

**Developing Literary Glasgow: Towards a Strategy for a
Reading, Writing and Publishing City**

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Abstract

Since the 1990s, urban cultural policy in the UK has been bound to the cause of urban regeneration. Much has been written in examination and critique of this relationship, but what happens when the direction of strategic attention is reversed and civic leadership seeks to regenerate culture itself? The city of Glasgow, having made capital of culture over many decades, has moved towards a strategy for the development of literary Glasgow. This thesis documents a search for those factors crucial to that strategy.

The research focuses on literary Glasgow as one aspect of the city's cultural sector; identifies and examines gaps in the relationship between the civic cultural organisation and literary communities; and highlights those elements vital to the formation of a strategy for development of the literary in Glasgow.

An extended period of participatory ethnographic research within the Aye Write! book festival and Sunny Govan Community Radio, is supplemented with data from interviews conducted across the literary sector and analysis of organisational documentation. Through these a gap has been identified between the policies and operations of a civic cultural organisation, and the desires of those engaged within the literary community. This gap is caused, in part, by the lack of a mechanism with which to reconcile contrasting narratives about the cultural essence of the city, or to negotiate the variations in definitions of value in relation to cultural engagement.

The interdisciplinary approach builds upon insights from existing work within publishing studies, cultural policy, complexity theory and organisational studies to construct an understanding of the dynamics of Glasgow's literary sector. This reveals the need for a framework in support of a landscape of practice, a desire for the placement of boundary objects to facilitate engagement, and the significance of value in relation to participation in literary activity.

This work informs a strategy for literary Glasgow and contributes to conversations on strategies for cultural development in other cities.

Declaration

This thesis is presented in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree. It contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. D. G.', written in a cursive style.

Date: 29 March 2018

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Introduction

The City of Glasgow has made capital of culture. Since the mid-1980s Glasgow's cultural sector has been quarried as a resource for the rebuilding, regeneration and rebranding of the city, and although there are criticisms of the methods and impacts of these, there is no doubt that this civic-cultural sector relationship has brought about transformation both within the city and in how it is perceived by others beyond. Culture has been deployed as a tool of urban regeneration by many cities over the past three decades. What happens when the direction of strategic attention is reversed, and civic leadership seeks to regenerate culture itself? Glasgow Life, the city's main cultural organisation and an arm's length external organisation (ALEO) of Glasgow City Council, initiated this collaborative doctoral project along with the University of Stirling's Centre for International Publishing and Communication, with the aim of generating research to inform a strategy for the development of literary Glasgow.

This research focuses on literary Glasgow as one aspect of the city's cultural sector. It considers the following questions: Which factors are significant to the individuals, communities and organisations of literary Glasgow? (RQ1) Which factors are crucial to development of the literary in Glasgow? (RQ2) And, in the light of the answers to these questions, how can Glasgow Life perform an effective role in the development of literary Glasgow? (RQ3)

Answers to these questions were sought through a multi-method approach: which included a series of semi-structured interviews with people across the range of literary Glasgow activity; two separate channels of participant ethnography over the research period; and analysis of documentation from Glasgow Life. This process identified gaps and problem areas in the relationships between Glasgow Life and literary communities. It highlighted those factors considered crucial to development of the literary in Glasgow by those within Glasgow Life, and those with no formal connection to the organisation. The multiple data sources allowed an element of cross-checking across fields, and the length of the study period enabled the

enrichment and refinement of concepts which arose. By bringing these data together in the light of literature on complexity, cultural value and organisational theory, this thesis can propose a direction for the formation of a strategy for literary Glasgow.

This introductory chapter gives an overview of the field of study and the methodology applied. It locates the research and surveys some of the challenges specific to Glasgow and to this project. The second half of the chapter presents background information about the city of Glasgow and its relationship with literature.

At its core, this thesis examines the relationship between policy and community as enacted in a specific cultural segment in this one city, but the challenges of strategic development of culture within a modern urban setting has resonance beyond Glasgow. Locally, the research interrogates whether the current relationship between Glasgow Life and the literary sector is appropriate for the needs of the sector or the aims of Glasgow Life. Where there are gaps or blockages, I seek to understand why and to uncover solutions from within the research data. Based on this work, proposals are offered on how literary Glasgow might be developed, and what Glasgow Life could do, or be, to support this.

This research project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, was devised to contribute to a strategy for the development of 'literary Glasgow'.¹ The thesis documents an examination of the relationship between Glasgow Life and literary Glasgow through a variety of perspectives and pursued in a multi-method approach, which is discussed in greater detail in the Methodology section later in this chapter. Through this approach, three central issues emerged which should command the attention of Glasgow Life as it moves towards a strategy. These are: the desire for connectivity across the sector; the significance of the representation of value; and the role of Glasgow Life within a complex adaptive system. The research has also delivered particular insights on the actual and perceived role of Aye Write! (Glasgow's book festival) within literary Glasgow, which are documented in Chapter

¹ 'AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award PhD Studentship: Developing Literary Glasgow. Ref: AH/L008610/1', 2013.

Three; contributes to knowledge in the area of non-participation in cultural activity; and builds upon literature on the use and misuse of boundary objects. The thesis closes with proposals for a staged transformation of the relationship between Glasgow Life and literary Glasgow in a way which could strengthen the civic-culture relationship.

Glasgow Life

Glasgow Life is the operating name of Culture and Sport Glasgow (CSG), an ALEO with charitable status set up by Glasgow City Council in 2007 to manage Glasgow's heritage, culture and sport, and Scotland's largest civic cultural organisation. In 2017, Glasgow Life directly employed 2,800 people, with an annual budget of £113 million.² Across Glasgow Life-operated venues, including museums, libraries, cultural venues and sports venues, over 19 million visits were recorded.³

Glasgow Life has a strategic, tactical and operational remit over the city's cultural sector generally and the sub-categories of Arts, Museums, Libraries, Events, Communities, Music and Sport. Glasgow's literary sector crosses all these categories but also has significance beyond Glasgow Life's reach to areas such as education and commerce, which are within the remit of Glasgow City Council's Education Services and Business Development departments respectively. The position of Glasgow Life as a city-wide organisation, with reach into libraries, events and communities, is particularly useful for research into the literary sector, although this has been supplemented with connection to educational and commercial organisations and to the many small and medium size businesses which operate in and around the literary sector, including publishers, literary agents, booksellers and writers.

Significantly for this research, Glasgow Life delivers the city's public library service with 32 community libraries, 29 school libraries, the Mitchell Library, and a

² Bridget McConnell, 'Making It Happen in Glasgow: A Vision for Glasgow Libraries', *Public Library Quarterly*, 36.2 (2017), 136–53 (p. 153) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01616846.2017.1313036>>.

³ *Annual Review and Performance Report 2016/17* (Glasgow Life) <<https://prodglportal.azureedge.net/media/1796/annual-review-and-performance-report-2016-to-2017.pdf>> [accessed 23 March 2018].

mobile library service. Glasgow Libraries is the largest public network of library and information services in Scotland and accounts for 14% of national usage.⁴ Glasgow's main book festival, Aye Write! and the children's book festival, Wee Write! are also delivered as part of the mission of Glasgow Libraries.

Glasgow Life's 2014 vision statement announces the organisation's aim: 'To inspire Glasgow's citizens and visitors to lead richer and more active lives through culture, sport and learning.'⁵

Among its strategic objectives Glasgow Life makes a commitment to 'encourage participation, involvement and engagement in culture and sport for all'. This commitment is broken down into aspirations which could be seen as desirable objectives for any modern city:

- to enhance the health and wellbeing of people who live, work and visit the City
- to create an environment where enterprise, work and skills development are encouraged
- to provide opportunities for making positive life choices in a safe, attractive and sustainable environment
- to create a culture of learning and creativity that lets people flourish in their personal, family, community and working lives
- to enhance and promote the City's local, national and international image, identity and infrastructure
- to demonstrate the ongoing improvement in the quality, performance and impact of the services and opportunities we provide.⁶

⁴ 'Glasgow Life Business and Service Plan 2015-16' (Culture and Sport Glasgow, 2015) <<<http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/about-us/Documents/Business%20and%20Service%20Plan%202015-16.pdf>>> [accessed 24 August 2015].

⁵ 'Glasgow Life Vision Statement and Strategic Objectives 2014' (Glasgow Life) <<http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/about-us/Documents/Vision%20Statement%20+%20Objectives%20FINAL.pdf>> [accessed 28 September 2014].

⁶ 'Glasgow Life Vision Statement'.

While these aspirations can be seen as overlapping and complementary in general terms, closer scrutiny reveals potential tensions between them, particularly in an economic climate which puts additional pressure on public sector resources.

This thesis argues that Glasgow Life's current model of engagement with literary Glasgow struggles to break free from an instrumental approach and therefore fails to adequately recognise the value within the sector. As the research reveals, this has led to a lack of connectivity across the sector, which many organisations and individuals in the literary sector look to Glasgow Life to resolve. A renewed relationship which encompasses an understanding of complexity, would enable Glasgow Life to advance the untapped energy and opportunity across the spectrum of literary sector organisations and groups.

The nature of literary Glasgow and Glasgow Life's relationship with it is constantly evolving. The period of this research, 2013-2017, sees it in transition due to the continuing effects of austerity on public sector funding, and the arguably related drift towards localism and the pursuit of community resilience. This drift is supported and encouraged by local and national government policy and may be well-intentioned, but this research uncovers a call for a different relationship between literary Glasgow and Glasgow Life, and specifically for an active and engaged literary sector champion.

Public sector finances have been under increasing pressure since 2007 and have resulted in contraction of Glasgow Life staff and services. Despite the efforts of Glasgow Life staff to protect literary activity, and particularly reading and literacy development, over time, weaknesses have been exposed in Glasgow Life's current model. Reduction in resource is disastrous to a model focussed on a linear, instrumental approach to, for instance, reader development. This is unwelcome news, but the contraction does bring with it an unforeseen opportunity to consider and move towards a new model for Glasgow Life's relationship with literary Glasgow, one with the potential to make use of the expertise, skills and dedication of the sector in a way that was not possible during times in which Glasgow Life could afford to rise above the sector and pursue its own agenda. Since this is a period in which the relationship between the city government and communities is being reassessed, it is

the ideal opportunity to realign the commendable intent of policymakers with the needs of the literary sector, as expressed by practitioners and communities.

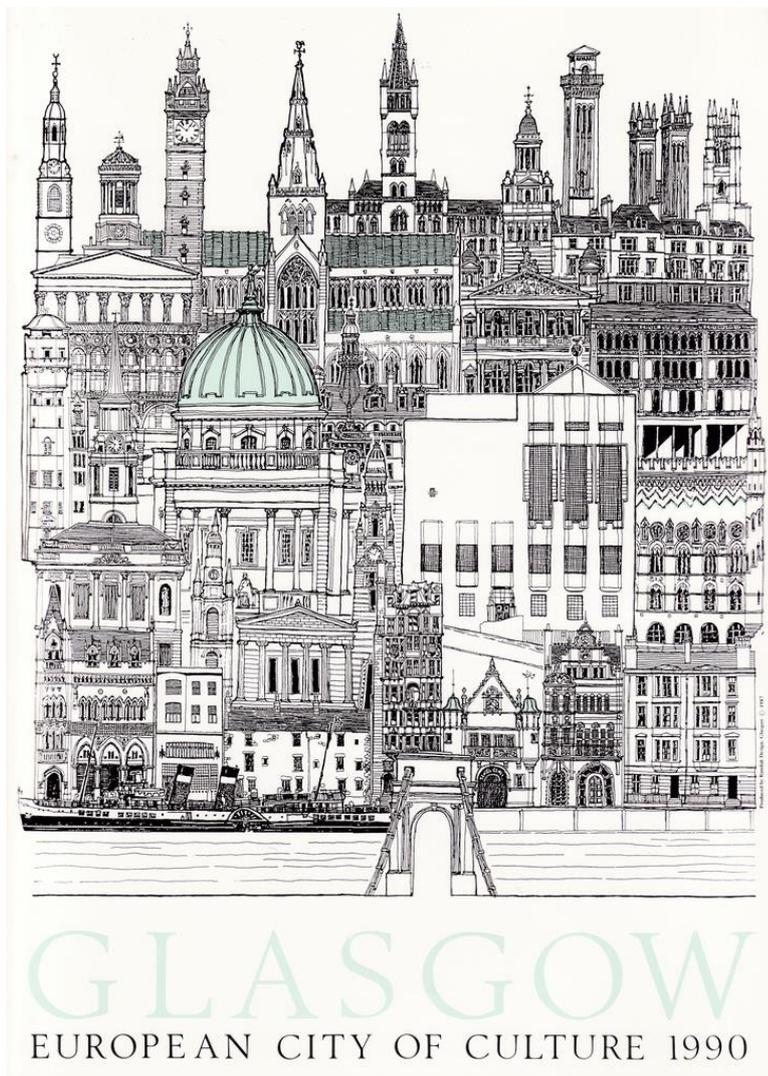


Figure 1: Promotional image from ECOC 1990

Glasgow and cultural regeneration

Glasgow has been a name to conjure with in discussions on urban cultural policy ever since 1990, when it took on the status of European Capital of Culture (ECOC).

Bianchini, Garcia, Mooney, Gomez, Hesmondhalgh and Boyle have each written on the strengths and weaknesses of the 'Glasgow Model' of culture-led regeneration enacted

during this period.⁷ This is an important topic and one which should continue to be considered in the light of its contested legacy and longer-term impacts. The culture-led regeneration which took place before and after Glasgow ECOC 1990 is now, for good or ill, an integral part of the city's heritage. That heritage is acknowledged within this research project, but the focus is on the here and now, and in the voices and activities of one segment of Glasgow's cultural sector, both within Glasgow Life and out in the life of Glasgow. In this respect, *Developing Literary Glasgow* provides a unique perspective on the field of urban cultural policy as it applies to Glasgow's literary sector, and adds to understanding of the potential of civic cultural organisations to develop and improve their relationship with the culture and cities they serve. A detailed discussion of the literature around culture-led regeneration as it applies to Glasgow and this current research, will be found within Chapter One.

'Literary Glasgow' is a term which could be interpreted in several ways, and this ambiguity allowed an element of freedom in defining the scope of this research. When used in interviews and informal discussions during the early stages of research, it was often presumed by interviewees to be associated with some 'higher form' of written material, perhaps 'serious' poetry, historical non-fiction or academic writing. It was not my intention to limit the research to these elements and so the opportunity was taken to explain a wider vision of literary Glasgow as a concept which includes all activity and resources related to reading, writing and publishing in the city, including book festivals, informal discussion of literature, support for literacy, and performance of poetry and the spoken word. On more than one occasion, this explanation of a wider definition of 'literary' was received by the interview subject with visible and

⁷Bianchini, Franco, 'Reflections on the Origins, Interpretations and Development of the Creative City idea', in Van Damme, Ilja, Bert De Munck, and Andrew Miles, eds. *Cities and Creativity from the Renaissance to the Present*. (Routledge, 2017); Beatriz García, 'Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration in Western European Cities: Lessons from Experience, Prospects for the Future', *Local Economy*, 19.4 (2004), 312–26 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/0269094042000286828>>; Gerry Mooney, *Cultural Policy as Urban Transformation? Critical Reflections on Glasgow, European City of Culture 1990*, 2004, xix; Boyle and Hughes; Hesmondhalgh, D.J (2008) *Cultural and Creative Industries*. In: The SAGE handbook of cultural analysis. Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 553-569.; Gómez, M. V. (1998), 'Reflective images: the case of urban regeneration in Glasgow and Bilbao'. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 22: 106–121. doi:10.1111/1468-2427.00126;

verbal relief. Author Janice Galloway on the use of the word 'literature' in community settings, responded with, '[y]ou have no idea what a poisoner that word is. It's like orchestral music, it's the automatic assumption it's got nothing to do with me has it?'⁸ Similarly, Community Learning Tutor, Julie Fraser, had reservations about the use of the word 'literary' in community settings. Although an accomplished writer, playwright, and former script editor and producer for BBC Scotland, she would not be comfortable using the word in the community learning settings in which she worked:

Maybe the way to reach... it's that word literary I think, I sort of imagine cravats and velvet jackets, you know. [...] And it's also confused with literacy and a lot of folk don't know what literacy is either so the whole thing, literacy, literary, I don't know what you would use, you might have to think about it. Literary makes me think of the old smoky pubs, McIlvaney and all that lot as well, hardman, I don't know.

[...] It's how you define literary and what do you mean. Is it about being able to read a book? I think literary sets it off on a whole different thing.⁹

The broad interpretation of literary Glasgow was taken to encompass the complex relationships between libraries, literacy, reading, publishing, writing and communities made of some or all of these elements, and in recognition of Glasgow Life's wide responsibility in enacting local government policy within the cultural realm. The choice made was influenced by an awareness of the interconnectedness of reading and book-related activities, and also the desire to offer a meaningful contribution towards a strategy in developing these. Literary Glasgow is not to be equated with what in creative industries terms might be referred to as 'Glasgow's literary sector': rather, the latter is a subset of the former.

Literary Glasgow is a necessarily woolly term which encompasses all reading and book-related activity and interest in the city. Therefore, commercial enterprises,

⁸ Interview: Janice Galloway, 2015. 00:01:41

⁹ Interview: Julie Fraser, 2015. 00:45:35

such as publishing and bookselling, can be considered alongside book groups, libraries, therapeutic creative writing classes, community radio poetry readings, literacy interventions, book festivals, spoken word/slam poetry events, and conversations about books in pubs. These are set within a landscape of political and physical infrastructure, which includes local and national government policy and position documents, organisational aims and objectives, use of physical space and allocation of resource. The central concern of this research is to understand how these things interrelate and discover how literary Glasgow ‘works’ and how it could work better. This leads inevitably into questions of value, which are also implicit within the idea of ‘development’.

Within literary Glasgow many contrasting values are expressed, from commercial interests, to community cohesion, to city branding. A strategy for developing literary Glasgow will necessarily include choices about deployment of resource. These choices will reflect, and demonstrate, the values Glasgow Life chooses to foreground, as they have done in the past. This research demonstrates that the choices made can be less about selecting from a menu of values, and more about choosing to modify the organisation in order to value literary Glasgow as a whole.

Methodology

The collaborative nature of this research afforded me access to Glasgow Life’s literary activities, to the process of developing the Vision for Glasgow Libraries, and specifically to the Aye Write! book festival and the planning and debriefing meetings surrounding it.¹⁰ This relationship is central to the methodological design of the research project. In 2013, during the initiation phase of this research, Mark O’Neill, Glasgow Life’s Director of Strategy and Research stated his hope that the study would inform a strategy for the development of literary Glasgow. He shared concern that across the array of programmes and initiatives in support of reader development: the book festivals; publishing; creative writing; poetry; and literacy for children, adults

¹⁰ ‘A Vision for Glasgow Libraries’ (Culture and Sport Glasgow, 2016).

and speakers of other languages, the organisation was busy doing things without a clear understanding of whether its efforts were effective, or whether there was a better way.¹¹ The concern expressed by O'Neill was about more than simple evaluation of individual programmes; the questions here were on the greater issues of the role of a civic cultural organisation and its relationship with the communities it served. As a result of these early conversations around the aim of the project, I proposed to take a broad view of literary Glasgow, and the research was designed with a staged, multi-method approach to gather data from a wide range of sources. This approach was taken to reveal areas of significance within literary Glasgow beyond questions of the efficacy of any individual initiative. I have taken a deliberate step back from the temptation to simply document and evaluate the numerous literacy initiatives, reader development efforts and literary activities carried out in Glasgow. The choice to do so springs from those early discussions with O'Neill and my supervisory team, and is informed by initial surveys of literature on reader development and critiques of the instrumental use of cultural policy. This material is discussed further in the literature review in Chapter One.

Conceptual Frameworks/Philosophy

The term 'mixed methods' has been applied to various types of research: Bryman & Bell define it as 'research that combines quantitative and qualitative research'.¹² It is still most commonly used to refer to this type of research, but it can also refer to research which uses more than one qualitative or more than one quantitative method, or draws upon more than one theoretical perspective.¹³ The definition of mixed methods has been developed to the point of being considered a 'third

¹¹ Field Notes: Glasgow Life. 15/10/2013.

¹² Alan Bryman and Emma Bell, *Business Research Methods* (Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 641.

¹³ Helen Kara, *Creative Research Methods in the Social Sciences: A Practical Guide* (Policy Press, 2015), p. 26; Nollaig Frost and others, 'Pluralism in Qualitative Research: The Impact of Different Researchers and Qualitative Approaches on the Analysis of Qualitative Data', *Qualitative Research*, 10.4 (2010), 441–60 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794110366802>>; Shalini Lal, Melinda Suto, and Michael Ungar, 'Examining the Potential of Combining the Methods of Grounded Theory and Narrative Inquiry: A Comparative Analysis', *The Qualitative Report*, 17.21 (2012), 1–22.

paradigm’;¹⁴ Teddlie & Tashakkori contend the mixed methods approach is independent of the qualitative or quantitative approaches, and even apologise for using those terms as they consider them to be part of a continuum.¹⁵ Developing Literary Glasgow is conducted using a version of mixed methods research referred to as the qualitative and multi-method approach.¹⁶ This type of research is characterised by the use of methodological pluralism and is underpinned by pragmatism and constructivism.

This research is positioned within a pragmatic constructivist framework, which combines Piaget’s constructivist epistemology with the pragmatism of Dewey and James.¹⁷ Blending epistemological perspectives was proposed by Garrison in his 1995 paper on the subject, and subsequent academics have returned to Dewey’s work and identified seeds of modern constructivism.¹⁸ There has been a recent resurgence in interest in this approach and its application within education, organisational and cultural studies.¹⁹ The pragmatic constructivist philosophy is essentially ontologically fluid in the sense it moves beyond the objectivist/subjectivist dichotomy. According

¹⁴ R. Burke Johnson, Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie, and Lisa A. Turner, ‘Toward a Definition of Mixed Methods Research’, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1.2 (2007), 112–33 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689806298224>>.

¹⁵ Charles Teddlie and Abbas Tashakkori, *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research: Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches in the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (SAGE, 2009).

