



# Shetland *arts*

## **2022 - 2023: Quarter 3**

Report of activity relating to Social Outcomes

Case Studies: Pollyanna Paradox, Remembering Together, Youth Arts Pricing

Interim Key Performance Indicator Statistics (appendix)



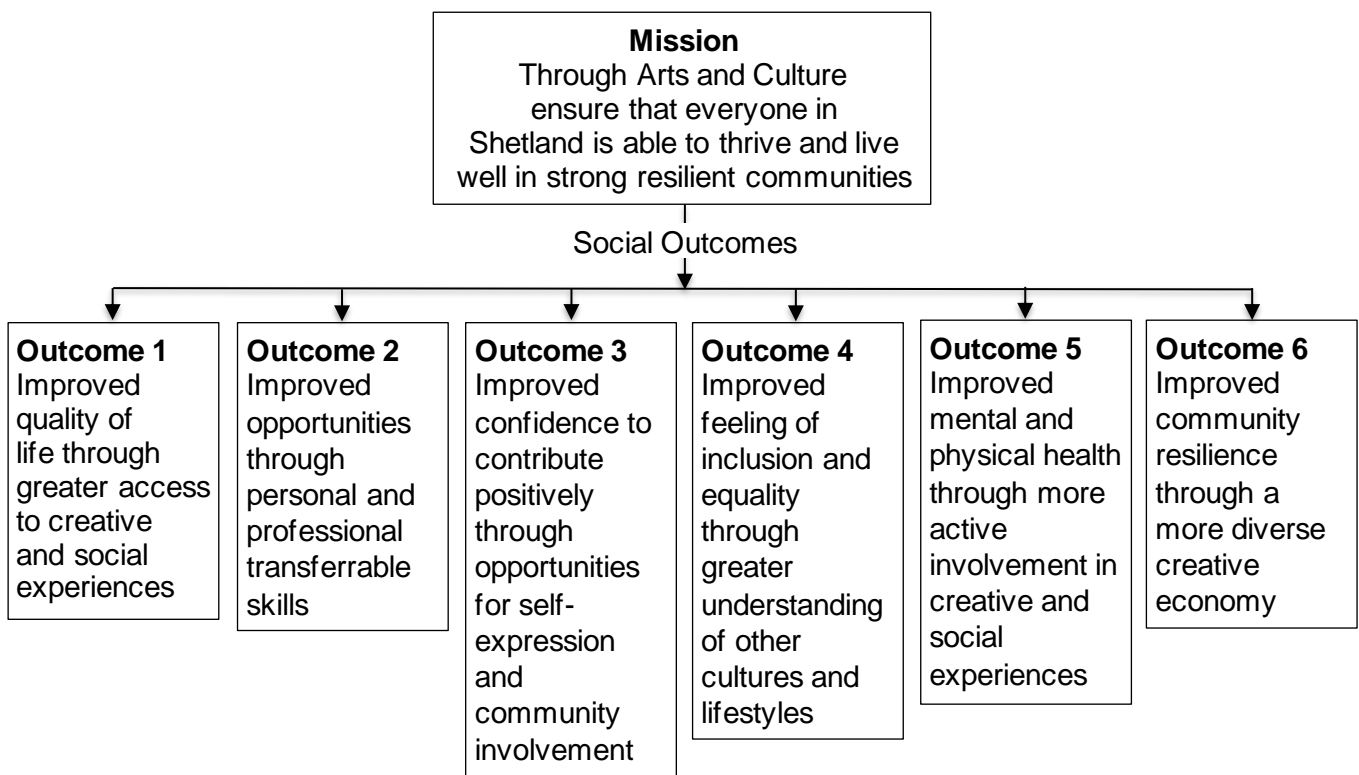
# Introduction

In the summer of 2020, Shetland Arts developed a new mission statement and six supporting social outcomes as part of an overall review of strategy. The work was supported by the Social Value Lab and responded to a range of strategy documents, including the Shetland Partnership Plan, Shetland Charitable Trust's Strategy 2020-25, Scottish Government's Islands Plan and Cultural Strategy alongside Creative Scotland's Priorities and Ambitions.

