have been extremely positive about Inverclyde Culture Collective and the sustained and consistent progress that has been made around building and expanding the arts infrastructure in Inverclyde and in developing and supporting an impactful creative approach.

It feels like there's artistic infrastructure that's been established over the last couple of years. People are up for it, and it feels like people understand that this is a place where lots of different stuff happens. (Artist)

Inverclyde Culture Collective set out to deliver 21 projects and 40 paid opportunities, and this was exceeded. Across the full span of the Inverclyde Culture Collective period:

- 32 projects were funded;
- 791 sessions were held, engaging with an estimated 2,456 participants;
- An estimated 56 community partners were involved;
- In addition to the co-ordinating team, 116 freelance opportunities were created undertaking 2,625 hours of paid work.

It's really raised Inverclyde's profile in Scotland, in the arts, people are actually looking at Inverclyde. I've noticed, I've seen the difference. (Lead partner)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction to the evaluation

Inverclyde Culture Collective was established to create a context for artists to experiment with alternate modes of sharing practice, test piloting new local partnership and community projects with no pre-determined outcomes. The funding provides a context for both emerging and established artists to push the boundaries of their practice and think about radical solutions to how we can sensitively collaborate and make work with local communities. Inverclyde Council as the lead applicant in the Inverclyde Culture Collective Steering Group was awarded £275,000 from Creative Scotland to deliver 18 months of Culture Collective activities in Inverclyde, followed by an additional £198,000 for 12 more months of activity.

Independent researcher Ruth Stevenson undertook a mixed methods evaluation of the process, approach and impact of the Inverclyde Culture Collective. A methodology was developed in 2022 and repeated in 2023, comprising: an Activity Snapshot form completed by all projects, case studies relating to the project objectives, an artist survey, qualitative research with artists and lead partners, postcode analysis and the inclusion of other internally collected data.

The impact of the Inverclyde Culture Collective

The various stakeholders have been extremely positive about Inverclyde Culture Collective and the sustained and consistent progress that has been made around building and expanding the arts infrastructure in Inverclyde and in developing and supporting an impactful creative approach. Inverclyde Culture Collective set out to deliver 21 projects and 40 paid opportunities, and this was exceeded. Across the full span of the Inverclyde Culture Collective period:

- 32 projects were funded;
- 791 sessions were held, engaging with an estimated 2,456 participants;
- An estimated 56 community partners were involved;
- In addition to the co-ordinating team, 116 freelance opportunities were created undertaking 2,625 hours of paid work.

The Inverclyde Culture Collective has generated strong linkages between local organisations, artists and communities, and at the close of the Inverclyde Culture Collective:

- 91% of participants agreed that *taking part in this makes me glad to live in Inverclyde*;
- All of the artists (100%) felt embedded in the local community;
- All of the artists (100%) agreed that *I undertook work that would not have happened if Inverclyde Culture Collective had not funded my role*.

Progress against objectives

Objective 1: Arts and cultural organisations and creative freelancers will have built sustainable partnerships with other sectors, agencies and organisations in the place, and arts and culture will be fully reflected in local plans and strategies.

The lead partners felt strongly that “this objective has been achieved” with substantial activity contributing to the local arts ecosystem via artist opportunities and intra-sectional and cross-sectoral collaborative working.

Objective 2: Local creative organisations and freelancers will be more resilient.

Inverclyde Culture Collective has established activity and generated employment opportunities which have built on the earlier stages of the work and contributed to local resilience by:

- Supporting local projects and arts infrastructure at scale and over a prolonged period;
- Funding two 'neutral' facilitative roles in the Inverclyde Culture Collective team which proved to play a vital role in maintaining the broader partnership and ecology;
- Enabling in-depth cross-sectoral working between arts and the third sector which has resulted in new partnerships and ongoing collaborations;
- Enabling the delivery of a large part of the Inverclyde Arts Action Plan which would otherwise have been funded in a more fragmented way, if at all.

Objective 3: Inequality and barriers to access will be addressed, and everyone given the opportunity to experience and to be inspired by arts and culture.

The lead partners felt strongly that Inverclyde Culture Collective has successfully “linked up” the Inverclyde community and enabled local partners to build relationships with marginalized groups. Substantive need and demand amongst these groups was identified, and activity engaging with these groups was felt to have resulted in “a grassroots empowered community”.

Objective 4: Inverclyde will be a better place to live, work or visit.

Inverclyde Culture Collective has provided many employment and participation opportunities, and the lead partners felt strongly that “the sheer number of artists and things that we were able to bring to Inverclyde is great” and “it has definitely opened people's eyes to the opportunities that exist in Inverclyde”.

Features underpinning success

The following features were identified as underpinning the successes of the work in Inverclyde:

- It was built on a strong foundation of work linked to the existing Arts Action Plan;
- The Inverclyde region was a receptive environment for this work;
- There was a commitment to partnership working locally;
- Situating the Inverclyde Culture Collective within Inverclyde Council and CVS Inverclyde enabled process and relationship-building;
- Those facilitating Inverclyde Culture Collective: Championed a clear and consistent vision for the creative approach to be taken across the project, were experienced artists themselves which enabled them to develop a conducive environment for delivering the vision, and had a can-do attitude to supporting experimental work.

Looking forward

It is hoped that the local arts ecosystem established through Inverclyde Culture Collective will be strong enough to be self-sustaining beyond the funded period. At the point of writing the lead partners were working hard to look for ways to support and resource continued activity, but concerns were raised around whether the arts would remain a local priority without the security of the Culture Collective funding stream and the co-ordinating roles.

Introduction

Creative Scotland with Scottish Government emergency Covid-19 funds launched the Culture Collective pilot programme to support creative practitioners, organisations and communities to work together across Scotland to help shape the future of local cultural life. The programme focus was on community engaged creative activity, supporting 26 lead organisations in Scotland working collaboratively to develop ways of responding to the impacts of the ongoing pandemic and establish a network of creative practitioners, organisations and communities, working together to create a positive difference locally and nationally in response to Covid-19. Inverclyde Council as the lead applicant in the Inverclyde Culture Collective Steering Group was awarded £275,000 from Creative Scotland to deliver 18 months of Culture Collective activities in Inverclyde, followed by an additional £198,000 for 12 more months of activity. The funding was allocated to support the following objectives:

1. Arts and cultural organisations and creative freelancers will have built sustainable partnerships with other sectors, agencies and organisations in the place, and arts and culture will be fully reflected in local plans and strategies.
2. Local creative organisations and freelancers will be more resilient.
3. Inequality and barriers to access will be addressed, and everyone given the opportunity to experience and to be inspired by arts and culture.
4. Inverclyde will be a better place to live, work or visit.

Inverclyde Culture Collective was established to create a context for artists to experiment with alternate modes of sharing practice, test piloting new local partnership and community projects with no pre-determined outcomes. The funding provides a context for both emerging and established artists to push the boundaries of their practice and think about radical solutions to how we can sensitively collaborate and make work with local communities. The aim of Inverclyde Culture Collective is to investigate key areas specific to Inverclyde: Health and Social Care (with a focus on adult Mental Health), young people, regeneration of communities, outdoor work and engaging with Inverclyde communities that have low arts engagement.

Methodology

Independent researcher Ruth Stevenson was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the process, approach and impact of the Inverclyde Culture Collective – first evaluating activity to August 2022 and then again evaluating activity between September 2022 and August 2023. A mixed methods methodology was utilised, with data collected as follows:

- Survey with 21 commissioned artists;
- Focus group with 5 artists and depth interviews with 2 artists;
- Focus group with 2 lead partners and depth interview with 1 lead partner;
- Survey with 81 activity participants;
- Activity Snapshot form completed by all 22 projects;
- Case studies (interviews and input from 10 individuals);
- Depth interviews with both members of the project team;
- Comment sourced from 2 local decision-makers;
- Postcode analysis;
- Other feedback and evaluative data collected in the course of project delivery.

Key themes arising from this process are summarised in this report.

KEY FINDINGS

Background

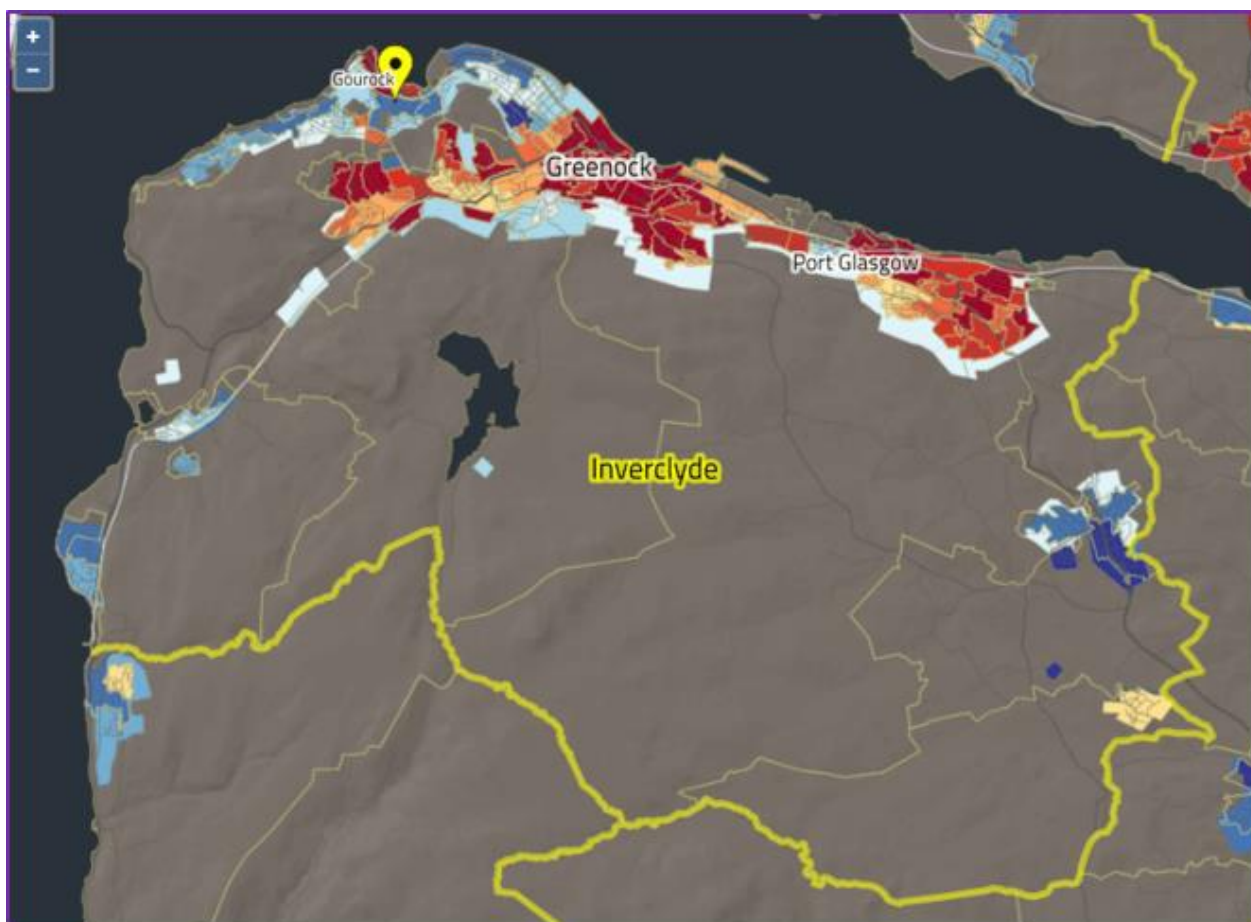
The following section outlines the background to the Inverclyde Culture Collective programme.

About Inverclyde

Located on the west coast of Scotland, Inverclyde enjoys beautiful scenery, excellent transport links, and some of the best walking and sporting activities in Europe. A strong sense of community identity exists within Inverclyde and in local neighbourhoods in particular. Local citizens are rightly proud of their area and its history, which is steeped in centuries of maritime and industrial endeavour.

However, the area is subject to a high degree of de-population, and a lack of local employment opportunities and other markers of multiple deprivation are the main causes of this. Deprivation levels vary significantly across the area with residents in Greenock and Port Glasgow experiencing some of the worst income inequality in Scotland.

The following Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) map of data-zones across Inverclyde shows that much of the area falls into the first and second deciles (in red), with these areas being the most deprived 20% of all data-zones in Scotland.



Background to Inverclyde Culture Collective

Alana Ward

(previously) Libraries, Educational Development and Arts Manager, Inverclyde Council

“Inverclyde’s strong focus on arts, culture and heritage in recent years can be traced back to our three-year Place Partnership in 2014-2017, which was led by a management consortium of local arts stakeholders.

At the same time Inverclyde Council was working towards an Outcomes Improvement Plan for 2017-22, and as culture was recognised as being an important local focus it became one of the three priorities in the Outcomes Improvement Plan. Each of these three priorities had a delivery group, and the Inverclyde Cultural Partnership was the delivery group that took forward arts and culture in Inverclyde. An Arts Sub-group made up of local partners was then set up, and this group developed an Arts Action Plan 2021-23 which was forward-thinking and aspirational.

We had some money left over from the Place Partnership so it was agreed that we would take on an Arts Co-ordinator with that money to help move the group along. Kat Boyle was appointed as Arts Co-ordinator and held that role for about a year, at which point we were thinking about how we would continue to fund the role. This coincided with the launch of the Culture Collective opportunity, and Creative Scotland were keen for us to put in a bid. When we saw the outcomes of Culture Collective it was exactly what we were already trying to do, exactly what we were already trying to achieve. We were able to pull out actions from our Arts Action Plan and build these into our Culture Collective bid. Such a natural fit and such perfect timing.

It had made sense for Inverclyde Council to run the Cultural Partnership, so then it made sense for Inverclyde Council to lead on the Inverclyde Culture Collective. We had an established partnership model with associated policy and procedures and budget management, so we were already demonstrating that this could work effectively.

Kat went from being Arts Co-ordinator to Creative Producer for Culture Collective, and later we took on Jack Stancliffe as Activities Co-ordinator, with these roles based at CVS Inverclyde. Having Kat and Jack based at CVS Inverclyde has had a lot of benefits - there is infrastructure already in place there, plus the organisation is very well connected into the third sector and third sector initiatives. Having partners in the third sector is key, and another thing that is unique about our model that works well.

Being part of Inverclyde Council has a lot of benefits too. We can access support on the Council side including legal support, HR support, and corporate comms support. We can also tap into the Council departments if we need to seek advice, for example around insurance or working with vulnerable people or using community spaces. There are regulations that we need to work under because we are part of the Council but we’ve put in place effective processes. We’ve worked through the challenges and not yet come across something we couldn’t deal with.

We report formally through the Council and Community Planning structures so the decision-makers see everything that Inverclyde Culture Collective is doing – such as new research we are publishing on arts activity in the area, and the links between arts and health and social care - and this impacts on how visible we are to elected members in the area. It crystallises in minds how much good work is going on culturally and feedback has been universally positive.”

Interview conducted July 2022

The following diagram outlines the aforementioned relationships:



Inverclyde Culture Collective is managed by a Steering Group which includes all partners and is Chaired by Inverclyde Council's Libraries, Educational Development and Arts Manager.

The lead partners for the Inverclyde Culture Collective are:

- Inverclyde Council
- CVS Inverclyde
- RIG Arts
- Beacon Arts Centre
- Inverclyde Youth Theatre (Kayos)

Projects undertaken this year

In total 22 Inverclyde Culture Collective were active between September 2022 and August 2023, bringing the total number of projects funded through Inverclyde Culture Collective to 32 (including 6 projects awarded extension funding and 2 projects spanning both reporting periods).

The new projects undertaken this year were:

	Name of project	Delivery partner	Description of project
1	Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Researcher in Residence (New Relations Residencies)	Beacon Arts Centre	Research topic of approaches to removing the barriers to wider community participation in the arts and developing a sustainable model of community-led theatre (X1 freelance contract split into X2 opportunities for artists @36 days each).
2	Creative Minds Festival (encompassing planned X3 Test Artist Curated Events budget line)	Beacon Arts Centre	Working with local groups to deliver a festival in May 2023.
3	Performance and Dance Development Bursaries	Beacon Arts Centre	X2 opportunities for artists @2 weeks per artist.
4	'AI' - Africans in Inverclyde - Artist Residency	CVS Inverclyde	Artist in Residence – X4 weeks.
5	Local Artist Development Strand	CVS Inverclyde	X2 week residencies at an artform-relevant partner organisation for X2 artists.
6	Front: Re-imaging Greenock High Street.	CVS Inverclyde	Artist/Curator in Residence - Responding to the highstreets / town centre @ X25 days residency.
7	Rig Arts OPEN STUDIO'S Residency	CVS Inverclyde	X1 Experienced Artist - Sessions with Young People @ X20 days.
8	Galoshans Festival Bursary	CVS Inverclyde	X2 Local artist development opportunities to be part of the festival. X2 week residencies at an artform-relevant partner organisation for X2 artists.
9	Inverclyde Cares: No One Grieves Alone Residencies	CVS Inverclyde	'No One Grieves Alone' Festival linked to Greenspace Scotland 'Remembering Together' Covid Memorial. X4 week residency per artists.
10	Exploring Health, Illness, Disability and Long term Conditions - with Health Improvement Inverclyde	CVS Inverclyde	Artist research and participatory project with Your Voice Recovery, Chronic Pain Group and Dance For Parkinsons. @25 days each.
11	Questions of Democracy	Inverclyde Council	X1 artist based in Inverclyde libraries. @X25 days residency.