¹⁶ David Collier and Colin Elman, ‘Qualitative and Multi-Method Research: Organizations, Publication, and Reflections on Integration’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology* (Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 780–95 <<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7x31q779>>.

¹⁷ Hilary Putnam, *Pragmatism as a Way of Life* (Harvard University Press, 2017).

¹⁸ Jim Garrison, ‘Deweyan Pragmatism and the Epistemology of Contemporary Social Constructivism’, *American Educational Research Journal*, 32.4 (1995), 716–740; Larry Hickman, Stefan Neubert, and Kersten Reich, *John Dewey Between Pragmatism and Constructivism* (Fordham University Press, 2009).

¹⁹ Marie-José Avenier and Catherine Thomas, ‘Finding One’s Way around Various Methodological Guidelines for Doing Rigorous Case Studies: A Comparison of Four Epistemological Frameworks’, *Systèmes D’information & Management*, 20.1 (2015), 61–98; Morten Jakobsen, ‘Helping as the Topoi for Interventionist Research from a Pragmatic Constructivist Point of View’, in *ECRM 2018 17th European Conference on Research Methods in Business and Management* (Academic Conferences and publishing limited, 2018); Lars Bo Henriksen, ‘Towards Integrating Realities-Pragmatic Constructivism and Arendt’s Theory of Action’, *Proceedings of Pragmatic Constructivism*, 7.1 (2017), 6; Mordechai Gordon, ‘Toward A Pragmatic Discourse of Constructivism: Reflections on Lessons from Practice’, *Educational Studies*, 45.1 (2009), 39–58 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131940802546894>>; Stefan Neubert, ‘Pragmatism, Constructivism, and the Theory of Culture’, in *John Dewey Between Pragmatism and Constructivism* (Fordham University Press, 2009), pp. 162–84.

to Jakobsen, pragmatic constructivism supports an interventionist approach to knowledge creation, which is appropriate for this research with embedded ethnography at its core, and is inclined toward research which aims to make a difference within organisations.²⁰

The constructivist position is that reality is constructed through negotiation and dialogue, and is embedded within social, geographical and political settings.²¹ As this position accepts the existence of multiple realities, it allowed me to approach this research not as a search for a single solution but as a journey to deepen understanding of the various perspectives within literary Glasgow. My main task within the research then became the gathering and analysis of these multiple perspectives, with a view to uncovering areas of significant convergence or conflict of ideas relating to literary development within Glasgow. This correlated well with O'Neill's desire for greater clarity on the role of Glasgow Life (or indeed any civic cultural organisation) in the development of literary activity. As this framework positively embraces change, allows the emergence of negotiated solutions to challenges and accepts the validity of multiple perspectives, it is appropriate for the research project and my own inclination towards a multi-method approach in this context.

Interdisciplinarity

Among the challenges presented by the broad scope of this project is that of interdisciplinarity. The definition of literary Glasgow used here and the overarching aim to uncover that which could be of use in informing a strategy, have contributed to the decision to resist a firm monodisciplinary approach. This has allowed pursuit of issues and concepts emerging from the data and the freedom to weave these into the narrative of the research, but has also raised concern over conceptual fit and consistency of those concepts that might be rooted in one discipline, or modified

²⁰ Jakobsen; Morten Jakobsen, Tuomas Korhonen, and Teemu Laine, 'Pragmatic Constructivism for Making a Difference in Organizations', *Proceedings of Pragmatic Constructivism*, 7.1 (2017), 3.

²¹ Gordon; Jenna Breckenridge and others, 'Choosing a Methodological Path: Reflections on the Constructivist Turn', *Grounded Theory Review*, 11.1 (2012), 64–71.

across disciplines. Newell's (2001) support of interdisciplinarity as an essential response to the requirements of research within complex fields, was later refined in his subsequent work, and also by Klein and Repko.²² Pursuit of the areas of interest indicated by initial data in this research initially formed a bricolage approach, which is expanded on below, but as the project progressed, strong themes emerged and connecting pathways between theories and concepts from a range of disciplines became apparent.²³

Complexity theory is an important backdrop to this research and forms a framework which brings the elements together. Cairney and Geyer acknowledge the seductive relationship between complexity and interdisciplinary research but also call for caution.²⁴ Clearly there are advantages to moving beyond a single disciplinary approach in studies of complex systems that seem to move across and through disciplinary boundaries, but basic challenges, such as those of terminology, must be recognised and handled with care. In considering what complexity and interdisciplinary approaches can contribute to policy studies, Cairney and Geyer also highlight the limitations of policymakers' ability to engage with such complexity, and conclude that pragmatic actions tend to define local and national government actions.

²² William H. Newell, Jay Wentworth, and David Sebberson, 'A Theory of Interdisciplinary Studies', *Issues in Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2001; William Newell, 'Complexity and Interdisciplinarity', in *Knowledge Management, Organizational Intelligence and Learning, and Complexity, Encyclopaedia of Life Support Systems* (Oxford, UK: UNESCO: EOLSS, 2004); Julie Thompson Klein, Jay Wentworth, and David Sebberson, 'Interdisciplinarity and the Prospect of Complexity: The Tests of Theory', *Issues in Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2001; Julie Thompson Klein, 'Interdisciplinarity and Complexity: An Evolving Relationship', *Emergence: Complexity and Organization*, 6 (2004); Allen Repko, 'Integrating Interdisciplinarity: How the Theories of Common Ground and Cognitive Interdisciplinarity Are Informing the Debate on Interdisciplinary Integration', *Issues in Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2007.

²³ Joe L. Kincheloe, 'On to the Next Level: Continuing the Conceptualization of the Bricolage', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11.3 (2005), 323–50 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405275056>>; Joe L. Kincheloe, 'Describing the Bricolage: Conceptualizing a New Rigor in Qualitative Research', ed. by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7.6 (2001), 679–92; Matt Rogers, 'Contextualizing Theories and Practices of Bricolage Research', *The Qualitative Report*, 17.48 (2012), 1–17.

²⁴ Paul Cairney and Robert Geyer, 'A Critical Discussion of Complexity Theory: How Does 'Complexity Thinking' improve Our Understanding of Politics and Policymaking?', *Complexity, Governance and Networks*, 3.2 (2017), 1–11.

Approach

From this philosophical position, and with the opportunities presented within the research for multiple sources of data, I take a pragmatist approach.²⁵ At a basic level, pragmatism is a paradigm which advocates using methods best suited to addressing the research problem, and prioritises methods useful within the immediate context of the research, over any perceived traditional methodological approach. These may include mixed or multi-methods and may be selected from different disciplines. Sanderson maintains the pragmatist philosophy is essential to the formation of 'intelligent policy making', particularly when engaged with within complex adaptive systems.²⁶ Morgan also champions pragmatism as a philosophy rather than purely as a methodological approach, and states:

[...] pragmatism can serve as a philosophical program for social research, regardless of whether that research uses qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods.²⁷

My philosophical position is most closely aligned to the neo-pragmatist perspective proposed by Rorty, and later developed by Baert and Putnam, which foregrounds the value of self-understanding leading to the potential for groups of people to re-conceptualise themselves in the light of a new framework.²⁸ It also has relevance in the proposals made by this thesis on creation of a landscape of practice based on a shared understanding and agenda.

The multi-method approach chosen enacts these philosophical positions within the broad field of literary Glasgow. The methods followed threads of knowledge creation, even when these led to areas more closely aligned with other

²⁵ Ian Sanderson, 'Intelligent Policy Making for a Complex World: Pragmatism, Evidence and Learning', *Political Studies*, 57.4 (2009), 699–719 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2009.00791.x>>; Putnam; Patrick Baert, 'Neo-Pragmatism and Phenomenology. A Proposal', *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*, 3.III-2 (2011); Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism: Essays, 1972-1980* (U of Minnesota Press, 1982).

²⁶ Sanderson, 'Intelligent Policy Making for a Complex World'.

²⁷ David L. Morgan, 'Pragmatism as a Paradigm for Social Research', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20.8 (2014), 1045–53 (p. 1) <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800413513733>>.

²⁸ Rorty; Baert; Putnam.

disciplines. The study is primarily ethnographic, and gathers data through participatory ethnography, discourse analysis, targeted subject interviews and participation in focus groups. I recognised a need to make sense of the pursuit of data collection through various sources. This approach of making use of ‘whatever was at hand’ was described by Levi-Strauss as ‘bricolage’.²⁹ The concept has been developed by Berry and Kincheloe, who recognise its alignment with the pragmatist paradigm in that it values the use of multiple data sources and perspectives in order to increase the robustness of the knowledge created.³⁰ Feilzer also makes a case for the use of multi-methods and modes of analysis when the aim is knowledge production towards a specific goal.³¹ She contends:

[...] pragmatism as a research paradigm supports the use of a mix of different research methods as well as modes of analysis and a continuous cycle of abductive reasoning while being guided primarily by the researcher’s desire to produce socially useful knowledge.³²

The primary goal of this project is to create knowledge which could inform a strategy for development of literary Glasgow. I took the position that this goal was best achieved with the broadest possible reach across the field of potential data in literary Glasgow, to identify those areas most significant for a whole-city strategy. For this project to make a significant attempt at that goal, a multi-method approach was chosen. By gathering data from a range of sources, using multiple methods and a progressive cycle of analysis, the knowledge created is more robust, and arguably more useful for the creation of strategy than a more focussed, single-method study. Denzin (2012) works through some of the challenges of validation faced by multi-

²⁹ Claude Levi-Strauss, *Savage Mind* (University of Chicago Chicago, IL, 1962), I, p. 11.

³⁰ Kincheloe, ‘Describing the Bricolage’; Kathleen Berry and Joe Kincheloe, *Rigour and Complexity in Educational Research. Conducting Educational Research* (Open University Press, 2004).

³¹ Martina Yvonne Feilzer, ‘Doing Mixed Methods Research Pragmatically: Implications for the Rediscovery of Pragmatism as a Research Paradigm’, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 4.1 (2010), 6–16 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689809349691>>.

³² Yvonne Feilzer, p. 6.

method research (MMR), and though he is clearly troubled by these, he seems also hopeful a way through is emerging.³³ Triangulation has been a traditional method of verification of results, but Denzin reminds us:

The use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured. [...] Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation but an alternative to validation.³⁴

Denzin follows this up with an acknowledgment of the positive perspective on the rigor that MMR can bring:

The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry.³⁵

It is notable Denzin does not see satisfactory compatibility of MMR with any version of pragmatism, although he does offer alternatives which have promise, including bricolage.³⁶ Within this project, mixed-methods may not be able to confirm results in a purely objective sense, but the effective triangulation it offers through multiple perspectives does serve to build a clearer picture of the issues within literary Glasgow.

Research questions

The research questions were devised to move from a broad sweep of literary Glasgow towards specific, actionable findings relevant to Glasgow Life in its strategy for literary development. The following three questions are addressed: Which factors

³³ Norman K. Denzin, 'Triangulation 2.0', *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 6.2 (2012), 80–88 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689812437186>>.

³⁴ Denzin, p. 82.

³⁵ Denzin, p. 82.

³⁶ Denzin, p. 85.

are significant to the individuals, communities and organisations of literary Glasgow? (RQ1) Which factors are crucial to development of the literary in Glasgow? (RQ2) And, in the light of the answers to these questions, how can Glasgow Life perform an effective role in the development of literary Glasgow? (RQ3)

The use of multiple methods, continuous analysis and cyclical data collection means these questions were approached in a non-linear way. Data relating to all three questions were collected throughout the research period. Answers to these questions emerged from the data and were refined through analysis and comparison with subsequent data in a process which was both inductive and abductive.

- My initial desk research, survey of organisational documents, engagement with literary groups, and early round of interviews formed the foundation of data relating to RQ1. Participation in the Aye Write! Programme Advisory Group and in the Vision for Glasgow Libraries focus groups added data to this from a perspective more closely connected with Glasgow Life and its partner organisations.
- RQ2 relied heavily on data from interviews, and on the comparison with data gathered through the two ethnographic studies. These were considered against further explorations in the literature in a reflexive process, which distilled elements of significance to development of literary Glasgow.
- Many of the interviewees offered answers to RQ3 and made suggestions regarding Glasgow Life's role, but in isolation these tended towards the simplistic and lacked nuance. Richer findings in response to RQ3 were developed through analysis of the interview data in tandem with reflection on the ethnographic studies. The literature on Complexity, Boundary Objects and Communities of Practice strengthened the theoretical foundations of the knowledge produced.³⁷ Evidence from the Home Ground project and the

³⁷ R. Comunian, 'Rethinking the Creative City: The Role of Complexity, Networks and Interactions in the Urban Creative Economy', *Urban Studies*, 48.6 (2011), 1157–79 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098010370626>>; David Colander and Roland Kupers, *Complexity and the Art of Public Policy: Solving Society's Problems from the Bottom up* (Princeton University Press, 2014); Cairney and Geyer; Susan Leigh Star, 'This Is Not a Boundary Object: Reflections on the Origin of a Concept', *Science*,

Glasgow: A Reading City event provided further support for the recommendations which arose from these findings.

Research design

The collaboration with Glasgow Life offered access to the working of its literary engagement beyond what could otherwise have been expected. While I recognised the value of these opportunities for access and participation presented by the Glasgow Life partnership, I also wanted to maintain the flexibility to pursue and test those factors which emerged from the initial stages of contact with the field beyond that organisation. As a result, the central opportunities presented by the Collaborative Doctoral Partnership were supplemented with interviews, observation and participation beyond Glasgow Life activity. Data collection from the various methods used took place in parallel rather than consecutively and although this was a challenging way to proceed from an administrative point of view, it did allow a continuous ‘doubling back’ process in which concepts could be tested and developed. Analysis of these data used techniques from Critical Discourse Analysis, which allows a reflexive approach and the flexibility to analyse and compare data of different sources and types.³⁸ The methods used in initial stages of data analysis drew upon Grounded Theory’s ‘general method of comparative analysis’.³⁹ Analysis was carried out in the spirit of what Frost et al describe as Walton’s observation that,

[...] discourse analysis is less to do with following prescribed steps and more about conducting analysis in the spirit of post-structuralist enquiry: that is, to avoid making ‘truth-claims’, to utilise appropriate analytic concepts and

Technology & Human Values, 35.5 (2010), 601–17 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243910377624>>; Geoffrey C. Bowker and others, *Boundary Objects and Beyond: Working with Leigh Star* (MIT Press, 2016); Martyn Denscombe, ‘Communities of Practice: A Research Paradigm for the Mixed Methods Approach’, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 2.3 (2008), 270–83 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689808316807>>; Etienne Wenger, ‘Communities of Practice: A Brief Introduction’, 2011 <<http://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/11736>> [accessed 10 October 2017].

³⁸ *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. by Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, Introducing Qualitative Methods (London ; Thousand Oaks [Calif.]: SAGE, 2001).

³⁹ Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *Discovery of Grounded Theory : Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Routledge, 2017), p. 1 <<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781351522168>> [accessed 10 October 2018].

to report findings in a way which is consistent with the appropriate theoretical and epistemological positions.⁴⁰

Despite significant overlap between the data collection methods, they can be categorised into three distinct stages. Embedded ethnography within Aye Write! took place during the entire research period and is therefore not listed as specific to any of these stages. This formed the core of the research, and both informed and was informed by data emerging from the other sources.

Stage One: Primarily concerned with gaining an overview of the field of study, developing an awareness of the main areas of literature which might have relevance to the research, and building relationships with colleagues and communities within literary Glasgow. Some of this was desk research, but it also required my presence at Glasgow Life meetings, literary organisations such as Glasgow Women's Library, Weegie Wednesday and St Mungo's Mirrorball, and at reading and literacy workshops in community centres and libraries. I took notes on these meetings and encounters and they were recorded in NVivo, alongside my notes on organisational documents and other printed material from Glasgow Life and literary organisations.

Stage Two: Majority of the semi-structured interviews. The aim was to gather data from a wide range of people engaged in some way with literary Glasgow. This included librarians, publishers, academics, community learning workers, library users, writers, poets and book group members. The interviews comprised of a series of questions designed to trigger discussion and elicit comment on the quality and extent of literary activity in Glasgow, the role of Glasgow Life, the Aye Write! festival, and the potential for improvement across the sector. The notes and transcriptions from these interviews were added to NVivo for coding and analysis. This revealed concepts which were identified as significant across the whole sector.

Stage Three: Emergent concepts from early rounds of data collection fed back in to the research project for testing. There was a further round of semi-structured

⁴⁰ Frost and others, p. 444.

interviews, which allowed testing of concepts that emerged from earlier interviews, primarily around cultural value, participation, the nature of the literary network and Glasgow Life's role within it. The ethnographic study of Sunny Govan Radio and the literary community around this would also be considered as part of this third stage. This was an opportunity to experience an alternative organisation/community to that observed in the book festival, and to examine some of the assumptions around cultural participation and reader development. A focus group on reader development in Glasgow ran as a public event during Aye Write! 2017 under the title Glasgow: A Reading City. This tested the theory that reader development could be used as a concept or agenda to bring contributions from multiple sources across Glasgow, and that the outcome of this collaboration would be positive. Contributors were invited from Glasgow's universities, the University of Stirling and from public and voluntary sector organisations. The event was free and open to the public, and resulted in the introduction of champions of reader development from previously unconnected organisations.

The next section covers each method in more detail and reflects on its contribution to the study and also its limitations.

Participatory ethnography

Ethnographic research is traditionally a multi-method approach in which data is discovered in language, traditions, relationships, visual signals and many other sources. Eberle and Maeder acknowledge this diversity as a great strength but point out ethnography is primarily about direct observation, and therefore requires the physical presence of the researcher.⁴¹

At the core of the material in this thesis are two sets of ethnographic research: one of which took place within the Aye Write! Book Festival from November 2013 until September 2017, and one within Sunny Govan Community Radio from May 2015 until August 2016. In each of these roles I conducted ethnographic research as an

⁴¹ Thomas S Eberle and Christoph Maeder, 'Organizational Ethnography', in *Qualitative Research: Issues of Theory, Method, and Practice*, 3rd ed (Los Angeles: Sage, 2011), p. 54.

embedded participant within the organisation. Bryman and Bell outline a range of possible roles for an ethnographer and draw upon what has become known as Gold’s typology of participant observer roles (see Figure 2) – although Gold himself attributed these categories to Sociologist Buford Junker.⁴² By this system of classification I had greater involvement within Aye Write! (Participant-as-observer) than within Sunny Govan (Observer-as-participant) as I had a clearly defined co-worker role within Aye Write!, and was more of a ‘researcher who helped out a bit’ at Sunny Govan. It was clear from preliminary discussions with Glasgow Life I would have the opportunity to engage in an extended period of participatory research within Glasgow Libraries, and the Aye Write! team in particular. My Glasgow Life supervisor at that time was the Head of Glasgow Libraries and also the Director of the book festival and there was an expectation the book festival would form a significant part of the research project.

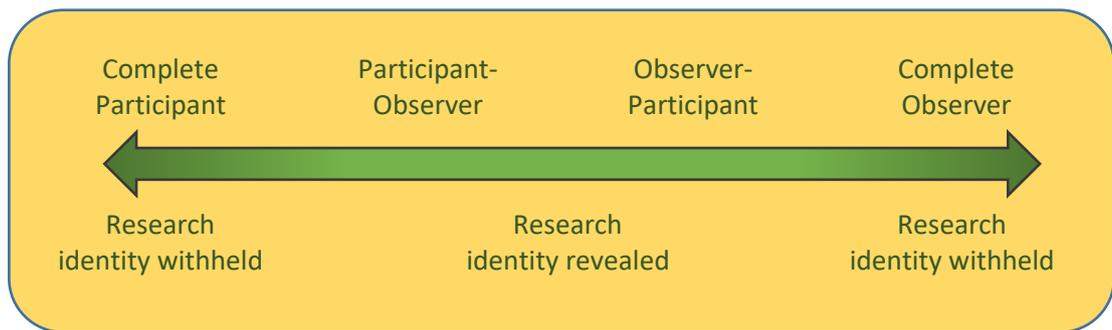


Figure 2: Gold’s typology of participant observer roles

I was invited to be involved in the Aye Write! Book Festival as a participant observer within programming and operational meetings and was given wide access within the Glasgow Libraries team. During my involvement with the Aye Write!, I attended 25 PAG meetings and six Community Engagement & Creative Learning meetings. I also contributed to other sessions called to address specific issues around

⁴² Bryman and Bell, p. 456; R. L. Gold, ‘Roles in Sociological Field Observations’, *Social Forces*, 36.3 (1958), 217–23 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2573808>>; Buford Junker, ‘Some Suggestions for the Design of Field Work Learning Experiences’, in *Cases on Field Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1952), III-A.

Bookselling & Retail, Marketing & Promotion, Sponsorship & Funding, and Gaelic Programme.

During the four Aye Write! festivals which took place in the research period, I engaged as an audience member, assisted in a supporting role and chaired author events. Alongside fellow researcher, Lauren Weiss, I also delivered two knowledge exchange events within the programme, as mentioned earlier.

I participated in a special Aye Write! evaluation and debrief session held each year, typically a few months after the festival. Through attendance and participation in these meetings I became familiar with the issues affecting the design and delivery of Aye Write! and the negotiations which took place between strategic aims, financial pressures and the input of Glasgow Life staff and individuals from the literary Glasgow community. This opportunity formed the backbone of my research for two reasons: firstly, Aye Write! is a significant expression of Glasgow Life's reader development, cultural placemaking and literary sector engagement activities and is therefore at the centre of negotiations around Glasgow Life's role within literary Glasgow; secondly, as my engagement with the book festival continued throughout the entire research period, I was able to document and participate in these negotiations and the factors which influenced them. Field notes on these meetings were kept and referred to in order to track the evolution of issues over the research period.