The social outcomes were formally adopted by the SADA Board of Trustees for implementation in April 2021 and complement SADA's purposes:

- To advance the education of the public resident in Shetland in the Arts, in particular the Arts of Dance, Drama, Theatre, Film, Literature, Music, Crafts, Visual Arts and any new form of Media;
- The advancement of Arts and Culture for the benefit of the public in Shetland;
- The advancement of Citizenship and Community Development for the benefit of the public in Shetland.

We used 2021-22 to transition to this new way of thinking about our work and we now actively design our workplan using the social outcomes developed and report against them.



When planning an activity, we consider which two Social Outcomes the activity will deliver against. Many of our activities will deliver against more than two of our Social Outcomes, however our KPI reporting only takes into account the two outcomes defined at the beginning of the project. In our narrative reporting we acknowledge that a participant or audience member may well have experienced a different impact than we intended, and we will make every attempt to capture their story.

# 1: Improved quality of life through greater access to creative and social experiences

It was great to be hosting **Hogmanay at Mareel** again after the pandemic. The evening was split into two halves, constituting two separate ticketed events: a variety concert in the Auditorium followed by a DJ set in the Café Bar for the bells.

The variety concert featured local comedian **Marjolein Robertson** as compère, **Scott Moncrieff**, **Freda Leask Band** and **Skelburn**. The evening went well and has had glowing reports. Unfortunately, Freda Leask was struggling with her voice and had to bow out of her set towards the end. Marjolein stepped in and gave the audience a taste of her folklore stories and comedy which went down a treat. Skelburn ended the concert with a terrific selection of tunes, and all in all it was a great night's entertainment from some of Shetland's best artists.

**Bells in the Bar** sold out within five hours of going on sale, and proved a great way to finish off the night with a brilliant atmosphere and music from **DJs Lyall & Brendan**.

The cinema programme for this quarter was as varied as usual, with a wide range of films to suit all audiences, including our first Bollywood screening, **Brahmastra Part I: Shiva**, fulfilling a request from a customer. We screened Gary Oldman's hard-hitting 1997 drama **Nil By Mouth** in association with **Shetland Domestic Abuse Partnership** to mark 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, the annual international campaign that runs from 25 November to 10 December.

In early December our **Winter Warmers** initiative began, supported by **Shetland Islands Council Winter Activities Fund**: free screenings twice a week, with customers given soup and/or a hot drink, a piece of fruit and a carton of juice. We showed family films on Tuesdays after school and films aimed at an older audience on Thursday afternoons. During December we had nearly 450 customers watching everything from 1947 Christmas classic **The Bishop's Wife** to **Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical**, with positive and appreciative feedback across the board. Winter Warmers received a hugely warm reception on social media and was shared 128 times.

**Shotput Dance Theatre** spent a full week in Shetland prior to showcasing their performance **Fergusson and Barton**, a dance theatre piece based on Alfred Hitchcock's film **Vertigo**. We screened **Vertigo** in the Mareel cinema during the production week to allow audience members to view it before or after the performance. The week allowed for plenty of community engagement and activity; Shotput ran a ballet class as well as a Youth Arts Intensive exploring film, theatre and dance. They also hosted a post-film discussion in the bar where Hitchcock enthusiasts could talk about the film that they just seen which formed the initial inspiration for the company to create this work. Their intensive worked towards creating a curtain raiser for the Saturday night performance at Mareel.

**Scottish Opera** visited Cullivoe Hall and Mareel in October as part of their **Opera Highlights** tour. This was a welcome return to Shetland for Scottish Opera, as evidenced by the size and enthusiasm of the audiences. The company of four young singers and a pianist provided two nights of varied operatic highlights, performed in original language and English translation. The production was staged with costumes and set, and a loose storyline that gave the wide-ranging repertoire coherence.

*"Love how Shetland Arts is more about community involvement and less about elitism."*  
(Local Creative Practitioner)

*"Shetland Arts really know the meaning of Christmas."* (Winter Warmers feedback)

## 2: Improved opportunities through personal and professional transferrable skills

In October, Shetland-based practitioners participating in the **Creative Islands Network (Culture Collective)** project had the opportunity to attend an event organised by the national Culture Collective programme. This two-day event in Dundee involved a day of discussion and activities amongst practitioners' delivering arts activity all across Scotland, followed by a day of presentations and screenings, with guests including MSPs and other government representatives. **Berenice Carrington** gave a presentation on her projects, and a number of other practitioners attended and took part in activities over the two days, which included plenty of opportunities to meet and make connections with other practitioners. More info on the event can be found here: <https://culturecollective.scot/blog/dundee-2022/>

**Linda Richardson** ran a workshop on printmaking for adults. This workshop was focused on learning new skills with an emphasis on participants making their own festive cards. Due to popular demand we have scheduled another workshop in February.

