

SPRING 2023

Outdoor Arts Feasibility

Artist Residency
Consultation

Led by: **RIG Arts**

Key Partners: **Feral & Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park**

Report written by: **Sarah Longfield**

Funded by The Scottish Government 2022/23 LAG Co-operation Challenge Fund





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Introduction

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"The arts are an effective tool that brings people together creating a sense of community, educating and sharing information in interactive ways and giving people an opportunity to express themselves in a safe space." Survey response



This report is the culmination of a month of intensive community consultation in Inverclyde, focusing specifically on Gourock, Kilmacolm, Wemyss Bay and Inverkip, about the potential for a programme of outdoor arts residencies in rural spaces in the local area.

There are three main partners with the consultation being led by RIG Arts, supported by Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park and Glasgow based producing house, Feral.

Before we dive into the detail, I want to share with you some constant themes which emerged across all groups and individuals we've spoken to.

When local people start talking about the landscape and natural beauty of Inverclyde, they light up, their voice becomes more musical and their eyes sparkle. Everyone did this. This isn't always the case in other areas of Scotland and it's important to note how valuable this shared enthusiasm and passion is.

Another important aspect to note, which was evident in nearly all conversations, was the high value people place on community in Inverclyde. There is also an impressively wide reaching volunteer sector. From community gardeners, to health walkers to litter pickers, the commitment to volunteering in Inverclyde is noticeably stronger than other areas of Scotland, even some of its closest neighbours.

Who we spoke to

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Our consultation involved creative workshops, a series of walk and talks, a snapshot survey and some group visits and a series of in depth conversations online



Over the course of 4 weeks we:

- Delivered Walk & Talks at four different sites in Clyde Muirshiel Park
 - Inverkip to Wemyss Bay
 - Corlick Hill
 - Lunderston Bay
 - The Greenock Cut
- We also delivered 4 Creative Consultation workshops
 - Inverkip Primary School
 - Literati (after a litter pick at Greenock Cut)
 - 2x workshops at RIG's studios
- 86 local people engaged in the walks and workshops
- 115 people filled out the online survey
- 20 artists were interviewed online, all of whom had either expertise in outdoor arts, or had worked in Clyde Muirshiel, most of them had both.
- 92 people were engaged through informal conversations with our consultant, Sarah Longfield visiting a range of community groups including Gourrock Shore Street Gardens (Inverclyde Shed), Kilmacolm Community Council, several Inverclyde Bothy Walks and Belville Community Garden Trust.

Outdoor Arts Residencies

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This report focuses on developing a programme of Outdoor Arts Residencies in Clyde Muirshiel Park. This is what we mean by that:



- A residency is a period of time where an artist or group of artists might spend time in a particular area of the park and make some art work.
- This could be in any art form, not just visual art, including theatre, music, film, dance, circus and more.
- The length of a residency can be anything from a couple of weeks to a year. We weigh up the pros and cons of different lengths of residency later on in the report.
- Some residencies might not have a product - a piece of art or an event at the end. Some might be about working with a specific group and the outcome is the wellbeing and increased creative skills of the participants.
- Some might be fully participatory with community members taking a full, engaged part in the process.
- Some might involve the community at certain stages but the main output would be artist-led.
- A residency is more open than a commission where a specific artwork is often identified in the brief. We want artists to make discoveries and evolve their ideas by being supported to work fluidly, which is why we are developing residencies rather than commissions.

The Partners

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LEAD ORGANISATION

RIG ARTS

www.rigarts.org



RIG Arts is a socially engaged arts charity, based in Greenock. They create and deliver a wide range of visual arts and film projects, workshops, training opportunities, exhibitions, public artworks, community spaces and events.

RIG believes that the arts are a valuable tool to support regeneration and affect multiple policy areas including health, tourism and wellbeing and their work in creative regeneration has been recognised for best practice nationally, winning a SURF Award in both 2017 and 2021.

Their objectives are to engage disadvantaged people through cultural activities – enhancing their lives, developing new skills and encouraging citizenship, community development and education, encouraging the development of a diverse cultural and artistic base within Inverclyde, to the benefit of the whole community through education, outreach, and heritage.

The Partners

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Those involved in this
consultation and project plan

FERAL

www.feralarts.co.uk



Feral are a Glasgow based arts producing house founded in 2015 by Jill Smith and Kathryn Boyle. They produce a portfolio of artists, tour work locally and internationally, organise festivals and develop creative residencies as a way of supporting a diverse community of independent artists working across the visual theatre and outdoor arts sector in Scotland.

They are specialists in the outdoor arts sector and sit on the Advisory board for Articulation (an advocacy and development organisation for the outdoor arts sector in Scotland) and are members of Outdoor Arts UK (a national strategic organisation for the Outdoor Arts sector). Feral are linked both nationally and internationally to the outdoor arts network and are extremely knowledgeable about best practice.

The Partners

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Those involved in this
consultation and project plan

CLYDE MUIRSHIEL REGIONAL PARK – Inverclyde Council Ranger Service.

www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk




This park spans several local authorities and encompasses a wide range of rural environments. For this consultation we have worked with the rangers based at The Greenock Cut visitors centre in Cornalees and also explored sites in the Inverclyde sections of Clyde Murshiel including Corlick Hill, Lunderston Bay and the path from Inverkip to Wemyss Bay.

Country Park Senior Ranger, Michael Holcombe, working with Inverclyde council, has supported the project as environmental and land expert. Leading on ecological priorities and they have lent a distinct expertise to the consultation about the proposed site and invaluable insight into how they have connected with artists in the past, and what they would like this to look like in the future.

Methodology

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And what we hope to achieve



“If you’re enhancing and celebrating the environment, people are more likely to want to protect it and fight for its survival”

We undertook this consultation to

- Gain a better understanding of what the community want and need from an Outdoor Arts residency programme through consultation
- Explore and exemplify how our innovative arts led practice can support community
- Development and achieve shared goals
- Learn from local partners, build upon existing relationships and explore new network opportunities
- Develop learnings from RIG & Feral’s experience and ongoing expertise
- Identify and reflect ecological and environmental priorities for Clyde Muirshiel Park Rangers

As outdoor arts experts, Feral explain: “The Audience Agency’s 2018 Outdoor Arts Report suggests that outdoor arts experiences captivate accidental audiences who may not otherwise seek cultural activity acting as a stepping stone to deeper engagement with local cultural venues.