In terms of potential researcher 'bias', I do not believe it would have been possible, or beneficial, to remain detached during these meetings. It was necessary for my beliefs and values to be present, even while remaining professionally objective. My bias as a person who loves books and reading, and who attributes much of my early personal development to the Glasgow library service may well be part of the reason I was awarded the studentship. In this sense my personal desire to see reader development in Glasgow flourish energised and enhanced my research. As a person with great interest in books, reader development and communities, I contributed what I could to discussions and decision-making, including bringing insights gained from other aspects of my research during that period. For example, on the issue of ticket pricing I related a summary of the views of interviewees on that subject, and

this information was added to the pool of knowledge on which PAG decisions were taken. This highlights an interesting aspect of participatory ethnographic research in which I found myself documenting the processes and decisions of a group I was influencing through my own contribution, and the data from other areas of my research. This feedback loop within the research could be jarring to those of an objectivist philosophy, but from the perspective of an interventionist, pragmatic constructivist paradigm, it is a valuable process of knowledge creation. As a Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) with an expectation of impact on the partner organisation, this is in fact completely aligned with the initial aims of the project. There was reciprocal benefit to this collaboration as the embedded nature of the research placed me as an insider within the organisation, which brought both access and a co-worker perspective to the ethnography.

In my participatory ethnographic research within Sunny Govan Community Radio, I encountered a community of people more engaged with literature than I had anticipated, yet with only a glancing relationship with the book festival or with Glasgow Life's reader development efforts. This focus on SunnyG came about following a chance meeting at an Aye Write! event. My initial plan to interview two young men from Sunny who had attended the event, was modified when I identified an opportunity for deeper engagement with that community and access to their views on literary Glasgow. This formed a secondary organisational ethnographic study which differed significantly from my participation in the book festival. The ethnographic study took place in regular visits over a seven-month period, with more sporadic contact thereafter. The activity which took place included semi-structured interviews, informal visits and assisting with the setting up of a regular book-centred radio show. This participatory ethnographic research is covered in detail in Chapter Four. Valuable insights emerged from this segment of research which had resonance across literary Glasgow, including the use of a boundary object as an organisational tool for community engagement. It would be of interest to conduct additional ethnographic studies within organisations which fit somewhere between the high-profile, public sector-embedded book festival and the small, under-resourced community project. It was not possible to do so within the scope and resource of this project, but study of an organisation such as Glasgow Women's Library or Scottish

Writers' Centre might contribute an additional perspective on the findings of this research. Early plans to develop Glasgow Women's Library as a case study within the research were shelved for a number of reasons: it became clear my presence as a man within this woman-focussed centre could be an unhelpfully disrupting influence on the research, and my access to the organisation would be subject to limits. There were also a number of other doctoral researchers involved with the library, so I took the decision not to add to the research burden on this small organisation.

Interviews

I welcomed access to Aye Write! as a valuable opportunity to get inside the workings of the book festival and gain an understanding of its relationship with the city. I could also see this would be an incomplete picture without other voices, and therefore set up and conducted 31 semi-structured interviews with people who were connected with literary Glasgow in some capacity. Most of the interviews took between 45 and 75 minutes, with a few outliers.

Interviewees were selected to include a range of voices from within Glasgow Life's operations and those within literary Glasgow who had no particular connection with Glasgow Life. I drew up a list of target categories, organisations and roles in the early mapping stage of the project, to try to cover the widest possible range of voices. These were selected to cover a range of roles within the sector, but also to include variety in age, gender, background, geographical location and supposed socio-economic status. This list was revisited regularly through the research process. Most of the interviewees were sought out by me directly, but some were approached following recommendation from Glasgow Life staff, other interviewees or literary Glasgow contacts, as someone to offer an additional or alternative viewpoint.

The interview is widely used in qualitative research and is a commonly used method within ethnographic studies.⁴³ Semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow me to direct the subject, but also offered the flexibility for the interviewee to

⁴³ Bryman and Bell, p. 479; Jaber F. Gubrium, *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft* (SAGE, 2012).

take the conversation in directions important to them. The interview schedules (Appendix ii) contain questions as prompts and signposts, designed to encourage the subject to speak as freely as possible about literary Glasgow. I initially considered that these interviews might be carried out using inductive techniques adapted from Grounded Theory. This would use a recursive process of coding and sorting the interview data into categories until theory emerged, which could then be tested through subsequent rounds of interviews. From my first contact with the field in early exploratory meetings it was apparent this approach would not be ideal. Conducting these interviews in parallel with my embedded ethnographic research meant I had neither the emotional or philosophical distance required to process the data in a 'traditional' detached Grounded Theory manner, recognisable as such by Glaser, one of the founders of the technique.⁴⁴ Strauss, the co-founder of Grounded Theory, later championed a more evolved approach, further aligned with social constructivist philosophy by Charmaz and Urquhart.⁴⁵ I decided not to apply Grounded Theory as an end-to-end method in this research as it is less suitable for the complex field I was engaged in and raised additional issues around the participatory ethnography and representation of subjects' stories. Breckenridge et al tackle the methodological dilemmas of Grounded Theory in constructivist research but come to a different conclusion on the use of this technique.⁴⁶ I continued to use inductive techniques in the analysis of interview data, but in a manner more closely aligned to inductive ethnography,⁴⁷ to enable the richness of my engagement with the field to inform and direct the interviews and their analysis, while remaining fully

⁴⁴ Barney G. Glaser, 'Constructivist Grounded Theory?', *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung. Supplement*, 2007, 93–105; Barney G. Glaser, 'The Impact of Symbolic Interaction on Grounded Theory', *The Grounded Theory Review*, 4.2 (2005), 1–22.

⁴⁵ Antony Bryant, 'Grounded Theory and Pragmatism: The Curious Case of Anselm Strauss', in *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 2009, x; Glaser, 'Constructivist Grounded Theory?'; Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis* (Sage, 2006); Cathy Urquhart, 'An Encounter with Grounded Theory: Tackling the Practical and Philosophical Issues', in *Qualitative Research in IS: Issues and Trends* (IGI Global, 2001), pp. 104–140.

⁴⁶ Breckenridge and others.

⁴⁷ Bryman and Bell, p. 444; Khaldoun Aldiabat, 'Clarification of the Blurred Boundaries between Grounded Theory and Ethnography: Differences and Similarities', *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 2.3 (2011), 1–13; Eberle and Maeder.

engaged with my experience. Uhan et al consider the relative merits of Grounded Theory and inductive ethnography and expand on the differences between them.⁴⁸

A complete list of interviewees is attached in Appendix i, and the interview schedules are in Appendix ii. Of these 31 interviews, 17 were audio recorded and the remainder were documented in note form only, due to environmental reasons or interviewee preference. Careful consideration was given to the ethics of the interview process. Each of the subjects was fully informed about the reason for the interview, my position as a researcher, and the collaborative nature of the project. The interviewee was required to read, agree to and sign a consent form acknowledging these facts and giving permission for the interview data to be used. A small number of interviewees requested a portion of the interview be excluded from the data used, and these requests were honoured. Audio recordings, transcriptions and typed notes from interviews were stored in a secure, password-protected folder and have not been passed to any third party. All audio interviews were transcribed and added to NVivo, along with the notes from non-audio recorded interviews. These texts were analysed and coded soon after each interview, and emergent themes were then used as sensitising concepts on subsequent rounds of interviews and analysis. A similar process was carried out with imported policy and strategy documents from Aye Write and Glasgow Libraries. The emergent themes sensitised me in my participatory ethnography within the PAG and Sunny Govan. For example, during conversations with people at Sunny Govan in Chapter Four, I had heightened awareness of comments relating to value and participation, which had surfaced as significant to early interviewees. Literature on this is examined in Chapter One, and the issues explored in Chapters Three and Four.

Ultimately, Glasgow Life and literary sector strategists make their decisions based on a narrative that includes concerns and desires of both the organisation and the community they serve, while taking account of available resources and the potential for effective action. The narrative is constructed on the basis of values,

⁴⁸ Samo Uhan, Brina Malnar, and Slavko Kurdija, 'GROUNDED THEORY AND INDUCTIVE ETHNOGRAPHY: A SENSIBLE MERGING OR A FAILED ENCOUNTER?', *Teorija in Praksa*, 50.3/4 (2013), 642.

purpose and political pressures. The challenge faced by this research was to source and present the data to usefully inform the shaping of this narrative.

The limitations of this research are explored in the Conclusion and include the broad scope of the study. This resulted in a necessarily limited exploration of some parts of the literary sector but allowed a broad sweep to identify convergences, subsequently tested further through comparison with other data sources.

The changing nature of Glasgow Life and the literary sector during the research offered another challenge. The sector was in a state of flux throughout the research period; personnel changed at every level from the voluntary members of the Aye Write! PAG, through to the managerial level of Glasgow Life. The Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014 brought an element of disruption, as did national and local government elections, with resultant purdah periods imposed by Glasgow City Council on the Aye Write! festival bringing restrictions to the events and authors which could be programmed. Glasgow City Council also changed leadership from a Labour Party to a Scottish National Party majority following the electoral cycle in May 2017, which brought a change of rhetoric around priorities and values. This was also a period of significant transition for policy as the city and national governments tried to respond to changing socio-political-economic circumstances, which led to subtle and less subtle changes to policy affecting the cultural sector and Glasgow Life's relationship with it.

As a participant in planning meetings and in the delivery of the festival, my position as a researcher was always explicit, even so, I am keenly aware of the problems this brings to the elements of ethnography and participant observation within the research. The Hawthorne Effect describes the potential change in research subject behaviour when they are aware of being observed.⁴⁹ My embedded relationship within Aye Write! could potentially have amplified this effect. While my

⁴⁹ Geoff Payne and Judy Payne, 'The Hawthorne Effect', in *Key Concepts in Social Research* (SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2004), pp. 108–11 <<http://methods.sagepub.com/book/key-concepts-in-social-research/n22.xml>>; Jim McCambridge, John Witton, and Diana R. Elbourne, 'Systematic Review of the Hawthorne Effect: New Concepts Are Needed to Study Research Participation Effects', *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 67.3 (2014), 267–77 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2013.08.015>>.

connection with Aye Write! and Glasgow Life has undoubtedly assisted with access to interview subjects, this relationship cannot be discounted as a factor in the responses given. The restructuring of roles within Glasgow Libraries during 2015-2016 caused significant uncertainty and anxiety among library employees; it is difficult to know whether this made staff members more or less open in their conversations with me as a researcher, or if it had no impact at all. I attempted to minimise any impact of this by conducting myself ethically as a researcher and being transparent about my role. I was careful with respect to comments made to me in confidence; and anything of relevance which came up in clearly informal settings (e.g. in the pub after work) was not used in any attributable way without first seeking the consent of the person concerned in a more formal setting.

Conducting some of the research through participatory ethnography brought a valuable opportunity to get close to the mechanisms and challenges of Glasgow Life and Aye Write! in particular. This was only made possible by the collaborative nature of the research project. The challenges arising from this, including that of conducting research on decisions in which I was personally involved, are considered in more detail in the Conclusion.

Focus groups

There were four distinct periods of engagement with focus groups, the first two organised by Glasgow Libraries in order to inform the vision for the organisation. Outputs of these are formally recorded in the 2016 Vision for Glasgow Libraries publication.⁵⁰ A series of discussion groups was organised by Glasgow Life's Head of Reader Development and Literacy to elicit the input of relevant Glasgow Library staff (librarians, community educators, policymakers) and reading and literacy professionals from local and national agencies, such as Scottish Book Trust, and Scottish Libraries Information Centre. I assisted with the delivery of these sessions, engaged with discussions and took notes on issues raised for my research. A second round of focus groups was organised by an external partner on behalf of Glasgow

⁵⁰ 'A Vision For Glasgow Libraries'.

Libraries, to elicit input from library users. I took part in two of these sessions and made notes.

In 2016, I assisted Glasgow Libraries Head of Reader Development and Literacy to set up two sessions of a City Reading and Literacy Forum, which brought literacy and reading partner organisations together to explore the possibility of a ‘campaign’ to impact literacy and reader development in Glasgow. I made presentations at these sessions and took part in discussions; again these notes became part of research data.

I organised the fourth focus group with Lauren Weiss, a fellow researcher. Glasgow: A Reading City, mentioned above, was programmed as part of Aye Write! 2017 and brought together researchers, educators, community workers and people from the NHS and union organisations to present on and discuss innovative reader development activities taking place in Glasgow. The speakers invited were undertaking reader development work in settings beyond Glasgow Life’s efforts. The event and discussion were open to the public and widely promoted through the Aye Write! programme. This revealed a range of previously unconnected activity with potential for greater collaboration. It also tested an emerging theory within my research around the power of a shared agenda to stimulate reader development efforts, as opposed to a focus on the detail of potential outcomes of that activity. This material contributed to a proposal for a Glasgow Reading and Literacy Campaign, which was developed by Glasgow Life’s Programme Manager for Reader Development and Literacy. More detail on this is included in Chapter Five.

Thesis structure

The thesis presents material which gives a broad overview of literary Glasgow alongside specific areas of greater focus. This is to demonstrate the variety of activity and viewpoints represented here and the complexity of their interaction, with the focal points and mini-case studies demonstrating how the broader issues are enacted at a city, local and hyper-local level.

This introductory chapter is followed by Chapter One, which introduces the literature and theory most relevant to the thesis. The central chapters parallel the

mechanics of the research process, from a broad survey of the city and the literary sector in Chapter Two, through to participatory ethnography within Aye Write! and Sunny Govan Radio in Chapters Three and Four. The focus of the research expands to a wide view again in Chapter Five, which considers how the elements identified interact on a city-wide basis. Chapter Six draws the specific findings together and considers them in the light of literature on complexity, cultural value and boundary objects. A new working model is proposed for Glasgow Life's relationship with literary Glasgow in the development of a strategy.

Chapter One surveys relevant literature which informs and interrogates the areas of interest for this research, including work on Libraries and Reader Development, Cultural Policy, Creative Industries, and Cultural Value. The theoretical frameworks used are considered, along with an acknowledgment of the challenges and opportunities presented by interdisciplinarity. Theories which inform specific elements of the research, such as Star's work on boundary objects and Belfiore's critique of instrumentalism in cultural policy are introduced in this chapter.⁵¹

Chapter Two is an extended survey of literary Glasgow, which details its hard and soft infrastructure. It is divided into two main sections. The first provides background to Glasgow's literary sector through an overview of the city's literary heritage and a detailed survey of the current structures, organisations and activities which define literary Glasgow. The second section looks specifically at Glasgow Life and its historic and current role in the literary sector, including its overall remit, organisational structures and main points of interaction with literary Glasgow.

Chapter Three focuses on Aye Write!, Glasgow's Book Festival, and brings together background material, documentation, interview data and a participatory ethnographic account, to present a multi-method perspective on this significant

⁵¹ Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, 'Institutional Ecology, translations' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39', *Social Studies of Science*, 19.3 (1989), 387-420; Star, 'This Is Not a Boundary Object'; Eleonora Belfiore, "'Defensive Instrumentalism" and the Legacy of New Labour's Cultural Policies', *Cultural Trends*, 21.2 (2012), 103-11 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2012.674750>>.

festival in the literary calendar. The aims, objectives and expectations of the festival are considered, and the evolution of the festival from 2013 to 2017 documented.

Chapter Four provides an ethnographic account of literary encounters around Sunny Govan Community Radio station. It brings in voices of those who do not engage with the book festival and overturns assumptions around cultural value and participation. Sunny Govan Community Radio operates on a vastly different scale from Aye Write!, yet each aims to provide the community they serve with opportunities in cultural activity with instrumental intent. Sunny Govan's community relationship is symbolised by a wooden bench which performs a role as a boundary object. The significance of this boundary object for SunnyG is extrapolated to the Glasgow Life/literary Glasgow relationship and found to have resonance there.

In Chapter Five I take the insights from Chapters Three and Four and test them against the wider landscape of literary Glasgow. This considers the challenges of public, private and informal groups working together in the sector; explores the interactions between the civic, commercial and community drivers of literary development; and identifies the desire for new working models. It views Glasgow's literary activity through the complexity frame, offering the potential for new perspectives on the issues faced, and access to tools and techniques which could fit the sector.⁵² The role of partnership working within literary Glasgow and the potential for support of a landscape of practice is explored.⁵³

Chapter Six identifies the key elements of the preceding chapters that must be addressed in the creation of a strategy for developing literary Glasgow. It outlines the opportunity for a renewed relationship which exists in the current socio-political-economic climate and frames that relationship through the lenses of complexity, connectivity and value. It also emphasises the importance of boundary objects and their role in construction of a landscape of practice.

⁵² R. Comunian; Cairney and Geyer; Colander and Kupers.

⁵³ Etienne Wenger-Trayner and others, *Learning in Landscapes of Practice: Boundaries, Identity, and Knowledgeability in Practice-Based Learning* (Routledge, 2014).

In the Conclusion, there is a summary of the material covered, and a demonstration of how the research questions have been addressed. This is followed by reflections on the research process, an acknowledgement of its limitations and suggested areas for further study. The thesis is completed with key findings from the research alongside statements on their contribution to knowledge.

The City of Glasgow

Glasgow, with a population of around 600,000, is the largest city in Scotland and the fourth largest in the UK.⁵⁴ It grew rapidly during the industrial revolution and became one of the world's leading centres of shipbuilding and commerce through the late 19th and early 20th century, revelling in its prominent role within the activities of the British Empire and its strategic position in relation to transatlantic trade.

In common with many cities built on heavy industrial activity, Glasgow faced economic difficulties through the latter half of the 20th century as demand for ships and steel declined and there was a transition towards a service-based economy. While this change brought new sources of wealth for many people, among those communities most reliant on the traditional heavy industries and manufacturing this contributed to high unemployment and an increase in the number of people in poverty. In some ways the city still reflects the difficulties of that time – many of those areas which were most reliant on the declining industries continue to have a higher than average level of unemployment and poverty. However, some traditional industrial areas, such as the east end of the city, have seen recent investment in new housing schemes and facilities.

In recent years, employment rates have seen some improvement but as International Labour Organisation (ILO) statistics in Figure 2 below demonstrates,

⁵⁴ 'Scottish Government Statistics on Population' <<http://www.scotland.org/about-scotland/the-scottish-people/population-of-scotland/>> [accessed 30 September 2014].

Glasgow still has the second highest rate of unemployed in Scotland, significantly higher than the Scottish and UK average.⁵⁵

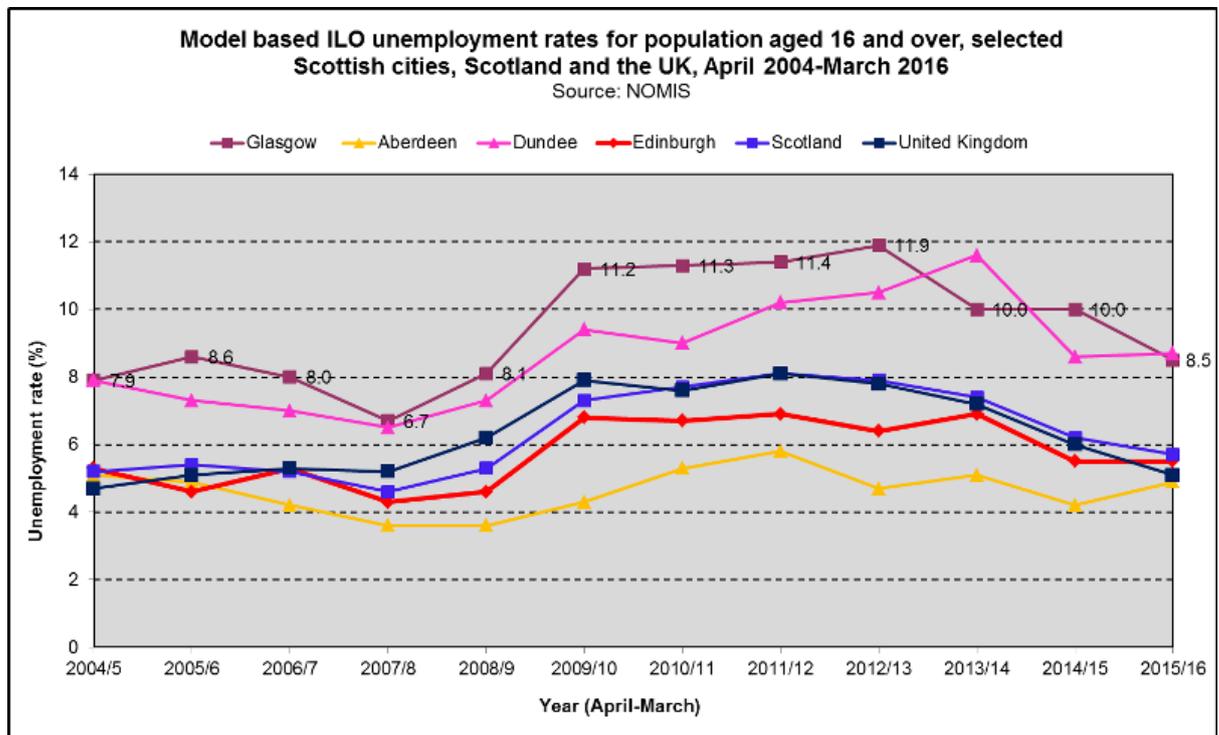


Figure 3: Unemployment rates for population aged 16 and over

The figures are even less inspiring for the younger generation, with 46.7% of 16-24 year olds in Glasgow classed as economically inactive in 2016, compared to 36.7% for Scotland as a whole.⁵⁶ In the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2016) – a system of ranking areas in Scotland on the basis of certain indicators of deprivation, including access to facilities, average household income, average education level – in the 10% of the most deprived areas in the country, around a third are in Glasgow.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *ILO_trend_Scottish_cities_2016.png (800x489)* (Understanding Glasgow, 2016) <http://www.understandingglasgow.com/assets/0003/1860/ILO_trend_Scottish_cities_2016.png> [accessed 26 March 2018].

⁵⁶ St Andrew’s House Scottish Government, ‘Local Authority Tables 2016’, 2017 <<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Labour-Market/Local-Authority-Tables-2016>> [accessed 23 March 2018].

⁵⁷ *Introducing Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016* (The Scottish Government, 2016) <<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00504809.pdf>> [accessed 25 February 2018].