12	Creative Connect Networking Events	CVS Inverclyde	Three events arranged by Inverclyde Culture Collective.
13	Access Training	CVS Inverclyde	Two training sessions focusing on supporting EDI approaches in Creative Practice and race awareness training.
14	No One Grieves Alone (Event)	CVS Inverclyde	Event involving speakers from different organisations and X2 further artist contributions

Projects provided with extension funding to run for a subsequent year were:

	Name of project	Delivery partner	Description of project
15	Circus, clowning and puppetry	Kayos Youth Theatre	Continuing to work with an artist to build in new skills for young people including circus, clowning and puppetry.
16	Improv, devising and writing	Kayos Youth Theatre	Working with an artist to develop improv, devising and writing skills working towards a sharing/work in progress performance.
17	Creativity in Mind	RIG Arts	A pilot arts mental health project for adults in Inverclyde, using creativity as a means of self-expression to support recovery, manage symptoms, and build self-esteem.
18	Open Studios	RIG Arts	Building upon the summer open studio opportunity from 2018 when RIG Arts handed their studio to young people in Inverclyde and invited them to come in and be creative utilising RIG's space and materials.
19	Inside Out	RIG Arts	Weekly intergenerational workshops focusing on the creative regeneration of community greenspaces of the Auchmountain Glen area.
20	Beacon Art Group	Beacon Arts Centre	An inclusive, friendly and participant-led visual art group for adults (16+) meeting weekly at the Beacon Arts Centre.

Projects spanning both years were:

	Name of project	Delivery partner	Description of project
21	Writer In Residence	CVS Inverclyde	12 month Writer-in-residence post based in Inverclyde libraries.
22	Artist In Residence	CVS Inverclyde	12 month Artist-in-residence post.

Employment opportunities

The Inverclyde Creative Producer and the Activities Co-ordinator have continued to be employed (each two days per week) to facilitate the Inverclyde Culture Collective, and are hosted by CVS Inverclyde.

In addition, 71 freelance employment opportunities were created by Inverclyde Culture Collective across the 22 projects that were active this year. 63 individual artists took up these 71 opportunities, with 7 artists holding two roles each and one artist holding three roles. The greatest number of opportunities were created by the Creative Minds Festival (19 artists employed) and Inside Out (16 artists employed) projects.

In total an estimated 2,625 paid hours of work were undertaken by the freelance artists this year. Engagements ranged from 2 hours to 315 hours per opportunity with an average of 37 hours per opportunity (lower than the average of 82 hours per opportunity recorded last year) and 119 hours per project (lower than the average of 204 hours per project recorded last year).

Partnership working

In addition to working with one or more of the lead partners, 15 Inverclyde Culture Collective projects worked with 34 named community partners and 7 external partners this year,

Local community partners were:

- Your Voice Recovery (engaged with 5 projects)
- Compassionate Inverclyde (engaged with 3 projects)
- Clyde Pride (engaged with 2 projects)
- Inverclyde Shed (engaged with 2 projects)
- 175 Club Greenock
- Ardgowan Hospice
- Auchmountain Glen Women's group
- Branchton Senior Youth Club
- Broomhill Community Gardens and Hub
- Community Circus Paisley
- Craigend Community Centre
- Friends of Auchmountain Glen
- Galoshans Festival
- Greenock Celtic Supporters Club
- Greenock Cut
- In Work
- Inverclyde Community Development Trust
- Inverclyde Dementia Resource Centre
- Inverclyde Faith in Throughcare
- Inverclyde Health Improvement Team
- Inverclyde Libraries
- Inverclyde New Scots
- Inverclyde Royal Hospital
- Magic Torch Comics CIC
- Man On

- Mears Housing
- Mind Mosaic
- Notre Dame Secondary School
- Port Glasgow Health Centre
- Prominence Academy of Performing Arts
- The Auchmountain Glen Project
- The Oak Mall
- Turning Point
- Victim Support Scotland

Other external partners were:

- Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival
- GOMA
- JuJu Books
- Print Clan, Glasgow
- Surge
- The Stove Network
- Tracing Autonomy Project

Delivery against plans

Inverclyde Culture Collective set out to deliver 21 projects and 40 paid opportunities, and this was exceeded as 32 projects and 116 paid opportunities were delivered across the full span of the project.

Scope and reach of delivery

The following section describes the scope and reach of the projects delivered by Inverclyde Culture Collective this year.

Projects undertaken by Inverclyde Culture Collective

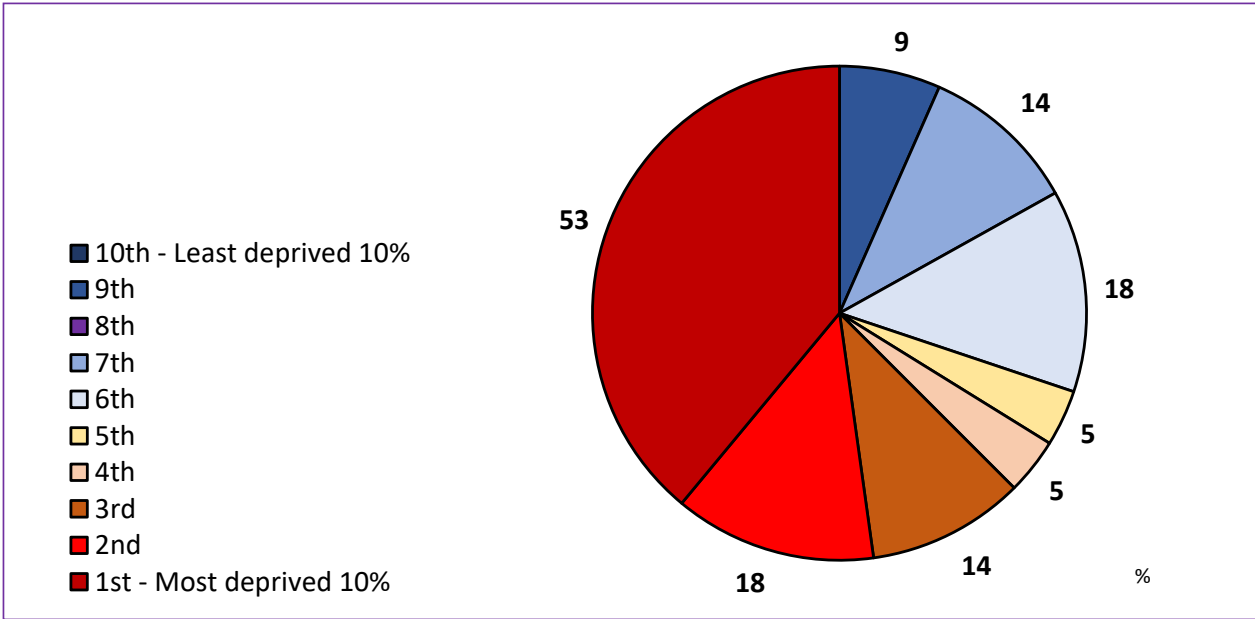
As outlined earlier in the report, 22 projects were active this year as part of Inverclyde Culture Collective. Of these 14 (64%) were already complete at the point of data collection (end of July 2023), and 8 (34%) remain ongoing.

In total 416 individual Inverclyde Culture Collective sessions have been held this year, which is an average of 18.9 sessions per project with a range from 1 to 85 sessions per project. The projects holding the most sessions were Creative Minds Festival (85 sessions) and Creativity in Mind (80 sessions).

An estimated 1,526 individuals took part in these 22 projects this year. This is based on an estimate of individuals attending each project, so there may have been some crossover of individuals attending multiple projects.

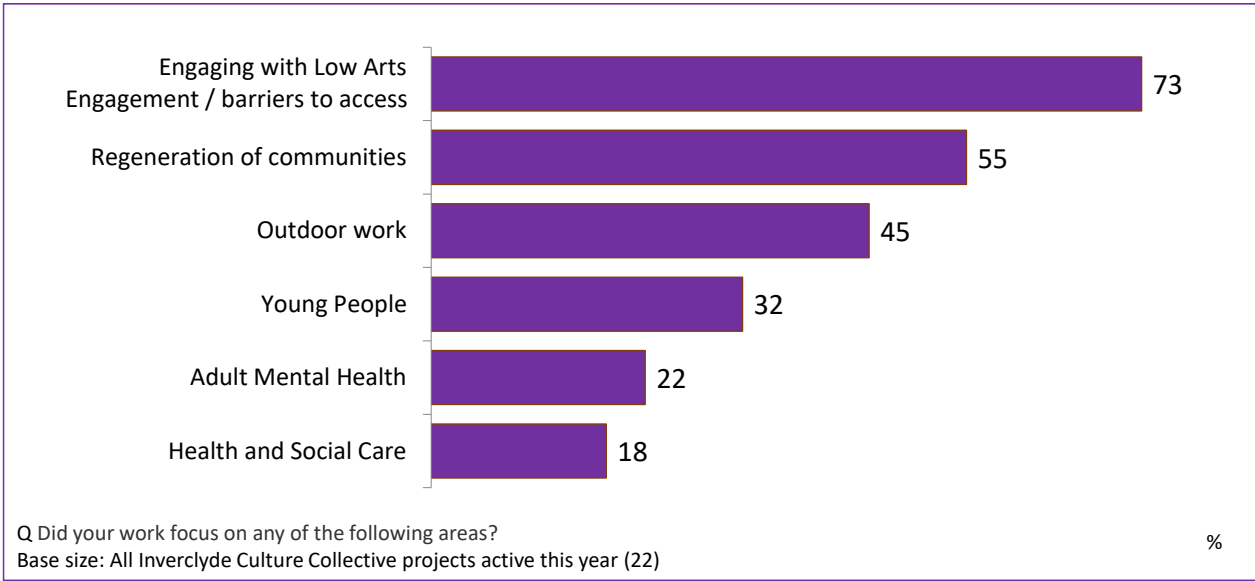
The sessions took place in 38 unique locations across Inverclyde this year (mapped later in this report), which is an average of 1.7 locations per project (lower than 2.6 locations per project recorded last year). Multiple projects held sessions at locations including Beacon Arts Centre (10 projects), RIG Arts (5 projects) and Your Voice Recovery (3 projects). In addition seven projects held at least one session in Glasgow and one project held at least one session in Paisley.

Analysis of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data-zones for each of these 38 unique locations shows that similar to last year around half of the work has been delivered in the first decile (in red, below), with these areas being amongst the most deprived 10% of all data-zones in Scotland.



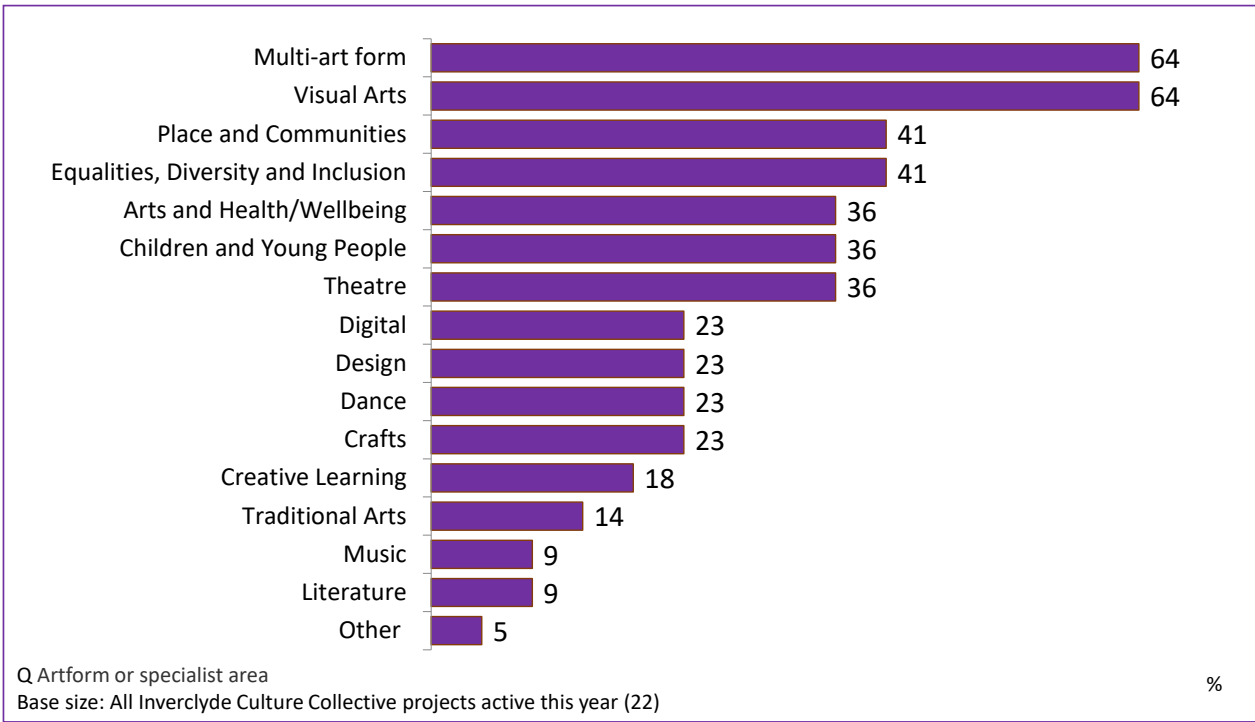
Type of work undertaken

This year’s 22 active Inverclyde Culture Collective projects focused on the following areas:



This year saw a greater focus on engaging with communities with low arts engagement and barriers to access (73% as compared to 44% last year) and regeneration of communities (55% as compared to 33% last year).

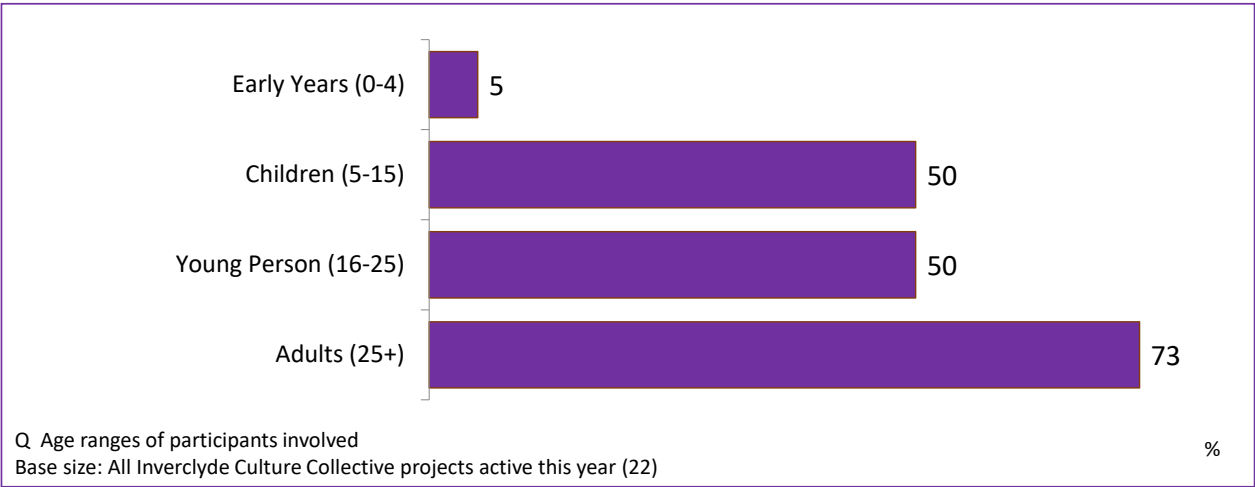
The Inverclyde Culture Collective projects worked with the following specialist areas this year:



As last year, this year’s active projects were most often multi-art form (64% of the projects this year) or visual arts (64%), or worked with place and communities (41%).

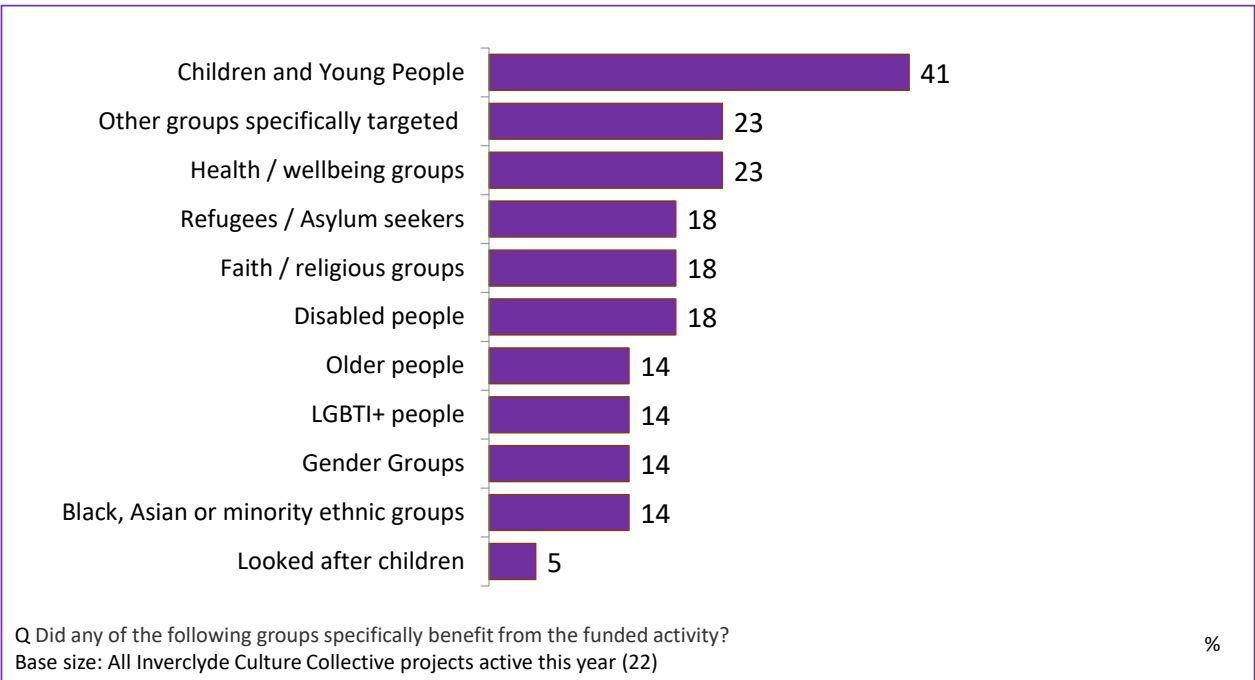
Reach of delivery

The Inverclyde Culture Collective projects worked with the following age groups this year:



Similar to last year, the projects most often worked with adults (73% of the projects this year) and young people (50%) or children (50%). Very few of the projects (5%) worked with early years.