The outdoor arts inherently prototypes new ways of being together; it creates space where frontiers and limitations of how we can connect with one another are constantly re-imagined. Outdoor artworks that capture the imagination of a broad public/accidental audiences will act as a bridge to future attendance at venue/building based programmes.”

This consultation evidences community support, where we have meaningfully sought to involve the community through a range of consultation formats including an accessible online survey, creative workshops, walk and talk events and more informal conversations using prompts, such as the Outdoor Arts booklet of inspiration as a catalyst for ideas.

Building from a series of successful artist residencies and commissions in 2022, delivered with the three main partners and Inverclyde Culture Collective, we want to move forward with momentum and strengthened relationships. Spending time imagining what future opportunities could look like alongside local residents has been an important step to achieving a future programme of exciting, inspiring and engaging outdoor art in Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park.

A love letter to the Park Rangers

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"The rangers were amazing, all the way through"

Everyone we spoke to who had spent time with Michael or John, the rangers based at The Greenock Cut Visitors Centre were all in agreement that these people are a total inspiration.

This is a rare occurrence to have such blanket praise and in the context of the current economic and social backdrop, perhaps an ephemeral moment in time. The moment is now to maximise the potential of having such inspirational, warm and welcoming rangers in Inverclyde.

Despite the service being massively under-resourced, they have gone above and beyond in supporting the artists who worked in the park in recent years and are hugely supportive of any future creative initiatives.

Their extensive knowledge of the landscape and natural habitats of the park is exceptional, as is their ability to share that enthusiasm with anyone who is lucky enough to hear their stories.

We will dive into the themes further into this report, but an important one to pull out here is that all the potential ideas stem from an overarching consensus that the landscape should be the main attraction with any artistic intervention that happens in the future. If the landscape is the main attraction, then the rangers, as custodians and passionate storytellers of the land, should also be fully supported to shine.



Executive Summary

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Key Findings and Recommendations

"The landscape is the star"

Key Findings

An artist residential can take a number of forms, and perhaps this programme should include several different approaches. Some core ingredients though, which should feature in every element are:

- All work should consider its impact and work towards net-zero
- Natural and locally sourced materials should be prioritised
- Every project should have a participatory interactive element
- The social justice issue around inaccessible spaces should always be considered
- A digital connection and legacy should be included in all work
- A library of heritage stories, an up to date list of potential partners and local facilities and a growing artist-created bank of inspiration should weave throughout the programme
- Clarity on co-design and whose work it is should be clear in every brief
- All opportunities should be taken to listen to the rangers' stories as they are brilliant!

Taking the most popular themes and ideas from this consultation, some suggestions for the programme are:

- Remember this programme has developed from years of excellent participatory and socially engaged practice. It is standing on the shoulders of giants
- There are a wealth of partners, local artists and armies of volunteers who should be engaged meaningfully in the process
- The themes of wellbeing, net-zero and community led tourism are intersectional and should be a focus through all the work, not just in specific artist briefs
- Known outdoor pieces such as fairy trails, easter egg hunts and dummy trees are incredibly popular and can be adapted and built upon
- Maps are enduringly attractive and evocative
- People want things to do in the winter (as well as other seasons)
- People are always looking for free things to do with their kids
- There is a wide range of people/groups who use these spaces and some work could be targeted to specific groups

Previous Work

Context and Learnings

Inverclyde Culture Collective – 2 week residency at Greenock Cut

Irene Evison

Irene Evison created a participatory woven tapestry installation, drawing inspiration from the industrial heritage and natural heritage of the Park using natural resources. Linking up with local partners, the Inverclyde Shed and also using the resources of the Watt Institute for inspiration, Irene's residency at the Greenock Cut created a brilliant way for walkers and weaving enthusiasts to take part in the creation of a beautiful piece of work.

It was of particular appeal to many as it was made from local materials, in fact, as the participants sat weaving, they could see the sheep on the hills which the fleece had come from.

Photo credit: Steve Elliot



Previous Work

Context - learnings from before

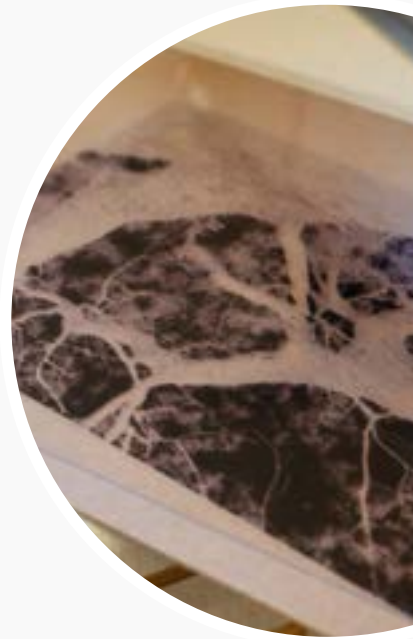
Inverclyde Culture Collective – 2 week residency at Greenock Cut

Noel Griffin

Noel Griffin's residency initially was set to explore invasive species, specifically the Rhododendron Ponticum, and its threat to the biodiversity of the park. However, up at the Greenock Cut, there are few rhododendrons, but there was, and continues to be, a big issue of Ash dieback disease, with hundreds of Ash trees needing to be felled.

Noel created charcoal from the felled ash trees on site, engaging passers by in the process. That charcoal was then used to create a series of photographic prints.

Photo credit: Steve Elliot



Previous Work

Context - learnings from before

Light Up: Alternative Burns Night

RIG Arts

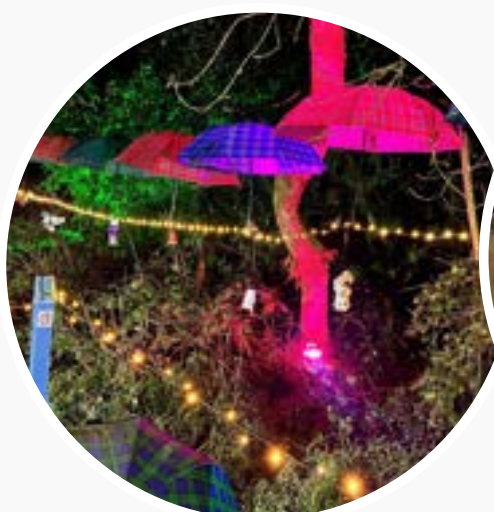
Light Up was two free community focused 'Alternative' Burn's Night celebrations held in Lunderston Bay and Gourrock celebrating Robert Burn's through various art and creative installations.