This is demonstrated most starkly on the map below (the areas of red represent the highest levels of deprivation):

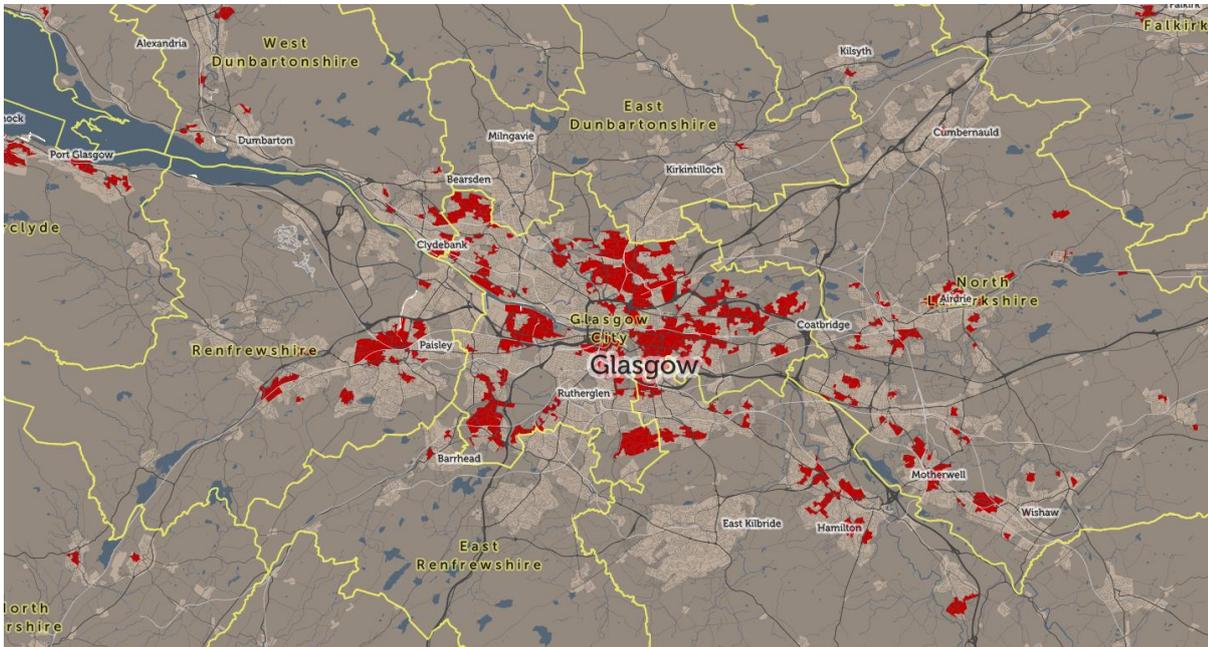


Figure 4: Areas in Glasgow suffering from highest levels of deprivation according to SIMD

In the 1980s and 90s the city began a process of regeneration, beginning in 1983 with the Glasgow’s Miles Better campaign and the opening of the Burrell Collection, a purpose-built museum and gallery displaying some of the great collection of art and historical artefacts donated by ship owner William Burrell to the citizens of Glasgow. This process saw a gradual turning away from heavy industry towards a growing service industry and the retail and cultural sectors. The transition was punctuated by a series of cultural awards and schemes, and the progression can be mapped through these, as indicated below:

Year	Event
1983	Opening of The Burrell Collection Glasgow’s Miles Better Campaign
1985	Opening of the Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre

1988	The Glasgow Garden Festival
1988	Opening of Tramway (visual and performing arts venue)
1990	European Capital of Culture Opening of the McLellan Galleries Opening of the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall
1996	Opening of the Gallery of Modern Art
1997	Opening of the Clyde Auditorium
1999	UK City of Architecture and Design
2003	European Capital of Sport
2006	Reopening of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum
2008	UNESCO City of Music
2011	Opening of the Riverside Museum
2013	Opening of the SSE Hydro arena
2014	Host City of the Commonwealth Games
2016	Opening of National Library of Scotland at Kelvin Hall

Figure 5: Significant milestones in Glasgow’s cultural regeneration

The high level of investment in culturally significant infrastructure bears witness to the importance of cultural development as a feature of Glasgow’s regeneration strategy.

It is clear Glasgow’s cultural offering has been placed at the centre of its rebirth, both as a driving force for regeneration and as a measure of its success, and is something Glasgow City Council has considered central to its contemporary identity. In looking back at the significance of ECOC 1990, a Glasgow City Council document called it:

a milestone event, helping both to transform the city’s reputation in the UK and abroad, and to restore self-confidence and pride in the city, to Glaswegians

devastated by years of post-industrial gloom, deprivation and the consequent poverty of aspiration.⁵⁸

While it is true that ECOC 1990 and subsequent cultural programmes have developed aspects of Glasgow's cultural sector, there has been significant cultural activity in the city for centuries. In contrast with the city's mid-20th century image as a place of heavy industry, urban decay and violence, Glasgow has long been a place of culture, art and entertainment, with music halls, theatres, libraries, galleries and museums. Many were funded by the champions of the industries which grew the city, such as William Burrell and grocer Thomas Lipton, who used Glasgow's connection to the world to build a trade empire. In a sense, Glasgow's cultural identity could be said to have been revealed rather than created by the city's more recent developments. It has been a rebirth rather than a new creation, although the prominence of the culture sector as driver of development and beacon of change within Glasgow's current narrative, is a new approach in line with Scott's observations in *The Cultural Economy of Cities*, and Brouillette's analysis in *Literature and the Creative Economy*.⁵⁹

Cities worldwide have generated cultural and artistic output in various forms and have also been centres of economic innovation and growth, but Scott (1997) claims it is only from the last decades of the 20th century that both of these spheres have converged into the particular regeneration pattern which has become the defining characteristic of the modern city:

[P]lace, culture and economy are highly symbiotic with one another, and in modern capitalism this symbiosis is re-emerging in powerful new forms as expressed in the cultural economies of certain key cities.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ 'Glasgow City of Culture 1990', 2007 <http://ecoc-doc-athens.eu/attachments/472_Glasgow%201990%20European%20City%20of%20Culture.pdf>. [accessed 12/8/14]

⁵⁹ Allen J. Scott, 'The Cultural Economy of Cities', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 21.2 (1997), 323–339; Sarah Brouillette, *Literature and the Creative Economy* (Stanford University Press, 2014).

⁶⁰ Scott, p. 325.

Scott (1997) and Brouillette (2014) both attribute this emergent feature to a recent movement of capitalism into a form which commodifies human culture as a whole and has appropriated cultural products, whether tangible or aesthetic, into the creation of marketable outputs.⁶¹ Other cities engaged in regeneration and rebranding, such as Bilbao, Liverpool and Barcelona, have followed Glasgow's example in attempting to make use of the strengths and energy of the cultural sector as an attractive offering.

As the country's major commercial and retail centre, the city of Glasgow has a much greater reach than its boundaries would suggest. The Glasgow Indicators Project points out that depending on definition, the Glasgow conurbation includes between one fifth and one third of the population of Scotland:

It is worth noting that these city populations are based on local authority boundaries and thus do not reflect the size of the wider surrounding conurbation for each city. For example, the Greater Glasgow and Clyde population is 1.2 million, and using a wider definition of the Glasgow conurbation, encompassing the West of Scotland and including Lanarkshire and parts of Ayrshire, would bring the population to above 2 million.⁶²

The modern city is not a clearly defined area which people are either part of or excluded from, rather it serves and draws from a much wider geography. This has implications for the definition of literary Glasgow and ultimately, for the strategy which will seek to develop the sector. The research takes place within the recognised geographical boundaries of the City of Glasgow but is mindful that participating individuals and organisations may have a life beyond the city itself. Additionally, Glasgow Life as an organisation under the banner of Glasgow City Council operates

⁶¹ Brouillette, p. 176.

⁶² 'Understanding Glasgow: The Glasgow Indicators Project'
<http://www.understandingglasgow.com/indicators/population/comparisons/with_other_places/population_trends_for_selected_uk_cities> [accessed 1 October 2014].

within the city's geographical boundary, yet it is clear its reach is much wider. Data from the 2014 Aye Write! festival shows only around 50% of attendees stated they were Glasgow City residents, although many may work or study within the city.⁶³ Other cultural offerings from Glasgow Life will have different patterns of citizen/outsider attendance, which gives cause for consideration of citizenship and belonging.

Glasgow's defined boundary and the flow of workers, audiences and service users, are of significance to any study of cultural policy. Around half of the Glasgow's workers live beyond the city boundary, benefitting from the cultural resources Glasgow has to offer, yet not contributing to them through local taxation. Ian R Mitchell, author and historian writing in *The Herald* newspaper, claims this creates an imbalance in which Glasgow's residents are effectively subsidising the lifestyles of people in the more affluent satellite communities of East Renfrewshire and North & South Lanarkshire. He makes a case for a metropolitan Glasgow that includes those communities, therefore broadening the resource base of the city, particularly in terms of local taxation.⁶⁴

The future political boundaries of Glasgow are part of a discussion beyond the scope of this thesis, but the nested nature of what constitutes a 'literary Glasgow' and the challenge of encouraging Glasgow residents to take up cultural opportunities, without alienating the greater Glasgow community or the income and other resources which they bring to the city, are highly relevant. All the organisations connected with literature in Glasgow are affected by this porous boundary in some way. This area will be considered in more detail in Chapter Three, with specific relevance to Aye Write!.

Glasgow does not exist in a vacuum and there are wider discussions ongoing in Scotland about the place of creative industries, regeneration and issues such as literacy. Creative Scotland, the public body set up to support the arts, screen and

⁶³ Katrina Brodin, *Aye Write End of Project Monitoring Report 2015-16 v1-1.pdf* (Glasgow Libraries, 2 September 2016).

⁶⁴ 'Let Glasgow Flourish: The Case for a Bigger, Better, Metropolitan Glasgow', *HeraldScotland* <http://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/13463816.Let_Glasgow_flourish__The_case_for_a_bigger__better__metropolitan_Glasgow/> [accessed 26 March 2018].

creative industries across Scotland and responsible for distributing funding from the Scottish Government and The National Lottery, recently commissioned research into the literary sector across Scotland which ultimately will have a bearing on the funding landscape on which Glasgow's literary development may depend.⁶⁵

It is of concern that against Glasgow's backdrop of literary infrastructure and heritage, the statistics for literacy in some areas of the city are particularly low. It is well established that poverty and deprivation are contributing factors in this. The Scottish Government's Literacy Action Plan (2010) stated:

Recent surveys have confirmed that literacy skills are linked to socio-economic status and level of deprivation, with those from more deprived areas achieving lower scores. In primary education, those from more deprived areas often fail to reach even basic standards of literacy. This continues into secondary, coming to the fore in the later stages of school-based learning. For example, S2 pupils from more advantaged areas are around twice as likely to perform above the expected level in reading. The results for the 2006 OECD *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) suggest that compared to other countries, socio-economic status is a more major determinant of attainment in Scotland. The *Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009* reinforced this, stating that adults with literacies issues are more likely to have low income and lower level employment.⁶⁶

Glasgow has long placed value on learning and literature. Glasgow Cathedral, built in the 12th century, as well as a place of worship, was one of learning and the birthplace of the University of Glasgow. The university was formally established in 1451 and is one of seven remaining ancient UK universities. In the 18th century the

⁶⁵ 'What We Do | Creative Scotland' <<http://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do>> [accessed 26 March 2018].

⁶⁶ Scotland and Scottish Government, *Literacy Action Plan: An Action Plan to Improve Literacy in Scotland.*, 2010, p. 8 <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/27084039/0>> [accessed 26 March 2018].

university and the city's reading clubs were centres of debate and philosophy for the great thinkers of the day, among them people instrumental in the Scottish Enlightenment, such as Adam Smith, Frances Hutcheson and Robert Black. Historian Jonathan Israel posits that as early as 1750, Scotland's major cities had created an intellectual infrastructure of mutually supporting institutions, including universities, reading societies, museums and libraries.⁶⁷ Recent work by Weiss provided rich detail on the literary clubs and societies of 19th century Glasgow and the communities which participated in them. Her account of communal reading practices and production of literature reveals similarities to some of the DIY literary culture activities of 21st century Scotland.⁶⁸

There is a wealth of culturally significant institutions represented in Glasgow today, despite Edinburgh, Scotland's capital city, being home to many of Scotland's leading cultural organisations, such as Creative Scotland, Scottish Book Trust, Scottish Poetry Library, Scottish Storytelling Centre, the National Gallery of Scotland, the National Museum of Scotland and the National Library of Scotland, and host to the world's largest annual arts festival, the Edinburgh International Festival & Fringe, and the UK's largest literary festival, the Edinburgh International Book Festival. Significant research commissioned by Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Life in 2011, produced statistics underlining the value of the cultural sector within the city:

The cultural sector has a workforce of some 5,362 people. Additionally, Glasgow has the greatest concentration of the creative industries in Scotland, and one of the largest in the UK outside London, which employ a further 24,632. The workforce of the cultural sector and the creative industries together equate to 7% of Glasgow's employment total.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Jonathan Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁶⁸ Lauren Jenifer Weiss, 'The Literary Clubs and Societies of Glasgow during the Long Nineteenth Century: A City's History of Reading through Its Communal Reading Practices and Productions' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Stirling, 2017) <<http://hdl.handle.net/1893/26616>>.

⁶⁹ John Myerscough, 'Glasgow Cultural Statistics Digest', *Glasgow, Scotland: Glasgow City Council*. Retrieved May, 20 (2011), 2015 (p. 6).

In 2011, Glasgow Life was still capitalising on this growth, and making the case for Glasgow as a cultural powerhouse in press releases:

The dynamism of Glasgow's cultural sector and its power to innovate was evident long before 1990, but since then the growth in jobs has been considerable, up 43% since 1993, the number of performances across all sectors has increased by 82% since 1992 – and audiences have grown, making Glasgow's cultural offer the most significant in the UK outside London.⁷⁰

Glasgow is home to Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet, Scottish National Theatre and the Scottish National Orchestra, as well as the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. It has also been fertile ground for popular culture: Two of the world's legendary pop/rock music venues (King Tut's and The Barrowlands); influential musicians such as The Sensational Alex Harvey Band, Jesus and Mary Chain, Franz Ferdinand; and performers and comedians from Billy Connolly to Frankie Boyle. Glasgow also boasts three universities, many colleges and the world-renowned Glasgow School of Art.

The close examination of Glasgow and its regeneration from 1990, by researchers and policymakers, resulted in the availability of a significant quantity of statistical data for Glasgow and the cultural sector in particular, over the past 20 years. Some of this, as demonstrated below in data summarised from the *Scottish Household Survey, 2011*, is particularly pertinent to research into Glasgow's literary sector. Of Glaswegians

- 86% took part in some kind of cultural activity in the past 12 months (2011).
- 63% of adults read for pleasure, while 17% dance and 12% play an instrument or write music (2011).

⁷⁰ *Glasgow Life Press Release 7/3/2011* <<http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/news/pages/Glasgow's-status-as-cultural-capital-confirmed-by-landmark-research.aspx>> [accessed 8 December 2014].

- Of those with no qualifications, only half had taken part in a cultural activity in the last year. Those with long term illnesses or disabilities were also less likely to participate in cultural activities (2011).
- The most attended cultural events or cultural places visited were: cinema (55%), museums (41%), live music events (32%), libraries (28%) and theatre (25%).⁷¹

The Myerscough Report on Glasgow Cultural Statistics concluded Glasgow was the most significant cultural centre in the UK, outside London.⁷² The findings on library usage stated:

the City has succeeded in running counter to the national decline in library visits. At 4.52 million in 2008/09, library visits in Glasgow are above the mid-1990s level and still climbing.⁷³

Collected data showed between 2005 and 2009, active library borrowers in Glasgow increased by 10%, and children's book issues increased by 26%.⁷⁴ These statistics show an impressive increase in library usage during that period, but when Glasgow's library service is compared with the statistics for the 31 other local authority library services in Scotland, Glasgow comes 23rd for book issues per head of population. The numbers do not tell the whole story, as issues such as access to opportunity and resources also play a part.

Although Glasgow's population is predominantly white/UK in origin, it is changing. In the 10 years to 2011, the percentage of Glasgow's citizens of non-white/UK origin doubled to 15%.⁷⁵ This cultural mix adds an interesting dimension to

⁷¹ *Scotland's People: Scottish Household Survey 2011* (Scottish Government, 2012) <<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0040/00403747.pdf>> [accessed 26 March 2018].

⁷² Myerscough, 'Glasgow Cultural Statistics Digest', p. 7.

⁷³ Myerscough, 'Glasgow Cultural Statistics Digest', p. 57.

⁷⁴ Myerscough, 'Glasgow Cultural Statistics Digest', p. 58.

⁷⁵ 'Glasgow City Council - Briefing_paper_2011_Census_release_2Av2_web_update2.pdf' (Glasgow City Council, 2011).

considerations of identity and cultural engagement, and adds to the complexity of literary heritage and languages which enrich literary Glasgow. James Robertson, in his plenary address to the First Congress of Scottish Literatures in July 2014, said

it has become normal to see Scottish Literature as a multilingual beast – at least triple-tongued (in Gaelic, Scots and English) but potentially unlimited in its use of languages, and willingness to engage with other literatures and cultures through translation.⁷⁶

It is not clear whether this makes it easier or more difficult for other language backgrounds to find a place within Scottish literature. Suhayl Saadi's novel, *Psychoraag*, explored this cross-cultural, multi-lingual nature of life in Glasgow.⁷⁷ In her article analysing issues of language and identity in *Psychoraag*, Ashley (2011) demonstrates that the novel is concerned with the renegotiation of identity, and the attempt to harmonise conflicting cultural identities, in particular through language.⁷⁸ The specific challenges of non-indigenous language speakers (and readers) within Glasgow's diverse heritage of languages and dialects is an interesting area for further study. The relationship between identity and literary culture from minority communities within Glasgow is certainly worthy of consideration, in order to have a full and inclusive picture of literary Glasgow, however, it was not possible to do justice to this area in this research project.

Glasgow's literary map is a moving, multi-layered network of public, private and voluntary sector organisations, using overlapping resources and initiatives and peopled by individuals who may operate within some or none of the above. That said,

⁷⁶ 'James Robertson: Scots Literature Speaks to All - The Scotsman'
<<https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/culture/books/james-robertson-scots-literature-speaks-to-all-1-3467263>> [accessed 10 September 2014].

⁷⁷ Suhayl Saadi, *Psychoraag* (Virago Press, 2004)
<https://www.goodreads.com/work/best_book/177027-psychoraag> [accessed 26 March 2018].

⁷⁸ Katherine Ashley, "'Ae Thoosand Tongues": Language and Identity in *Psychoraag*', *International Review of Scottish Studies*, 36 (2011).

it is useful to try to unpick this network to expose some of those layers and identify general themes.

The public sector is potentially the easiest to identify here. Local government has the remit to support the development of culture, to provide lifelong learning opportunities, and to support the personal and social development of its citizens and communities. Glasgow City Council has transferred a large part of this responsibility to Culture and Sport Glasgow (operating as Glasgow Life), to deliver on its behalf. Among the private sector organisations are publishers, professional writers, literary agents, editors and educators, many of whom work with Glasgow Life or the voluntary sector on specific projects. In the context of Glasgow's literary development, the voluntary sector includes those organisations and collectives that contribute directly to the literary infrastructure, such as Glasgow Womens' Library or St Mungo's Mirrorball, and those which contribute more obliquely, such as literacy support projects run by housing associations or glasgowwestend.co.uk, a local information blog, which promotes literary events and disseminates information about opportunities for readers and writers.

Within and beyond all these structures and organisations there are of course individuals who read, write, talk about reading and writing, volunteer to distribute books to the elderly, buy tickets to book festivals, show up at author events and spoken word nights in the local cafe. Some of these people are also active in the sort of organisations listed above, but many are not, yet the woman with a creaking bookshelf, man with a kindle and teen writing fan-fiction, are as fundamental to the sector as any company.

Chapter One: Exploring the Issues

This chapter surveys the key disciplinary areas and theoretical concepts which underpin the discussions, arguments and conclusions of the subsequent chapters. The small initial section aims to set the scene for the challenge, responsibility and implications of impacting the cultural landscape of a city.

In 1899, John Lee stood before the Literary & Philosophical Society of Liverpool and told them a story (abbreviated version copied below).⁷⁹ For context: at this point, Glasgow's wealthy tobacco merchant, Stephen Mitchell, had been dead for 25 years, and it would be another five years before Glasgow Corporation would take the decision to build the library which bears his name. The story Lee told is fictional, but was intended to effect change in the city of Liverpool through presentation of a vision in which culture would be supported as an essential part of city life. In that regard, Lee's tale bears a relationship to this thesis, which hopes to present a vision for the city of Glasgow that will be as transformative.

A Dream of a People's University of Liverpool

It came to pass that after the Liverpool Corporation had provided a perfect system of trams; after electricity was introduced into every house for lighting and heating; after every householder had become a reader of the People's Library, and at whose door books were left daily by the city library delivery cart; [...] the city fathers foregathered to discuss in what way municipalization could best be extended. Many proposals were put forward. It was suggested on the one hand that a municipal magazine should be launched with a view to discover any latent literary talent which might lurk blushing unseen in the by-streets and alleys. Would it not be well worth the expenditure of tax and ratepayers' money to uncover a Kipling or a William Watson, and thus add lustre to the fame of the city— the first literary city out of London! The proposal was warmly discussed,

⁷⁹ John Lee, 'A Dream of a People's University of Liverpool', *Proceedings of the Liverpool Literary & Philosophical Society*, 88.LIII (1899), 107–15.

and so far the Council was swayed very strongly in its favour. Had it not been for an Irishman, the motion would have been carried at once. He raised a novel Objection. A municipal magazine would pay its way undoubtedly, and that was an insuperable difficulty.

The Council sighed heavily; the Irishman had won the day. But he was not satisfied with a destructive policy. He wished to be constructive, and so he boldly proposed that the Council should undertake the higher education of its citizens. At least, he said, it was as important that the Council should supply culture as that it should supply bread and light and heat and carriage from place to place.⁸⁰

There are striking parallels between the issues which feature within Lee's tale and those which occupy the minds of today's academics and policymakers engaged in the various fields of cultural development and policy. In this, we see desire for urban municipal development, the possibility of city branding through the leveraging of cultural success, and literature as a powerful force for individual development and achievement within the wider world. The struggle with deployment of resource is also here, along with the responsibility to the taxpayer, leading to difficult decisions around what could be achieved. Above all, Lee's story tugs on the Council's civic responsibility to provide those things which its citizens need, and that this should include culture; a commodity as essential as bread, light and heat.