The Inverclyde Culture Collective projects worked with the following minoritized groups this year:



The minoritized groups that most often specifically benefitted from the Inverclyde Culture Collective projects this year were children and young people (41%, similar to 50% last year), other groups specifically targeted (23%) and health / wellbeing groups (23%).

EVALUATING THE INVERCLYDE CULTURE COLLECTIVE MODEL AND PROCESS

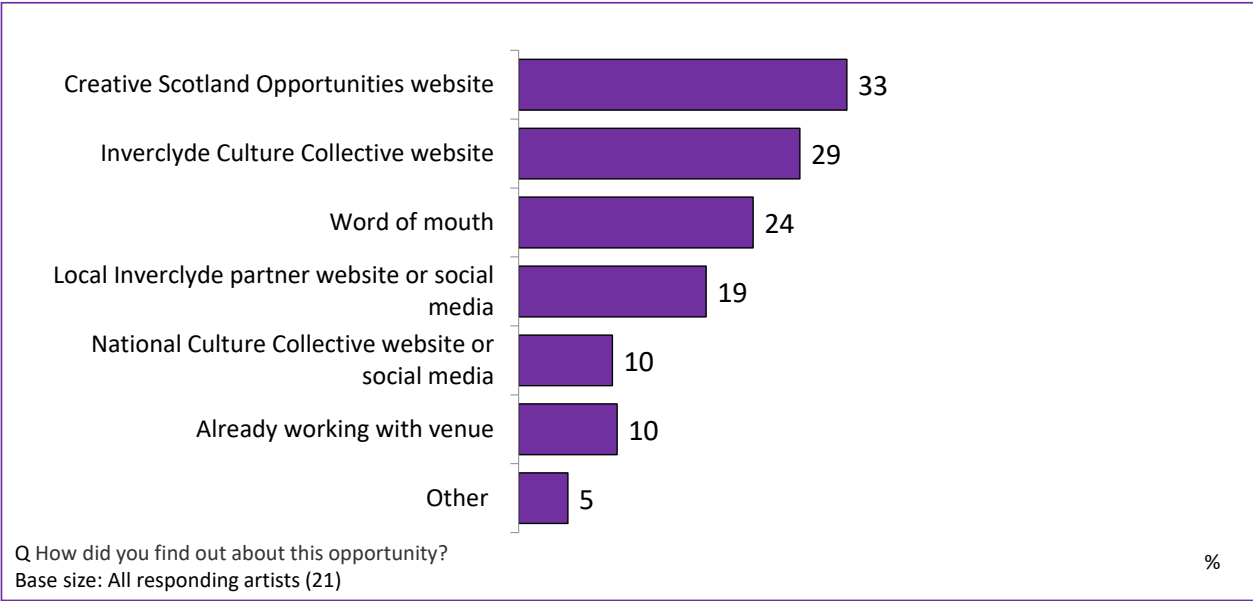
The following section evaluates the Inverclyde Culture Collective model and process this year.

Employment of artists

Recruitment of artists

The whole process was really open and accessible and everyone was very transparent about what was going on. (Artist)

We asked the artists to tell us how they found out about the opportunity to work with Inverclyde Culture Collective this year:

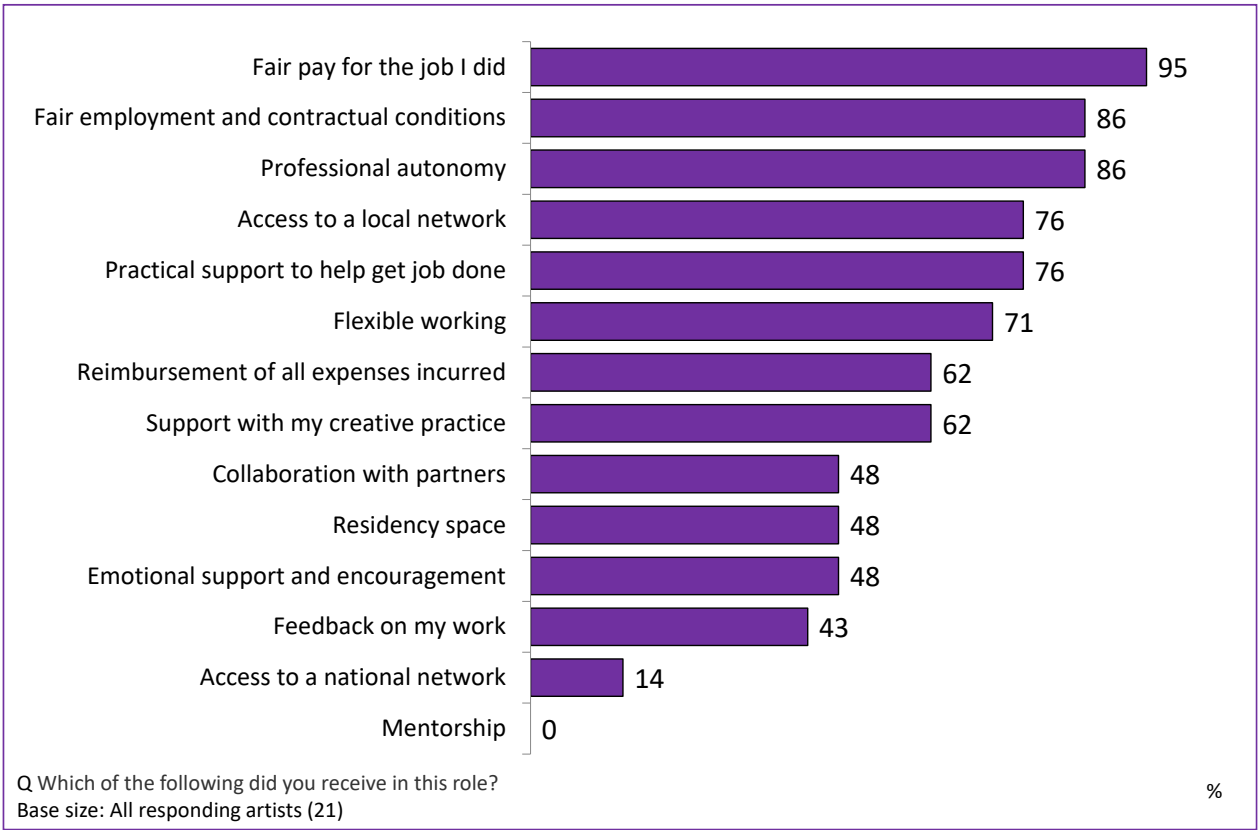


This year the artists found out about the opportunity to work with Inverclyde Culture Collective through a variety of sources, most often the Creative Scotland Opportunities website (33%), the Inverclyde Culture Collective website (29%) or word of mouth (24%).

81% of the artists found the recruitment and contacting process to be straightforward this year (similar to 80% finding it straightforward last year).

Types of support received

We asked the artists to tell us what sort of employment support they received in undertaking their role with Inverclyde Culture Collective this year:



All of the artists (100%) received supportive employment in their role this year, most often *fair pay for the job I did* (95%, the same as 95% last year), *fair employment and contractual conditions* (86%, up from 80% last year) and *professional autonomy* (86%, up from 75% last year).

On average each artist selected 8.2 types of employment support from this list, similar to 8.4 last year, indicating that individuals continued to be provided with and receive a variety of support.

A supportive employer

One of the highlights was the tone of engagement and pastoral support offered by the producers, Jack and Kat. I felt like they were very much on my team and that's not always the case when you go into new projects. I felt very unconditionally supported by them. (Artist)

The artists commented that they received “quite an unusual level of support” from Inverclyde Culture Collective this year. Kat and Jack were described as being “really great” and “really helpful”, with the support that they offered being “brilliant” and “phenomenal”. More

specifically “the communication was really easy” and the approach taken was described as “really agile” and “very very accommodating”.

Fair payment

**The rate of pay is the best I've actually received as an artist.
Artist Union rates, which is something I feel like people should be working
towards but is often never the case. (Artist)**

As highlighted earlier, 95% of the artists told us that they received *fair pay for the job I did* this year and 62% received *reimbursement of all expenses incurred* this year.

The artists commented that the rate of pay had been “really good” and “quite generous” and “very decent”, giving them enough “time” and “space” to undertake their role which “felt really great and achievable for what I was trying to do”.

Brokering connections

It feels like there's artistic infrastructure that's been established over the last couple of years, which has really been making it a lot more straightforward for me to engage with local groups. People are up for it and it feels like people understand that this is a place where lots of different stuff happens. (Artist)

76% of the artists told us that they received *access to a local network* this year, similar to 75% recorded last year.

In the final year of Inverclyde Culture Collective, several artists observed that they had benefited from “an ecology that flows well” because Inverclyde Culture Collective had been “building those connections over two years”. Some of the artists referred again to the supported connections offered by Inverclyde Culture Collective, for example: “I’ll say this is what my suggestion is for something and he’ll say ‘have you thought about speaking to this person?’”

Assistance with practicalities

**They were just so accommodating and helpful with practical things like transport and admin and logistics that usually takes up a lot of your time.
They made it really easy so that you could concentrate on the processes of what you were making and what you were trying to do. (Artist)**

76% of the artists told us that they received *practical support to get my job done* this year, similar to 75% recorded last year. Inverclyde Culture Collective were felt to be “really really accommodating” as “all that sort of stuff was really taken care of”.

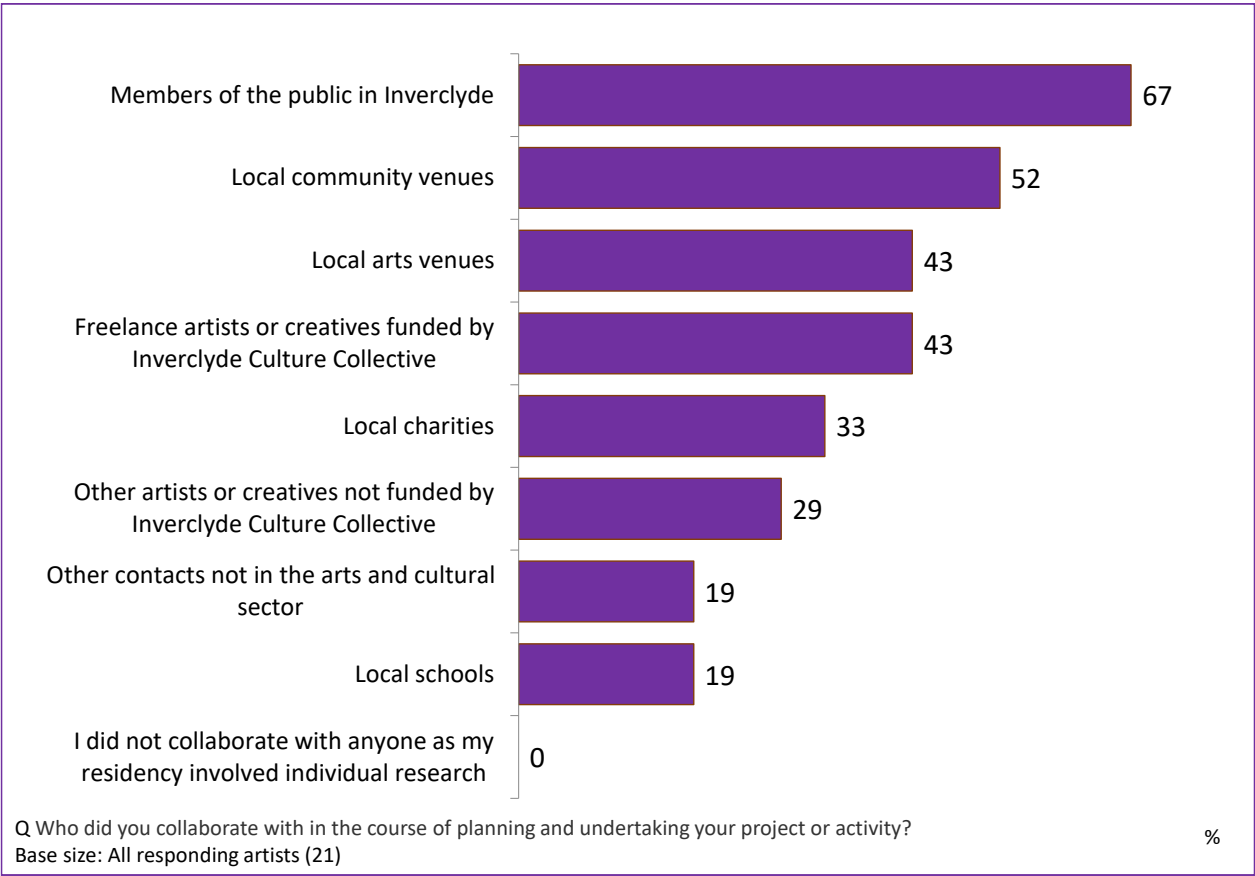
Flexible working

A lot of it might be from home, a lot of it is actually being in the region. I'm working a combination of full time some weeks and other weeks more sporadic. (Artist)

71% of the artists told us that they received *flexible working* in their engagement with Inverclyde Culture Collective this year, similar to 70% recorded last year.

Collaboration opportunities

48% of the artists told us that they undertook *collaboration with partners* this year, lower than 65% recorded last year, although when prompted with a broad definition of ‘collaboration’ 100% of the artists had collaborated with someone this year as shown in the graph below:



As with last year, all (100%) of the artists had collaborated in the course of their project this year. This was most often with members of the public in Inverclyde (67%, up from 55% last year), local community venues (52%, down from 60% last year), local arts venues (43%, similar to 45% last year) and freelance artists or creatives funded by Inverclyde Culture Collective (43%, up from 25% last year).

71% received support from someone within the Inverclyde Culture Collective network (similar to 70% last year) and 0% received support from someone within the national Culture Collective network (down from 10% last year).

Progress against baseline

In the previous evaluation report we identified a number of indicators of success relating to working with artists, and progress against these is outlined below. In this and other comparative tables later in this report, change has been indicated using 'traffic light' colours. Please note that because we are working with small base sizes, a positive or negative change is defined to be +/- ten percentage points as this represents the responses of approximately two artists.

The following indicators relate to conditions when working with artists:

Indicator	Source	Baseline	Final year	Change
% of artists: found the recruitment and contacting process to be straightforward	Artist survey	80	81	+1
% of artists received: <i>fair pay for the job I did</i>	Artist survey	95	95	0
% of artists received: <i>fair employment and contractual conditions</i>	Artist survey	80	86	+6

Responses to artist working conditions were similarly positive across the baseline and final year.

The following indicators relate to the approach taken when working with artists:

Indicator	Source	Baseline	Final year	Change
% of artists received: <i>professional autonomy</i>	Artist survey	60	86	+26
% of artists agree: <i>I had the freedom to develop my own ideas and approaches</i>	Artist survey	85	85	0
% of artists agree: <i>I pushed the boundaries of my own practice</i>	Artist survey	85	86	+1
% of artists agree: <i>overall this process was positive for me and my practice</i>	Artist survey	95	86	-9

Responses to artist working conditions were similarly positive across the baseline and final year, except in the case of professional autonomy where a substantial positive change was recorded.

Reducing barriers to career development in the creative industries

The following section describes ways in which Inverclyde Culture Collective has contributed to reducing barriers to career development in the creative industries this year.

Opportunities for emerging artists

For me this was a different kind of project which I had never done before. (Artist)

Inverclyde Culture Collective has provided some opportunities for emerging artists this year. In the survey, 48% of the artists told us that they consider themselves to be emerging artists in the sector (lower than the 70% recorded last year), and 52% told us that they consider themselves to be established artists.

Opportunities for a diversity of artists

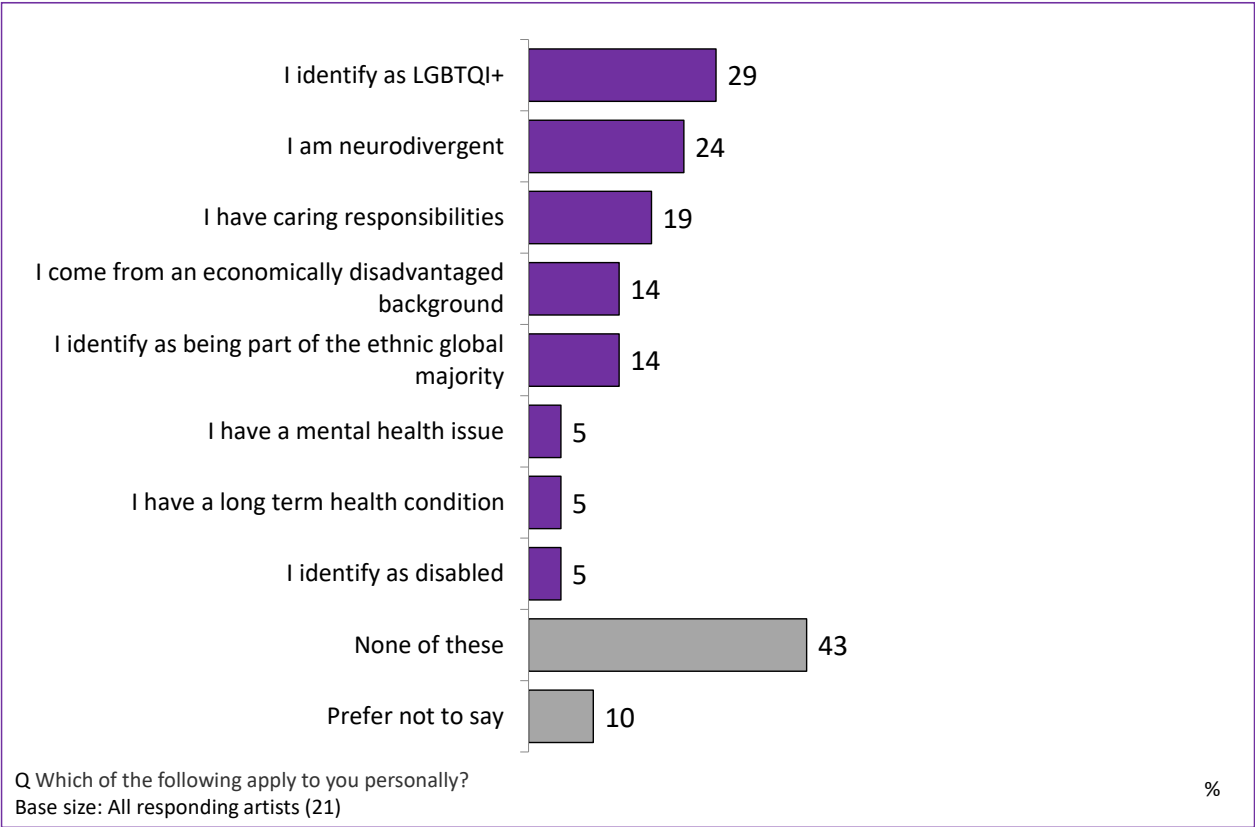
Having so many callouts means we have been able to offer a lot of freelance paid opportunities for local artists, who from that might find other paid work in the future. (Lead partner)

Inverclyde Culture Collective has provided some opportunities for local artists this year. In the survey, 38% of the commissioned artists told us that they live within Inverclyde, similar to the 35% recorded last year.