In the build up to this, RIG delivered 12 weeks of creative workshops to schools and targeted groups. The events, which attracted 400+ local people involved a range of arts installations, walkabout performance, poetry and burns suppers.

The audience could also take a free pack to make their own burns supper at home.

In an evaluation carried out by ekos, of the 400+ audience members who attended the events, 75% felt they had a greater appreciation of art and 81% felt they understood their environmental impact better after attending.

Photo credit: Ronan Donnachie



Previous Work

Context - learnings from before

Feral x Galoshans Takeover 2023

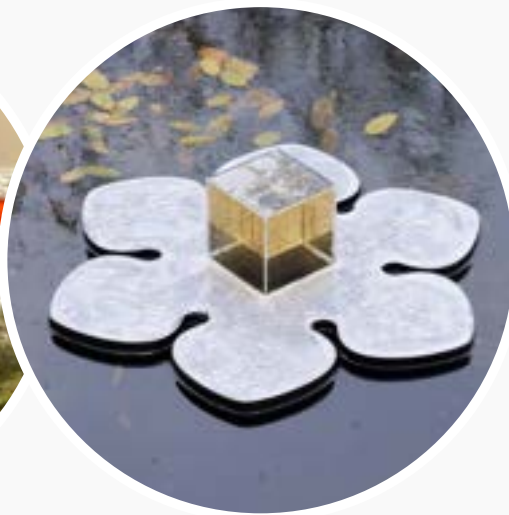
In 2022, Galoshans Consortium, led by RIG Arts, teamed up with the arts organisation Feral to create a programme of dynamic performances, installations and interactive encounters that enabled audiences to explore the extraordinary in the everyday.

This included a new commission with Greenock Cut Visitor Centre & Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Nature Trail by artist Matthew Rimmer. Biotopes is an ongoing body of sculptures in the form of vitrines that magically suspend water above the surface, aiming to enable the viewer to observe aquatic ecosystems.

Another highlight of the Feral programme was Alien Species by Dudendance at Lunderston Bay an outdoor performance and headphone installation that weaved together ethereal dance, otherworldly soundscapes and sculptural costumes. Thematically linked to the impact plastic waste is having an irreversible, devastating effect on the planet especially in the sea.

"Powerful piece. The location was essential to the work. Having the chance to wander off and experience the piece the way we wanted was a highlight, taking our time to go to the mental space we needed. Thank you."

(Audience Quote from Feral Curated Galoshans Programme)



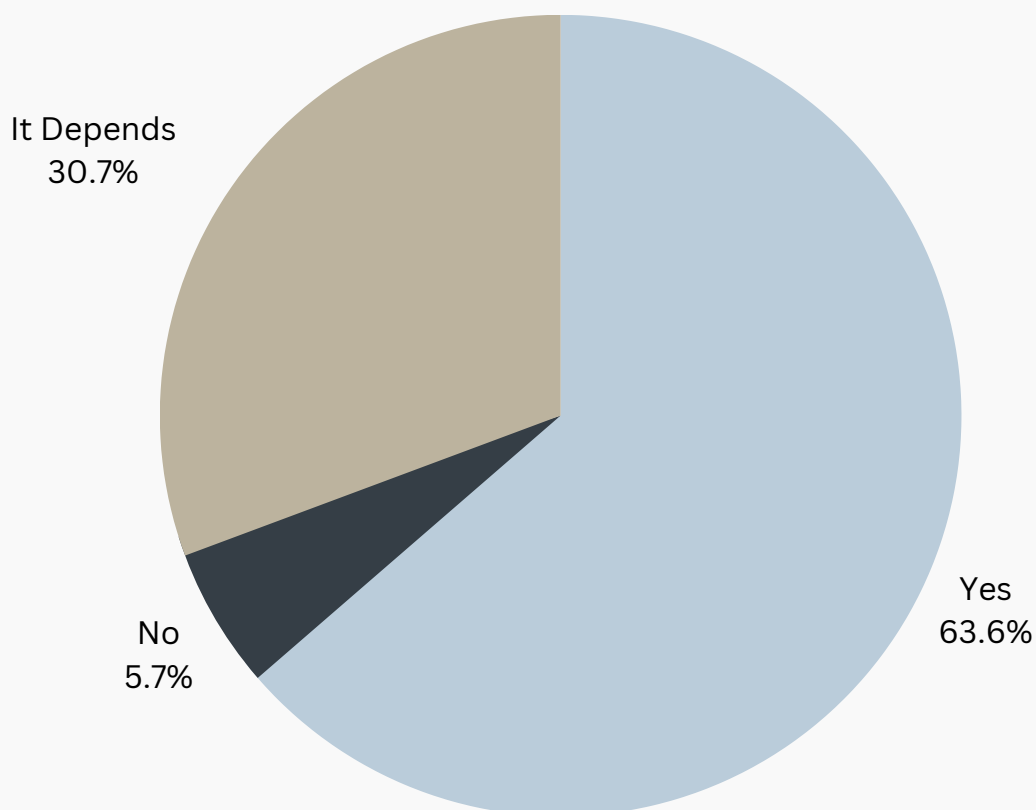
Arts in Inverclyde

Context & Survey Findings

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"Functional interactive art would get me there. Art for arts sake...not so much"

We asked people if Arts & Creativity would make them more likely to visit places like the Greenock Cut

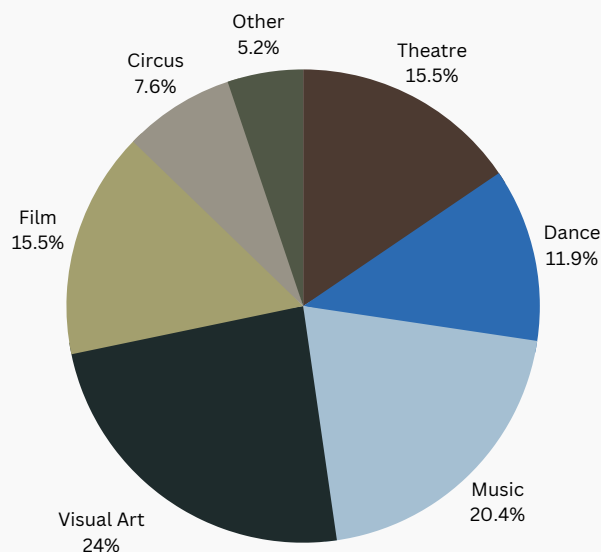


Where respondents selected "It depends" on the question above, there were a range of reasons, but the two most popular were that it would depend on the art form and a concern that the art would disrupt the environment.