It is almost 120 years since Lee's speech before the Liverpool Literary & Philosophical Society, and although there has been positive change in many areas, the most recent research shows there are still barriers to participation and progress within the cultural sector. Attempts at improving social mobility with the arts have also been criticised; as author and journalist Kit de Wall recently wrote, 'the notion of

⁸⁰ John Lee, pp. 107–8.

social mobility has always smacked of: “How can we help you to be more like us?” It seems to say that to be working class is to be a failure’.⁸¹

The report: *Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries* (2018) was published during the completion phase of this thesis.⁸² It presents striking findings on social mobility in the sector, which have resonance with the situated and specific experiences of this work, including the central claim that ‘the cultural and creative sector is marked by significant exclusions of those from working class social origins’.⁸³ The report explores some specifics about this exclusion and considers perceptions of class, gender and ethnicity as factors. Interestingly, it exposes the lack of ability by those who are on the ‘inside’ of the creative industries to perceive (or accept) the structural inequalities. This inside/outside dichotomy is reflected in the ethnography of *Aye Write!* in Chapter 3 and *Sunny Govan Community Radio* in Chapter 4. It also surfaces in the concerns of Glasgow’s spoken work community in Chapter 5, and the call for a strengthening of mitigating social networks in Chapter 6. Clearly, there remains much work to be done to remove inequalities in the cultural sector, and I hope this thesis can help find those solutions. That same goal is a significant driver for the proposed repositioning of Glasgow Life’s role within literary Glasgow.

Instrumentalism and complexity

When we talk about Glasgow Life’s desire for a strategy for the development of literary Glasgow, we must engage with the enactment of policy with intent. The way in which policy is enacted and the expectation of the types of results which may be brought about by this action, is crucial. Specifically, in relation to this research, policy can be designed to support the emergence of solution to problems, or it can be

⁸¹ Kit de Waal, ‘Kit de Waal: “Make Room for Working Class Writers”’, *The Guardian*, 10 February 2018, section Books <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/feb/10/kit-de-waal-where-are-all-the-working-class-writers->> [accessed 15 October 2018].

⁸² Orian Brook, Dave O’Brien, and Mark Taylor, *Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries*, 2018 <<http://createlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Panic-Social-Class-Taste-and-Inequalities-in-the-Creative-Industries1.pdf>> [accessed 8 October 2018].

⁸³ Brook, O’Brien, and Taylor, p. 2.

designed to bring about specific results in relation to those problems. The instrumental use of cultural policy to bring about social change is a version of the second of these options, in which the policy being enacted and the issue being targeted exist in entirely different realms. The justification of reader development efforts in Glasgow on the basis of their effect on average earnings many years from now, is one example of this raised at a Vision for Glasgow Libraries meeting.⁸⁴

Public policy has a contested but necessary relationship with instrumentalism. It is to be expected policy should concern itself with bringing about positive change in some aspect of everyday life. In some cases the instrumental use of cultural policy is applied inappropriately or has unintended negative consequences: this has been well documented within the creative industries. Gray (2002, 2017) identifies the problem of policy ‘attachment’, in which arts organisations modify positions and expected outcomes towards social and economic improvements, in order to attract funding.⁸⁵ Belfiore (2002, 2012) questions the efficacy of such instrumental use of the arts while acknowledging the reasons for it.⁸⁶ She states the aim of her 2002 paper ‘is to show how instrumental cultural policies are not sustainable in the long term’.⁸⁷ She also documents the deployment of ‘defensive instrumentalism’ through the New Labour years and beyond. The literary sector is Brouillette’s (2014) primary focus, and she critiques the neoliberal model, which leveraged the cultural sector for political ends.⁸⁸ In her survey of the creative economy, she identifies the damage done to our perception of value of the creative arts, particularly literature, through an over-reliance on measuring value through ascribed instrumental outputs.

⁸⁴ Participant in workshop as part of data gathering for A Vision for Glasgow Libraries, 3/09/2015; ‘A Vision For Glasgow Libraries’.

⁸⁵ C. Gray, ‘Local Government and the Arts’, *Local Government Studies*, 28.1 (2002), 77–90 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/714004133>>; Clive Gray, ‘Local Government and the Arts Revisited’, *Local Government Studies*, 43.3 (2017), 315–22 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2016.1269758>>.

⁸⁶ Eleonora Belfiore, ‘Art as a Means of Alleviating Social Exclusion: Does It Really Work? A Critique of Instrumental Cultural Policies and Social Impact Studies in the UK’, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 8.1 (2002), 91–106 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/102866302900324658>>; Belfiore, “‘Defensive Instrumentalism’ and the Legacy of New Labour’s Cultural Policies’.

⁸⁷ Belfiore, ‘Art as a Means of Alleviating Social Exclusion’, p. 104.

⁸⁸ Brouillette.

It can be easy to be consumed by these genuine concerns about the instrumentalisation of cultural policy, but it is worth considering instrumentalism is not in itself a terrible thing. Generally, we do want our policymakers to be creating or modifying policy to have positive outcomes. While the funding models and political use of the cultural industries over the past three decades have clearly caused problems around cultural policy, it is counterproductive to dismiss any positive secondary effects of cultural production or engagement. This argument is stated clearly by Gibson who points to ‘the last 200 years – of cultural programmes and policy in Anglophone countries’ as evidence that cultural instrumentalism did not begin with New Labour and goes on to argue the arts and culture are in fact ‘constitutively instrumental’⁸⁹.

We have museums, art galleries and libraries today, as a result of the supposed positive effects of cultural exposure or engagement, and there are few who would argue against the idea that participation in cultural activity can be positive on a personal, social and societal level. The extent of that positive effect, how it can be measured and whether we can leverage this, are open for debate, and academics such as Belfiore have raised concerns about overreach in impact claims.⁹⁰

Instrumentalism casts a shadow across the scope of this research, and is part of the exploration of the Aye Write! festival in Chapter Three. In the methodology section of the Introduction, I discussed an extended period of participatory ethnography carried out within the team that delivers Aye Write! Through this I observed, and participated in, the festival’s struggle to balance its reader development ethos with the need to justify funding. At higher levels within the organisation there was pressure for that justification to be through the instrumental frame. Continued commitment of human and financial resources to Aye Write! would be easier to protect and defend, if a direct link could be made between festival activity and improved youth literacy or employment prospects, or a reduction in poverty.

⁸⁹ L. Gibson, ‘In Defence of Instrumentality’, *Cultural Trends*, 17.4 (2008), 247–57 (p. 249).

⁹⁰ Belfiore, ‘Art as a Means of Alleviating Social Exclusion’; Eleonora Belfiore, ‘On Bullshit in Cultural Policy Practice and Research: Notes from the British Case’, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 15.3 (2009), 343–59 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10286630902806080>>.

Many arts and cultural organisations have experienced a similar struggle with external funders but in this case, the struggle is almost entirely within a single organisation, Glasgow Life.

Much of the difficulty with cultural instrumentalism lies not with the intent for positive outcomes but with the way it is enacted. It is a form of reductionism in which a cascade of linear steps (perhaps leaps) are taken. A sequence of actions of positive instrumental intent, all aligned to policy but unable to acknowledge complexity, leads to what I would call *cascading linearity*. This rational, mechanistic series of choices and actions appear to be justifiable in close-up, but ultimately fail to deliver the outcome desired and in the process, undermine the ethos and core values of the activity itself. This mechanistic application of instrumental intent is one explanation 'why bad things happen to good policies'.⁹¹ It could be argued there are situations in which the linear approach to policy is the best one. Having the resources to apply initiatives with a specific purpose and towards defined outcomes is a great thing when it works. But policymakers should not consider this the only way to operate. It is a theory of action, but it is only one among many.

Chapman and Edwards (2004) describe the failure of governments and organisations to see beyond the linear, mechanistic frame, and to accept the need for complexity thinking. In the preface to *System Failure*, Chapman confesses to underestimating the extent of the issue:

In *System Failure* I argue that the dominant approach to policymaking was based on mechanistic and reductionist thinking. This is actually more deeply embedded in our culture, particularly the culture of government, than I had appreciated.⁹²

⁹¹ Jake Chapman and Nigel Edwards, *System Failure Why Governments Must Learn to Think Differently* (London: Demos, 2004).

⁹² Chapman and Edwards. p. 10.

Recognising these policies are less effective than they would hope, this same mechanistic approach is applied to attempts to improve policymaking. The evidence-based approach is one aspect of this, and while attractive in its apparent rationality, is flawed in its inability to move beyond the linear cause and effect frame and into a new way of approaching complex problems:

the ‘evidence-based’ approach presumes a linear, or at least unproblematic, relationship between cause and effect. In fact, complex systems involve hundreds of nested feedback loops, which result in significantly non-linear behaviour. Change in such systems is at least as much to do with internal structure as with external interventions.⁹³

Organisations and policymakers have a strong inclination to cling to what Chapman refers to as ‘the presumptions of control and predictability’.⁹⁴ He contends this is based partly in how they would like the world to work, and in part due to political and career pressures. It is not a career advancing move to admit lack of control, or uncertainty about outcomes. It is of no great surprise that a large civic organisation such as Glasgow Life, accountable for its handling of public money and use of the city’s resources, would be cautious about moving away from a model in which they can draw a straight line between the cost of a particular action and the intended effect on the community, even if that action is frequently unsuccessful.

The complexity approach would allow and work with such uncertainty, rather than wishing it away. It would also allow deployment of direct, linear action when the circumstances allow. One of the liberating and valuable aspects of the complexity frame is it embraces all other frames, including itself. The urgent need for Glasgow Life to embrace a complexity theory approach to literary Glasgow, is an overarching theme within this thesis and the argument is made for this in Chapter Five.

⁹³ Chapman and Edwards, p. 11.

⁹⁴ Chapman and Edwards, p. 11.

Complexity Theory provides an important conceptual foundation for this research. It is beyond the boundaries of any single academic discipline and in fact lends itself to an evolving understanding of research subjects which display the features of complex adaptive systems. The alignment between complexity and the pragmatist approach to research was introduced in the Methodology section. The complex nature of the city and of the urban cultural system within it, poses a challenge to the instrumental interventions favoured by policymakers to address issues such as poor literacy. This requires an approach that marries the obligations of government with the challenges and opportunities revealed through complexity theory, an issue explored by Cairney and Geyer.⁹⁵ Sanderson brings the issues of complexity and policy-making together. In calling for a move beyond instrumental rationality to more 'intelligent policy making', he finds value in the pragmatist perspective.⁹⁶

Key authors in guiding the applicability of complexity theory within this research include Anderson on organisational studies; Klein and Newell on interdisciplinarity; Cairney, Geyer and Colander and Kupers on public policy; and Comunian on creative city networks.⁹⁷ Complexity theory is not able to provide solutions to all the challenges facing Glasgow Life and literary Glasgow, but it offers a frame of understanding in which the entangled needs and relationship of the sector can be negotiated and potentially influenced.

Problematization

The culture-led regeneration discussed later in this chapter is a significant example of the identification of problems within a city and the local government response to those. I have acknowledged the defining of these problems, and who gets to do the defining, are issues which continue to haunt the narrative of Glasgow's application of

⁹⁵ Cairney and Geyer.

⁹⁶ Ian Sanderson, 'Complexity, 'practical Rationality' and Evidence-Based Policy Making', *Policy & Politics*, 34.1 (2006), 115–132; Sanderson, 'Intelligent Policy Making for a Complex World'.

⁹⁷ Philip Anderson and others, 'Introduction to the Special Issue: Applications of Complexity Theory to Organization Science', *Organization Science*, 10.3 (1999), 233–236; Klein; Newell; Paul Cairney, 'Complexity Theory in Political Science and Public Policy', *Political Studies Review*, 10.3 (2012), 346–358; Cairney and Geyer; R. Comunian; Colander and Kupers.

cultural regeneration. In the background to such initiatives is a culture of problematisation – now recognised as a common feature of government at all levels and policymakers generally – which approaches cultural participation, creative industries development, and culture-led regeneration as a set of problems that require government action to resolve. Bacchi puts this succinctly:

Government is understood to be a ‘problematizing activity’ (Rose & Miller, 1992: p. 181), in which ‘policy cannot get to work without first problematizing its territory’ (Osborne, 1997: p. 174). To intervene, it is argued, government, including but beyond the state, has to target something as a ‘problem’ that needs ‘fixing’. The critical task, in this account, becomes examining the ways in which specific issues are problematized.⁹⁸

Local and national government in the UK has built on this approach over many years, validated by a certain amount of success that has obstructed any fundamental need to look for an alternative. Problematisation is an appropriate response in many instances, such as the emergence of acute issues to which timely, coordinated efforts could be applied: a major employer announces closure of a factory central to local industry; or a sudden increase in youth crime in one ward of the city. Some endeavours may require a different approach. The creation of a garden, the running of a kindergarten and the writing of a symphony could each be approached as a set of problems to be solved, but this would not necessarily bring about the best outcome.

Problematisation suits the structural frameworks of government. Issues are reported, problems defined, strategy decided, resources deployed and results measured. It is an approach which appears to work within given limits of resource, time and scope; it has also come under criticism. According to Turnbull⁹⁹ this

⁹⁸ Carol Bacchi, ‘The Turn to Problematization: Political Implications of Contrasting Interpretive and Poststructural Adaptations’, *Open Journal of Political Science*, 5.1 (2015), 1–12 <<https://doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2015.51001>>. p6

⁹⁹ Nick Turnbull, ‘The Questioning Theory of Policy Practice: Outline of an Integrated Analytical Framework’, *Critical Policy Studies*, 7.2 (2013), p115 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2013.776501>>.

apparent link 'between clearly defined social problems and a rational policy analysis that aims to "solve" them in practice has been subjected to extensive criticism and exposed as inadequate'. It is partly the power of circular logic which keeps the approach alive. Policy is built to solve defined problems; problems are defined in response to policy. Turnbull and Bacchi both make reference to the value of a Foucault-influenced poststructuralist approach to policy as problematisation which challenges the processes that define both the 'problem' and the policy. Problematisation is not a neutral act of discovery, but a creative act, and can conjure problems that fit with current policymaking practices. Turnbull argues this is an issue of 'orientation', in which the focus is on the policy that generates both problem and solution, rather than on the field of interest. The problems are not found but made:

Problems are constructed, not only through power and interpretive framing schemes, but as much by the practice of policymaking activity, so that the existence of policy problems is often inferred from policymaking practices, rather than the other way around.¹⁰⁰

This can provide a useful way in for the researcher. What is being positioned as a problem, who is it a problem for, and what does this indicate about the policies and frames of the organisation being studied? Within this research, it is interesting to look at the problematisation of cultural participation as explored in Chapter Three on the Aye Write! book festival, and Chapter Five to consider what the problem is that policy on community resilience answers. The political dimension to problematisation is acknowledged by Bacchi, who writes 'problem-solving initiatives invariably accept "problems" as some sort of identifiable ill instead of recognizing them as the effects of political processes'¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Turnbull, p. 115.

¹⁰¹ Bacchi, p. 8.

Subsequent chapters approach the ‘problems’ revealed by actors across literary Glasgow as potential sources of greater understanding of the sector and signposts to new ways of working.

Problematism can be a politically-driven act of simplification, used to justify deployment or withdrawal of resource, or excuse poor results. The broad development of literary Glasgow does not fit conveniently within parameters, and so is resistant to straightforward problematisation, but some aspects related to literary Glasgow, such as low youth literacy rates in certain areas, do lend themselves to problematisation, and connections are made here between literacy, poverty and low economic output. However, to approach this without the richness of socio-economic and political context, isolates these aspects from the larger picture and from the source of longer-term emergent solutions and resilience. To connect these aspects to development of literary Glasgow as a whole, requires a different way of doing government; a new approach which relinquishes problematisation and allows the literary sector itself to share resources and shape policy direction and in doing so, to unleash its potential and opportunities. This thesis makes the case that the time and circumstances are right for Glasgow Life to move in this direction.

Culture-led regeneration

Towards the end of the 20th century, cities across the world began to use culture as a resource which could be applied in the service of urban redevelopment and regeneration. Garcia observes,

[...] a key realisation during the last decades of the 20th Century was that, although cities have always had cultural functions, the evolution of a global, service-oriented economy has placed culture at the very centre of urban development, and has shifted traditional notions of culture as art and heritage

to a view of culture as an economic asset, a commodity with market value and, as such, a valuable producer of marketable city spaces.¹⁰²

The major turning point in Glasgow's regeneration was undoubtedly its time as ECOC, in 1990. Since, Glasgow has been held up as an icon of culture-led transformation and a model other cities have, to some extent, tried to follow. Its impact is such that it is regarded as having had an effect not only in regeneration of the city, but also on the development of the institution of European Capital of Culture itself:

The case of Glasgow, European Capital of Culture in 1990, is considered to be exemplary in the history of the institution, given that it "had an impact both on the city and on the long-term development of the festival... In particular, Glasgow 1990 shifted the agendas towards urban regeneration, thereby greatly increasing the interest in staging the events in the second round" (Gold and Gold, 2005: 225).¹⁰³

This significant accolade was preceded by a period of culture-led development and an ongoing drive to change the city's image. Gomez (1998), in her paper comparing urban regeneration in Glasgow with a similar approach in Bilbao, explains that Glasgow took the radical approach of appropriating the city's cultural identity as a lever of change, in order to arrest what appeared to be a spiral of decline in which the negative image of the city had become a disincentive to potential investors.¹⁰⁴ Glasgow put into effect a strategy of city rebranding and focussed on place marketing, in order to lure investment to help transition Glasgow to its post-industrial identity. A comparison of the Glasgow of 2014 with the city of the early 1980s, would lead one to believe this bold move was largely successful. Current perceptions of Glasgow from

¹⁰² García, pp. 313–14.

¹⁰³ Panagiota Papanikolaou, 'The European Capital of Culture: The Challenge for Urban Regeneration and Its Impact on the Cities', *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2.17 (2012), 268–73 (p. 271).

¹⁰⁴ Maria V Gomez, 'Reflective Images: The Case of Urban Regeneration in Glasgow and Bilbao', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 22.1 (1998), 106–21.

across the UK have changed significantly and it is now established as an attractive centre of culture and commerce.¹⁰⁵ Florida (2002) asserted creative people were the key to thriving cities and the city needed to create an appropriate cultural infrastructure to attract them.¹⁰⁶ Mark O'Neill, Glasgow Life's Head of Policy and Strategy submits Glasgow's regeneration strategy differed significantly from Florida's approach, and instead followed the Creative City model proposed by Landry:

I'm not sure about reading Florida back into Glasgow's regeneration strategy. Florida's focus is on attracting specific kinds of worker. Glasgow's strategy was about creating jobs in the creative industries, but did not have a particular demographic in mind. The strategy was articulated by Charles Landry and the consultancy Comedia, who came up with the idea of the 'creative city'.^{107 108}

Grodach summarises Landry's approach as one which is collaborative in nature and recognises a systemic approach was the most appropriate one:

Charles Landry first articulated his creative city strategy in work for Glasgow in 1991 (Comedia, 1991) and developed the idea over the next decade (Landry & Bianchini, 1995; Landry, 2008). At its core, the creative city strategy gained currency by applying a new discourse to reframe the cultural amenities and cultural planning approaches as a response to urban crisis. Landry emphasized the need for municipal bureaucracies to embrace a more collaborative, open, and experimental

¹⁰⁵ John Myerscough, *Glasgow Cultural Statistics 2014*, April 2015
<<http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/policy-research/documents/glasgow%20cultural%20statistics.pdf>> [accessed 23 March 2018].

¹⁰⁶ Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (New York, 2002).

¹⁰⁷ Comments from Mark O'Neill on initial research notes for Developing Literary Glasgow, 12/2/2014.

¹⁰⁸ Charles Landry, *Making the Most of Glasgow's Cultural Assets: The Creative City and Its Cultural Economy* (Glasgow: Comedia, May 1991)
<http://www.understandingglasgow.com/assets/0000/5037/MAKING_THE_MOST_OF_GLASGOW_S_CULTURAL_ASSETS_vpdf.pdf> [accessed 26 March 2018].

culture. It is a recognition that cultural affairs, community and economic development offices, and planning departments must work together to facilitate urban redevelopment solutions. At the same time, “culture” should be approached as central to urban development and planning rather than an unnecessary extra.¹⁰⁹

Vickery identifies some specific challenges in approaching an examination of culture-led regeneration:

The profound interconnectedness of the social and culture in urban regeneration demands an acknowledgement of the non-visible and unquantifiable elements of experience, community cohesion and identity, quality of life, and yet these elements pose a severe problem for methods of analysis.¹¹⁰

This would lend support to the argument for an approach to cultural regeneration beyond a linear, mechanistic understanding of the field. Among the key characteristics of late 20th century urban culture-led regeneration identified by Vickery are three which feature strongly within Glasgow’s continuing deployment of culture as a catalyst for regeneration:

- a creative interaction between culture and commerce, social and institutional life.
- inspiring visionary ideas providing an impetus for cultural change and social participation without traditional social divisions.
- a visible expression of international cultural consciousness.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Carl Grodach, ‘Urban Cultural Policy and Creative City Making’, *Cities*, 68 (2017), 82–91 (p. 85) <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2017.05.015>>.

¹¹⁰ Jonathan Vickery, *The Emergence of Culture-Led Regeneration: A Policy Concept and Its Discontents* (Centre for cultural policy studies, 2007), p. 16.

¹¹¹ Vickery, pp. 18–19.

Within these three characteristics, multiple dimensions are represented: the first concerns internal relationships, the second is forward looking through time and the third projects and reflects an external cultural identity. All three aspects are to be found in Glasgow Life's current activity within literary Glasgow.