Inverclyde Culture Collective has provided opportunities for a fairly diverse group of artists this year:

- Around half (52%) of the artists were female this year, with 33% being male and 14% being non-binary – a greater diversity than last year.
- Last year all of the artists were aged 25-55, however this year Inverclyde Culture Collective employed artists in the 18-28 group and the 65+ age group. This year the greatest proportion were aged 25-35 (38%), whereas last year the greatest proportion of artists were aged 45-55.
- 14% of the commissioned artists told us that they come from an economically deprived background, lower than the 25% recorded last year.

We asked the artists to tell us whether they come from a minoritised group or have a protected characteristic:



This year 47% of the artists identified with at least one of these characteristics and thus are potentially minoritised (lower than 65% recorded last year), most often identifying as LGBTQI+ (29%, up from 20% last year), being neurodivergent (24%, up from 15% last year), and having caring responsibilities (19%, down from 30% last year).

Commitment to accessibility

As soon as the residency process started it was like 'How can we support you? What are your access needs?' I don't know if I've actually been asked that before. They were considering childcare, travel, whether someone needed an assistant. That was unusual and in a good way. (Artist)

Jack Stancliffe, Activities Co-ordinator

"We have been committed to ensuring that the Inverclyde Culture Collective approach is accessible and have made amendments and alterations within recruitment, support and events to further work started last year.

Recruitment

Inverclyde Culture Collective has continued to utilise access forms (digital and physical) for use with all artists and partnering organisations to ensure any access requirements are embedded within meetings, activity and communications as well as within contracts with contract holders. Within callouts, Large and Clear Text callout formats have been used as standard (PDF for screen readers and Word) as well as BSL translations for broader residencies. Upon request we have provided proposal information in accessible formats as required. There has been a continuation of assisting applicants with writing proposals for residencies, support with pre-application conversations and note-taking for individuals with dyslexia. To further our reach of activity and call out we have ensured ongoing publication of opportunities through local and national networks, with an effort to provide information in non-arts specific forums in order to meet marginalised groups and community groups across both Inverclyde and nationally.

Events

We embedded captioning and BSL translation within public events including networking events as well as No One Grieves Alone event day, using the charity "StageText" to deliver this.

Access support provided to Participants/Artists through the open access budget

- Expenses for participant travel to attend workshops and activities across Inverclyde.
- Childcare costs for participants to attend community events.
- Refreshments and travel for MEARS housing (asylum seeker accommodation providers) as part of workshops.
- Yoga mats for individuals with chronic conditions as part of Aniela Piasecka's workshops.
- Embedded artists' access requirements within contracts with Inverclyde Council.

Access Training

Inverclyde Culture Collective hosted two training sessions led by artist, educator and researcher Amadu Khan. The training covered two areas based around supporting EDI approaches in Creative Practice and within arts institutions and race awareness training. This training was offered for free and 25 individuals across local Arts/Culture attended."

Reflections on the creative ethos of the Inverclyde Culture Collective

The overall concept of Culture Collective is to test and show new ways of working, and not being scared to fail. (Kat Boyle)

Project description

Our intention for Inverclyde Culture Collective is to create a context for artists to experiment with alternate modes of sharing practice. Our activity is primarily routed on test piloting new local partnership and community projects that offer a window into new collaborative ways of working including residency and artist exchange process. There is no pre-determined outcome however there are opportunities for artists and the community to reflect and evaluate across a National Network. This funding will provide a context for both emerging and established artists to push the boundaries of their practice and think about radical solutions to how we can sensitively collaborate and make work with local communities.

The following section reflects on the creative ethos of the Inverclyde Culture Collective.

Response to the creative approach

My time was spent being creative with [the participants], figuring out how to meet their needs as opposed to creating some massive performative outcome. I found it nice to be able to feel calm about doing what I needed to do. To be responsive to them authentically rather than trying to squeeze them into a project-sized box. (Artist)

With regards the creative approach taken by Inverclyde Culture Collective, around six in ten of the artists had worked in this way before (62%, similar to 60% recorded last year), but around four in ten (38%) had not. As highlighted earlier, 86% of the artists felt they had *professional autonomy* during their engagement this year, much higher than 60% recorded last year.

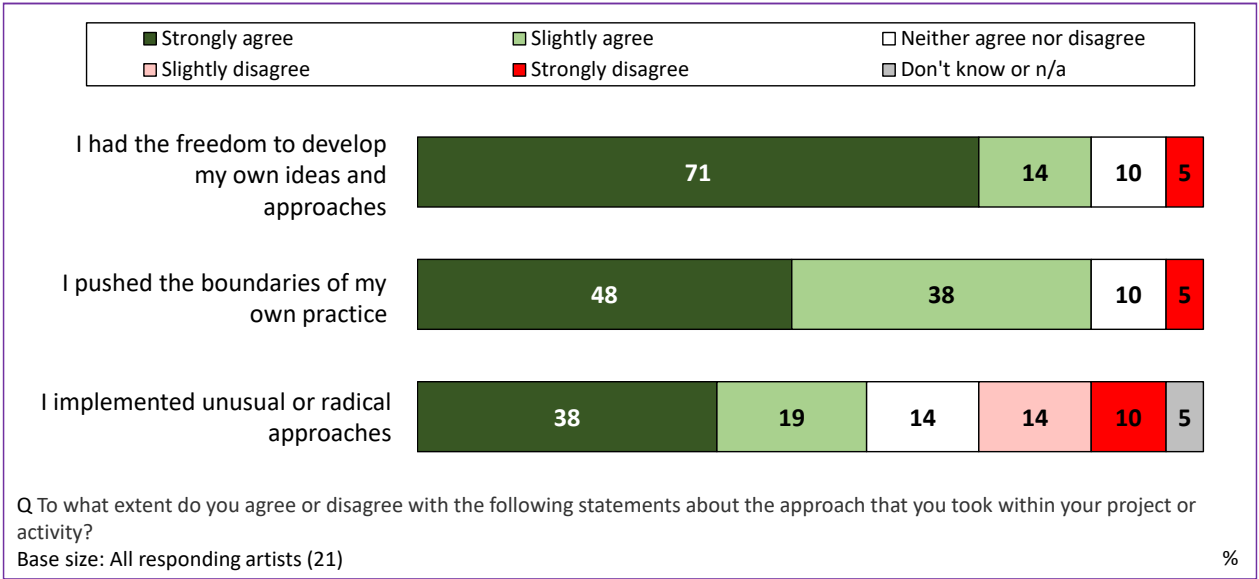
This year the artists described the “freedom” that they had within the creative process, which enabled them to “design what I wanted to do” as it “wasn’t too specific from the beginning”. They felt that Inverclyde Culture Collective had “just let me get on with it in my own way” and had been “very supportive of changing ideas” as things “very much evolved” across their engagement. The artists commented that they had “loved the openness” of this approach, which felt “huge” and “really good” and “great” and “really positive”. As one artist said: “Actually, it feels quite unusual that I’m allowed this level of kind of artistic freedom”. All but three of the artists (86%) told us that *overall this process was positive for me and my practice* this year, with each of the remaining artists giving different responses (neutral, negative and *don’t know*).

This year the lead partners also noted that they had appreciated the opportunity for “experimentation” and “seeing what happens” and “allowing that unknown to be held” within their projects, which they felt was “exciting” and “has given me a lot of energy”.

Ambition of approach

What I'm doing is ambitious and it's political and it's not something that I would have imagined the Council would be a partner in. The fact that they're open to this project - that feels positive. (Artist)

We asked the artists to tell us how ambitious they had been with their creative approach this year:

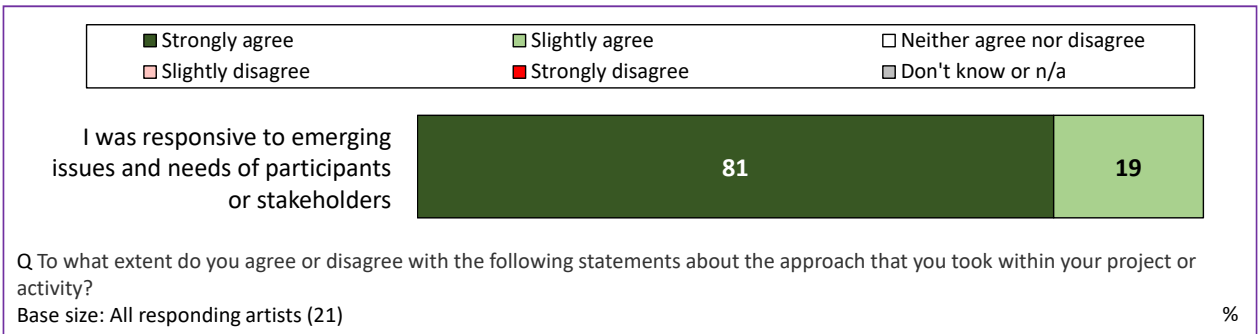


85% of the artists agreed that they felt *I had the freedom to develop my own ideas and approaches* this year (the same as 85% recorded last year), which perhaps enabled ambition of approach as 86% agreed that *I pushed the boundaries of my own practice* (similar to 85% recorded last year) and 57% agreed that *I implemented unusual or radical approaches* (lower than 70% recorded last year).

A collaborative process

It's basically run by the participants. Their own goals, their own projects. (Artist)

We asked the artists to tell us how they were responsive through their projects:

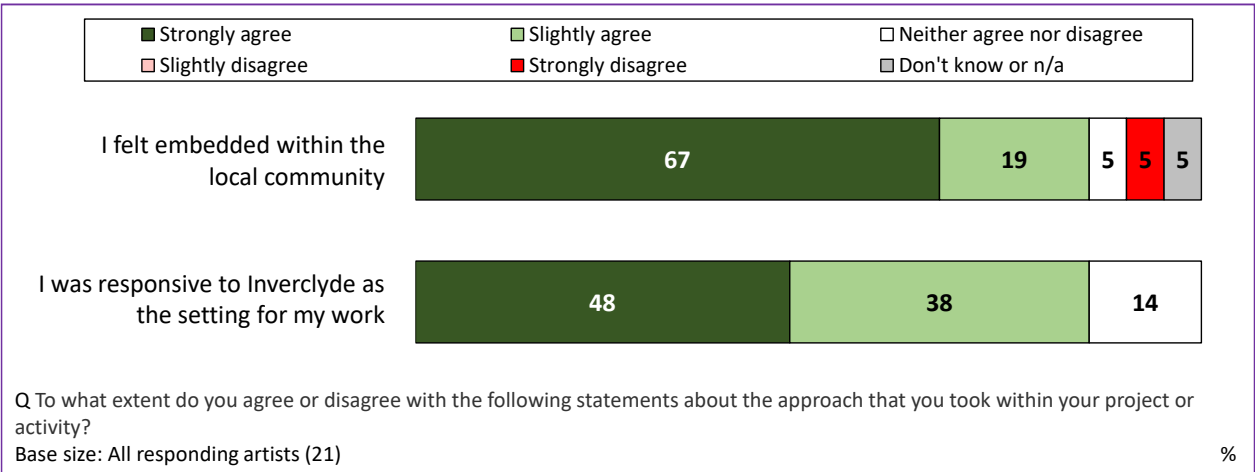


86% of the artists agreed that that *I was responsive to emerging issues and needs of participants or stakeholders* this year (up slightly from 80% last year).

Taking a collaborative and participant-led approach was an important part of many of the projects this year. This was emphasised by the lead partners, who felt strongly that “it should be steered by the people involved” and that the “power” dynamic had been such that “these levels of co-ordinator or participant all became a wee bit blurred and it felt like actually they were equally if not more important in that space”. As a consequence of taking this approach it was intended that the participants would ultimately “go on that process of taking the reins” in leading projects themselves, and successes of this approach are illustrated in the case studies that follow later in this report.

Connection with Inverclyde

We asked the artists to tell us how they responded to place through their projects this year:



The artists were very connected with the local community in Inverclyde this year. 86% of the artists agreed that *I was responsive to Inverclyde as the setting for my work* (similar to 90% recorded last year). Consequently, 100% of the artists agreed that *I felt embedded within the local community* (up from 90% last year).

A number of the artists described their creative interest in Inverclyde’s environment, history and community this year. For example:

- “Inverclyde is a very interesting place historically, its post-industrial quality. I feel that there's a disparity between wealth and poverty and deprivation and it feels very noticeable.”
- “Everyone has a relationship to the River Clyde and I feel interested in that. They speak more of an industry's death rather than a river’s life, which feels quite interesting to me.”
- “I had a long-standing interest in the history of slavery in Inverclyde. This history is all our history.”

Challenges and learning points

The following section outlines challenges experienced when undertaking this process this year.

Challenges faced by the artists

There were quite a few challenges alongside the successes, which proved to be valuable learning experiences. (Artist)

Our previous evaluation highlighted the following challenges as experienced by the artists:

- Length of application process;
- Time taken to pay artists;
- Desire to network with other artists;
- No engagement with artist Slack.

None of these issues were raised again this year, and in fact the artists that participated in the evaluation felt that the process had been largely smooth this year with the caveat that experimenting and learning was very much part of the ethos of Inverclyde Culture Collective.

The only challenges raised by the artists were as follows:

- “There was some internal conflict with one member and the rest of the group.” (Artist)
- “When the partner dropped out both Jack and Kat were very understanding about the shifting goalposts and the need to re-assess whether an outcome was feasible.” (Artist)

Challenges faced by the lead partners

The challenge that we've got is that nobody is leaving. (Lead partner)

A key challenge faced by several lead partners was that “we expected a bigger dropout rate than we had” as “you think a third of them are going to drop out, and they didn't” meaning that some projects were “really, really oversubscribed” which was challenging for resourcing.

Challenges faced by the project team

We are only two days a week, there is a lot for us to manage. (Project team)

The project team raised the challenge of time, as they had to “deliver huge amounts of work within two-day-a-week roles”, and that they had been unable to fully engage with the national network because “external networking trips felt like it wasn't always possible capacity-wise”.

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF THE INVERCLYDE CULTURE COLLECTIVE

Impact on participants

The following section explores the impact that the Inverclyde Culture Collective has had on participants this year.

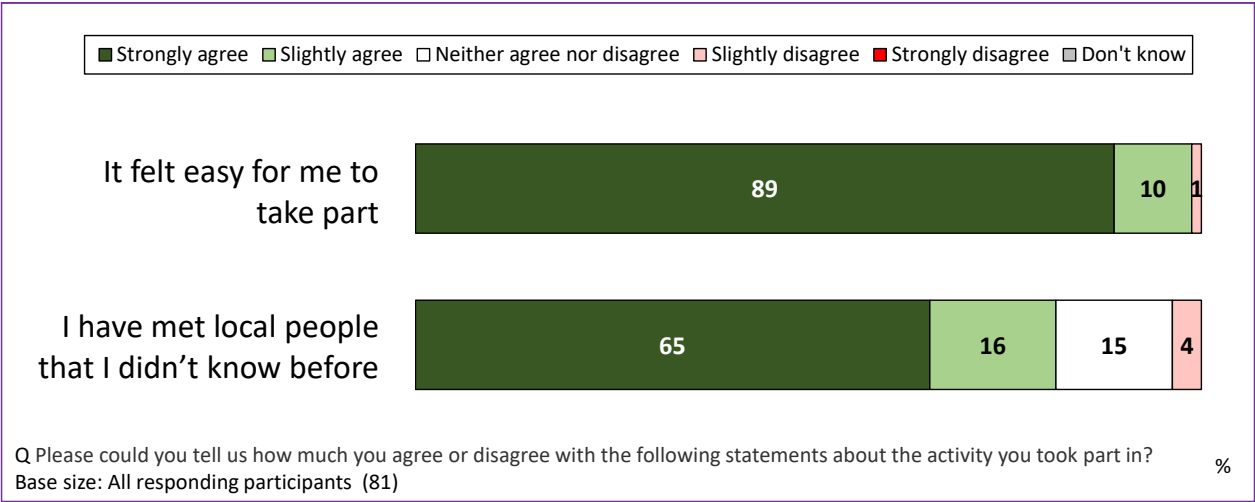
95% of the artists agreed that *my project or activity had a positive impact on local people* this year (up from 75% last year), with the remaining artist (one individual) saying ‘don’t know’.

A positive experience

Participants in the Inverclyde Culture Collective projects were invited to complete a brief survey to provide feedback on their experience, and 81 participants completed the survey this year giving us an indication of the participant experience.

We asked the participants whether they enjoyed the experience, and this year 99% agreed that they did. They told us that “it was a fun wee session” and “I have really enjoyed myself” and “really loved this experience” and “came out buzzing”.