Shetland Arts continued to deliver a range of full-time and part-time film, music and drama courses in partnership with **Shetland UHI**.

We have recently introduced two new SQA National Progression Awards to the **Senior Phase Delivery Programme** that is currently offered to S5 and S6 students by UHI Shetland. The Senior Phase Programme is designed to give candidates the opportunity to experience studying as a college student, and to gain a recognised qualification alongside other school studies in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year.

Students will attend Mareel every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon to gain qualifications at SCQF Level 5 and Level 6. Students who successfully complete the course will be able to progress onto creative NC and HNC courses delivered by Shetland Arts and UHI Shetland.

*"I love the flexibility of this [Sound and Music for Moving Image] module. It gives me the headspace to seek out new sources of inspiration, and gives me the opportunity, and the reason, to develop new practical techniques."* (Masters level student)

## 3: Improved confidence to contribute positively through opportunities for self-expression and community involvement

Our **Youth Arts** sessions worked towards an event this term which brought **Shetland Youth Theatre** together with **Film Crew** for an informal sharing to family and friends, with mulled apple juice and mince pies. It was a delight to share their work this term with their families, and an opportunity to celebrate the skills of both the participants and the tutors. These sessions run weekly and focus on skills development as well as social experience.

During Q3 Shetland Arts has been working with **Shetland Youth and Employability Services** to develop a three-month engagement programme for the **Shetland Young Promoters Group (SYPG)**. Before COVID restrictions in March 2020, the group regularly planned music and arts events for young people in Shetland. COVID was hard on the group, and activity stopped abruptly during the first lockdown. Thanks to **Time to Shine** funding secured by Shetland Youth and Employability Services, a

three-month programme of activity leading up to an event in March has been planned. The first meetings with the group will begin in early January.

***Polyanna Paradox*** was a radio play created by **Stephenie Georgia** and performed by **Islesburgh Drama Group**, with support from **The Compass Centre** and **Shetland Women's Aid**. It is featured as a Case Study below

*"They just love it! It's been a great way for them to make new friends from outside their school, and they're always running about now making films on my phone!"* (Film Crew members' parent)

*"I learnt how to work as a team. I learnt how to edit and how to use the big cameras and how to make compromises for other people. Keiba is kind and listens to everybody's ideas. She is understanding. She is really fun and I also like Film Crew because it's a bit different from the other things."* (Film Crew member)

## 4: Improved feeling of inclusion and equality through greater understanding of other cultures and lifestyles

Slanjayva Danza's **6 Feet 3 Shoes** was a piece celebrating two cultures – Spain and Scotland - and the collaboration of traditional arts. The show toured to four local community halls: Skeld, Vidlin, North Unst and Bigton. Audience numbers grew each night as word of mouth spread about how fantastic the show was. This was an honest, funny and moving piece that celebrated traditions and cultures coming together to share music, dance, stories and friendship. They seamlessly switched between contemporary, highland, step, ceilidh, Spanish and flamenco dancing. The audience were taken through the performance with storytelling which shared how they've grown together and learnt from one another's cultures and languages, as well as looking at friendship and how they had bonded throughout the years. It was a pleasure to have live music in the piece, which also used foot percussion from the dancers to add to the overall sound.

Each evening rounded off with a traditional Shetland 'country hall' dance, which provided a chance for local audiences to share their own community dance culture with the visiting performers.

Quotes from audience members:

- *"Storytelling at its best – thank you for taking us on this journey. Absolutely loved it!"*
- *"Great show. I feel educated, informed, and entertained!"*
- *"Footstompin good! Thank you so much for sharing such a lovely and personal story with us. [I'm] off to look at Flamenco shoes online and terrify the woodworm in my floorboards!"*

## 5: Improved mental and physical health through more active involvement in creative and social experiences

A number of activities were delivered as part of **Creative Islands Network (Culture Collective)** in this quarter. Young people in Yell made stop-motion animations with **Berenice Carrington**. **David Boyter** began a micro-synths project with young people in Unst, Yell, Brae and Aith, and **Jane Cockayne** began inviting neurodiverse young people to participate in a film and story-making project to run in the new year.