Glasgow's development in many ways foreshadowed the UK-wide move towards leverage of the creative economy in national rebranding and regeneration, ushered in during the New Labour administration of 1997-2010 and continued during the subsequent Conservative administration. Vickery sees in this a crystallisation of New Labour's aspiration to 'unite the torn halves of British society'.¹¹² In contrast, Brouillette in *Literature and the Creative Economy* (2014) links this development to the burgeoning appropriation of the creative economy as a branding tool and indicates creative industries' policies have been 'rapidly embraced as an inexpensive way to brand one's city or region or nation as friendly to private enterprise and to investment and development.'¹¹³

While Glasgow's redevelopment is universally recognised as significant, not all voices have agreed with the approach taken. Mooney considers some of these criticisms in his 2004 article, *Cultural Policy as Urban Transformation? Critical Reflections on Glasgow, European City of Culture 1990*, while acknowledging the influence of the Glasgow model:

Glasgow continues to be mobilised as both a model and a reference point for other disadvantaged cities [...] Above all, Glasgow is widely acclaimed as the benchmark for other de-industrialised and/or 'second cities' to follow. It was the first ex-industrial city to develop a cultural-led regeneration programme and to be designated as ECOC. 'Doing a Glasgow' has now become a recurring theme in discussions of urban cultural policy and place marketing in many of Europe's older industrial cities.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Vickery, p. 19.

¹¹³ Brouillette, p. 29.

¹¹⁴ Mooney, xix, p. 328.

Garcia argues the one-message, rebranding approach taken by some cities who engage in culture-led regeneration, is one which fails to take account of the diversity of identities represented within the city:

[T]he ability of city branding to create a distinctive sense of place is questionable as it relies on the creation of harmonic all-encompassing messages that can be in direct contradiction with the diverse and often conflicting cultural identities of a given urban environment.¹¹⁵

Garcia also makes reference to Miles, Hall and Borden's criticism that the former industrial cities have taken an approach of 'aggressive redefinition of city identities and images' in pursuit of private sector and tourist investment, while Brouillette (2014) expresses concern that the cultural sector has been used as a tool of government to realign the population to an acceptance of the 'inevitability of capitalist modernity' through celebration of the creative economy worker as an exemplar of consumer/creator citizenship.¹¹⁶

This tension between the renewed identity of the regenerated city and the extant identities of its citizens, communities and organisations, is the issue at the heart of Sacco and Segre's call for application of a new model of endogenous growth.¹¹⁷ They express concern that any model for culture-led regeneration which fails to take into account the relationships between the creative practitioners within that city is flawed from the start, and recent literature considering the role of culture in leading regeneration is flawed as it:

¹¹⁵ García, p. 317.

¹¹⁶ Brouillette.

¹¹⁷ Pier Luigi Sacco and Giovanna Segre, 'Creativity, Cultural Investment and Local Development: A New Theoretical Framework for Endogenous Growth', in *Growth and Innovation of Competitive Regions* (Springer, 2009), pp. 281–294.

lacks a deep analysis of the causal links between all the important factors involved. All – and sometimes not even all – the important factors have generally been grouped together in a “black box”, without any attempt to identify the causal relationship between them.¹¹⁸

A fundamental objective of this research is to examine one particular strand of the relationship between individuals and organisations and the cultural sector; the relationship citizens and organisations have with literary engagement. This is in accord with calls by Miles to address the particular challenge of culture-led urban regeneration in order to:

democratise this [cultural] process and create transparency in the production of urban spaces. That is, critically, to see what takes place and according to what sets of assumptions. Those assumptions [...] can then be seen as cultural products and open to change.¹¹⁹

Garcia is more specific when she states ‘cities need to develop policies that acknowledge whose culture is being supported at any one time and for what purpose.’¹²⁰ This question of ‘whose culture’ is a significant and recurring one. Issues of identity, ownership and belonging surface regularly in discussion on urban regeneration and are even more acute when this is culture-led. The significance of identity is discussed in relation to Sunny Govan Community Radio in Chapter Four. An understanding of the relationship between issues of identity and engagement with the literary sector is a crucial factor in the construction of a strategy for literary development across Glasgow.

The city of Glasgow has significance in any debate on modern urban regeneration, and particular relevance to culture-led development. It is held up as the

¹¹⁸ Sacco and Segre, p. 281.

¹¹⁹ Malcolm Miles, Tim Hall, and Iain Borden, *The City Cultures Reader* (Psychology Press, 2004), p.

4.

¹²⁰ García, p. 314.

first major city to leverage cultural enhancement as a tool for urban economic renewal and rebranding, with its transformational redevelopment as European Capital of Culture in 1990. There has been much debate on the merits of what has become known as the 'Glasgow model'¹²¹ for urban regeneration but for the decade after Glasgow's period as ECOC, it was widely accepted the development of a city-based cultural policy had become 'an indispensable tool in re-imagining and regenerating cities'.¹²²

During this period, there was an orthodoxy that culture-driven strategies were the ideal means to transform post-industrial cities, some dissenting voices were heard, both within Glasgow and beyond. Glasgow author James Kelman was one of the most vocal in his opposition to aspects of "the 1990 agenda"¹²³ and scholars including Garcia, Gomez and Sacco have questioned both the specifics of the Glasgow model and the approach which seeks to mobilise cultural development as a form of urban renewal itself, particularly when this renewal is considered overly 'top-down' or is seen to be not as responsive to the needs of the communities as it could be, or even dismissive of the existent local culture. The consideration of any strategy for cultural development within Glasgow must necessarily acknowledge the wider historical and current debate around the place of culture in regeneration. This research approaches from the position that it is impossible to come to any worthwhile conclusion on the merits and benefits of a particular historical cultural regeneration policy to the citizens of a city, without some understanding of the needs and desires of those citizens in relation to that cultural environment. Comunian contends one of the problems has been an approach to cultural and economic policy which focusses on what a city needs to have in order to become 'creative', rather than considering the distinctive aspects of place and circumstance currently forging cultural identity and activity. She argues the 'cultural development of a city is a

¹²¹ Beatriz Garcia, 'Deconstructing the City of Culture: The Long-Term Cultural Legacies of Glasgow 1990', *Urban Studies*, 42.5-6 (2005), 841-68 (p. 844) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500107532>>.

¹²² Mooney, xix, p. 1.

¹²³ James Kelman, *Some Recent Attacks: Essays Cultural & Political* (AK Press, 1992), p. 1.

complex adaptive system' [which] 'encourages the use of a more agent-focused and interaction-based understanding for both researchers and policy-makers'.¹²⁴

For this reason, a significant part of this research is dedicated to exploring the relationships citizens, communities, organisations and professionals have with the literary sector – only a part of Glasgow's cultural landscape but significant in its reach across areas of commerce, art, education and community.

While development of the literary sector is an important aspect of cultural policy, there appears to be a lack of research into the factors which affect this development in a city context, or the relationships which may connect this diverse range of individual, community, cultural and commercial activity. Grodach's recent work has attempted to define these dimensions of cultural policy in an urban setting, meeting a timely challenge.¹²⁵ Speaking generally of the lack of understanding of the mechanisms which underlie culture-led development, Markusen and Gadwa state '[a]mid the buzz on the creative city and cultural economy, knowledge about what works at various urban and regional scales is sorely lacking.'¹²⁶

Cultural Participation and the Deficit Model

The issue of cultural participation has been deployed in many directions and with various intent, from indicators of success to evidence of inequality, by governmental bodies humming with instrumental purpose, and by arts organisations adept at using the optimum terminology to keep funding flowing.^{127 128} Definitions are pushed and tested, projects are set up and voices raised to challenge traditional models of cultural participation, expanding the scope into the everyday, and raising questions about the

¹²⁴ R. Comunian, p. 1158.

¹²⁵ Grodach, 'Urban Cultural Policy and Creative City Making'.

¹²⁶ Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, 'Arts and Culture in Urban or Regional Planning: A Review and Research Agenda', *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 29.3 (2010), 379–391 (p. 380).

¹²⁷ Belfiore, Eleonora, "'Defensive Instrumentalism" and the Legacy of New Labour's Cultural Policies', *Cultural Trends*, 21 (2012), 103–11 <<http://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2012.674750>>

¹²⁸ Gilmore, Abigail, 'Cold Spots, Crap Towns and Cultural Deserts: The Role of Place and Geography in Cultural Participation and Creative Place-Making', *Cultural Trends*, 22 (2013), p87 <<http://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2013.783174>>

validity of non-participation narratives.^{129 130} Meanwhile, the Scottish Government uses cultural engagement statistics as one of 50 national indicators of a thriving country¹³¹, and the success of Glasgow Life's literary mission is still largely measured in terms of participation with library services, with the book festivals, and with community literacy programmes.

Stevenson points to a flaw in the problematisation of participation:

'non-participation' is seen as a problem that should be addressed. However, what is not questioned is the extent to which this 'problem' is an endogenous one that has taken shape within the policies that have been developed to tackle it.¹³²

These policies, and the questions they raise around participation, appear to be worryingly close to cultural deficit thinking. The Cultural Deficit Model is a widely debunked approach to educational and/or transformational interventions, which identifies the immediate culture (family, housing estate, community) of the individual/group as to blame for their lack of engagement or achievement. Speaking in an educational context, Irizarry outlines the link between the deficit model, cultural value and participation:

The cultural deficit model stems from negative beliefs and assumptions regarding the ability, aspirations, and work ethic of systematically marginalized peoples. It asserts that students of color and low-income

¹²⁹ Miles, Andrew, and Lisanne Gibson, 'Everyday Participation and Cultural Value', *Cultural Trends*, 25 (2016), 151–57 <<http://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2016.1204043>>

¹³⁰ Stevenson, David, 'What's the Problem Again? The Problematisation of Cultural Participation in Scottish Cultural Policy', *Cultural Trends*, 22 (2013), 77–85 <<http://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2013.783172>>

¹³¹ <http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/indicator/culture>

¹³² David Stevenson, 'What's the Problem Again? The Problematisation of Cultural Participation in Scottish Cultural Policy', *Cultural Trends*, 22.2 (2013), 77–85 (p. 77) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2013.783172>>.

students often fail to do well in school because of perceived ‘cultural deprivation’ or lack of exposure to cultural models more obviously congruent with school success. Consequently, according to this perspective students of color and poor students often enter school with a lack of ‘cultural capital’ (Bourdieu, 1997), cultural assets that are affirmed by schools and often shared by school agents and therefore considered valuable. [...] Much of the deficit-centered literature also suggests that a lack of involvement among families living in poverty is in part responsible for the educational outcomes of this community.¹³³

This model sidesteps issues of systemic barriers, inappropriate measurements and failures of support mechanisms. Communities such as Govan, can be considered lacking based on their below-average levels of participation in centrally designed cultural events, blaming a localised deficit of cultural capital or appreciation, rather than bringing into question the validity of the participation measures, the suitability of the cultural opportunities offered, or even whether this offer/consumption model is appropriate at all. While this deficit model has been largely discredited, it appears to live on in policy and practice, and there is concern that it is creeping back into education and cultural policy evaluation discourse. Kasprisin is concerned about the model’s ‘pathologizing’ of sectors of our communities, and Walmsley, in his critique of the Culture and Sport Evidence (CASE) programme, connects its use to an inadequate resolution of the question of culture value, citing pre-CASE work by Matarasso and Scott:¹³⁴

it seems that at the heart of these problems lie questions of ownership and power: “The important, and essentially political, question about evaluation is which value system is used to provide benchmarks against which work will be

¹³³ Irizarry, Jason. "Cultural deficit model." *Education.com* (2009)
<<http://www.education.com/reference/article/cultural-deficit-model/>> [accessed 10 October 2016]

¹³⁴ Kasprisin, Lorraine, ‘Challenging the Deficit Model and the Pathologizing of Children: Envisioning Alternative Models’, *Journal of Educational Controversy*, 9 (2015), 1

measured – in other words, who defines value” (Matarasso, 1996, p. 2). Or, as Scott (2010, p. 276) puts it: “At its core, Public Value focuses attention on the on-going and contested questions of ‘whose values’ and what values provide the benchmarks against which the worth of arts and cultural heritage is assessed and measured.’¹³⁵

Another aspect of this same issue is exposed in recent work by Miles, and the Understanding Everyday Participation project, in which he calls for a ‘recalibration’ of the concept of cultural value currently ‘neglecting the importance of participation in the everyday cultural realm’.¹³⁶ There is a clear connection between how this concept of participation is applied and the perception of cultural value on either side of the imagined fence. While cultural organisations, such as Glasgow Life/Aye Write! are wondering why communities within Glasgow fail to see the value in opportunities for cultural participation or consumption on offer, some within those communities are wondering why civic society is reluctant to value the cultural activities, materials and opportunities produced and enjoyed locally.

This argument has been going on for decades and the problem is ingrained in policy and society. In 1993, Basset expressed concern that the erosion of local culture may have gone too far, and called for policy solutions:

Policies should be aimed at fostering a genuine popular culture, rooted in local traditions and experiences, that stands between high culture and standardised mass culture. However, the problem with such a strategy is that the erosion of local cultural traditions in the face of mass culture may already have gone too far to form the basis for resistance. Ultimately, therefore, I believe we need to

¹³⁵ Walmsley, Ben, ‘Towards a Balanced Scorecard: A Critical Analysis of the Culture and Sport Evidence (CASE) Programme’, *Cultural Trends*, 21 (2012), 325–334

Matarasso, Francois, ‘Defining values: evaluating arts programmes’, Stroud: Comedia, (1996), 2

Scott, Carol A., ‘Searching for the “public” in Public Value: Arts and Cultural Heritage in Australia’, *Cultural Trends*, 19 (2010), 276 <<http://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2010.515003>>

¹³⁶ Miles, Andrew, ‘Telling Tales of Participation: Exploring the Interplay of Time and Territory in Cultural Boundary Work Using Participation Narratives’, *Cultural Trends*, 25 (2016), 182–93 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2016.1204046>>

link local cultural strategies to the construction of a new, critical cultural discourse.¹³⁷

The spatial metaphor and urban regeneration

The metaphor of spatiality is commonly-used regarding any personal or professional development. Community workers and educators speak about progression, distance travelled, positive destinations. However, this spatial language is problematic when applied to a city in which geographical areas face significant challenges, such as high unemployment, lack of opportunity, a lack of good housing, and poverty. To overlay the spatial metaphor on the actual social geography of a city can cause an entrenchment of negative messages about places facing economic and social problems. If the answer is framed as travel, movement, new destinations, then it negates the possibility of solutions being developed locally.

Chapter Four introduces a literary community within Govan, a place still deeply connected to its shipbuilding heritage, even though most people living there have not been and will never be involved in it. Govan's identity is anchored on being the place that sends out the best ships to the world. It was the source of ships, of engineering expertise, and of pride, rather than a place to get away from. Yet the spatial metaphor typically used within youth or community development work, implies a need to leave the area. It would not be unusual for the young people there to be asked 'How are you going to move on with your life?' or 'Where do you see yourself in the next five years?'

Of course, progress is often connected with geographical movement. We leave home to set up on our own somewhere else, we travel to university, we relocate for a better job, home, life. For many people, these options are available and are natural ways of thinking. But there are people in communities who have fewer options as far as actual movement is concerned. They may have limited financial means to travel

¹³⁷ Keith Bassett, 'Urban Cultural Strategies and Urban Regeneration: A Case Study and Critique', *Environment and Planning A*, 25.12 (1993), 1773–1788 (p. 1786).

across town, much less relocate their lives. Unemployment, poor health, poverty, housing issues, are all factors in limiting relocation options. Yet to make progress necessitates being far from Govan. Positive destinations (employment, education, training) are effectively those places not found in Govan, or Pollok, or Riddrie, or Dalmarnock.

I have heard a particular phrase repeated within Glasgow Life: 'out in the areas' is regularly used by library staff and community learning and arts workers to refer to work, events or initiatives which take place beyond Glasgow's city centre, where the main Glasgow Life offices are based. This is not used with any ill intent or to be disparaging, yet it highlights a geographical perception connected with power and influence. Generally, things are decided in the centre and are then done to 'the areas'. Sometimes people 'out in the areas' are given the opportunity to input to those decisions, which are then made or confirmed centrally. The directionality of this giving and receiving reveals where the power is held. There is nothing unusual or particularly sinister about this type of structure, which is how most cities, countries and large organisations operate. It could however, if unacknowledged, be reflective of an unhelpful attitude towards cultural value if Glasgow Life aims to change the way it engages and works with the city.

Some of the districts comprising modern Glasgow were once towns in their own right. Some predate Glasgow, and some were more powerful than Glasgow for centuries. Others are relatively new, built on fields in the middle of the 20th century. The dominance of Glasgow as a centre of commerce and culture and the place where decisions are made, makes it easy to view locations on and beyond the fringes of the city as dormitory towns where people go to rest before returning to the centre to work or engage in 'real' culture. These areas, districts and towns are not simply a source of audience numbers/participants/props for whatever activity deemed crucial to showcasing Glasgow as a 'cultural destination' on the world stage. These are communities populated with people who have as much creative ability and cultural insight as found in any city centre area.

There appears at times to be a devaluing of cultural and artistic output based not on its quality but on the postcode of its source. The logic seems to be if people

from community X do not come (as audience members) to a cultural offering, they are lacking in culture (or cultural sophistication/awareness); that those connected with the city's cultural core should help by sourcing a 'cultural person', possibly from far away, and sending them to this community to do cultural things with them; this will be done to activate and support culture within that community. Meanwhile, the community's artists, writers, performers find themselves consistently on the outside of what Glasgow is doing with Culture. They know they could engage, they are constantly told of opportunities – but are invited only as audience members, consumers, participants of cultural activity generated by someone else. This has been the experience expressed by Brian McQuade and Martin Taylor in Chapter Four, and Bram Gieben in Chapter Five.

In the light of the effect on conscious and unconscious representations of value based on location, *Aye Write!*'s gradual move from a Mitchell Library only setting to multiple locations in the city, appears even more significant. The reasons for this are discussed in Chapter Three.

Boundary objects

The concept of boundary objects has been applied across a variety of fields of study but it was initially developed by Susan Leigh Star in the course of her work with Griesemer in relation to Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.¹³⁸ Star and Griesemer were trying to understand the methods by which information could flow between scientists from different disciplines to enable their cooperation, without undermining their diversity. Star and Greisemer define boundary objects as not just operating between different worlds, as a translation device might, but actually inhabiting those worlds:

This is an analytic concept of those scientific objects which both inhabit several intersecting worlds... and satisfy the informational requirements of each of them. Boundary objects are objects which are both plastic enough to

¹³⁸ Star and Griesemer.

adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become more strongly structured in individual use. These objects may be abstract or concrete.¹³⁹

Star developed the concept of boundary objects throughout her career and found application in areas of organisational studies, architecture and information systems design. The desire for cooperation is seen to be a starting point and Star is clear boundary objects grow out of local information needs. “They are essentially organic infrastructures that have arisen due to [...] “information and work requirements,” as perceived locally and by groups who wish to cooperate.”¹⁴⁰

Reflecting on the concept in 2010, Star reiterated the three components which define boundary objects: ‘Interpretive flexibility, the structure of informatics and work process needs and arrangements, and, finally, the dynamic between ill-structured and more tailored uses of the objects’.¹⁴¹ Others, including Michalski and others (2006) and Lee (2007), express reservations about the universality of boundary objects, and identify potential negative effects, particularly when the power dynamic across the boundary is imbalanced.¹⁴²

Cooperation and collaboration emerged as significant factors in literary Glasgow. The variety of actors within the sector suggests a means of establishing strong connections and channels of communication, with multiple interpretations and points of access, will be a fundamental requirement of any future strategy for development of literary Glasgow.

¹³⁹ Star and Griesemer, p. 393.

¹⁴⁰ Star, ‘This Is Not a Boundary Object’, p. 602.

¹⁴¹ Star, ‘This Is Not a Boundary Object’, p. 601.

¹⁴² Marina Michalski and others, ‘Boundary Objects and Organizational Integration’, 2006 <<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.420.3585&rep=rep1&type=pdf>> [accessed 3 August 2016]; Charlotte P. Lee, ‘Boundary Negotiating Artifacts: Unbinding the Routine of Boundary Objects and Embracing Chaos in Collaborative Work’, *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)*, 16.3 (2007), 307–39 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10606-007-9044-5>>.

The wooden bench outside Sunny Govan Community Radio has been identified as a boundary object. As discussed in Chapter Four, it facilitates cooperation between the organisation and the community it serves. The insight from this understanding is applied to Aye Write!'s work with the literary Glasgow community and it is postulated the book festival may itself is being misappropriated as a boundary object by groups of people attempting to engage with the literary sector through it.

Reader Development

The theme of reader development is threaded throughout this thesis and it is useful to consider the definition of this. It is a concept which begins with functional literacy, the foundational ability to read, but includes active progression of reading skills and development of the desire to read, and to be involved with literature in other ways, through writing, performing and supporting others. The way in which Glasgow Life positions the concept of reader development, and the results promised by increased reader development, are an important element of the context of this research. This is significant not just for Glasgow Libraries and Aye Write! but for the wider community of literary Glasgow, all of whom have a part to play in, or something to gain from, reader development in the city.

Glasgow Life has produced various documents around reader development, including the Vision for Glasgow Libraries Action Plan document, produced during the consultation process in 2015. This outlined six elements of reader development:

Reading for Pleasure (and with Pleasure)

By 2020 we will be inspiring more people to spend time reading for pleasure and encourage sharing of the benefits that reading can bring

Reading for Empowerment

By 2020, the library service reading offer will be regarded as a key resource for personal development and community empowerment, supporting people at key life transitions, through collaborative and innovative work with our local and national partners

Reading for Literacy/Learning

By 2020, every Glasgow Library will be consistently welcoming and supportive environments for everyone take steps on their reading journey, focusing on early intervention in the development of reading and literacy skills.

Reading for Attainment

By 2020, Glasgow Libraries will play a key role in supporting every learner to identify, reach and celebrate their personal reading goals, supporting a positive culture of reading and achievement across our schools

Audience Development

We will provide you with reading choices, to support your individual and group needs to underpin reading across the city, while working to reach more people who haven't yet found their connection with reading and libraries

Cultivation of Glasgow as a Reading City

We will lead the way and enable Glasgow to grow as a reading city where everyone champions the power and value of reading, through collaboration with other key reading and literacy partners

The Reader Development Plan: 'Nurturing a City of Readers' produced by Katrina Brodin, Glasgow Libraries' Programme Manager (Reader Development & Literacy) presents a different aspect based on choices and experiences, linked with the Public Libraries Act (1850).¹⁴³

What is Reader Development?