Arts in Inverclyde

Context & Survey Findings

"The excellent work of the Culture Collective must not be lost!"



Preferred art forms for outdoor artwork



There have been several large programmes of work in recent years which have enhanced and strengthened the cultural sector in Inverclyde, encouraging significantly more partnership working and fostering a collaborative and generous approach to shared expertise and resources. This coming together of partners creates a regional programme of creative activity and opportunity which is greater than the sum of their parts.

As is often the case, much of the funding for this collaborative approach is fixed term. The Inverclyde Culture Collective, funded through COVID recovery Scottish Government funds, is led by a consortium of local arts organisations, RIG being a key partner. This is coming to an end this Autumn. The Dandelion project and the Climate Beacon are also examples of excellent local partnership working, but were also fleeting in financial support.

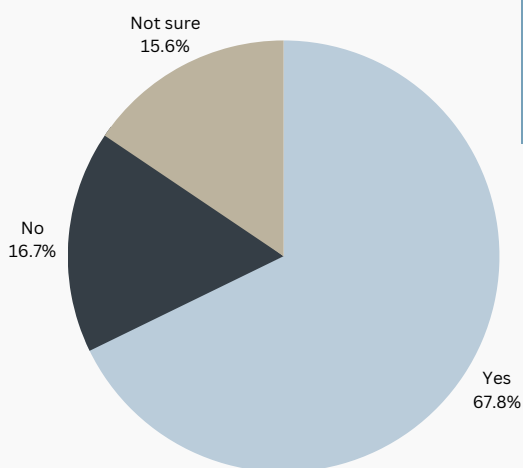
This consultation is part of a drive to overcome these relatively short term initiatives and find ways of developing longer term, impactful arts opportunities for all.

Kat Boyle, of Feral, has also been leading the Inverclyde Culture Collective, and working as Inverclyde Creative Producer since March 2019 with a focus on leading the Inverclyde Arts and Creativity Strategies. It's of utmost importance that Kat's expertise isn't lost as the Inverclyde Culture Collective comes to an end. This consultation demonstrates how this is possible, through collaborative working with RIG and Clyde Muirshiel, Feral can continue to build a legacy of the excellent partnership model of the ICC over the last two years.

Climate Emergency

Context of aiming for Net Zero

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We asked people if they thought that the Climate Emergency was a threat to Inverclyde

Despite clear scientific evidence that climate change will impact the whole planet, this small snapshot shows there is still some way to go to raise awareness. It's also important to point out that the majority of respondents to the survey had an interest in the arts and in the outdoors, so would be more likely to have an awareness of the climate emergency.



In Creative Scotlands (refreshed) Strategic Framework (2021), they state: “In 2019 the Scottish Government declared a climate emergency and introduced legislation setting national targets to reduce emissions to net-zero by 2045 at the latest. This critical global issue will have a major impact on how people engage in artistic and creative activity.

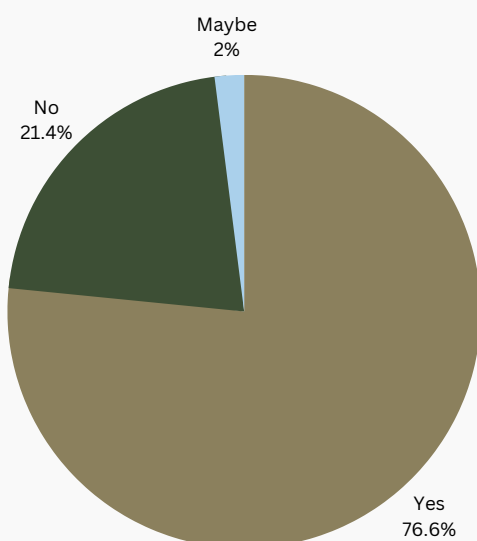
Arts and creativity can play a key role as we transition to a more sustainable society, and we will continue to advocate for this wider role while supporting the arts, screen and creative industries to adapt and to embed sustainable business and environmental practices. Scotland aims to develop a wellbeing economy, and this can only be achieved if cultural value, social value and economic value are all treated as equal parts in our common objective for sustainable development.

This will be challenging yet is necessary, and we are committed to both significantly reducing the environmental impact of our work and supporting the sustainability of creative businesses across all parts of Scotland. There can be no economic sustainability without environmental sustainability.”

This consultation has engaged people in conversation about net zero and the programme of work which will evolve from it will work towards being net zero, meaning that emissions will be reduced as much as feasibly possible, and those that are necessary will be off-set.

Arts & Activism

Context & Survey Findings



Do you think arts events can help raise awareness about how to protect and celebrate our local outdoor spaces?



We also asked how outdoor arts could raise awareness of environmental issues, such as the climate crisis:

It helps people see an area in a different light or from an alternative view point.

Art evokes emotion and discussion which is always good

Possibly highlights areas and causes for concern that might otherwise be missed by those who don't engage with the outdoors.

It's more engaging than providing information to read. It speaks more directly to people and have grab attention more quickly.

Absolutely. Once people are aware of an issue, and how it affects them, they are much more likely to care. We can no longer rely on our mainstream media to do this.

The best artworks engage, entertain and inform and are therefore an excellent way to communicate.

Definitely to celebrate them - bring more people to them, make people realise what great outdoor spaces we have! I'm not sure about how art events would help protect them - except maybe getting more people to care, or creative ways to share info that doesn't bore, guilt or isolate people?

Community Wealth Building

Including Community Led-Tourism

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Scotland Tourism Alliance's tourism strategy, Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible tourism for a sustainable future also demonstrates the intersectionality of the themes of net-zero and wellbeing.