**Shotput Dance Theatre** delivered a Youth Arts Intensive (drama, dance and film) for ages 12-19 in October, with participants creating a curtain raiser for their Saturday night performance at Mareel. This was a week-long intensive where young people learnt new skills and developed these across art forms.

Q3 saw our wellbeing activities return. Informal, creative and social **Wellbeing Writing** returned to Mareel, with many pre-pandemic participants returning. **Genevieve White** guided participants through creative writing tasks in an informal and fun manner allowing participants the chance to explore their creativity and feel part of a welcoming space. We tried a 'hybrid' class to allow remote participation together with the 'in-person' participants but the on reflection we feel the intimate nature of personal social experiences and dynamics was compromised, and the tutor had to split her attentions.

We have completed Phase 1 of the **Remembering Together** project: a national project run by **Greenspace Scotland** and funded by the Scottish Government, to work alongside local partners to commission local artists to creatively engage the local community to understand what a Covid memorial might look like.

Shetland Arts, together Shetland Islands Council appointed **Christina Inkster** as Commissioned Artist who led a number of creative workshops and attended many events at local halls and workplaces to engage with the local community to open up conversations about what a memorial may look like to them.

We engaged with a 27-member reference group from across Shetland both geographically and in the public sector. This group helped to provide contacts for Christina, which she used alongside her own contacts to reach as many people as possible through the project. Christina's summary and recommendations are presented as a Case Study at the end of this report, and the full report is available on the Shetland Arts website.

A selection of Remembering Together responses:

- *“Some people have found comfort from the restrictions placed on their lives and now self impose them. We must not forget these people, however invisible they may seem.”*
- *“Society became more flexible and adaptable to change... which only proved it was a choice to not be, before.”*
- *“As a community, we all supported one another. We are now more aware and careful of each other's vulnerabilities. We wish to protect one another. We value life.”*



## 6: Improved community resilience through a more diverse creative economy

**Bonhoga Christmas** featured paintings, photographs, prints and embroidery by **Billy Arthur, Kristi Tait, Howard Towll, Diane Garrick, Gilly B** and **Linda Newington**. The exhibition was well-attended and the work sold well. Gilly B's original pieces and lampshades generated exceptional interest, with enquiries coming from folk outside of Shetland who had seen the pieces on social media.

Retail at Bonhoga and Mareel picked up as expected in the run up to Christmas. We stocked some Christmas decorations from Shetland makers including **Glansin Glass** and **Two Little Chickpeas**, as well as some new products from further afield.

The third round of Retail Commissions resulted in six makers being funded to develop a prototype product. The products will be reviewed in March 2023.

We continue to make our facilities available to support a range of community events, and in quarter three this included the **Wool Week Craft Fair**, the **Up Helly-Aa Mass Meeting**, and a range of conferences and meetings.

In the **Mareel Recording Studio**, **Laeverick** continued sessions through November for their forthcoming album. There were recording sessions for **Trookers** and **George Spence**, and mixing continued on projects by **Freda Leask** and **Karol Lynch**. The recording and editing of the radio play **Pollyanna Paradox** was done at Mareel during the production week in November (see Case Study).