We then asked the participants about their experience of participation this year:

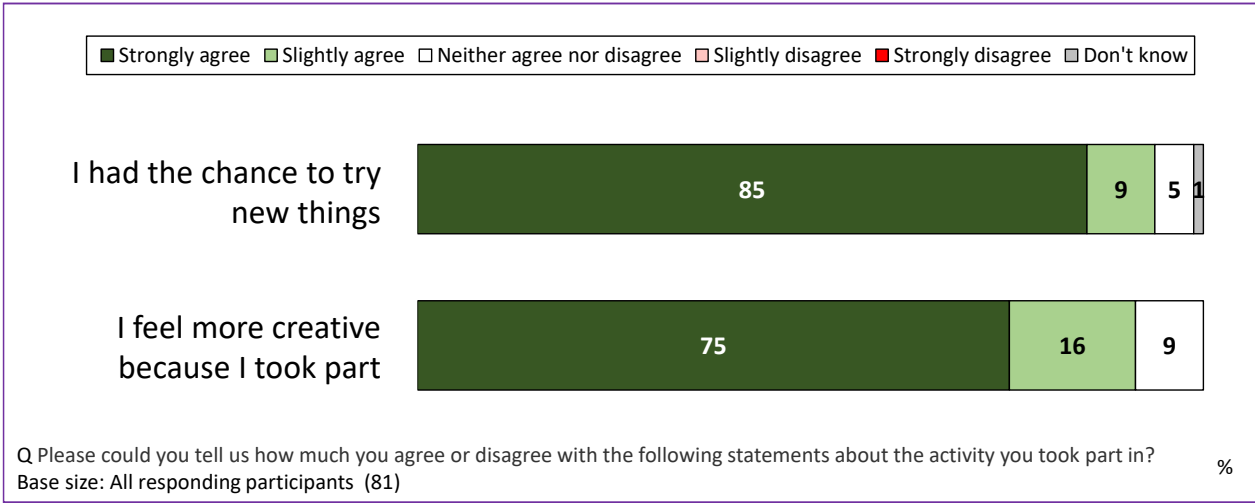


Almost all of the participants (99%) agreed that *it felt easy for me to take part* this year (similar to 100% last year), and 81% agreed that *I have met local people that I didn't know before* this year (similar to 83% last year).

Some of the participants described having met “like-minded people” and “made friends” during their experience with Inverclyde Culture Collective, which they “enjoyed”. One lead partner described that following the end of their project their participants were “still coming in and meeting up and sitting outside and still sketching and painting and chatting”.

Access to creativity

Next, we asked the participants about their creative experience this year:



The creative experience was very positive for the participants. Almost all (94%) of the participants agreed that *I had the chance to try new things* this year (similar to 98% last year), and 91% agreed that *I feel more creative because I took part* this year (similar to 95% last year). No participants disagreed with these statements.

Describing this experience in more detail, this year the participants told us:

- “It’s been great to learn how to do artwork and painting. Never thought it was something I was capable of.”
- “I have become much more confident in my artistic abilities.”
- “Without this class I'd be lost creatively. I learn new things and processes, and attempt things I'd never do at home.”

Similarly, one of the lead partners described their observation of the participant creative journey:

- “When they started out a lot of them said ‘I can't draw to save myself, I've not done it since school’. And they've now just got so much more confidence in that and you can see the ownership of their work”.

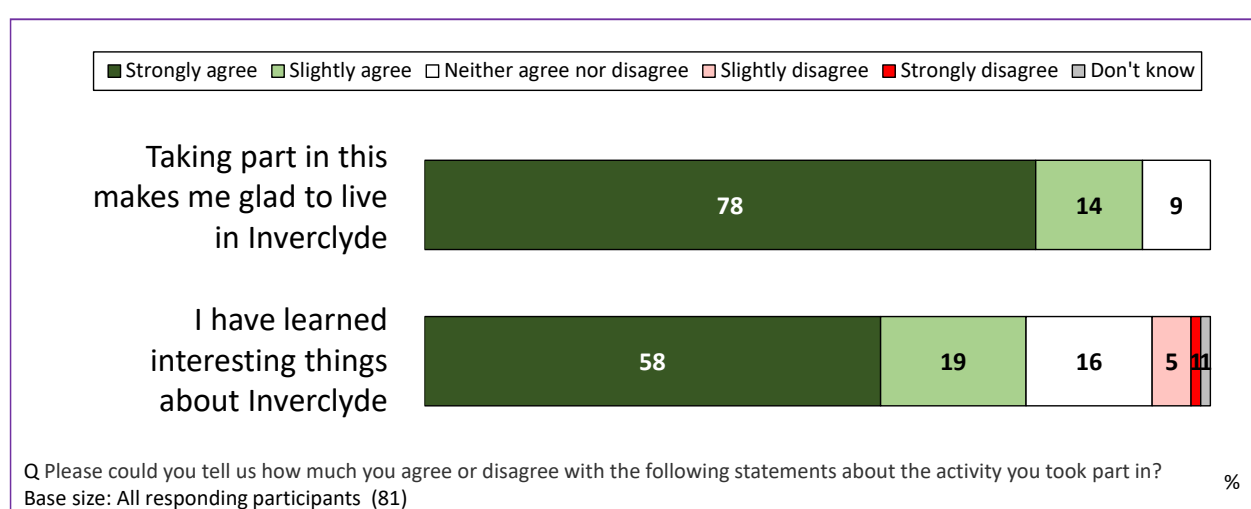
This year, several participants also described the positive impact that their experience with Inverclyde Culture Collective had on their mental health and wellbeing:

- “This class has helped me get through one of the hardest years of my life.”
- “This class helps me to cope better with my anxiety, and gives me something to look forward to.”

- “Without such classes I would not be on the path that I am on now. The classes have given a whole meaning to life.”
- “This class has been a life changing experience, given me confidence in my abilities not only in art but in myself.”
- “It helps me focus on art and not other issues / problems.”
- “I cannot emphasise how important this group is for my mental health.”

Creativity in Inverclyde

Finally, we asked the participants how this experience related to Inverclyde:



The experience strengthened connections to Inverclyde for many of the participants. 92% of the participants agreed that *taking part in this makes me glad to live in Inverclyde* this year (comparing favourably to only 78% last year) and 77% agreed that *I have learned interesting things about Inverclyde* this year (comparing favourably to only 55% last year).

The participants felt that Inverclyde Culture Collective and its activities were “great community events” and “great for the community”. Participants told us:

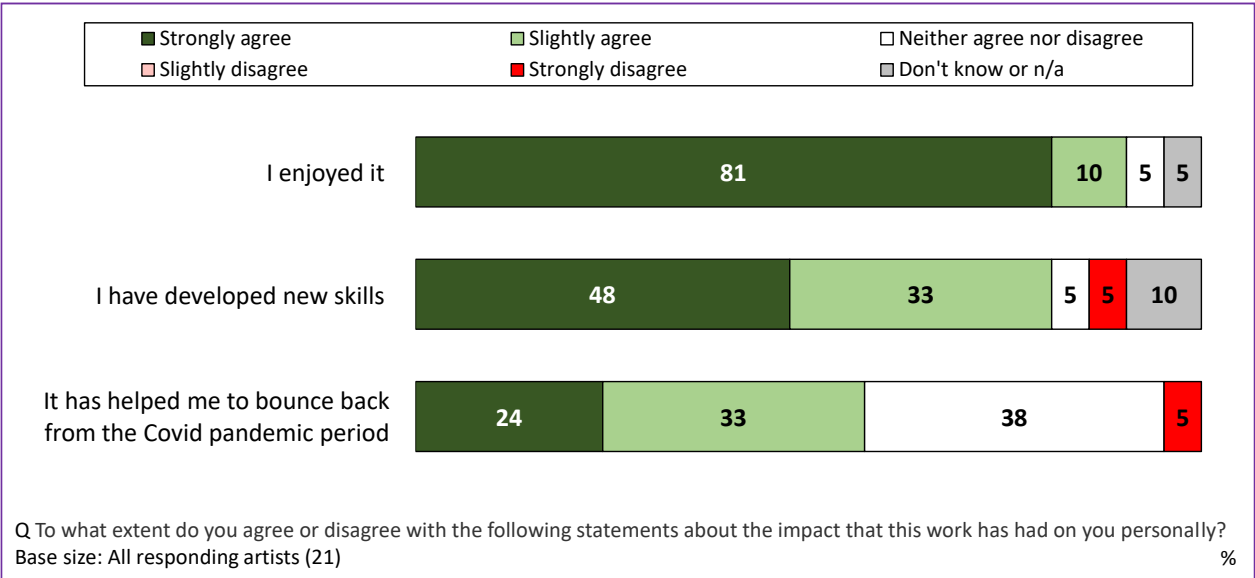
- “Love that there are things like this locally, popping up! Need more of this for our children and families to become more community focused.”
- “This class enabled me to meet creative people in Inverclyde and to feel included in a town new to me.”

Impact on artists

The following section explores the impact that the Inverclyde Culture Collective has had on the commissioned artists this year.

Experience of Inverclyde Culture Collective

In the survey we asked the artists to tell us about the impact that the experience of working with Inverclyde Culture Collective had on them this year:



The experience of working with Inverclyde Culture Collective was very positive for the artists. 91% agreed that *I enjoyed it* this year (similar to 95% last year), 81% agreed that *I have developed new skills* this year (down slightly from 90% last year), and 57% agreed that *it has helped me to bounce back from the Covid pandemic period* this year (down from 90% last year, perhaps influenced by the increased distance from the pandemic lockdowns).

Development opportunities

I don't think that would've happened if we didn't have these types of funding from Inverclyde Culture Collective, and I believe that we couldn't have delivered a programme that helped our community on such a large scale. (Artist)

This year three of the projects (14%) included training or professional development opportunities for the artists.

Crucially, 100% of the artists agreed that *I undertook work that would not have happened if Inverclyde Culture Collective had not funded my role* this year (up from 95% last year) and this has had an impact both on the participants but also the artists themselves.

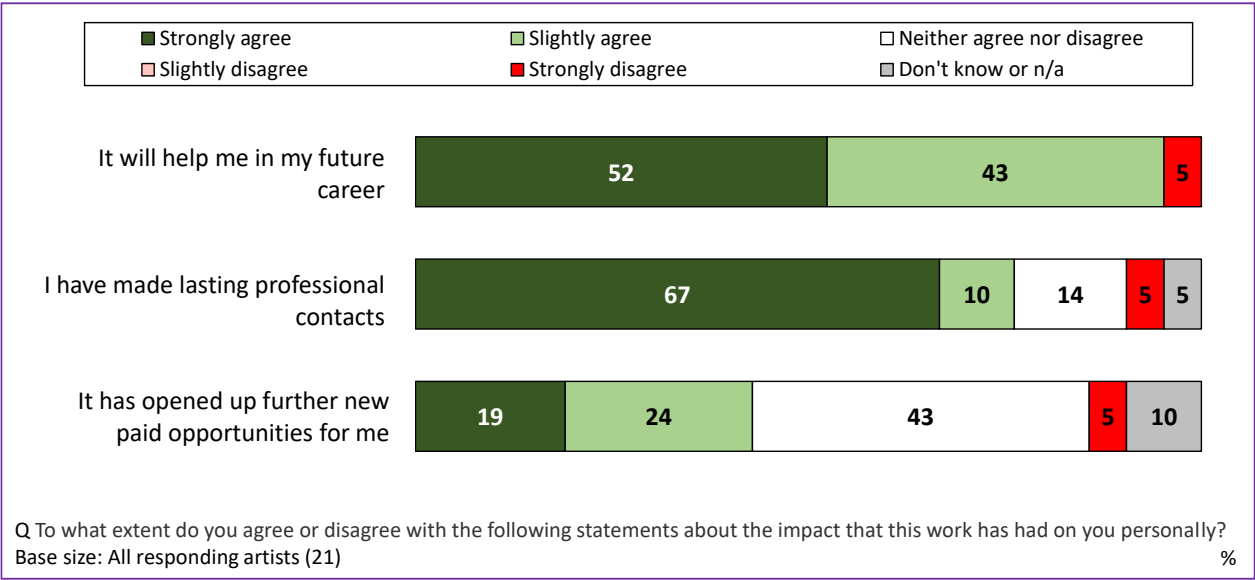
Several artists described having been given the opportunity to bring long-held plans to fruition this year, for example:

- “I learned things that I had in my head for years and never took the time to try it.”
- “I did something that I’ve been rumbling about my mind and I haven’t had the chance to do it before.”

It was also notable that several artists described their experience as being integral to their wider practice and future plans:

- “I do work with people a lot anyway, but I think it’s further cemented how much I enjoy that and possibilities for the future as well in terms of where I might want to go with working.”
- “It’s a joy to work with a class [when] you feel as though you’re doing a service for other people and it’s not just doing something for yourself. I love that, it’s one thing I will take with me and hopefully carry on.”
- “I don’t feel like this work is something that’s just tiding me along like sometimes I’ll do workshops and primary schools or high schools and it’s important but it’s not necessarily at the heart of my practice, but this feels like it’s a chance for me to really explore simultaneously artistic inquiry and community engagement and ideas.”

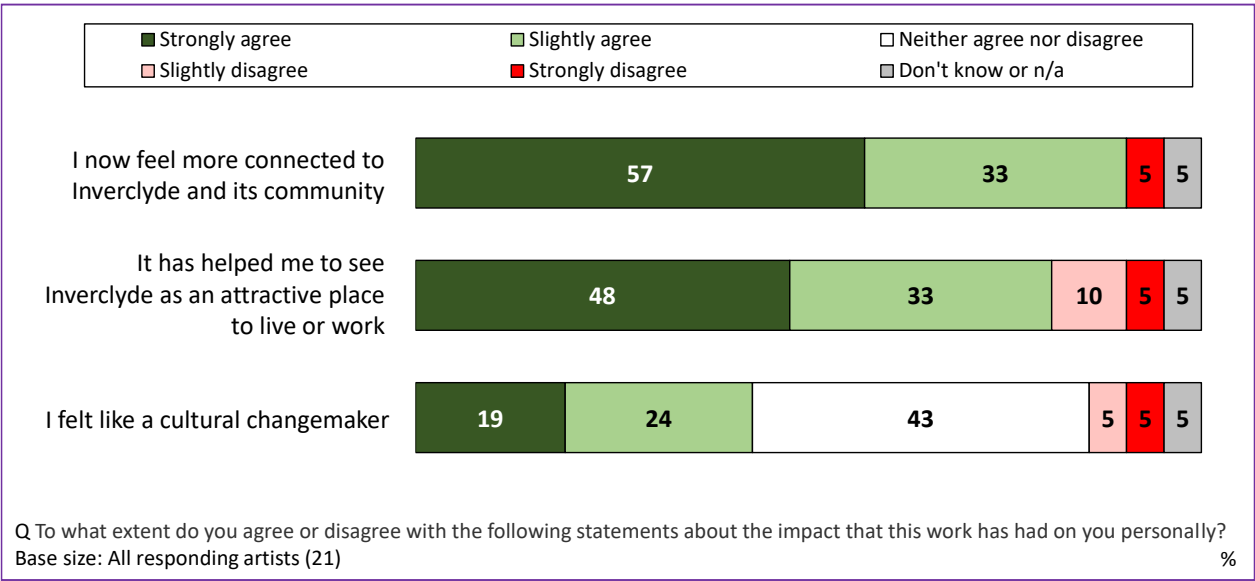
We asked the artists to tell us about the impact that working with Inverclyde Culture Collective has had on their career:



The experience of working with Inverclyde Culture Collective has had a very positive impact on artist careers. 95% agreed that *it will help me in my future career this year* (similar to 90% last year), 77% agreed that *I have made lasting professional contacts* this year (down from 90% last year), and 43% agreed that *it has opened up further new paid opportunities for me* this year (down from 80% last year).

Relationship with Inverclyde

We asked the artists to tell us about the impact that working with Inverclyde Culture Collective has had on their relationship with Inverclyde this year:



The experience of working with Inverclyde Culture Collective has had a very positive impact on artist relationships with Inverclyde.

90% agreed that *I now feel more connected to Inverclyde and its community* this year (the same as 90% recorded last year), and 80% agreed that *it has helped me to see Inverclyde as an attractive place to live or work* (down from 90% last year).

This year 43% of the artists agreed that *I felt like a cultural changemaker* whilst working in Inverclyde, which is substantially lower than the 85% that agreed last year. This year 43% gave a neutral response, which accounts for the difference.

Impact on partners

The lead partners worked closely together through Inverclyde Culture Collective, forging strong local links. The following section explores the impact that the Inverclyde Culture Collective has had on project partners across the full course of the funding period.

Expanded delivery

We've achieved a lot with this funding. (Lead partner)

The lead partners felt that working together through Inverclyde Culture Collective has “been brilliant” and “a really positive thing for us” which has “helped us develop our strategy”. They described the progress they had made through Inverclyde Culture Collective as follows:

- “It's been great to have that funding and to be able to try new things and keep things going. It's helped us through what is continuing to be a really difficult time for us.”
- “It just brings that breadth, and then that is something to build on. The Culture Collective has helped in terms of piloting things to make sure it works with confidence, with the evidence we could see that.”
- “It's accelerated the work we would have done. We probably would have engaged some of the groups on a smaller scale, but it wouldn't have been so in depth or meaningful. It's almost like it's condensed a couple of years of work into six months. We wouldn't have been able to do that if it wasn't for the Culture Collective and our artist in residence.”

Wider engagement

To have our name out there has just been fantastic. (Lead partner)

The lead partners and artists commented that working with the Inverclyde Culture Collective has increased engagement and brought in new audiences, for example when describing the new and different ways in which the Beacon has been working:

- “I projected onto the walls of the Beacon. People can see themselves on the wall of the Beacon and think ‘the Beacon is for me’.” (Artist)
- “I've never seen the Beacon being used the way the Beacon has been used.” (Lead partner)

Learning about accessibility

Seeing all the access stuff was learning development for our organisation. (Lead partner)

The lead partners felt they had learned a lot about accessibility through working with Inverclyde Culture Collective, via “training” and “interview panels” and “how the residencies have been advertised”. This had been “really good learning”, and one lead partner commented that “we'll take that on as an organisation and then pass it on to freelancers”.