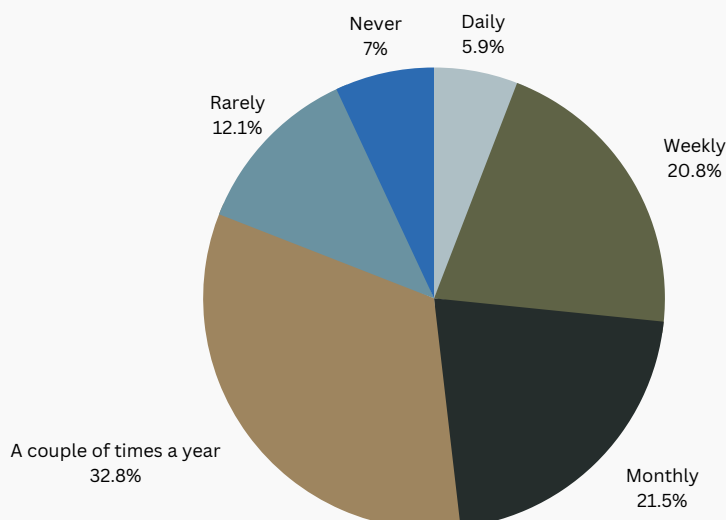
Their outcomes include:

"Scotland's tourism sector will make a full contribution to our national ambition to become a net-zero society by 2045... We will ensure that tourism leads to improved community wellbeing and nurtures thriving places across Scotland."

Inverclyde's tourism strategy is currently under review (as the most recent was developed in 2020 and is focused on the immediate issues faced at the beginning of the pandemic). It is hoped that this programme of Outdoor Art will be part of any new developments, linking in with local expertise, such as the Inverclyde Tourist Group and Discover Inverclyde.

The Centre for Local Economic Strategies' Community Wealth Building Centre of Excellence state that: "The creative economy can contribute to community wealth building through economic and social benefit and by making a locality a more attractive place to live, work and play."

Currently, there are no public transport routes to access much of the park. The Cut visitors centre and Corlick hill are only accessible by car (or bike/on foot for only the fittest). This is something that needs to feed into future tourism strategies and is part of our considerations later on in this report.



We asked people how often they went to places like the Greenock Cut

Ideas, Themes and Opportunities

Quotes from the survey

We asked people in the survey what outdoor art they might have seen which they really liked. We also asked them what they didn't like.

As with most consultation about the arts, opinion can vary quite dramatically and at times can be diametrically split. The selection below highlights some of the most common themes.

I liked it because:

Because it told a story was bright and eye catching

Public art done well tells a story, asks a question, or gives us an experience we will never forget about being in that space.

It was a Robert Burns event and it had actors

It related to the environment around it or had a lasting impact.

I didn't like it because:

It didn't fit in with the natural wonder of the area and spoiled it for me

I'm not a fan of 'signature' artworks by 'famous' artists that are parachuted into locations to which they have no relevance and are there merely as a tourist/economic attraction.

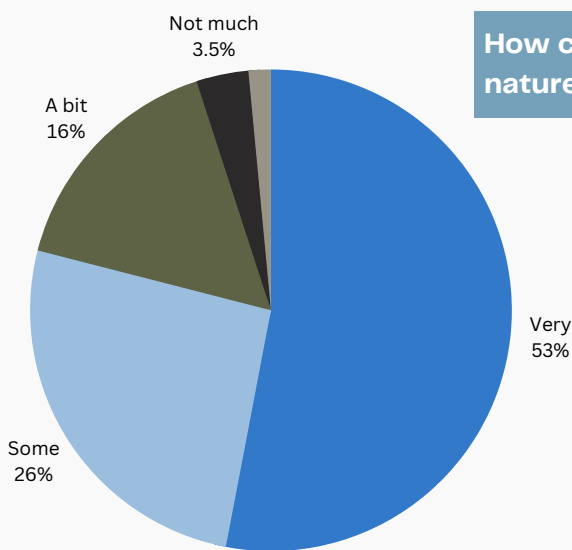
Didn't feel in keeping with themes or feel of area.



Ideas, Themes & Opportunities

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The Landscape



How connected do you feel to nature and the outdoors

"It's got to have relevance to place"



There was a consensus across all who were consulted that the landscape should be the star of the show and the potential outdoor arts residency programme should reflect that.

The majority of consultees did not want anything that clashed with the environment and was too “bright and gaudy”.

Many also mentioned how much they didn’t want to see a work by a famous artist plonked into a space without it really meaning much to the place it is in.

Much debate was had around the value of work which you stumble across and perhaps don’t even know it was art versus something you specifically seek out to visit. Both were considered to be valuable, although most felt that some interpretation or maybe even just a QRcode would be useful to those who want to know more about a work. The QR code could be carved into natural materials to be less obtrusive.

Ideas, Themes and Opportunities

Interactivity

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“It’s got to
be
interactive”



Ideas, Themes & Opportunities

Heritage & Materials

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Heritage

The link to heritage and stories from days gone by split respondents. Some thought this was essential to any artistic intervention. Others were bored of the repetitive nature of Inverclyde's industrial heritage being represented in the urban outdoor art and wanted to see new, future looking, aspirational work.

There are a whole pile of interesting heritage stories at these sites though that provide rich inspirational material for artists. Collating a library of these would make sense as part of programme development, so the artist doesn't have to do all the research as part of their residency time.

Stories or heritage sites we heard about as part of this process include: the Roman roads and a Roman watchtower; Iron Age settlements; Lunderston Bay as "Tent City" where Glaswegians came down the water; WW2 anti-aircraft site; mediaeval beehives; 1800 year old cave engravings; old farmland foundations under the water in the reservoir which can be seen when water levels are low; a possible quartz grave under the water.

Materials

Many emphasised the importance of using natural materials, sourced locally wherever possible. Several also want the work to be durable "we don't want something put there and then it rots away within a year and looks horrible. That would actually devalue the place if that happens"

Using "materials from the land" provides a tangible and accessible connection to a sense of place. There was also an interest from several to use existing assets such as the old ornate fence/gate posts as part of a sculpture or functional artwork.

"All needs good support, an emphasis on the process and sustainable thinking on materials and approach"



Ideas, Themes and Opportunities

Trails, Hunts and Pathways

Many of the consultees mentioned a trail, treasure/scavenger hunt or path where several small artworks are connected. Maps are also extremely popular.