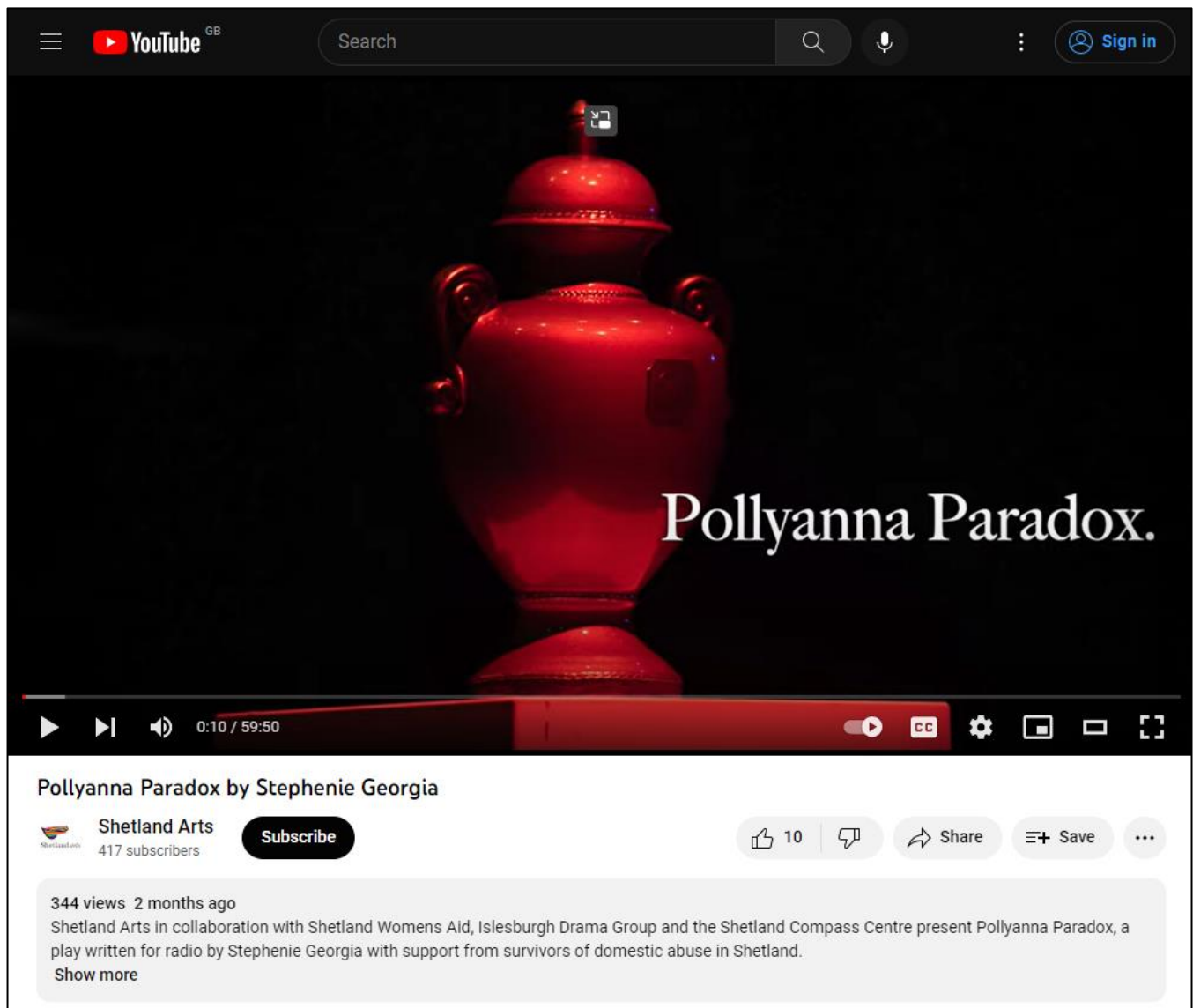
We supported four artists through the **Visual Arts and Crafts Makers Awards**, two of which received the emerging bursary. The panel welcomed a freelance artist who has been a VACMA recipient before but never been on a panel. They found this experience incredibly beneficial.

VACMA Awardees:

- *"[VACMA has] been a notable support in helping me consistently continue to develop my work as a visual artist, mentioned in my application."*
- *"The award allowed me to "get off of the hamster wheel" of business for a week and immerse myself in my practice."*

## Case Study: Polyanna Paradox

*"There is always something about everything you can be glad about, if you keep hunting long enough to find it."*



**Pollyanna Paradox** by Stephenie Georgia

Shetland Arts  
417 subscribers

10 likes

Share

Save

344 views 2 months ago

Shetland Arts in collaboration with Shetland Womens Aid, Islesburgh Drama Group and the Shetland Compass Centre present Pollyanna Paradox, a play written for radio by Stephenie Georgia with support from survivors of domestic abuse in Shetland.

***Pollyanna Paradox*** was an original audio play exploring the felt impact of coercive control on a family. The play centered around the character of Polly, a survivor of domestic abuse. A year following the death of her husband she is returning to their villa in Spain with her family to make some big life decisions as the ripples of her husband's coercive control make their presence felt.

In collaboration with **Shetland Women's Aid** and **The Compass Centre** and supported by **Shetland Arts**, this play was written by local playwright **Stephenie Georgia** with creative input from survivors of domestic abuse in Shetland. The radio play was performed by **Islesburgh Drama Group** in front of a live audience in Mareel on Friday 25th November as part of **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence**.