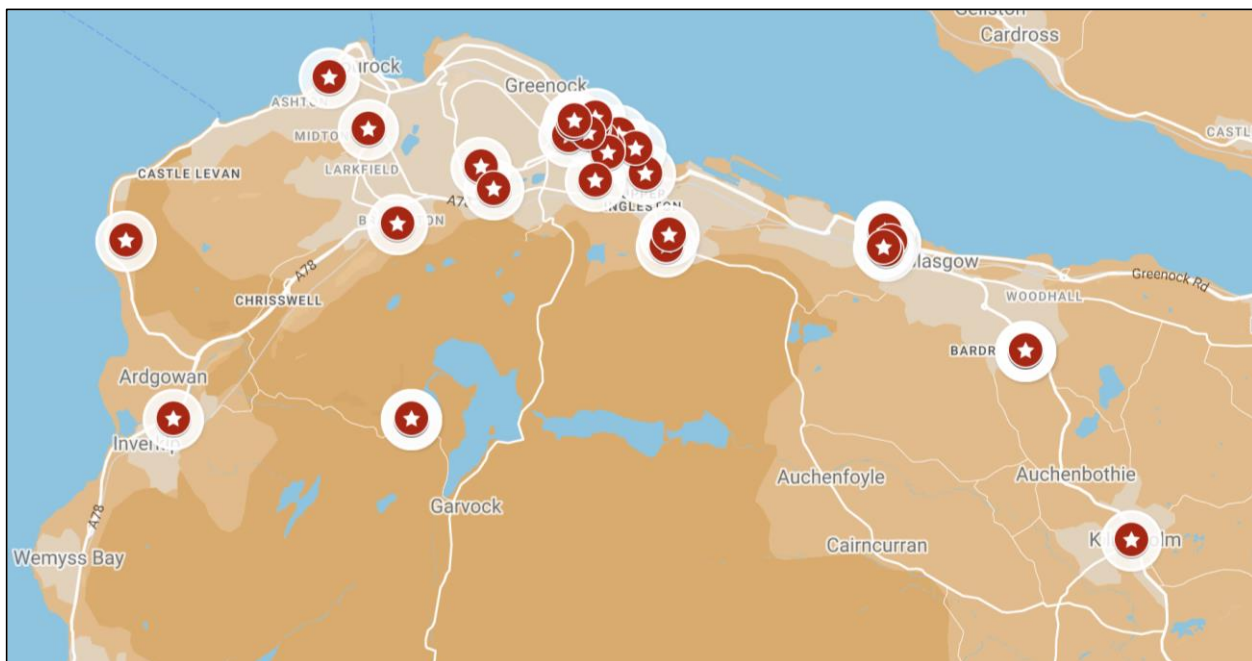
Impact on Inverclyde

All the stuff we are doing [locally], I feel as if Inverclyde Culture Collective was great helping to amplify that. (Lead partner)

The following section explores the impact that the Inverclyde Culture Collective has had on the Inverclyde region this year.

As outlined earlier in this report, the sessions took place in 38 unique locations across Inverclyde (plus three in Glasgow and one in Paisley). The majority of the sessions were held around Greenock, along with other locations across Inverclyde.

The following map shows these locations:



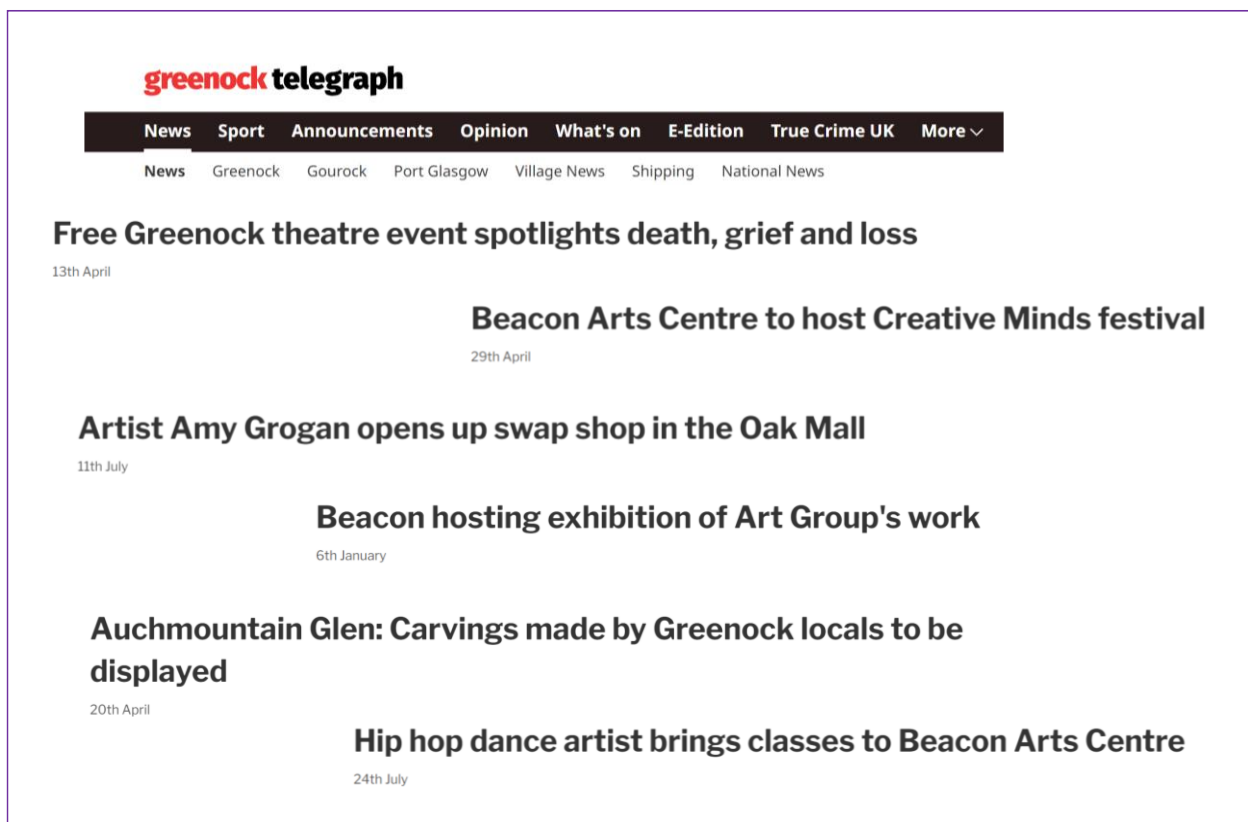
These projects have provided creative opportunities for the Inverclyde region that may not have taken place without Inverclyde Culture Collective.

Raising the profile of Inverclyde

It's really raised Inverclyde's profile in Scotland, in the arts, people are actually looking at Inverclyde. I've noticed, I've seen the difference. (Lead partner)

The lead partners felt strongly that the work of Inverclyde Culture Collective had raised the profile of Inverclyde, commenting that "it's put Inverclyde on the map". More specifically, they recalled that "we've had people saying 'oh, you know, Inverclyde is the place to be'" and that "our marketing team are seeing the difference".

This year 10 of the projects (45%) told us that they had received press coverage about their activities. Nine of these were featured in the *Greenock Telegraph*, and one featured on the website *stayhappening.com*. A selection of the headlines is shown below:



This press coverage will have helped to inform the wider Inverclyde community about the work of the Inverclyde Culture Collective and to further raise the profile of the work and of the area.

In addition, the Your Voice Recovery project 'Walking to Connect' received some coverage during their exhibition at the Alchemy Film & Moving Image Festival. The Skinny also included 'Walking to Connect' in their *Alchemy Film & Moving Image Festival: 2023 Report Highlights* and artist Elina Bry wrote a blog about this visit for the Culture Collective website. This project is featured as a case study later in this report.

Legacy

This year 77% of the artists agreed that *my project will have a lasting positive impact in Inverclyde*, (down slightly from 85% last year).

At the close of the Inverclyde Culture Collective we asked those leading each of the projects to tell us whether they expected the activity to continue beyond the funded period. In total 9 of the projects (41%) were expected to continue, including 2 where this was happening already, 2 with firm plans to continue, and 5 which it was hoped could continue. Of these, 2 had already secured funding, 6 planned to seek external funding, and 1 will not need funding as their activity will be self-sustaining. In addition to this, the leads for 8 projects (36%) indicated that the activity would not continue in its current form but it had sparked other new ideas for future work.

Reflecting on delivery against Inverclyde Culture Collective objectives

Objective 1: Arts and cultural organisations and creative freelancers will have built sustainable partnerships with other sectors, agencies and organisations in the place, and arts and culture will be fully reflected in local plans and strategies.

In our previous report we concluded that progress against Objective 1 was as follows:

Inverclyde Culture Collective was built on a foundation of the strategic planning that had already happened locally, and it is fortunate that Inverclyde's plans fit very well with the intentions of the national Culture Collective funding stream. When Inverclyde Culture Collective was established it consequently felt natural to situate it within the Local Authority structure as a continuation of existing work. As such, all of Inverclyde Culture Collective's strategic direction aligns closely and is intrinsically intertwined with local strategic plans (including the Inverclyde Arts and Creativity Strategy 2017 and the Action Plan 2021). It is certain that some local decision-makers are supportive of the arts and there is a lot of goodwill surrounding Inverclyde Culture Collective's work.

Inverclyde Culture Collective provides a great opportunity for local partners to work together strengthening existing relationships and building new ones. Commissioning 39 individual freelance artists also contributes to broadening and developing this vibrant arts ecosystem in the area with the bringing in of talent and the cross-fertilisation of ideas. All of these partners and artists have also forged relationships with other individuals and organisations across the regions, both intentionally and organically, most often in schools and the third sector. This has opened up access to further relationships and resources and audiences, upon which new ideas are already being built. Through this evaluation the partners made clear that they felt that a lot of excellent grassroots progress had been made but that more work must be done to make a significant and long-lasting difference to both the broader cross-sectoral policy landscape and to the local arts infrastructure. It is hoped that this will be more of a priority in the coming year.

In the final year of Inverclyde Culture Collective, this positive progress has continued with substantial activity contributing to the local arts ecosystem via artist opportunities and intra-sectional and cross-sectoral collaborative working.

We previously identified a number of indicators of success relating to Objective 1, and progress against baseline for these indicators is outlined below:

Indicator	Source	Baseline	Final year	Change
Number of projects worked directly with community partners	Snapshot	3	15	+12
% of artists: undertook collaboration	Artist survey	100	100	0
% of artists agree: <i>I felt like a cultural changemaker</i>	Artist survey	85	43	-42

The Inverclyde Culture Collective worked more extensively with community partners this year, however fewer of the artists considered themselves to be a cultural changemaker. This may be linked to the shorter average length of engagement recorded for artists this year.

Reflecting on Objective 1 at the close of Inverclyde Culture Collective, the lead partners felt strongly that “this objective has been achieved” and that substantial progress with “breadth and scope” had been made around building relationships and strengthening the arts ecosystem locally.

Overall the process of working together through Inverclyde Culture Collective was felt to have helped with “communication” and “talking” and “rich discussion” and “making people seem more approachable” which enabled the building of new relationships and “strengthened the relationships that were already” in existence due to the “ongoing connection of it”.

The lead partners took pride in having worked “all together” and “supporting each other” through the Inverclyde Culture Collective. It was observed that “years ago that wouldn't have happened, honestly” but it was hoped that “we will continue” to work more closely in partnership beyond the funded period.

The lead partners also felt that “cross-partnership working has been a real highlight” of Inverclyde Culture Collective, and that that this had been “really exciting to be part of” as “we could really truly collaborate together – community, partners and artists”. They noted that they now had “better relationships” with a variety of “different sectors” including “third sector organisations who maybe have never worked with artists before” and “libraries” and “schools”.

Across the Inverclyde Culture Collective, the lead partners also observed that “I love it when projects link up and talk to each other” and that “those connections and conversations” had led to further “positive partnerships” meaning greater cross-sectoral interlinkages within the region both within and outwith the scope of Inverclyde Culture Collective activity.

The lead partners felt that “all these connections and relationships and things cannot possibly be doing any harm” in Inverclyde.

The case study that follows provides an example of the way that Inverclyde Culture Collective’s work has contributed to this objective by working collaboratively with the third sector.

Inverclyde Culture Collective case study – ‘Walking to Connect’

About the project:	
Partner organisation	Your Voice Recovery
Dates	June to September 2022 (with additional funding from February to September 2023)
Location	Greenock and across Inverclyde
Number of artists	1
Number of sessions	15
Number of attenders	7

The background to this project

In February 2022 Inverclyde Culture Collective hosted a series of creative research events bringing together representatives from over fifteen local Arts and Health & Social Care organisations to explore the past, present and future relationship of creative practice within health and social care contexts. The sessions explored the overarching question of: “How can the arts be a driver for improving health and wellbeing in Inverclyde?” with the aim to then consider “How best can we use funding available to support health and social care organisations in using the arts and creative practice as part of their health and wellbeing strategies”. Inverclyde Culture Collective was able to take forward a number of small test pilot projects based on the initial ideas generated through these sessions.

One of these successful HSCP/Arts test pilot projects was Your Voice Recovery Inverclyde who worked with artist Elina Bry to explore how creative practice can complement and build on a new strand of their recovery café programme. In 2022, artist Elina Bry engaged with Your Voice Recovery participants in a three-month film-making residency titled ‘Walking to Connect’. The initial inquiry was centred around the connection between recovery, the natural environment, walking practices and art.

Martita Dunn, Your Voice Recovery Co-ordinator

“We started a recovery café in 2013 and from that it just grew. Now we can offer practical assistance and support for people who would like to start on their recovery journey to engage with the recovery community. I had heard that there was an opportunity for some funding from Inverclyde Culture Collective, and I wanted to get our people out there doing creative arts incorporating different artforms.

These guys are multi-talented! I also thought that Inverclyde is a beautiful place, let’s go out and about and discover it. I talked to Jack at Inverclyde Culture Collective about our ideas, and that’s when we met Elina who became our artist.”



aye, it's been a completely different view on life

Elina Bry, Project Artist

“Greenock and Inverclyde is really beautiful and every Friday we did a different walk. Most of the guys had grown up in Greenock but maybe not seen most of the things that we saw. I believe that when you are outside you start talking about things that you would not normally talk about, and I wanted to explore that as a kind of performance as well. I knew from the beginning that we would make a film, but I wanted everyone to experiment with video and I was filming them when they were filming as well. Our film was a great success. It is a celebration of life and joy, and our method of working was joy.”



“This group has saved my life, I look forward to coming along every week, this group has kept me off the streets and given me an interest I never knew I had.”

Kevin, Project participant

“The project was great for loads of different reasons. You could call it a celebration of Inverclyde. Every week we went somewhere new, just enjoying being out in a nice place. It is a beautiful place we live in so it was good to get it on film. Our film was a piece of art, it is personal to us. I’m very proud of it, and a song I wrote ended up in the film.”

The film can be watched here: <https://vimeo.com/756136722> / password: recovery

Elina Bry, Project Artist

“Afterwards we all went down to Hawick for the Alchemy Film Festival as our film was showing there. We had funding for everyone to go down on the train and stay one night.”

**The Skinny included ‘Walking to Connect’ in their
Alchemy Film & Moving Image Festival: 2023 Report Highlights**

“Elina Bry’s Walking to Connect also merged community and nature. Made as part of Inverclyde Culture Collective, the film came out of a three-month residency that involved Bry working with Your Voice Recovery, a network for people recovering from substance abuse dependency. The concept is simple: Bry encouraged the guys she was working with to walk, not as a means of making it from A to B but to connect with the nature around their hometown of Greenock, and each taking an iPhone with them to record. But the phone isn’t just in their hand. It’s taped to their palms, or their ankles, or to the five iron one of them is carrying around, letting their bodies become tripods that see the world from new angles. Bry has cut their raw footage and sound recordings together in pleasingly playful ways, creating a kaleidoscope of split screens and screens within screens. Bry’s film is quietly moving; it’s heart warming to see people who often don’t get the chance to express themselves doing so in inventive and endlessly surprising ways.”

Elina Bry, Project Artist

"We knew that we wanted to continue working together and we applied for more funding from Inverclyde Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund. Our application was supported by Inverclyde Culture Collective. This time I was helping them to make their own short films and we borrowed some iPads from the library to do this."

"I'm so proud of us."



Kevin, Project Participant

"I ended up making a film based on an encounter with a dead sheep on a beach, a mysterious encounter, that was my debut! It inspired loads of thinking about my childhood and growing up. It is the first time I'd used an iPad so it was great that we had those from the library."

"This project has opened up my eyes and changed my life, this has been the longest that I have not used drugs."

Elina Bry, Project Artist

"Inverclyde Culture Collective understands the charity world, they understand the arts, they understand what we all need. It has been incredible for all of us and Inverclyde Culture Collective has made it happen."

Martita Dunn, Your Voice Recovery Coordinator

"The whole thing was fantastic because we weren't doing it as a means to an end, it was about the whole experience. It is amazing, and it works. I've seen our guys grow from strength to strength in ways that I couldn't have imagined. Seeing the confidence and where they are now is wonderful. I want a recovery arts centre here in Inverclyde! I'd like the guys to show other people in recovery their skills."

Elina Bry, Project Artist

"We plan to show all of our films in September as part of Recovery Month, and we are working towards the future of the project. You can't just be here and then take that away from people. We are putting in a funding application to Creative Scotland and Kat from Inverclyde Culture Collective is helping."



Inverclyde Culture Collective has not just been a good support inside the project, but they have been a good support after the project too."

Objective 2: Local creative organisations and freelancers will be more resilient.

In our previous report we concluded that progress against Objective 2 was as follows:

The creation of 18 new projects, 2 salaried roles and 45 new freelance opportunities in Inverclyde has provided significant opportunity for the creative community in Inverclyde to develop and flourish. 95% of the artists agreed that *I undertook work that would not have happened if Inverclyde Culture Collective had not funded my role*, demonstrating the scale of what can be directly attributed to the presence of Inverclyde Culture Collective.

In organisational terms, Inverclyde Culture Collective has provided funding at a difficult time (during Covid and Covid recovery, and a time of financial crisis) and is has also established opportunities to build on in terms of follow-on projects, new relationships and audience development. Evaluating the work also documents the progress, which will lead to further learning and potentially further funding prospects. All of this strengthens the base from which local creative organisations are grounded.