The concept of the fairy trail is well known as are things like Easter Egg hunts.

In fact one person we consulted told us about advertising an Easter Egg hunt at the local church that weekend. In 48 hours they had 400 people sign up (which is significantly larger than their congregation). The pull of a trail for children is incredible. What could be done that pushes the boundaries of this further, where the seekers are not finding some incongruous objects placed just for the trail (like chocolate eggs), but are finding secret stories about the landscape which spark imaginations and further connections to sense of place?

Much discussion was had around lighting events like the Enchanted Forest in Pitlochry. There are considerations around access and attracting large numbers of people with events such as this, but there's also a fundamental question around whether events like this impact on people's relationship to that outdoor space. If lighting is used to enhance the natural beauty of a place, this is welcomed and many wanted to see something like this happen, but none wanted an event which could happen anywhere (e.g. GlasGlow). A lighting experience would provide another desired outcome too: something to do in the winter, which was mentioned numerous times.

There are also a multitude of pre-existing platforms that exist that could be used to have a digital map, rather than trying to create something bespoke (and then creating an ongoing maintenance issue). Geocaching, for example, would be excellent for this, and there is already a community of Geocachers who would seek out new and exciting caches placed at key locations. There is an issue here about connectivity - there is little phone reception, for example, at the bottom of the nature trail at The Cut, but it returns once you climb the steps. There is also free wifi at the visitors centre, so digital mapping could still be considered. Phone reception at Lunderston is generally good. There's loads of other examples too like numbers on marker stones and trig points. A whole wealth of possibilities!



"Something like lighting up a gnarly tree... would be great"

"For kids, anything miniature is attractive"

Ideas, Themes & Opportunities

Functional Art

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A popular idea was around art which also performed a useful purpose. Seating, signage, creative wayfinding, artist created bins and so on. Things that are there regardless but can be made to connect and tell stories about the place as well as performing their function.

On the walk from Inverkip to Wemyss Bay, some felt there could be safety barriers in place along the river after the waterfall. This could be a very useful form of functional art.

Perhaps less functional but of significant importance to many is the fact that people want to add benches and other memorials to loved ones in these spaces. Lunderston Bay has a row of memorial benches and many ashes are scattered throughout Clyde Muirshiel in places special to them. One person told us that they scattered their dog's ashes in the river at the Cut at a place where the river would flow down to Lunderston bay - their two favourite spaces as dog and owner.

There is a lot of scope in creating a shared memorial or contemplation space or sculpture where people can put their mark or stop and reflect.



Ideas, Themes and Opportunities

Partners

There is a wealth of excellent potential project partners for this programme. From ones we met as part of this process, many were keen to be further involved including the Royal West of Scotland Amateur Boat Club, Inverclyde Bothy, Inverclyde Shed, Belville Community Garden Trust and the Inverclyde Tourist Group to name a few. From the previous projects, there were more partners who engaged enthusiastically, such as Cardwell's Garden Centre in Lunderston Bay.



Specific briefs, as part of a wider residency programme should be developed in collaboration with partners. For example, a boat club member has started running sauna and wild swimming sessions which is very current and rapidly growing in popularity. Shaping a brief around making work with that theme would reach new audiences and tap into current local interests.

There is also ample potential for wider tourism partnerships. For example, the Mein Schiff German cruise ships now come with 2000 electric bikes on board. They are guided off on bike tours in groups of 20 or less. Some visited Corlick Hill last year and would be very keen to visit a specific event or arts trail if they knew about it in advance. There would also be opportunities for artist talks on board when the ship is docked at Ocean Terminal. This could be paid for, commercial offerings, generating profit which could support the wider programme. Working with Inverclyde Tourist Group would be key in opening up this potential market.

There are also, it is very important to point out, some brilliant, exciting socially engaged artists living and working in Inverclyde. As it states in the Inverclyde Culture Collective Sept 2022 report:

"The artists were very connected with the local community in Inverclyde. 90% of the artists agreed that I was responsive to Inverclyde as the setting for my work and that I was responsive to emerging issues and needs of participants or stakeholders, with 80% agreeing strongly in each case.

Consequently, 90% of the artists agreed that I felt embedded within the local community. Many of the artists commented on "developing this relationship with Inverclyde" having "had the blessing" of the local people and been "made to feel very welcome", even in some cases "as an outsider". This was "very positive" and "felt really nice".

How a series of Artist Residencies might work

Trails, Hunts and Pathways



From the artists consulted, opinions varied on the perfect length of a residency. Some felt a fortnight was good, but most felt it wasn't long enough, especially if the residency had a participatory element.

One artist thought a year long residency would be the most ideal then they could experience a full seasonal cycle. However, perhaps we could flip that on its head: a residency programme could involve lots of artists throughout the year, but the focus is on developing a consistent core audience from the community, who could experience a range of artistic interventions and through that engage more deeply with the seasonal cycle.

Opportunities for cross-pollination, linking up with other artists working in the park and also collaboration with other sectors such as conservation and science was mentioned by most of the artists interviewed. There was a real appetite for this, which is great considering how the whole programme will be developed in collaboration between partners: it's in keeping with the ethos and provision should be made for this to happen.

One artist also raised the important point that cross sector collaboration would be important if the work was seeking to increase dialogue around environmental issues: "It's not our job to know the science, but it is our job to regurgitate it and through that raise awareness".

"Two weeks is too short. It doesn't allow the space for plans to change and space for failure"

"Having 4 or 5 different things in a year is better than one. One of those should be a big opening performance. Another should be for an emerging practitioner."

Considerations

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Facilities and accommodation which might make a residency more impactful



A learning that emerged from discussions with the artists who worked at The Cut in 2022 was a desire to have a base where an artist could stay and, ideally, also make work from, which could be sited within the landscape and passersby could see the artist at work.

“It’s important to get artists out of the urban environment [for them to develop their practice]”.

There are several options but perhaps the most effective and well known are from the Bothy Project, which are plumbed in bothies with foundations. There would be some issues around land ownership, but it’s not completely out of the question that there could be an artist studio bothy situated somewhere in Clyde Muirshiel. But would one setting be enough?

Perhaps an adapted campervan or towed vehicle would be more impactful so it could travel to where things are happening?