Following the play, the audience was welcomed to join a Q&A session with a panel of local experts including representatives of support groups and the Procurator Fiscal.



A recording of the play was due to be broadcast on **BBC Radio Shetland**, but BBC regulations meant two key scenes were removed from the recording. Upon reviewing the edited version, the project partners felt the integrity of the play had been compromised so the decision was made to broadcast the unedited version online instead. The unedited recording can be accessed at:

<https://youtube.com/@ShetlandArts>

*“We are very excited to have worked in collaboration with local partners to support this production and to give survivors a platform, a voice to participate in this fantastic project.”* (Laura Stronach, Shetland Women’s Aid service manager)

*“The bravery and generosity shown by the collaborators on the project in sharing their experiences with me is a testament to their strength. I am in awe. I believe theatre is an artform which can provoke debate, challenge perceptions, and make change happen and I believe this play will be no exception.”* (Stephenie Georgia, playwright)

Shetland News reviewer [Shining a light into the darkness | Shetland News \(shetnews.co.uk\)](#):

*“Georgia has done a tremendous work here. Drama is fitting for many things – for entertainment and joy, for fun and laughter – but also for story and truth-telling.*

*For making silent voices audible, and to shout light into the darkneses. My sincere hope is that dramas such as these enable those watching audiences to recognise how people can hide in the shade as perpetrators, but also how recognition and exposure can lead to survival and hope.*

*The original Pollyanna may have looked endlessly for something to be glad about, but hopefully we can work together to look endlessly for those who need a way out and give them the helping hands they need.”*

# Case Study: Remembering Together

Reflection and findings from local artist **Christina Inkster**. For more information on the project visit:

- [www.rememberingtogether.scot](http://www.rememberingtogether.scot)
- [www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/remembering-together](http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/remembering-together)



## Remembering Together Co-Creating Community Covid Memorials

Commissioned on the project in July 2022, my role was to engage with the Shetland community on conversations about Covid and the Covid pandemic, finding out the ways in which our lives have been impacted due to Covid. I didn't venture into this with blind naivety, nor had I been chosen for the role on a whim. I am an Artist whose roots are embedded in community-based practice.

I worked (in my bread-and-butter role) as a Community Social Care Worker, as a “*frontline key worker*” during the Covid pandemic. During this time, I glimpsed the complex ways in which Covid was impacting the lives of the people I supported, including: their family and friends, my family and friends, my colleagues and the service, other services and the community within which we live. It was like a ripple effect, bellowing throughout everyone.

Yes, for some, it was a period of time cast in dark shadow. Lives were lost. Opportunities were missed. Life seemed to hang in the balance. But for some it was a period of time welcomed with open arms; like a breath of fresh air - a new way of life - a chance to do things differently. And for others it was a period of fluctuation between the darkness of the shadow and the warmth of the light. For each and every person, their experience of Covid and the Covid pandemic was theirs alone.

*“Whilst we have a shared past we do not have a shared memory.”*  
(Karen Logan Senior Curator of History, National Museums NI)

With my wealth of lived life experience and a heart full of compassion I began reaching out to communities and forming connections through the Remembering Together: Co-Creating Community Covid Memorials project. (With a title that cumbersome - containing the ‘C word’ - I had my work cut out for me... And besides; how do you memorialise something that isn't over? Is that even possible? But then again; what even is a memorial? These were questions that were not for me to answer alone; community was the heart of this project).

I knew not everyone would be interested in participating in the project but I also knew that those who were interested in participating, would be for good reason. I also knew that not everyone would be able to participate. (It was after all a minute 6-month timescale I was given to do the mass groundwork, as a lone working person on a part-time basis, in a community of roughly 23,000 - spread over 13 inhabited islands - after a two year period of social/physical restrictions... But I do like a challenge!)

During the five month period from July to November, I shared in conversation with others; listening, hearing and understanding humanity, sharing compassion, hope and joy, as we creatively considered how we - as a local authority - wish to memorialise Covid and the Covid pandemic. Mindful of those who were not able to participate in the project, the proverb: "*no person is an island*" echoed throughout as each person reflected with consideration for the other; their presence exists within - and in spite of - their absence.