The provision of local employment opportunities for freelance creatives has been a real strength of the Inverclyde Culture Collective. The freelance creatives have had well-supported opportunities to develop their creative practice and build professional networks in a way that has had a tangible impact – as 90% of the artists agreed that *it has helped me to bounce back from the Covid pandemic period* and 80% of the artists agreed that *this experience has led to further paid work*. More specifically, many emerging and potentially marginalized artists have been awarded these roles, meaning that those facing the most barriers have benefitted.

In the final year of Inverclyde Culture Collective, this positive progress has continued and the careful support of a varied pool of artists (including some local and marginalised artists) has been a particular success.

We previously identified a number of indicators of success relating to Objective 2, and progress against baseline for the indicators relating to the resilience of local creative organisations is outlined below:

Indicator	Source	Baseline	Final year	Change
Number of new projects established locally	Snapshot	18	22	+4
Number of freelance employment opportunities created	Snapshot	45	71	+26
% of artists agree: <i>I undertook work that would not have happened if Inverclyde Culture Collective had not funded my role</i>	Artist survey	95	100	+5

The Inverclyde Culture Collective established more activity this year, and generated a greater number of employment opportunities, building on the earlier stages of the work.

Progress against baseline for the indicators relating to the resilience of local freelancers is outlined below:

Indicator	Source	Baseline	Final year	Change
% of projects including professional development opportunities	Snapshot	39	14	-25
% of artists agree: <i>I have developed new skills</i>	Artist survey	90	81	-9
% of artists received: <i>support with my creative practice</i>	Artist survey	60	62	+2
% of artists received: <i>access to a local network</i>	Artist survey	75	76	+1
% of artists agree: <i>I have made lasting professional contacts</i>	Artist survey	90	77	-13
% of artists agree: <i>this experience will help me in my future career</i>	Artist survey	90	95	+5
% of artists agree: <i>this experience has opened up further new paid opportunities for me</i>	Artist survey	80	43	-37
% of artists: are emerging artists	Artist survey	70	48	-22
% of artists: come from an economically deprived background	Artist survey	25	14	-11
% of artists: identify with at least one potentially minoritized characteristic	Artist survey	65	47	-18

On the whole, the artists employed by Inverclyde Culture Collective have felt similarly developed and supported as compared to last year, but the proportion of those anticipating a lasting career impact has fallen as compared to last year. This may be explained by the relatively lower proportion of emerging and minoritised artists employed this year, for whom any impact might be expected to be greater. Another relevant piece of context for this finding is that the average length of artist engagement was much lower this year which again will likely have an affect on potential for lasting career impact.

Reporting back as part of the national Culture Collective evaluation, the Inverclyde Culture Collective team noted that Culture Collective funding had led to greater local resilience because:

- It has supported local projects and local arts infrastructure at scale and over a prolonged period of time;
- It has funded two 'neutral' facilitative roles in the Inverclyde Culture Collective team which proved to play a vital role in maintaining the broader partnership and ecology;
- Both of the above have enabled in-depth cross-sectoral working between arts and the third sector which has resulted in new partnerships and ongoing collaborations;
- It enabled the delivery of a large part of the Inverclyde Arts Action Plan which would otherwise have been funded in a more fragmented way, if at all.

The two case studies that follow provide examples of the way that Inverclyde Culture Collective's work has contributed to this objective by supporting an emerging artist and by enabling a local organisation to be resilient.

Inverclyde Culture Collective case study – Robyn Dainese – ‘RIG Arts Open Studio’

“Before being involved with Inverclyde Culture Collective I had never worked professionally in a creative environment, although I had volunteered my time at local events and within RIG Arts while I was in high school. I achieved my advanced higher in Art and Design and went on to study Fine Art for two years following that. I was a year into my Printmaking degree when the Covid-19 pandemic hit and I was unable to continue my studies remotely. I picked up work in a local pet shop and took some time to consider what it was I wanted out of a career in the arts. I originally heard about the Inverclyde Culture Collective opportunity through Karen Orr of RIG Arts.



We met one day by chance and as we got talking she told me about the opening and encouraged me to give freelancing a go. Like many people post-pandemic I was struggling to adjust, I felt isolated and many outside factors led me to feeling I couldn't continue my studies. The opportunity to get out of my comfort zone, meet new people and learn on the job was one I didn't have to think twice about. I hoped that applying my skills in a practical setting and that sharing the knowledge I had already gathered would help me build my confidence again.

Through Inverclyde Culture Collective I have been heavily involved in setting up Open Studio, a class for people in Inverclyde aged 12-25 who were interested in furthering their artistic development. The class has been incredibly successful and has become a wonderful creative outlet for so many of Inverclyde's talented young artists. Being a part of this project has been so rewarding and knowing I have played a part in nurturing young creatives makes me so proud of the work that I do. Inverclyde Culture Collective also allowed for me to support another class hosted by RIG Arts, Creativity in Mind, which is a participant-led mental wellbeing project for adults in the local area. For me the best bit has been giving local people access to experiences they may not have had otherwise and seeing them go on to flourish.

I've since been involved with outdoor community arts projects such as the Galoshans Festival with FERAL Arts and other groups such as Young at Art - a class aimed at combating social isolation for people aged 60 and over in Inverclyde. Those opportunities and so many more came thanks to the work I was already doing with Inverclyde Culture Collective.

Because of Inverclyde Culture Collective I am a much more well-rounded artist than I could have ever imagined being. Over the last two years I have challenged myself, familiarised myself with the widest range of mediums, built relationships with a huge array of local and guest artists, and taken every opportunity to exchange knowledge and learn along with the participants. Working with Inverclyde Culture Collective has made all the difference, it has launched my artistic career.

More than anything, it has made me feel so much more connected to the area and the fantastic community we have here. Growing up in Inverclyde I think it's easy to feel all of the opportunities are further afield so to be able to consistently work in the field I love with members of my very own community has given me a real sense of pride in our area.

I'm so thankful to Inverclyde Culture Collective and RIG Arts for making the last two years possible, and to every wonderful participant who took part and made it the best experience.”

Inverclyde Culture Collective case study – Kayos Youth Theatre



“Inverclyde Youth Theatre (Kayos) is the senior section of Inverclyde Youth Theatre. At Kayos we work with young people aged 15 to 25, and we’re hearing time after time from numerous different places all over the country that this age range is the hardest to reach just now. Covid happened of course, and this last few years has been a struggle to get people to connect to anything and to turn up and to stay. In our experience young people seem to be completely unwilling to commit to anything at the moment, and trying to get them to answer anything one way or the other is nearly impossible. It might be as simple as they’ve had a few years of a lot of things that would be really important to them being cancelled or at least postponed. It feels like they can’t show any excitement or enthusiasm for anything. Plus

a lot of them are just really busy – perhaps at college or uni or working, or a combination of these things, and many of them are involved in loads of different activities like scouts and guides as well as the arts. We are still finding it hard to engage that age range even though when they are here with us they will throw themselves into things. It makes our planning really, really hard.

Having Inverclyde Culture Collective funding for Kayos has taken the pressure off and meant that we could try new things and keep going over the summer months. This has helped us to keep it going.

Because we had this funding we did so much that we wouldn’t have done otherwise and that we haven’t done before. Puppetry, circus, magic, street theatre. My concern has always been that short-term funding would lead to us trying something new and different but then going ‘yeah, that was great’ and forgetting about it. It’s so important to apply these things as much as we can, and because of the Inverclyde Culture Collective we have been able to do that. We introduced new techniques to our members and then we were able to say to them ‘do you want to do more of that? What particular aspect did you enjoy?’ and then go back and do some more of that for a slightly longer period of time. We also built it into our wider work, for example when we did our show Godspell we included the puppetry and street theatre skills that we had learned.

Inverclyde Culture Collective also funded the Creative Minds Festival at the Beacon, and that has proved to be a great experience for our young people too. Kayos worked together with Surge, a company who runs projects to develop street arts, physical theatre and circus. Since the festival our group has been invited to work with Surge again on a large-scale piece featuring professional performers as part of Surge Festival and we will also have the opportunity to work with Surge again over a longer time period to create a new piece of street theatre to be performed at Inverclyde’s Galoshans Festival.

Inverclyde Culture Collective has been a really positive thing for Kayos. Throughout this period we’ve been working with artists from Inverclyde, local people, positive and relatable role models for our young people. It helps our members to see that the career path for these artists started out in exactly the same place that they are in now. The funding has helped us through what is continuing to be a really difficult time, and without it our members wouldn’t have had all of these opportunities.”

Objective 3: Inequality and barriers to access will be addressed, and everyone given the opportunity to experience and to be inspired by arts and culture.

In our previous report we concluded that progress against Objective 3 was as follows:

An estimated 939 individuals took part in 375 sessions across 18 new projects so far, and as mentioned before 95% of the artists agreed that *I undertook work that would not have happened if Inverclyde Culture Collective had not funded my role*. Without Inverclyde Culture Collective much of this activity would not have taken place, and local people would not have had these opportunities to be inspired by arts and culture. A number of the projects focused on working with specific marginalized groups or individuals, or reducing barriers to access, in response to well-understood local need. 59% of locations used for activity were situated in SIMD decile 1 (the most deprived data-zone) and 44% of the projects focused on engaging with communities with low arts engagement and barriers to access. Those that took part in project activity were extremely positive about their experience and 100% agreed that *it felt easy for me to take part* which is testament to the inclusive ethos of Inverclyde Culture Collective and the careful attention that partners and artists put into engagement.

In the final year of Inverclyde Culture Collective, this positive progress has continued in a similar manner but expanded substantially in its reach.

We previously identified a number of indicators of success relating to Objective 3, and progress against baseline around addressing inequalities and barriers to access is outlined below:

Indicator	Source	Baseline	Final year	Change
Estimated total number of participants across all projects	Snapshot	939	1,526	+587
Number of sessions held	Snapshot	375	416	+41
% of projects focused on: engaging with communities with low arts engagement and barriers to access	Snapshot	44	73	+29
% of unique project locations in SIMD decile 1	Snapshot / SIMD analysis	59	53	-6
% of participants agree: <i>it felt easy for me to take part</i>	Participant survey	100	99	-1
% of participants agree: <i>I had the chance to try new things</i>	Participant survey	98	94	+4
% of artists agree: <i>I was responsive to emerging issues and needs of participants or stakeholders</i>	Artist survey	90	86	-4
% of artists agree: <i>my project or activity had a positive impact on local people</i>	Artist survey	75	95	+20

Response to indicators relating to addressing inequality and barriers to access in Inverclyde were generally similar or more positive across the baseline and final year with more activity taking place using an established impactful approach which was responsive to local need.

Reflecting on Objective 3 at the close of Inverclyde Culture Collective, the lead partners felt strongly that the work of Inverclyde Culture Collective had “been really successful” in the way that it engaged with the Inverclyde community, “helping us engage with marginalized communities who maybe wouldn't automatically access this” and “linking up the community”.

The lead partners reflected that “Oh, my God! There's such a need for this!” and “such a demand” within the community,

Funding from Inverclyde Culture Collective had “meant that we could try out new things” including “loads of things that we wouldn't necessarily have done otherwise” and things “we haven't done before”. Consequently, they reflected that “there's always something interesting happening, our community has benefited from all that interaction”.

The lead partners felt that the Inverclyde Culture Collective had resulted in “a grassroots empowered community” which was “very open” to creative experiences. Community groups had started to understand that connecting with an arts organisations was “something that you can do” and some now had “confidence to just approach” an organisation proactively because they are now “switched on to how the arts and culture can be used”.

The case study that follows provides an example of the way that Inverclyde Culture Collective's work has contributed to this objective via a project designed to address barriers to access.

Inverclyde Culture Collective case study – Beacon Arts Centre - Creative Minds Festival

About the project:	
Partner organisation	Beacon Arts Centre
Dates	Development: February to May 2023 Festival: 16 th /17 th May 2023
Location	Beacon Arts Centre, Greenock
Number of artists	19
Number of sessions	Development: 60 sessions, and Festival: 25 sessions
Number of attenders	Development: 137, and Festival: 137 participants and an audience of around 400

Karen Townsend, Beacon Arts Centre

“The establishment of Inverclyde Culture Collective really helped us to form some new partnerships with a wide range of community groups in our region. These partnerships were central to our thinking while we put together our second-round funding bid, as were the freelance artists that we work with, not to mention the media they work in. We were certain that we should consolidate all of this work and more importantly celebrate it and this is how the Creative Minds Festival was born! Partnerships are at the heart of Creative Minds. We encouraged participants to select the art form that they wanted to work in and, once they had, we provided an expert artist to support each group’s creativity. The workshop process was pressure-free and we worked hard to create an environment in which the stresses of day-to-day life remained outside the room. For some, working creatively was an unfamiliar experience and it was important to ensure that all participants were comfortable throughout. When it came to sharing the work, the celebrations were as much about the creative process as they were about the end product.”

In conversation with the team (Jennifer Hunter, Kevin Jannetts and Poppy Kohner)



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“The way that the Creative Minds Festival worked was that different community groups were invited to work in partnership with artists to then present something at the festival, and the artists were very carefully selected to complement the ideas that community groups had for the creative projects that they wanted to do. This was their opportunity to express themselves creatively, and we were there to facilitate that happening.

Some groups knew exactly what they want to do straight away, and some didn't have a clue. We had lots of cups of tea and lots of conversations! Things changed and evolved during the process and the participants thought of different things that they wanted to do which was great. We just adapted and went with it.

A lot of the participants hadn't really engaged in a similar creative process before. This is a very deprived area of Scotland with all of the challenges and barriers that come with that, and people often think the arts is not for them. We worked hard to make the process easier for people. This involved a warm working environment, good conversations and making sure that everyone was heard. We invited the groups into the Beacon throughout the process which included showing people around the backstage areas and introducing them to the tech team. It is quite exciting getting behind the scenes, but actually we were showing all the participants that their participation meant that they had become part of the Beacon's team.

We had open and honest conversations with them about risk assessments and about security - the kind of things that might have been an elephant in the room - and I think they appreciated that. Everybody felt safe in the space because we had things in place to make them safe.

Since we've done this we had a lot of reports from people saying that they feel welcomed in our building and it was somewhere that they haven't really gone into before. I think they're seeing the place in a different light now.

On the day of the Creative Minds Festival all of the groups came together and could witness each other's work. It was a real celebration of creativity! The day was well attended and not just by the people who were associated with the groups but by the public as well. Even when there wasn't an actual event taking place there was lots of time for people to just go and look at things and engage that way too. So many different groups were there who would never



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normally have crossed paths. Everything came together brilliantly and what a beautiful thing it was to see how proud people were of their work.

At the Beacon we don't want to just come in, do a project, tick some boxes and disappear. We want to build trusted relationships with our local groups and people and individuals. There's not one single group that were involved in the Creative Minds that doesn't want to do more. These are creative people and now they have this completely different relationship with the arts. They all want to keep working with us and they are the ones coming to us with the ideas now - they recognise that we can help them to amplify what they want to talk about. They are trying to do their own things now, and they are wanting to do something much more long term.

Since the Creative Minds Festival the people of Inverclyde are seeing the Beacon as a resource. This festival has demystified the building and helped us to bridge that gap making people realise it's actually their space to come into. For us to be part of the regeneration of Inverclyde as a wonderful creative place to live is an amazing thing. We just want to keep building on that momentum."

Objective 4: Inverclyde will be a better place to live, work or visit.

In our previous report we concluded that progress against Objective 4 was as follows:

Inverclyde Culture Collective has established a range of new creative opportunities for local people to attend, where they can enjoy trying new things and learning new skills and meeting their neighbours. The vast majority of the Inverclyde Culture Collective projects have been directly responsive to Inverclyde as a place, including the local community, environment and historical context. Inverclyde has provided inspiration and the creative research-led process has connected local people to place, no doubt giving them a greater appreciation of Inverclyde's environment and resources. The outputs of this process have also left a lasting legacy, through tangible artworks and exhibitions, and pockets of small-scale regeneration, as well as a less tangible but equally important sense of local pride. Additionally, Inverclyde Culture Collective has created 45 new employment opportunities for freelance artists, and a significant effort has been made to provide a fair, inclusive and enjoyable working environment for the artists locally. This has been extremely successful as the artists have found this to be a very positive, useful and enjoyable experience. In particular Inverclyde Culture Collective's commitment to creative autonomy has been noted and appreciated by the artists, leading to artists feeling trusted and respected. It is likely that this positive working ethos and environment will also have positive ripples beyond the freelancers and into the partner organisations and the wider network.

In the final year of Inverclyde Culture Collective, this positive progress has continued as the local arts infrastructure has developed further providing opportunities for work and participation.

We previously identified a number of indicators of success relating to Objective 4, and progress against baseline for indicators relating to Inverclyde being a better place to live or visit is outlined below:

Indicator	Source	Baseline	Final year	Change
% of projects focused on: place and communities	Snapshot	61	41	-20
% of projects focused on: regeneration of communities	Snapshot	33	55	+22
% of participants agree: <i>I enjoyed their experience</i>	Participant survey	98	99	+1
% of participants agree: <i>taking part in this makes me glad to live in Inverclyde</i>	Participant survey	78	91	+13
% of artists agree: <i>I was responsive to Inverclyde as the setting for my work</i>	Artist survey	90	86	-4
% of artists agree: <i>my project will have a lasting positive impact in Inverclyde</i>	Artist survey	85	85	0

Response to indicators relating to whether Inverclyde is now a better place to live or visit were generally similar or more positive across the baseline and final year. Although there was a fall in the proportion of projects focusing on place and communities, there was a rise in the proportion of projects focusing on regeneration of communities. This year saw a rise in participants agreeing that taking part made them glad to live in Inverclyde.