Reader Development is at the heart of any effective public and school library service. It is the means through which to engage audiences, broadening the scope of an individual's interests and resulting learning experiences.

¹⁴³ *The Public Libraries Act 1850, 13 & 14 Vict c.65, 1850.*

In Glasgow Libraries Reader Development is defined as opening up reading choices in all of our communities for all ages and all reading abilities. It incorporates:

- Reading as creative recreational experience that stimulates imagination and possibility.
- Learning about life through reading.
- Reading as therapy.
- Reading to support health improvement and wellbeing.
- Supporting literacy levels and confidence.
- Reading as a social connector.
- Reading to support community engagement.

Reader Development is set in the context the original Public Libraries Act (1850) which, from its original inception aimed to ensure that public libraries would provide facilities for self-improvement through books and reading for all classes, not just those who were wealthy enough to afford their own private libraries and collections.¹⁴⁴

The final consultation document in the Vision for Glasgow Libraries process linked reader development to improved opportunities and achievement:

We know that confident reading is one of the most effective routes to a better life and improved opportunities. We want to develop a love of reading across the city.¹⁴⁵

These documents show a lot is being asked of the act of reading: personal wellbeing, education, social cohesion, even a better life. This underlines the importance of this

¹⁴⁴ Katrina Brodin, 'Reader Development Plan - Nurturing a City of Readers', 2015.

¹⁴⁵ A Vision for Glasgow Libraries, Glasgow Life Report 2016.

research and the work Glasgow Life is doing through libraries, community facilities and the Aye Write! festival.

The next chapter surveys the groups, organisations and activities of literary Glasgow. This defines the scope of the sector and also identifies some of the individuals and organisations developed further in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two: Reading Glasgow, Mapping the sector

Literary Glasgow is a complex and evolving network of industry, resources, organisations, creative practitioners, events, policies and strategies. Any approach towards a strategy for development must negotiate these layers of activity and the ways in which they interact. Here, an attempt is made to define and explore some of these layers. As expounded in the Introduction, the literary is used in the broadest sense – the production, distribution and consumption of written material, and related experiences, such as book groups, poetry readings, literary sector networking and meet-the-author events.

This chapter surveys the hard and soft infrastructure of literary Glasgow: the hard being physical resources, such as public libraries and bookstores; the soft being those systems, programmes and relationships from which literary activity arises. Some elements, such as literary organisations or the Aye Write! Book Festival, are somewhere between, displaying characteristics of both types of infrastructure, being simultaneously destinations, resources and experiences. This overall infrastructure is comparable to the ‘conditions’ which Landry¹⁴⁶ deems necessary and supportive of the Creative City, as introduced in Chapter One.

Landry goes further to include the mental infrastructure of ‘approaches’, ‘environmental conditions’ and ‘atmosphere’ generated by a city in pursuit of creative development:

Creative infrastructure is a combination of the hard and the soft including too the mental infrastructure, the way a city approaches opportunities and problems; the environmental conditions it creates to generate an atmosphere and the enabling devices it fosters generated through its incentives and regulatory structures.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Charles Landry, ‘Lineages of the Creative City’, *Creativity and the City*, Netherlands Architecture Institute, 2005, p. 2.

¹⁴⁷ Landry, ‘Lineages of the Creative City’, p. 3.

The relevant infrastructure for literary Glasgow ranges from the sandstone and mortar of its oldest public libraries, through its networks and policies, to the environment and atmosphere brought about by those policies, the access to resources afforded, and the declaration of value enacted through these. This relationship between physical locations, resources and value is explored in the ethnographic accounts around the Aye Write! Book Festival and Sunny Govan Community Radio in Chapters Three and Four.

Categories of literary activity are used below to present an overview of the sector, but it is important to recognise these are not discrete entities. Each of the categories have some measure of 'bleed' or fuzziness around the edges, and many individuals or initiatives work across more than one of these: festivals sell books; bookshops and libraries host live literature events; publishers are writers are festival organisers. In addition, there are interactions and collaborations across these categories which effectively knit the sector together. This is an area of particular interest since the coherence of the sector contributes to its strength and has implications for communication, access and effectiveness.

Libraries and community learning

There is some comfort to be found in the public interest in the fate of libraries, reflected in the amount of media coverage the subject generates. The last couple of decades has seen news headlines declaring the decline or even demise of library services. A 2016 BBC investigation into the challenging circumstances of libraries across the UK, prompted articles such as 'Libraries: The Decline of a Profession?' and 'Libraries Lose a Quarter of Staff as Hundreds Close'.¹⁴⁸ *The Bookseller* reported on these findings and announced 'widespread library closures' which resulted in 'the

¹⁴⁸ 'Libraries: The Decline of a Profession?', *BBC News*, 29 March 2016, section England <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-35724957>> [accessed 26 February 2018]; 'Libraries "Facing Greatest Crisis"', *BBC News*, 29 March 2016, section England <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-35707956>> [accessed 26 February 2018].

loss of almost 8000 jobs' in the six years to 2016.¹⁴⁹ Related to this unwelcome news is the reported decline in library attendance, variously regarded as 'catastrophic' and 'no surprise'.¹⁵⁰ Laura Swaffield, a prominent library campaigner relates the decline in attendance to the contraction of services. Reported in *The Bookseller* she makes an interesting point about the unequal nature of that decline, and the importance of library services to certain groups:

Obviously it's significant that this period has seen a catastrophic decline in the number of libraries, and big cuts affecting service quality. So a decline in usage is no big surprise. It's also significant that usage is holding up better among those who need libraries most – unemployed people, deprived communities, BAME communities.¹⁵¹

Libraries have provided a neutral space, both state and public, which achieves a level of community 'ownership'. They are also relied on to supply the digital equipment required by people who do not have their own, and provide lifeline access to other state services through this. Although there is wide agreement these are challenging times for public libraries, the reasons for decline in attendance and the precise nature of the sectoral strength and weakness have been subject to public contention, notably the backlash against the Carnegie Trust's report on library attendance and usage in 2017.¹⁵²

In the past decade, while libraries have closed in many local authority areas across the UK, there have been no closures to Glasgow Libraries.

¹⁴⁹ 'BBC Investigation Finds 8,000 Library Jobs Lost in Six Years | The Bookseller' <<http://www.thebookseller.com/news/8k-library-jobs-lost-due-closures-325187>> [accessed 15 August 2016].

¹⁵⁰ 'Adult Library Usage Falls "Significantly" across All Groups | The Bookseller' <<http://www.thebookseller.com/news/library-usage-continues-decline-378946>> [accessed 15 August 2016].

¹⁵¹ 'Adult Library Usage Falls "Significantly" across All Groups | The Bookseller'.

¹⁵² 'Carnegie Report Slammed for "Avoiding the Truth on Libraries" | The Bookseller' <<http://www.thebookseller.com/news/coates-dims-light-carnegies-library-report-542936>> [accessed 27 April 2017].

As mentioned in the Introduction, Glasgow’s public library service is delivered through 32 community library facilities, 29 school libraries, and the Mitchell Library, which makes it Scotland’s largest public network of library and information services. Glasgow Libraries had 5.3 million virtual and physical attendances in 2016 and holds almost 3 million books.¹⁵³ The Mitchell, which expanded in 1981 to become Europe’s largest public reference library¹⁵⁴, acts as a hub from which the rest of the service is administered, and is also a publicly accessible lending and reference library.

The administrative divisions of Glasgow City Council are reflected in the operations of Glasgow Life and the library service. Glasgow Life divides the community libraries administratively into three approximately equal-sized sectors, North West, North East, and South.



Figure 6: Community Library Administrative Divisions

¹⁵³ McConnell, p. 138.

¹⁵⁴ The Library of Birmingham, which opened in 2013, superseded The Mitchell as the largest public library in Europe.

The divisions align with the sector partnerships, defined within Glasgow’s Community Planning Partnership and formed by the local authority in response to The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. This Act has been superseded and developed in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.¹⁵⁵

North West	North East	South
Anniesland	Baillieston	Cardonald
Drumchapel	Barmulloch	Castlemilk
Hillhead	Bridgeton	Couper Institute
Knightswood	Denniston	Elder Park
The Mitchell	Library at the Bridge	Gorbals
Library@GOMA	Parkhead	Govanhill
Maryhill	Riddrie	Ibrox
Milton	Royston	Langside
Partick	Shettleston	Pollok
Possilpark	Springburn	Pollokshaws
Whiteinch		Pollokshields
Woodside		

Figure 7: Community library areas

Community libraries are spread fairly evenly across the city, serving areas of high population. Each of the three areas hosts a mix of older, early 20th century libraries and more modern facilities, typically built during the city’s expansion in the 1960s, and covers areas with high and low scores on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

All these libraries offer a core suite of services, such as book lending, access to information and internet access, with a range of additional resources and services

¹⁵⁵ St Andrew’s House Scottish Government, ‘Community Planning in Scotland’, 2003 <<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/CP>> [accessed 22 February 2018].

which vary from library to library. Each library offers a slightly different set of services and opportunities and is engaged with in a unique pattern by its users.

The community libraries have various facilities and a range of settings, from the stately high street frontage of Maryhill library, one of seven Carnegie libraries in the city, to Castlemilk's 1960s facility, built into a shopping centre in a housing estate, to the library in the basement of the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) in the city centre. They do not attempt to achieve absolute consistency of style or activity but are rightly responsive to the setting and requirements of their location. However, it is important to have clarity and consistency in the nature of what is being offered. On the Libraries page of Glasgow Life's website, the basic aim is stated: 'provide a free library service to everyone living, working or studying in Glasgow'.¹⁵⁶

Glasgow Libraries' 'core offer' describes the main services and products available across the city. Alongside the basic statement of readiness to lend books and other resources, these include commitments to access and inclusion, 'Open to everyone/Free to join/Free public access to computers and the internet'¹⁵⁷.

The Glasgow Libraries service undertook a re-visioning process in 2014/15, which included an extensive public consultation process and work with partners to identify priorities and goals. The resultant document, 'A Vision For Glasgow Libraries' (2016), is candid about the changing nature of library services worldwide and the challenge of meeting high public expectations with 'diminishing resources'¹⁵⁸. Glasgow Libraries' supporting role in the transfer of power to local communities is also featured:

There are debates about the role and function of local and central government. Power is being transferred to local communities, but this needs to be supported by knowledge and information.

¹⁵⁶ <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/about-us/Pages/home.aspx> [accessed 12/03/16].

¹⁵⁷ Glasgow Life Policy & Research (2014), "A Tale of 33 Libraries – Baseline Report", internal report, Nov 2014, p11

¹⁵⁸ 'A Vision For Glasgow Libraries', p. 3.

Public libraries are at the heart of these debates around the future of public services and can support people and communities to engage and participate in civic society, influencing the issues that affect them¹⁵⁹.

While the modern public library service across the UK has evolved to offer an array of additional services, from family history research to ESOL courses, and welfare and benefits advice, the basic elements of book lending and access to information remain fundamental to the service. Glasgow Libraries' list of core services includes:

access to resources in formats which reflect changing publishing trends, such as e-books, e-audio books and e-journals;

the provision of 'friendly and knowledgeable staff' to support library users in finding the information they seek, and online access to an information professional, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through the 'Enquire' Ask a Librarian service;

the preservation of culture and heritage through the libraries' Archives and Collections, and the provision of access to these for research purposes;

ensuring library and information services are available beyond the community and school library facilities through support of a prison library service at HMP Barlinnie, school library outreach services, and Books To Go, which is an umbrella term for a range of book delivery services to Residential Homes, Nurseries, Community Centres, Book Groups and, through volunteers, to private homes of those who are unable to access traditional library services;

provision of a range of services specific to the needs of children, young people, parents and families.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ 'A Vision For Glasgow Libraries', p. 3.

¹⁶⁰ Glasgow Life Policy & Research (2014), p11

Poverty is recognised as a significant factor across all of Glasgow Life's activities. The library service is one of the areas of work which confronts this on a daily basis, due to its spread across the city and embeddedness within communities. Digital poverty is an aspect, which the library service is affected by and attempts to mitigate. Dr Bridgett McConnell, Chief Executive of Glasgow Life acknowledges this specific challenge faced by Glasgow Libraries in her article on the libraries' visioning process:

Our city faces a number of specific challenges of relevance to the current and future function and role of public libraries. These include low relative levels of fixed broadband access and uptake—one in four households in the city do not have access to fixed broadband internet—the impact of welfare reform, deprivation, health inequalities, lower levels of social capital than other comparable U.K. cities, and lower levels of child and adult literacy and numeracy.¹⁶¹

As welfare, education and employment services move towards a greater reliance on the internet, the disparity between those who have access and those who do not becomes even more significant. Through internet access, ICT training and related support, Glasgow Libraries, as in most library services in the UK, finds itself providing a crucial service. In a sense, this consolidates the role of the public libraries and connects with their founding ideals of enabling free public access to information for individual betterment and general wellbeing, as espoused in The Public Libraries Act 1850.¹⁶² In 'A Vision For Glasgow Libraries' (2016) the case for the current need for libraries is made in a way which echoes the 1850 act, including a route out of poverty, access to otherwise unaffordable resources, and issues of individual betterment and wellbeing:

For us the answer is clear.

¹⁶¹ McConnell, p. 141.

¹⁶² *The Public Libraries Act 1850.*

- We still need public libraries because reading is a direct route from poverty to a better life.
- We still need public libraries because not everyone can afford broadband or the next iPad.
- We still need public libraries because they provide access to information that supports business growth, improved health and jobs.
- We still need public libraries because we all need the space to discover and learn and a space to think and reflect.¹⁶³

The adaptation of the library service has been crucial to its survival but the direction it takes can also introduce vulnerabilities. There is a risk that sustaining library services through demand for digital access is subject to a quick transformation if, for instance, a city rolls out universal access to WiFi. The neutral public/civic space offered by libraries is also potentially undermined by the insistence from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that benefit claimants must apply digitally for Universal Credit, and conduct online job searches, with benefit sanctions imposed if not carried out. Libraries are being tasked to offer support and technology to access this service as there has been:

an expectation from the Westminster Government that public libraries will increasingly take on the role of enabling citizens to interact with “Digital by Default” public services – particularly with regard to Universal Credit which digitises claims’ management, and links welfare payments to evidencing job seeking activities online – for example.¹⁶⁴

This moves the library service out of the neutral zone and into the role of instrument of the state, which may ultimately undermine the generations of goodwill between community and library.

¹⁶³ ‘A Vision For Glasgow Libraries’, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ *Libraries 2030 Context Report* (Culture and Sport Glasgow, December 2013), p. 3.

Usage of Glasgow library facilities are classified as ‘Attendance’ and can be in the form of physical or virtual visits. Attendance has increased over the past five years, from 5,015,244 in 2011/12 to 5,462,281 in 2016/17. This increase in overall visitor figures is composed of a slight year-on-year decline in physical visits and a significant increase in virtual visits. In 2013/14 virtual visits comprised 25% of the total library attendance figure. In 2016/17 library visits accounted for more than 25% of Glasgow Life venues’ 18.1 million visits.¹⁶⁵

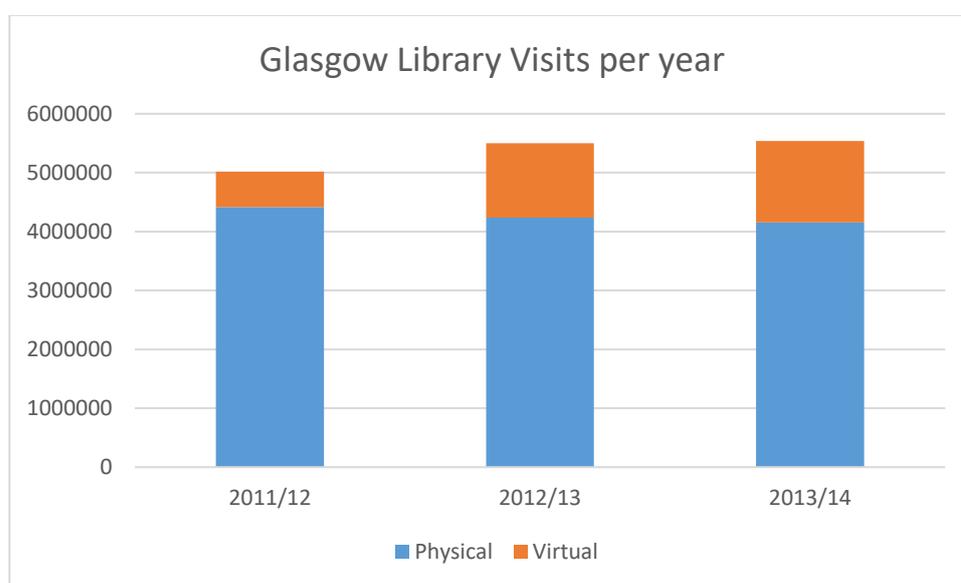


Figure 8: Glasgow Library Visits per year

The above graph reveals that behind the steadily increasing headline attendance figures, there is evidence of a changing pattern of library usage in which the virtual is becoming a more significant part.

A high proportion of Glasgow’s population does not have personal access to the internet (40% claimed by GL at Nov 2014, 45% by CAB at Aug 2015), higher than the Scottish average of 32% and almost double the UK average of 24%¹⁶⁶, and many

¹⁶⁵ *Annual Review and Performance Report 2016/17*, p. 10.

¹⁶⁶ *A Tale of 33 Libraries_Baseline Report_FINAL REPORT_03 11 14*, 2014.

people use library facilities to gain access. Glasgow Libraries offers free access to 625 public PCs and the internet. It also delivers packages of training in computer skills to support people to improve their digital literacy. The CIPFA Plus Survey of 2012 states 46% of library visitors came to borrow a book. Of the other 54%, a large proportion used the library to access the internet. If the proportion of the population with personal access to the internet increases, this is likely to impact even more on physical library visits.

As community demand and technology evolve, the library model is changing in response, much of which is not book-related. Glasgow Libraries also offers services not directly related to books and reading, such as money and benefits advice, digital training courses and access to family history resources. The value of the library as a community-based, non-threatening environment has been recognised by Macmillan Cancer Support, which entered into a partnership with Glasgow Libraries in 2012 to provide information and support services within community libraries to people affected by cancer.¹⁶⁷ In December 2016, this partnership witnessed the 10,000th attendance since its launch. The success of this service is no doubt largely due to the dedication and skill of Macmillan staff, but the 'Macmillan @ Glasgow Libraries Annual Report 2016' also recognises this partnership means no one in Glasgow is more than one mile away from the support service. The community libraries are therefore recognised as a uniquely placed resource within the city, even in ways disconnected from their literary aims.

In the literary realm, community libraries are the setting for an assortment of events. An ordinary week in any community library could see book groups or creative writing groups, adult literacy classes, ESOL classes, and regular parent-child activities, such as Bounce and Rhyme.

Book groups can be difficult to track down and access. This is explained in part by the independent nature of these groups, often formed among friends rather than

¹⁶⁷ Whitelaw, Sandy, et al. "Libraries as 'everyday' settings: the Glasgow MCISS project." *Health Promotion International* (2016): daw021.

by library staff, and the need for data protection around contact details of members of the public. An additional frustration from the perspective of someone who might like to join a book group, is the lack of accurate information. In April 2016, Glasgow Life's website listed 32 book groups and four creative writing groups that met regularly in community libraries or The Mitchell library – although it appears this information is not regularly updated. A search for book groups on the same website in February 2018, returned only four results, a couple of weeks later there were 39 listed. This is probably due to the quirks of the website rather than a cliff-edge reduction, followed by a massive revival. There is currently no data held on the attendance figures for these groups, or on the demographic of the attendees, but anecdotal comments made by book group attendees, library staff and community learning professionals during this research period, were in agreement that it is unusual for younger people or men to be involved with the reading groups. Glasgow Libraries supports book groups through offering the use of library space at low or no cost, and on request supplies a set of copies of the selected book, or a title chosen by a librarian, brought together from stock across the service. This service aims to reduce any barrier to participation based on the cost of books, and to encourage library usage. Some comments from book group members on this process are recounted in Chapter Five. In October 2017, Glasgow Libraries hosted a special Reading Groups Event at the Mitchell Library.

Literacy work carried out by Glasgow Libraries takes many forms. Some programmes are national and carried out at a large scale. Every Child A Library Member (ECALM) was launched as a Scottish Government initiative in 2015 and involves every local authority area.¹⁶⁸ Through this, Glasgow Life commits to library membership for every child in Glasgow and new-borns are automatically registered as at birth. The First Minister's Reading Challenge is coordinated by the Scottish Book Trust and sets reading goals for primary school children, with prizes and downloadable certificates for reaching milestones. Bounce and Rhyme is a Glasgow-

¹⁶⁸ Peter Reid, *Every Child A Library Member - An Evaluative Review* (Scottish Library and Information Council, 2016) <<https://scottishlibraries.org/media/1204/ecalm-review-2016.pdf>> [accessed 20 March 2018].

wide numeracy and literacy initiative for parents/carers and children up to two years old, which takes place in each of Glasgow's community libraries.

Literacy work may take place in specific settings rather than in every Glasgow Libraries facility. Literacy support for ESOL learners is mainly in libraries with high numbers of non-English speakers in the immediate community. There is also literacy work in Leverndale psychiatric hospital, and creative writing and literacy in Barlinnie Prison.

Glasgow Libraries has managed the school library service for Glasgow City Council since 2012. At January 2016, 17 FTE school librarians were employed across 29 secondary schools. This allowed a process of integration of the school library catalogue with the rest of the service, such that students and teachers now have access to city-wide collections of material, selected to support the school curriculum. In 2012/13, around 10,000 items were issued across the 29 schools and the library service recorded over 500,000 visits by pupils and staff.