There is a scout camp up from the nature trail at The Cut. An alternative to a larger scale bothy, could be a residency offered which involved wild camping (and access to the visitors centre). There would also be options for glamping set ups, such as a large bell tent, yurt or even a forest school type canopy. The canopy at the very least should be considered as an investment for the programme as the weather loves to create challenges! For the residencies in summer 2022, the main problem was heat, so a canopy was essential for the participatory elements.

“We need... off-grid facilities for artists in Inverclyde”

As well as accommodation, there is also a need for some artists to have access to facilities such as a kiln. Is it possible to have this on site?

Someone wanted a solar powered hot tub - perhaps that could be considered as part of a bothy design! In fact, one artist who was interviewed had, on a previous project, built a kiln which heated a hot tub on top of it. Now there’s a sustainable, innovative plan!

“Staying somewhere is an aspect of a residency that is really important. Normal life paused rather than the residency adding to the usual stress”

Considerations

How to support artists effectively

“Time for artists to be in the space is crucial”

One clear message from the artists involved in the residencies and commissions in 2022, was that both the Inverclyde Culture Collective and Feral struck a perfect balance between giving the artists space to develop their work without too many constraints, but also made the artists feel supported and nurtured at the same time. This is really important and funding should be in place for at least a part time producer or arts co-ordinator to ensure the artists have all they need to flourish.

The key partners involved in this project have an extensive wealth of experience, knowledge and networks within the arts community, the third sector and Inverclyde generally. With the right framing, this knowledge can be passed to an artist on residency without it being too prescriptive, so they don't have to reinvent the wheel.

A toolkit of knowledge, connections and recommendations can be developed and, perhaps more importantly, maintained so it remains up to date, so the artist isn't relying on any key partner remembering to impart a bit of knowledge (especially if the artist doesn't know what they should be asking as they are still in an exploratory phase).

One artist also suggested “a resource library that accumulates over time as different artists work there”, which would extend the legacy and increase the impact of the work.

Keeping the proposal process brief in the first stage and, for larger residencies, offer a small fee for building a more detailed proposal for stage two. Acknowledging unpaid development time is also important. One artist also mentioned how important it is to have the artist fee and materials budget separate so no one sacrifices one for the other.

Priority should be given to participatory and socially engaged artists, as they have less opportunity in the bigger residencies (where participation isn't valued as high), as well as then providing more interactive engagement.



Considerations

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Engaging with communities and making participatory work



Co-production, co-design and community led/influenced socially engaged arts practice is always going to be difficult. However, it is essential that every opportunity is taken to involve, engage and upskill local communities in the process.

Several people commented on this during the consultancy, questioning whether a pure co-production process really satisfies anyone as “nobody gets to make their own work”, neither the artist nor the participants/community.

If done right, and the artist briefs provide clarity on whose art it is, and what the artist controls and what the community co-create, then the impact can be far reaching and the legacy greater than when co-design and community influenced processes are ignored.

Some projects work brilliantly where the artist is using their skills to support, teach and empower participants to create their own work. Others work well when there is a participatory process which informs the final design, but ultimately that design is the work of the artist.

Occasionally, a project successfully sits between the two, for example Irene Evison’s weaving project which took place at the Cut in summer 2022. It was Irene’s concept and design and participants helped create it. Perhaps the success of this project was that the design process wasn’t diluted by democracy, yet as it was an accessible form of making, participation was achieved through that part of that process.

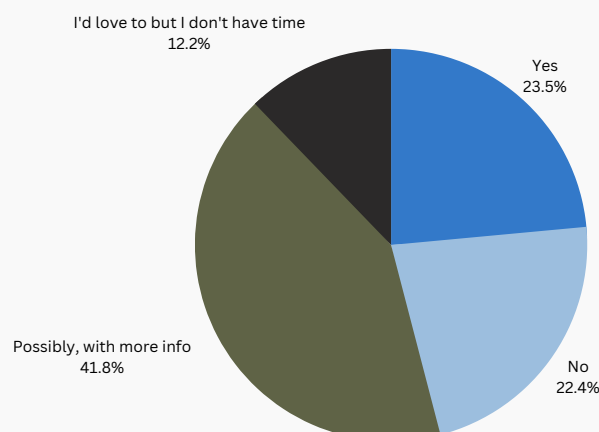
A few consultees emphasised the importance of effective promotion and marketing, stating they often don’t hear about events. Is there a consideration of budgeting for a project connector/marketer/documentarian to ensure word is getting out to a wide audience, not just an audience of regular culture consumers. Perhaps this is where a digital element could come in, engaging a wider audience who aren’t limited by accessibility.

“We should be giving people autonomy, more than having a nice wee time with an artist”

There is also an issue to consider, specifically up at the Cut, where it would be detrimental to the ecology to have too many visitors. But what is too many? Those living near areas where events or artworks might be placed will also need to be collaborated with sensitively.

Considerations

Engaging a range of audiences



Do you want to play a role in deciding what art should happen in your local rural spaces?



There are a lot of groups of potential audience in Clyde Muirshiel: dog walkers, serious hikers, outdoor sports enthusiasts, dirt bike riders, teenagers getting away from prying eyes, families getting their kids some fresh air and so on. Should there be different artist briefs that engage with a specific group or audience?

“Some people spend a big portion of their life at The Cut and Lunderston Bay... The impact of bringing the arts to them could be significant.”

“Start with who goes there and develop from there. Don’t disrupt the ecosystem”

There is a social justice issue around The Cut as you need to be physically able and have access to private transport to get there. This needs to be taken into consideration when programming work there. On the other hand, Lunderston Bay is very accessible with flat terrain and the new bus stops, providing direct public transport access. The footfall at Lunderston is huge which has significant benefits in reaching high numbers of local people, but also could be a negative with interactive works wearing out, breaking or being too busy (if event based).


Going hand in hand with there being lots of different groups using the spaces for different purposes comes the issue of vandalism. Many expressed being upset about this and wanted work that was impossible to vandalise. Is this even possible?

Perhaps it’s about viewing this differently, as some suggested: “If it gets trashed, who cares? People will respect it if it is well thought through and it reflects them” “Can we build something that can get vandalised/affected” by others on purpose?

Considerations

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Working towards Net Zero



"We need to remove the individual guilt as that's just consumer finger pointing, and form stronger communities to change big business"

Net Zero is the aim for our planet in order to combat rising temperatures and the climate emergency.