Progress against baseline for indicators relating to Inverclyde being a better place to work is outlined below:

Indicator	Source	Baseline	Final year	Change
Number of freelance employment opportunities created in Inverclyde	Snapshot	45	71	+26
% of artists: live within Inverclyde	Artist survey	35	38	+3
% of artists agree: <i>overall this process was positive for me and my practice</i>	Artist survey	95	86	-9
% of artists agree: <i>I felt embedded within the local community</i>	Artist survey	90	100	+10
% of artists agree: <i>it has helped me to see Inverclyde as an attractive place to live or work</i>	Artist survey	90	81	-9

More freelance employment opportunities were created in Inverclyde this year, as compared to last year. Response to indicators relating to whether Inverclyde is now a better place to work were generally similarly positive across the baseline and final year, and all of the artists felt embedded in the local community this year.

Reflecting on Objective 4 at the close of Inverclyde Culture Collective, the lead partners felt strongly that “the sheer number of artists and things that we were able to bring to Inverclyde is great” and “it has definitely opened people's eyes to the opportunities that exist in Inverclyde”.

The case study that follows provides an example of the way that Inverclyde Culture Collective's work has contributed to this objective through a creative response to place.

Inverclyde Culture Collective case study – Re-imagining the Highstreet Residency - Oak Ornaments

About the project:	
Artist	Amy Grogan
Dates	June 1 st – July 29 th 2023
Location	Oak Mall, Greenock
Number of artists	1
Number of workshops	3
Estimated public reach	100+

“My background is in sculpture. I relay my curiosity through increased scale, multiples and material. Collectively, all pieces exert absurdity and often humour. It is important to me that my work is accessible and this is considered whilst picking subject matters, objects and display methods. I had seen some great opportunities advertised by Inverclyde Culture Collective however they were just not quite right for me. This specific residency was just perfect for my practice.



My residency is all about reimagining the high street. Nationwide, the high street is in decline and therefore I wanted to put my own spin on the notion of a 'shop'. My shop appears to be a conventional shop but everything about it is completely unconventional. There's no legal tender accepted, currency comes in the form of either exchanged objects or stories. The lack of money allows the shop to be inclusive; anyone can

obtain a work of art. Each piece is valued independently, ranging from 1 story / 1 object to 20 stories / 20 objects. I think that anything new and unique like this does add something positive to the high street.

I spent my first two weeks in Greenock researching by exploring; going to shops, speaking to people and gathering observations. I then spent a week making moulds, objects, drawing and sculpting all inspired by what I had gathered around Greenock. Some of the objects are gigantic and some of them are small. I've made scotch pies, Greenock hairstyles, 'Oak Mall Tourist Guide for Ants' books, giant feet, 'How to Spot a Tourist in Greenock' keyrings and some giant sandals. It's set up a bit like a gallery and everything is labelled with the name of the work, the location of where it was purchased, the material and the value of it (i.e. 2 objects / 2 stories).



Initially, people were confused about how to navigate the shop but the Greenock Telegraph published an article (twice!) about what I was doing, and this really enticed the locals to come and have a peek.



I have a display section for all of the objects that people have exchanged with me. I was donated three walking sticks which I have used to produce works of art. I've had books, a picnic basket, a toy dog and a brand new high vis jacket. A giant onion was swapped for an 'I love Taiwan' bag, along with five other objects. I've also been given a lot of art. All of the objects in the exchange section can also be exchanged for another object or another story. What I didn't realise is that the stories

would be my favourite part. I've really enjoyed seeing what people want to share with you - what they find important, funny or significant. One day I had a children's birthday party in, they were going to get their nails done and they stopped by the shop before they went. They were all learning French at school so some of their stories were written in French. They nearly cleared me out because they wanted everything!

As well as running the shop itself I've been running workshops with various groups around Greenock: Your Voice Recovery group and asylum seekers through MEARS.

I've also used my shop window as an exhibition space, the display changes every week. The window display is always visible despite the shop only being open two days a week. I've displayed work from the Beacon Arts Group, had a solo show for somebody, Your Voice Recovery group, and Notre Dame High School pupils. This week the work of the asylum seekers will be on display that has been created during the workshop.



Some of these people have never had an exhibition before so it's really nice to see their work displayed. Everybody is intertwining and working together locally and there's been crossover with other Inverclyde Culture Collective projects. It's very unusual and I've never experienced anything like this before in the art scene. It is exciting, and it makes Inverclyde an enjoyable place to be.

At the end of the residency there's going to be a closing down sale. I have gathered a lot of data and therefore I am planning on making a storybook which includes all of the stories and also a catalogue, something similar to an Argos catalogue to document all of the objects that I've obtained through the exchanges.

I've really enjoyed this residency. The public in Greenock have made me feel very welcome. My role within the shop developed into a mildly performative one; an artist, a shop assistant, a shop owner. The shop constantly evolved during the residency. I've liked that aspect of the project and it is something that I probably want to incorporate into more of my work in the future. The whole experience has given me a different way of working and a different way of thinking."

Features underpinning the successes of Inverclyde Culture Collective

Reflecting on the work of Inverclyde Culture Collective since its inception, the various project stakeholders identified the following features as underpinning the successes of the work:

Feature underpinning successes	Illustrative quote
The Inverclyde Culture Collective was built on a strong foundation of work linked to the existing Arts Action Plan.	"I think what made it unique is the fact that all that infrastructure was there from the groundwork that had happened before." (Project team)
The Inverclyde region was a receptive environment for this work.	"The overwhelming generosity of community and partners to pull together to make things happen." (Lead partner)
There was a commitment to partnership working locally.	"There was the core group of strategic partners, and it was already in existence. Culture Collective has enabled us to demonstrate that the approach can work." (Project team)
Situating the Inverclyde Culture Collective within Inverclyde Council and CVS Inverclyde enabled process and relationship-building.	"Being based at CVS Inverclyde means we have been able to tap into those third sector partners which is a huge benefit. Having that third sector partner has been such a gateway and they can facilitate this flexible way of working." (Project team)
Those facilitating Inverclyde Culture Collective championed a clear and consistent vision for the creative approach to be taken across the project.	"The way that they are targeting certain needs within the community feels really great, the vision is really cool." (Artist)
Those facilitating Inverclyde Culture Collective were experienced artists themselves, which enabled them to develop a conducive environment for delivering the vision.	"I trust them. I feel like I know that they are coming from a similar place to me conceptually and artistically. I really trust that they care about the more grassroots kind of community engagement. They are on the same page as me." (Artist)
Those facilitating Inverclyde Culture Collective had a can-do attitude to supporting experimental work, with stakeholders noting that Kat and Jack had "gone above and beyond".	"We try to make everything work. We try to meet them where they are. We find out what they want to do and see the best way possible with the options that we have. I think that actually is the spirit of the project." (Project team)

Reflecting on the strategic impact of the Inverclyde Culture Collective

The following section describes the strategic impact of Inverclyde Culture Collective from the perspective of key local individuals.

Charlene Elliott
Chief Executive Officer
CVS Inverclyde

“The Inverclyde Creative Producer and the Activities Co-ordinator have been employed (each two days per week) to facilitate the Inverclyde Culture Collective and are hosted by CVS Inverclyde.

CVS Inverclyde develops community groups and voluntary organisations by championing the role of the sector in building successful communities. Inverclyde Culture Collective core is to thinking about radical solutions to how we can sensitively collaborate and make work with local communities.

This project demonstrated a sustained commitment to community and place by crucially building confidence that allowed the creative practitioners and organisations in Inverclyde to regularly come together with each other to share resources and peer-to-peer networking support. There was a clear collaborative vision supported by all partners across the locality from the individual to the strategic level of Community Planning Partnership which allowed for individuals and organisations to develop their own programmes.

CVS Inverclyde was a core component within this unique local delivery structure by being able to build new connections, shared ownership of decision-making processes, collectively manage a devolved budget and longer term sustained and interwoven community led artistic activity.

CVS Inverclyde was integral to the success of the project by being the ‘connector’ within Health & Social Care contexts, grassroots organisations, individuals and non-arts organisations who we might not be aware of. This led to in-depth cross-partnership research between arts and social care which has resulted in new partnerships and ongoing collaborations.

The Inverclyde Creative Producer and the Activities Co-ordinator posts being based at CVS Inverclyde allowed for their positions within the local structure to be ‘neutral’ and acted as the intermediary between all delivery partners which is an essential component to the ecology of the partnership being maintained.

We hope the legacy of Culture Collective projects will empower and mobilise ‘future implementers’ who may not previously have had the confidence to instigate creative projects in their community by being able to recognise their own potential as cultural changemakers in the creative future of Inverclyde.”

Ruth Binks

**Director of Education, Communities & Organisational Development, Inverclyde Council
Chair of the Culture and Heritage Partnership**

“Creativity is vibrant, visible and a significant source of pride for local people in Inverclyde. It is a critical tool for imagining and communicating a unique and innovative identity for the area. This identity makes meaningful connections between our rich heritage, environmental and social assets. In Inverclyde we are proud of the way that our local communities are supportive of culture and how they embrace artists with imagination and ambition. People living in Inverclyde have huge community spirit and have told us of their hope and ambition for the area. Without the arts some of the sparkle in life disappears. Our cultural partners in Inverclyde understand the need to deliver arts activity that is both community focused and responsive to levels of poverty and inequality within and across Inverclyde. Participating in the arts can put the sparkle back into communities by empowering them to feel confident and proud of Inverclyde as a creative place. There has always been strong grass roots cultural work going on in Inverclyde, but it was quite difficult to find a cohesive way forward to come together for larger scale projects and a collective vision. Sometimes, when partners put in individual funding bids, we don't always know what each other is doing, and some of our local organisations found themselves competing against each other for similar funds or project ideas.

The Inverclyde Arts and Creativity Action Plan (2021-23) established an implementation plan that set out a clear vision required to achieve the Arts Strategy Aims and Objectives (by the end of 2023). Culture Collective funding was crucial for us to test out this new way of large-scale partnership working by delivering a collective set of actions. For me as the Chair of the Culture and Heritage Partnership, Inverclyde Culture Collective has given us an ability to deliver a robust cross-area approach to arts programming and development where all communities irrespective of their socio-economic position have equal access to the arts. It is the ‘collective’ part of it that makes all the difference and has established Inverclyde with a unique cultural partnership model that encompasses Local Authority, third sector, arts venues, arts organisations and the individual.

The arts are a core driver for regeneration and contribute positively towards a sustainable increase in local economy and employment, underpinned by the work of every sector within the Local Authority. Culture Collective has created significant employment for freelance creative practitioners in Inverclyde, which works in partnership with the ambition to make Inverclyde a great place to live and work and to create thriving communities. A significant number of artists have been supported and feel empowered and inspired to participate in the positive progression of Inverclyde, knowing that their input is valued.

In difficult economic times we aim to build on and increase our partnership working in the arts, and Inverclyde Culture Collective has created a platform for us to achieve this. It has introduced a way of working that has created cohesion for us to continue to reach for the stars for our communities as we move forward. Arts will continue to be a core consideration when undertaking all community wide planning, policies, development and evaluation. We feel confident in the local artistic community's ability to make a positive impact and we know we can draw on their wide array of cultural knowledge and expertise.”

A wider interest in Inverclyde Culture Collective

The work of the Inverclyde Culture Collective has generated a wider interest, and some examples of this are highlighted below.

Inverclyde Culture Collective as a national case study

Queen Margaret University is evaluating the impact of Culture Collective as a whole for Creative Scotland and the Scottish Government. Dr Anthony Schrag (Senior Lecturer in Arts Management & Cultural Policy at QMU) advised that they had selected Inverclyde Culture Collective as one of their 7 case studies. The purpose of these case studies was to illustrate diverse contexts in which work is happening across the Culture Collective programme and also to profile some of the different ways that projects have been set up. The Inverclyde Culture Collective case study highlighted the success of the unique delivery model along with the following enabling factors: (1) Artists' professional knowledge and skills being properly valued, (2) Partner buy-in, (3) Freedom and flexibility for the project without pressure of set outcomes, feeling trusted to deliver, and the ability to be open about the project with collaborators and funders, and (4) Infrastructures.

Visit from Christina McKelvie MSP - the Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development

Inverclyde Culture Collective was asked by the Scottish Government Access to Culture Team and Creative Scotland to host a visit by Christina McKelvie MSP (the Minister for Culture) alongside Stuart McMillan MSP (the Minister for Greenock and Inverclyde). This meeting was held at RIG Arts on 18th August 2023 and facilitated as a round table discussion with partners, Funders, artists and participants who engaged with Inverclyde Culture Collective across the last two years. 30 people were in attendance and they joyfully described the impacts and successes.

"There is a wide variety of projects taking place through the Collective in Inverclyde, so I was delighted to help showcase some of the talent we have and the impact this creativity has had on the individuals and wider community" - Stuart McMillan MSP
(Greenock Telegraph)



"Many thanks go to Stuart McMillan MSP for inviting me along, so good to hear about the amazing work of the collective and the transformational impact on many community members. A really lovely visit, thank you." - Christina McKelvie MSP

Looking ahead across Inverclyde Council

“Capitalising on the legacy of Inverclyde’s Culture Collective is a priority recognised by all lead partners in the project. Already a solid foundation has been laid to take forward a refresh of the Inverclyde Arts and Creativity strategy, mapping new ways to build on the successes of collaboration, partnership, and participation that have made such a difference to the area’s cultural landscape. At the same time, fresh focus is being brought to the underlying heritage of Inverclyde – the geography, buildings and stories that combine to describe this particular place and the people who live here.

Inverclyde Council is actively seeking funding to bring the same connectivity already achieved through the Culture Collective to our heritage landscape – and in so doing will seek to draw in our existing partners and collaborators to think creatively about how to support groups and individuals to tell Inverclyde’s stories in new and engaging ways.

As the strategic planning cycle for the Inverclyde Community Planning Partnership renews, it is appropriate that the overarching theme of ‘Place’ invites all partners to consider how the work they do and the services they deliver actively contribute to positive outcomes for the people of Inverclyde. As already demonstrated by the Culture Collective – participation in cultural activities can be a transformative experience, impacting how people see themselves and how they think about their local area. Collectively, we look forward to writing a new chapter on the cultural landscape of Inverclyde – reaching into the past to help us describe our present, and shape our future.”

Looking to the future

Hopefully there's a way to keep those links and co-working going because the beauty of it is there's no one organisation that is doing it all and actually when they're placed together it does create something bigger. (Project team)

At the point of evaluation the lead partners and project team had been focusing on looking for ways to continue the work that had started through Inverclyde Culture Collective. Some projects were expected to continue on a self-sustaining basis or be embedded into local programmes:

- “The art group look like they are going to continue themselves after the Culture Collective.”
- “It's been nice to try that out, and I would say it's a really successful programme which we're going embed into our programme moving forward.”
- “We're trying to find legacy projects where there is appetite to keep going with infrastructure around them.”

The lead partners and project team were also sourcing funding to continue other projects:

- “I'm just doing the funding applications at the moment.”
- “I know that we put a few bids in with Creative Scotland to continue some projects.”
- “We are trying to find them pots of funding. We have been putting in other funding applications.”

However, as the Inverclyde Culture Collective came to a close the lead partners and project team expressed concerns about whether it would be possible to sustain the progress that had been made in Inverclyde so far:

- “That worry that it goes off a cliff edge at the end.”
- “When the funding comes to an end, when Culture Collective comes to an end, I just am slightly concerned that the focus is going to shift elsewhere and without the same money around then are we going to sustain these relationships?”

The lead partners and project team felt strongly that ideally the Inverclyde region would retain someone in a co-ordinating role, explaining: “It would be nice to see someone who can keep facilitating this kind of work going forward.”

At the time of writing, budget had been allocated to retaining Kat Boyle for a transition period:

“There has been a small underspend from contingency and Creative Scotland, so Inverclyde Council and CVS Inverclyde are willing to keep me on for a short duration of time in the transition period. The goal would be: the current Arts Action Plan finished at the end of 2023 and it is proposed I will write the next Arts Action Plan to use the data and evaluation to pull out what our next five years will look like and what we want to achieve in the area and to keep the conversations going.”

Concluding remarks

By the end of the Inverclyde Culture Collective grant term, along with our lead partners, we will have explored ways of engaging community planning partners, communities and visitors in mutual relationships, identifying that arts and culture is important to them and working with them to celebrate and preserve it.

The various stakeholders have been extremely positive about Inverclyde Culture Collective and about the sustained and consistent progress that has been made around building and expanding the arts infrastructure in Inverclyde and in developing and supporting an impactful creative approach. Inverclyde Culture Collective set out to deliver 21 projects and 40 paid opportunities, and this was exceeded. Across the full span of the Inverclyde Culture Collective period:

- 32 projects were funded;
- 791 sessions were held, engaging with an estimated 2,456 participants (although this is likely to include participants attending multiple projects);
- An estimated 56 community partners were involved;
- In addition to the co-ordinating team, 116 freelance opportunities were created undertaking 2,625 hours of paid work.

The Inverclyde Culture Collective has generated strong linkages between local organisations, artists and communities, and at the close of the Inverclyde Culture Collective:

- 91% of the participants agreed that *taking part in this makes me glad to live in Inverclyde*;
- All of the artists (100%) felt embedded in the local community;
- All of the artists (100%) agreed that *I undertook work that would not have happened if Inverclyde Culture Collective had not funded my role*.

The following features were identified as underpinning the successes of the work in Inverclyde:

- The Inverclyde Culture Collective was built on a strong foundation of work linked to the existing Arts Action Plan;
- The Inverclyde region was a receptive environment for this work;
- There was a commitment to partnership working locally;
- Situating the Inverclyde Culture Collective within Inverclyde Council and CVS Inverclyde enabled process and relationship-building;
- Those facilitating Inverclyde Culture Collective: championed a clear and consistent vision for the creative approach to be taken across the project, were experienced artists themselves which enabled them to develop a conducive environment for delivering the vision, and had a can-do attitude to supporting experimental work.

It is hoped that the local arts ecosystem established through Inverclyde Culture Collective will be strong enough to be self-sustaining beyond the funded period. At the point of writing the lead partners were working hard to look for ways to support and resource continued activity, but concerns were raised around whether the arts would remain a local priority without the security of the Culture Collective funding stream and the co-ordinating roles.