The last month of December was a time for me to be alone and digest all the information I had received from all the people I had connected with, and to consider how best to communicate this wealth of humanity via a word document that will become the basis from which the memorials are created.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to each and every person who shared their humanity with me: your trust and vulnerability has been core to the strength and authenticity of our co-creation and I hope that we deliver the Covid memorials that support your values: Community. Shared. Outdoor. Accessible. Shelter.

I would also like to thank Shetland Arts for this opportunity and I would like to thank the Remembering Together community for their trust and support, provision of accessible diverse learning resources and nurture of the creative community.

## What Do the Communities Want?

Time and time again, regardless of location, venue, demographics; the same words reverberated throughout:

Community. Shared. Outdoor. Accessible. Shelter.

- Locality is important; as is making use of pre-existing spaces. People don't want something new, they don't want something fancy; they want something practical that supports them to continue living within their communities, sharing spaces and spending time with the people that are important to them. Also; proximity to facilities is important.
- Communities also want autonomy; to be able to have a say in what is created and where it goes. Lots of communities have suggested an area they would like to be used and how they think it would be best used. They are, after all, the ones with the most knowledge about their community.
- I chose to include the following feedback from the Interim Report:

Artist's creative response:

5 Covid Memorials (areas of Shetland representing the points of a compass.)

- North
- East
- South
- West
- Central

Reasoning (from responses):

Covid was a time for;

- Self discovery
- Adventure/experiment

- Chartering new waters and territories of the self and others; life and living

The compass represents: guidance, balance and anchoring; the known and the unknown; what's been and what's yet to come: choice, decision and action; obligation, freedom and restraint.


Each memorial has the same attribute (shape, size, material) but each has slightly differing attributes (colour, texture, pattern etc). Tactile, natural, interactive somehow (perhaps you could embrace them?)

- Responses written onto memorials
- Interactive with technology, opens devices to an online website/app/soundscape for Shetland that shares information about the project and has recordings of local people sharing their stories
- No names of people who died during Covid on the memorials but it is known that their purpose partly exists as memorials for them
- Harmonious with the environment; no wish to disrupt/disturb the wildlife that inhabit these areas
- Lastly: the name of the memorials is to be considered. How much is the word 'Covid' a barrier? And how much will we remember Covid as the years pass?

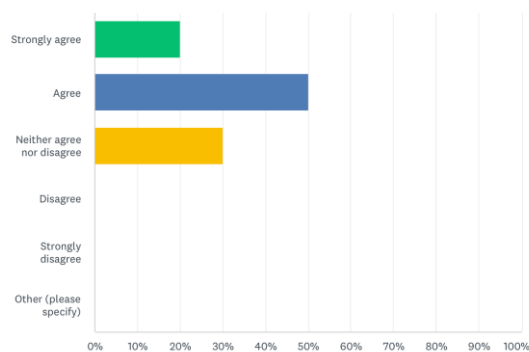
## Case Study: Youth Arts Pricing

In Q3 we sent a questionnaire to parents and guardians of young people who participated in some of our Youth Arts activities, including Film Crew and Shetland Youth Theatre. The principal aim was to check whether they thought the pricing of our activities provided value for money.

Whilst we feel that the results indicate that our Youth Arts activities do represent good value for money, it is noted that the sample were parents and guardians who were already paying for their children's participation.

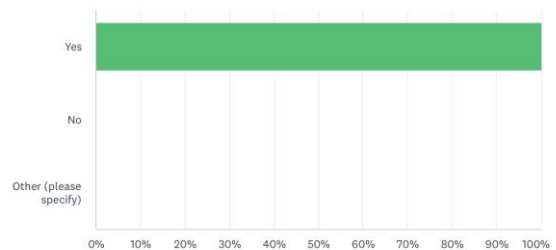
Q1  Youth Arts pricing is generally worked out at roughly £7.50 an hour. This pays for the experienced tutor, a Creative Assistant in the session, use of equipment and the facilities. Do you agree that this pricing is appropriate?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



Q2  Do the sessions feel good value for money?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

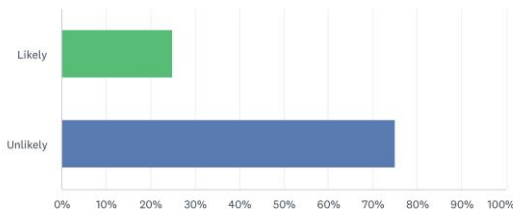


Q3



There are many reasons why you may choose to not return to one of our Youth Arts sessions. Would the pricing be a barrier from you attending the sessions?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 2