Arts organisations that are regularly funded by Creative Scotland have to report on their emissions and what steps they're taking to reach net zero.

Some questions to consider in shaping a programme that is as close to net-zero as possible:

- Have we reduced as much energy use as possible?
- How do we offset the residual energy use?
- What are our audience/visitor travel plans? How can we support a reduction in energy consumption here?
- If an artwork is temporary or a single event, what waste will it produce? What happens to the artwork after? Has this been planned with sustainability in mind?
- Have we prioritised using local suppliers and the use of local materials?
- Have we allocated increased budget or contingency to enable the above to happen?

"I don't go as far afield as I did and make use of local green space more" Survey respondent

Project Budgets

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Indicative potential budgets for specific project elements

It is vital that artists are well supported to take part in a residency of any format. Creative Scotland are currently in the middle of a wide ranging Fair Pay review and to remain competitive and relevant, any new arts initiative in Inverclyde should be in keeping with these developments.

The Scottish Artist Union pay rates are fairly swiftly becoming the industry wide benchmark and are the ones most often quoted in multi and cross art form projects. These rates are reviewed annually

SAU Hourly Rates:

£26.20 p/hr new graduate artist

£34.00 p/hr with 3 yrs + experience

£42.00 p/hr with 5 yrs + experience

Residency Rates:

£28,334 p/annum (pro rata) new graduate artist

£41,569 p/annum (pro rata) with 5 years + experience

A weekly fee (averaging the hourly and the residency rates) would be:

£797 p/week for new graduate artist

£1249 p/week for someone with 5 years + experience

[Click here](#) to see how the Scottish Artist Union calculate their rates.

Alongside the fee for the artist are all the associated costs of recruiting, supporting the artist, creating the digital legacy and ensuring that each residency effectively and fully connects with the local community and the programme has a concerted audience development element across the residencies. This requires sustainable investment in the partner organisations.

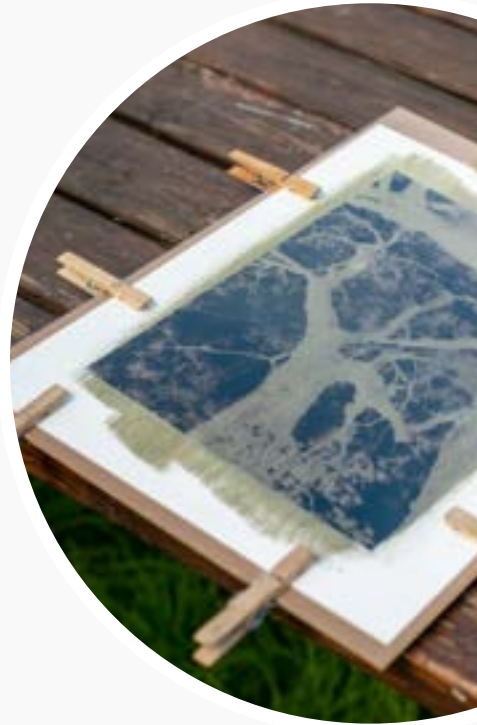
As a guiding principle, a recent 6 month residency with RIG where the artist was paid SAU union rates for 2.5 days a week, costs around £25,000. A shorter residency or one that had less days per week for the artist, naturally would be less.



Project Budgets

Indicative potential budgets
for specific project elements

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The materials budget should be separate and would vary depending on length of residency, art form and whether any product is expected (as outlined in the brief).

Other budgetary considerations should include:

The digital legacy of the work and any onsite interpretation

Documentation through image and film

Marketing and promotion (ongoing as part of the audience development commitment)

Artist access such as contribution towards childcare

Participant access (including regular transport to sites where there is no public transport)

Ongoing maintenance of any physical work

Tech equipment and management for events

Insurance and licences

Van hire, if needed

Recruitment, support and evaluation costs, delivered by a partner organisation

A proportionate contribution to overhead costs of all partners

Bothy/Shelter indicative costs:

For a full, plumbed in, permanent bothy from the Bothy Project, it would cost in the region of £44-55k plus foundations and the cost of connecting the bothy to utilities.

A simple forest school type large parachute shelter is £330-£465

A good quality glamping bell tent or yurt would be anything from £3-15k depending on size and facilities (like a stove).

Resources

Links to useful stuff

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Strategies/Research

- [Library of Creative Sustainability](#) from Creative Carbon Scotland
- [Massively useful collection of stats and facts](#) from Culture Counts
- Scottish Tourism Alliance's [Scotland Outlook 2030](#)
- [Visual Arts and Climate Change Adaptations 2019](#) Creative Carbon Scotland
- [Evidence Summary for Policy: The role of arts in improving health & wellbeing](#)
- DCMS Report 2020
- Culture, health and climate intersection - [a resource](#) from the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance, plus [Policies and Commitments](#)
- [2019 Article in Elephant](#) - a good overview of US and UK outdoor arts sector
- [An excellent guide](#) from Julie's Bicycle on what net-zero is and how to achieve it
- [National Performance Framework](#), Scottish Government
- [Scottish Artist Union Rates](#) - how they work them out
- The Audience Agency's 2018 [Outdoor Arts Report](#)
- Articulation, Scotland's development agency for Outdoor Arts + have a range of resources [here](#)
- [Inverclyde Culture Collective's strategies & research](#)

Resources

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Links to useful stuff



Examples of Outdoor Arts Organisations

[Kielder Forest](#)

[Little Sparta](#)

[Jupiter Artland](#)

[Yorkshire Sculpture Park](#)

[Grizedale Arts](#)

[The Crawick Multiverse](#)

[Ocean All Over](#)

[Aproxima Arts](#)

[Dandelion](#)

[Bewegetes Land](#) - an amazing example of how to combine outdoor art and public transport

Residencies

[Artist Bothy Residencies](#)

[Argyll Hope Spot Snorkelling Residencies](#)

[North Sea Artist Residencies](#)

[ANCHOR residency programme from Imperial](#)

[Winter Residency FERAL](#)

[Dunoon Outdoor Residency FERAL](#)

Shelters

[Bothy Project](#)

[Hut & Bothy Inspiration](#)

[More Hut Inspiration](#)

[Outdoor shelter options](#)



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