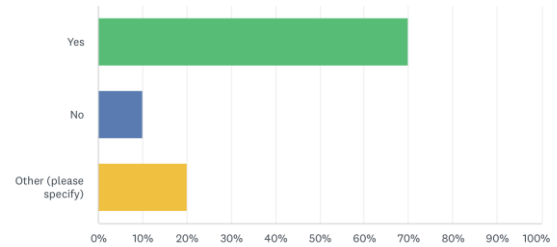


Q4



As far as you aware, does the pricing that you pay feel appropriate to other local youth activities? We recognise that there is a broad range from free to expensive provision.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

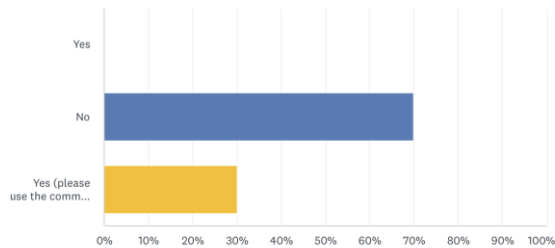


Q5



Do you have anything further you would like to add in regards to the pricing of Youth Arts Activity?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

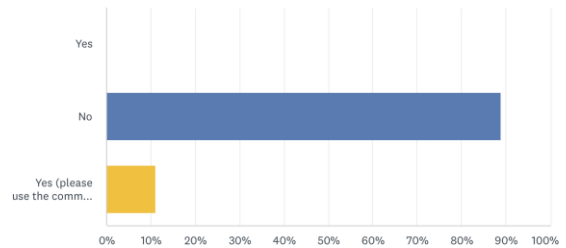


Q6



Do you have any further feedback in regards to pricing or Shetland Arts Youth Arts activity in general?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1



## Notes on KPI variances

(see table below)

The number of concerts, screenings and exhibition days continues to be lower than targets, but the trend is in a positive direction as activity continues to move toward pre-covid levels. Audience numbers have remained consistently higher than targeted in part due to the Locus public art installations in Lerwick town centre.

The number of development sessions has remained lower than targets as has the number of participations. This can be attributed to a lower-than-expected student role (although student enquiries and enrolments for the 23/24 academic year have been notably higher than in recent years) and some continuing Covid concerns amongst more vulnerable participant groups.

Actuals (see footnote 1)	Concerts, Screenings, Exhibition Days			Attendances			Development Sessions			Participations		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3
Delivered	924	1,065	936	54,984	61,260	47,463	325	289	339	2,600	2,905	2,413
Profiled Quarterly Target 22/23 (see footnote 2)	1,068	1,120	990	38,370	42,538	36,151	380	328	411	3,291	3,389	3,253
% of Target Delivered	87%	95%	95%	143%	144%	131%	85%	88%	83%	79%	86%	74%
Impact (see footnote 3)	Concerts, Screenings, Exhibition Days			Attendances			Development Sessions			Participations		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3
Improved quality of life through greater access to creative and social experiences	806	951	879	46,398	53,615	44,323	65	55	36	986	1,625	908
Improved opportunities through personal and professional transferrable skills	129	116	47	8,763	6,762	2,442	220	148	224	1,145	695	1,037
Improved confidence to contribute positively through opportunities for self-expression and community involvement	101	92	69	7,635	5,935	5,675	204	148	209	1,364	933	1,725
Improved feeling of inclusion and equality through greater understanding of other cultures and lifestyles	139	174	57	1,093	3,988	763	1	37	8	22	1,474	124
Improved mental and physical health through more active involvement in creative and social experiences	474	561	547	17,088	27,815	17,488	102	70	32	1,186	735	510
Improved community resilience through a more diverse creative economy	194	230	271	28,634	23,495	24,215	74	74	104	737	238	331

1: Attendances are the number of people who attend concerts, screenings or exhibitions. Participations are the number of times people take part in development sessions

2: We have profiled each quarter against data from previous years' so we can more accurately predict and analyse seasonal variances

3: Our activity is planned and measured against the 'Social Outcomes' (SOs) listed under the Impact heading - each event, session or project has two priority SO, and the table above cumulatively captures these priority SOs