The Mitchell Library

Since its inception in 2005, the Aye Write! Book Festival has centred on Glasgow's flagship central library, The Mitchell. Its location, among a diverse and changing cityscape, provides a visual metaphor for the challenges and opportunities faced by Glasgow Libraries. This stately stone-carved building was, like much of Glasgow's historic architecture, paid for from the proceeds of international commerce and specifically, colonial enterprise. Stephen Mitchell was a significant Scottish tobacco trader. On his death in 1874, he left a bequest of £70,000, the bulk of his estate, for the construction of a public library for the City of Glasgow. In *The Story of The Mitchell* a section of the text of this bequest is recorded.

...to the Town Council to form the nucleus...of a large Public Library in Glasgow... Books on all subjects not immoral shall be freely admitted... and no book shall be regarded as immoral which simply controverts present opinions on political or religious questions.

This has a particularly modern and open resonance, and in Chapter Three is interestingly juxtaposed with the purdah regulations imposed on the Aye Write! Book Festival in 2014.

Stephen Mitchell's library journeyed through two temporary homes, gathering other book collections, before it settled in the building now known as The Mitchell, which was purpose-built for the collection and opened in 1911.

Glasgow Women's Library

Glasgow Women's Library (GWL), a limited company with charitable status, is forging an interesting new model for the role of a library. Delivering over 200 events and activities each year, GWL initially sprung from a broad-based arts organisation concerned with ensuring the representation of women's culture during Glasgow's year as ECOC (1990).¹⁶⁹ This gathered so much information and documentation, there was a need for a resource base, and the first library was set up in September 1991; little more than a few bookshelves in a rented room.

Over the ensuing years, with little funding and reliant on donated material for its collections, GWL established itself as a centre for women's rights, a champion of gender equality and a base for women to meet, debate, read and create.

Today GWL has a wide scope of activity, all of which is linked to literature and community. In this regard it is perhaps a forerunner of the modernised public library that has expanded from a role of custodian of material for public access, to being actively engaged with the community through education, entertainment, technology and even political involvement.

¹⁶⁹ 'Glasgow Women's Library – Celebrating Scotland's Women' <<https://womenslibrary.org.uk/>> [accessed 26 March 2018].



Figure 9: Outside GWL

One of the key partners in GWL's development has been Glasgow City Council (more recently enacted via Glasgow Life). GWL was given support and encouragement from the local authority from its inception, at least in part because there was some alignment of ideology between them. The relationship developed over the years and is well demonstrated in the premises made available to GWL as it has grown in size and scope. After outgrowing its original home in Garnethill, GWL was offered a Glasgow City Council owned property in Trongate, before a relocation to a space within The Mitchell Library: it now occupies the former public library in Bridgeton, in the east end of the city.

GWL has successfully integrated a library service with the community it serves. In contrast to Glasgow's libraries, this community is defined less by geography than by need and interest. Much of its activity is issue-based and although this gives a strength of focus, it could be a barrier to access for some people. GWL retains its autonomy and is now an internationally recognised library and a fully accredited museum, two of the areas Glasgow Life oversees citywide.

Literary networks and support organisations

Glasgow is served by a number of literary organisations, which operate with varying levels of formality and a variety of purpose. Some of these aim to serve Glasgow only,

others are Glasgow based with a Scotland-wide remit; some are predominantly social or networking events, others offer opportunities for showcasing or critique of written work. There is an element of overlap between many of these organisations and it is not unusual for someone with a serious interest in Glasgow's literary scene to be a member of more than one. Some members of the literary community have expressed a desire for better communication among these organisations to improve scheduling of events and mutual support of activities. A point expanded on in later parts of the thesis.

The variety of independently organised events does present a challenge: there is currently no straightforward way to find out what literary events are going on in Glasgow over the coming weeks and months, and much information is fragmented across social media outlets, organisational websites and emailed newsletters. Glasgow literary organisations and promoters appear to be happy to share information on events other than their own, through their network. Pat Byrne manages the local information website Pat's Guide – Glasgow West End,¹⁷⁰ which began as a general interest site for the west end of Glasgow. There are frequent submissions to the site's What's On pages from promoters of literary activity all over Glasgow, and Pat feels this may be a result of the lack of an obvious home for that information, and the website's long-standing support for local spoken word and book events.

Three established literary organisations meet within the Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA) in the centre of Sauchiehall Street: Weegie Wednesday, St Mungo's Mirrorball, and Scottish Writers' Centre. The CCA is a multi-purpose arts centre in central Glasgow that incorporates gallery and performance space, a café, bookshop, bar and meeting rooms.

Weegie Wednesday

¹⁷⁰<http://glasgowwestend.co.uk>

Weegie Wednesday is primarily a literary networking event that meets once a month. Its website displays the tagline 'Glasgow's Writing Network',¹⁷¹ which sums up the aim to be an all-encompassing literary salon that welcomes people from all aspects of the writing and publishing community.¹⁷² It is described by those who take part, and on social media, as:

...an opportunity for writers, publishers, comic book writers and artists, poets, screen writers, drama writers, booksellers, librarians, TV and film people, journalists, marketing people, creative writing students and anyone else with an interest to get together socially once a month ... to talk about books, writing and publishing and all points related.¹⁷³

Membership is free and has no requirements other than to agree to the constitution and sign up on the website.

Weegie Wednesday began in 2007, prompted by the work of Simon Biggam, Glasgow Life's Literature Development Officer at the time, who identified the potential benefits of bringing Glasgow's diverse literary culture together. The events typically take place in the public bar attached to the CCA and are well attended by writers, publishers, librarians and academics – usually 20 to 30 people each month. The membership encompasses a wide range of literary interests. Members featured on the Weegie Wednesday website include publishers, poets, scriptwriters and comic artists, alongside creative writing students and established novelists.

While Weegie Wednesday is pitched as a relaxed, networking event, it is usually centred on one or two guest speakers from the literary community. New novelists, agents and academics have all featured, giving a brief talk to prompt further discussion.

¹⁷¹ <http://www.weegiewednesday.org/> [accessed 28/3/2016]

¹⁷² 'Weegie Wednesday | About Weegie Wednesday'

<<http://www.weegiewednesday.org/content/about/>> [accessed 26 March 2018].

¹⁷³ <http://www.weegiewednesday.org/content/about/> [accessed 28/3/2016]

St Mungo's Mirrorball

St Mungo's Mirrorball supports and promotes poetry in Glasgow. Its main aim, as stated on its blog, is 'to support the development of poetry and poets in Glasgow and to raise the profile of poetry in Glasgow and Glasgow poetry.'¹⁷⁴

Mirrorball began in 2005 and now hosts semi-regular poetry reading events showcasing new and established poets from Glasgow and beyond. These also serve as a way to promote and disseminate new, locally produced work, whether in pamphlet or book form. There are typically nine or 10 events per year, which usually take place either in the CCA or Tell It Slant café/bookshop, and these are also opportunities for socialising and networking.

Jim Carruth, one of the founders and the current chair of St Mungo's Mirrorball, is an established and award-winning poet and in 2014 was appointed as Glasgow's Poet Laureate, a position initially established in 1999 with Edwin Morgan's appointment. The Poet Laureate's role is to act as a poetry and literature ambassador for the city during their tenure of up to five years. In my interview with him, it was apparent Carruth has a clear vision for Mirrorball and its role in serving Glasgow's literary community. It includes a celebration of the power of the written word and an inclusive approach that invites all to discover and nurture the creative abilities within. He mounts a quiet resistance to the sometimes competitive nature of the literary community, rarely presents his own work at a Mirrorball event and promotes all other Glasgow poetry events through Mirrorball channels and networks on an equal footing. This generosity was noted by Scotland's Makar, and outgoing Glasgow Laureate, Liz Lochhead on Carruth's appointment:

Jim Carruth is a wonderful poet in his own right. And is that rare beast, one who cares deeply about the work of others.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ <https://stmungosmirrorball.wordpress.com/about/> [accessed 28/3/2016]

¹⁷⁵ http://www.heraldsotland.com/arts_ents/13170444.Lord_Provost_announces_appointment_of_new_Poet_Laureate_for_Glasgow/ [accessed 30/5/2016]

Carruth's appointment was also welcomed by Robyn Marsack, Director of the Scottish Poetry Library:

Jim Carruth is the poetry-engine of Glasgow, powering many events and initiatives that benefit poets and the wider community. I'm delighted that his appointment as Glasgow's Poet Laureate recognises both these achievements and his own considerable gifts as a poet. I'm sure his motto will be 'Let poetry flourish!'¹⁷⁶

St Mungo's Mirrorball has established Clydebuilt, a mentoring scheme for developing 'poets of potential'.¹⁷⁷ Clydebuilt evokes the apprenticeship system of Glasgow's shipyards, with more experienced and established poets offering guidance to those honing their craft. Poet mentees receive 12 months of support from an established poet, and many have gone on to publish and win prizes and awards. The programme is largely funded through Carruth's laureate stipend from the City of Glasgow, which he donates to the programme, and from Mirrorball's annual membership fees.

Scottish Writers' Centre

'Bringing Together Writers Working in Scotland'

The Scottish Writers' Centre (SWC) makes the claim on its website to be a 'countrywide resource, which supports national writers and promotes Scotland's vibrant literary culture'.¹⁷⁸ Like St Mungo's Mirrorball and Weegie Wednesday, most of its events and classes take place in the CCA.

SWC is run by volunteer members, although it does have a formal structure, including a board of directors and management team. It is effectively a collective of

¹⁷⁶ 'Lord Provost Announces Appointment of New Poet Laureate for Glasgow | HeraldScotland' <http://www.heraldscotland.com/arts_ents/13170444.Lord_Provost_announces_appointment_of_new_Poet_Laureate_for_Glasgow/> [accessed 26 March 2018].

¹⁷⁷ <https://stmungosmirrorball.wordpress.com/about/>

¹⁷⁸ 'Scottish Writer's Centre' <<http://scottishwriterscentre.org.uk/>> [accessed 21 March 2018].

writers organising and supporting events they consider beneficial to the writing community. There is a small annual fee for membership (£15/£10 at 2016). Information on the membership page of the website includes the intriguing goal of 'becoming the literary voice of Scotland'.

The organisation extends its reach beyond the city through an active social media presence.

Federation of Writers (Scotland)

The Federation of Writers (FOW) is a volunteer-run organisation based in Glasgow, which programmes events across Scotland.¹⁷⁹

On its website and social media presence, FOW positions itself as 'an organisation dedicated to making the written and spoken word available to the public of Scotland, with respect for diversity and recognition of additional support needs.'¹⁸⁰ This may give the impression readers and audiences are the focus of the organisation, but the main work of the FOW is to support writers. It aims to do this through strengthening networks for developing writers and by providing information and guidance on getting to the point of publication.

FOW events also provide opportunities for writers to sell their collections and anthologies to each other and to the public.

The Glasgow Writers' Meetup Group

Established in 2007 as 'a space for writers to meet and have their work critiqued by their peers'.¹⁸¹ The website states a membership of 1,308 writers, open to all levels of experience.

¹⁷⁹ 'About | Federation of Writers Scotland'

<<https://federationofwritersscotland.wordpress.com/about/>> [accessed 26 March 2018].

¹⁸⁰ <https://federationofwritersscotland.wordpress.com/>

¹⁸¹ <http://www.meetup.com/GlasgowWriters/>

The group meets weekly on alternate Thursdays and Tuesdays, with the opportunity to submit written work in advance for distribution and peer critique. The main aim is for mutual support on the writing journey and development of work, but there is also a significant social aspect.

Glasgow Science Fiction Writers' Circle

'GSFWC is a critique workshop for writers of fantastical literature based in Scotland'.

The GSFWC is one of the longest running groups for writers in Glasgow, and of speculative writers' groups in the UK. Since it began in 1986, members of the GSFWC have had novels published, and short stories featured in anthologies across the world.

The main aim of the group is to offer mutual support in the development of written work. This takes place at regular meetings and in accordance with a clearly defined format, as often used by formal creative writing courses delivered by universities and colleges:

We hold fortnightly meetings in Glasgow city centre and our critiques operate according to the Milford Rules. Members have a couple of weeks to read a submitted story or novel excerpt and prepare comments. Then, on the night of a discussion, with the author present, the other writers critique it, going around the table. After this the author of the piece gets to reply to their critique. It's a method that's worked exceedingly well for us over the years.¹⁸²

Festivals

Literature can and does play a significant part in many types of cultural festivals, whether featured as the focus or more obliquely in smaller, fringe events or supporting activities.

¹⁸² <http://www.gsfwc.co.uk/>

Glasgow hosts a wide range of celebratory and participatory cultural festivals each year and the largest are supported or directly run by Glasgow Life, including Glasgow's two book festivals, *Aye Write!* and *Wee Write!*. Many of the annual festivals that are not book-focussed include some literary elements as part of their programme. Among these are:

Celtic Connections – Glasgow's annual festival of contemporary and traditional Celtic music. In 2016, Celtic Connections began a co-promotion collaboration with the *Aye Write!* festival, bringing book events to Celtic Connections and music events to *Aye Write!*.

West End Festival – originally a small local festival of arts, culture, food and general revelry in Glasgow's west end district, it has grown to become one of the biggest festivals in the calendar. It takes place over three weeks in June and includes literary events, such as book fairs and spoken word events among the other activities.

Mela – Glasgow's largest free multicultural festival celebrates the diversity of the city. Mainly featuring music, dance and food, the festival also hosts educational events and community information.

Merchant City Festival – A multi-art and culture festival centred on the Merchant City district. Like the West End Festival, this includes literary events within the diverse programme.

Outspoken Arts (formerly GlasGay) – Champions LGBT literature, featured among a range of audience and participatory events.

The book festivals

Aye Write!

The *Aye Write!* Book Festival is looked at in detail in the next chapter. Launched in 2005, it has run annually since 2007, usually over nine days each April. In 2016, the festival took place in March in order to avoid the election purdah period and was

programmed over 11 days. It is among the largest literary festivals in the UK and the third largest by attendance, after the Edinburgh International Book Festival and the Hay-on-Wye Book Festival. An average of 160 events are centred in the Mitchell Library.

Aye Write! is undergoing a period of transformation in an attempt to engage more directly with communities under-represented among audiences and participants. This includes hosting events across the city throughout the year and distributing free tickets to the main festival events through community groups.

In common with many book festivals, Aye Write's promotional materials state a general aim to celebrate the best in national, international and local writing, but Aye Write! differs from most in its explicit commitment to reader development in the city, running year-round events, including free community engagement and creative learning events in addition to the charged, ticketed events of the commercial programme.

Aye Write! is also the 'parent' festival of Wee Write!, Glasgow's book festival for children and young people. The distinctive approach of Aye Write! is linked to its relationship with Glasgow Libraries and its position within Glasgow Life.

Wee Write!

The children and families' book festival grew out of a series of children-focussed events worked into the Aye Write! Book Festival programme. In 2014 it launched as a separate festival.

Wee Write! offers free literary events at the Mitchell Library and the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, including author and illustrator appearances and workshops, and a ticketed family day at the Mitchell. Most events are promoted through schools, and a bus service is provided to transport children and teachers to the events. In addition to the week-long schedule of events for children and families, Wee Write! also programmes events for educators.

Glasgow Comic Con

An annual summer event which bills itself as ‘Scotland’s Comic Book Festival’. Although not part of Glasgow Life’s calendar of events, some of Comic Con’s organisers have contributed to GL events, such as Aye Write! and Wee Write!, as well as national initiatives aiming to engage reluctant readers through comics. Based in the CCA for the comic book festival, and the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall for the comic convention, Glasgow Comic Con engages with around 10,500 people (2015 figures) and claims over ¼ million website visits during the festival period.

Glasgow is regarded as one of the hotbeds of comic book production and is the hometown of some of the most influential ‘big name’ comic writers and artists, including Grant Morrison, Mark Millar, Frank Quitely, Alan Grant and Jamie Grant. Historians recently accepted that the world’s first serial comic book was published in Glasgow in 1825 – *The Glasgow Looking Glass* predates the previous contender, *Punch* magazine, by 16 years.¹⁸³

Publishing

Glasgow boasts a rich heritage of publishers, and while many of these have gone from the city through the relocations and amalgamations of the industry, others have emerged. Edinburgh remains the main centre of Scottish publishing, but some of the most innovative and dynamic small independent publishers in the country have chosen to set up in, or grown out of, Glasgow’s literary community. A few of these have made some impact in the literary sector, including Saraband and Freight Books, both of whom have also won the title of Saltire Society Scottish Publisher of the Year (in 2013 and 2015 respectively). Of those who produce literary fiction and non-fiction, most have developed functional business models which feature a combination of these titles alongside works on sports, comedy, cooking and general Scottish interest. In 2015, Freight Books was awarded Publisher of the Year at the Saltire Society’s literary awards, and was often mentioned by interviewees as an example of

¹⁸³ <http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/month/june2005.html>;
http://www.heraldscotland.com/arts_ents/14339416.Glasgow_is_comic_book_city/?ref=rss

the strength and vibrancy of Glasgow's young publishing scene. By summer 2017 Freight had suspended any further releases and advertised for a buyer.

All but one of the Glasgow-based publishers (the exception being HarperCollins) fit the EU definition of Small/Medium Enterprise (SME), and within this are likely to fall into the smallest category of SME, Micro Enterprise – an enterprise with no more than 10 staff members and a turnover not exceeding two million euros.¹⁸⁴ (Turnover figures vary from year to year and are not always available.)

There is no standard model for Glasgow publishers, rather there is a huge variety both in reasons for being, and in the approaches to the art and business of publishing. Many of the publishers operate in an area of special interest, or for a niche audience, including archaeology (Pottingair Press), marine and maritime (Brown, Son and Ferguson), Gaelic language and interest (Gaelic Books Council), and religious/spiritual (Wild Goose Publications).

Glasgow has a history of educational publishing. 19th century publisher William Collins and Son began operations in Glasgow, and now continues worldwide within the HarperCollins name, and in the publisher's huge distribution centre near Glasgow. Educational publishing continues to feature in the city's output: Geddes and Grosset have a 25 year track record of publishing educational books and materials, distributed worldwide; the Association for Scottish Literary Studies (ASLS) has published scholarly works, study guides and new editions of classic Scottish literature, since its establishment in 1970; and Glasgow Museums publishes educational, art and historical guides related to the city's history, galleries and exhibits.

In commercial terms it is particularly difficult for a small publisher to build a sustainable business which relies on literary titles. Some of Glasgow's publishers have combined the production of their 'first love' material – whether that be literary fiction, poetry or children's literature – with titles more likely to deliver consistent

¹⁸⁴ <http://www.eusmecentre.org.cn/sites/default/files/files/news/SME%20Definition.pdf>

income. Adrian Searle at Freight Books names Freight's comedic, gift market book *Pub Dogs of Glasgow*¹⁸⁵ as one such title. As an image-heavy, text-light, mass market book it requires comparatively little input to produce but can add to the stream of longer term returns to contribute to a sustainable business model to support higher quality, financially riskier, titles. Keith Charters at Strident Publishing is an author and publisher of books for children and young adults. He runs Strident alongside his other activities as a cultural sector adviser and educational speaker, and considers Strident's backlist an essential ingredient of sustainability.

Innovative partnerships and approaches feature in Glasgow's publishing world. Vagabond Books publishes political and sports titles alongside poetry and crime fiction, generally with a strong Scottish flavour. Vagabond has an arrangement with Oxfam Books, one of the city's major sellers of second-hand books, to stock Vagabond titles in its Glasgow outlets. Vagabond has also tapped into the live literature scene by running monthly Vagabond Underground nights, featuring Vagabond authors with other guest speakers in a city-centre venue. The aim is clearly stated on the Vagabond Underground website:

Each Vagabond Underground features one of our authors, but there will also be other Vagabond personalities in attendance. It begins with a brief reading and Q&A, and then moves on to general mingling, which is the primary purpose of Vagabond Underground: to facilitate a dialogue between our authors and our readers, our readers and our readers, and our readers and us.¹⁸⁶

This mingling and dialogue around books is used to build up a refreshingly non-virtual community around the Vagabond brand.

Another innovative collaboration was undertaken by Ringwood Publishing, which identifies as a small Scottish publisher 'dedicated to publishing quality works

¹⁸⁵ Paris, R & Fulton, G (2014), *Pub Dogs of Glasgow*, Freight, Glasgow

¹⁸⁶ <http://vagabondvoices.co.uk/?p=2615> [accessed 27/5/2016]

of Scottish fiction and non-fiction around the key national themes of politics, football, religion, money, sex and crime'.¹⁸⁷ In 2015 Ringwood collated and published a series of written works responding to the Glasgow Film Theatre's quest for the meaning of 'For All' as they revisited their 1980s promotional phrase 'Cinema For All'. The multi-format interactive e-book which resulted contained input from local writers, researchers, staff-members, cinema audiences, musicians and illustrators.¹⁸⁸ This imaginative project illustrates some of the potential for publishing to play a significant part in the dialogue between cultural industry and community.

Booksellers

The Booksellers' Association lists 33 member shops in Glasgow. Of these, 12 are WH Smith's stores, which sell books alongside general stationery and gifts; nine are superstores (Sainsbury's and Tesco); four are educational booksellers (three John Smith's bookshops on university campuses and one schools' supplier); four are branches of Waterstones (which opened a new Glasgow store in 2017); three are religious bookshops; and two are independent.

The number of high street bookshops has been in decline throughout the UK, and Glasgow has not escaped this. The increase in online sales of physical books, coupled with a rising demand for e-books, has brought challenging conditions to the bookshop, which may also be struggling with the economic difficulties facing the rest of the retail sector. These changes have also rendered the question 'where do the people of Glasgow buy books?' almost impossible to answer, not least because Amazon, the dominant online book retailer, is reticent to release sales information. However, it is possible to look at the places in the city where you could buy a physical book in person. These are gathered below:

- 'High Street' retailers;
- independents and special interest bookshops selling new books;

¹⁸⁷ <http://ringwoodpublishing.com/for-all/> [accessed 30/4/2016]

¹⁸⁸ <http://www.glasgowfilm.org/forall> [accessed 27/5/2016]

- second-hand bookshops;
- charity shops.

'High Street' retailers

The last remaining UK-wide chain of dedicated bookshops, Waterstones, has four stores in Glasgow city and another two within the greater Glasgow area. Against the trend of store closures, the west end store opened in 2015 with Waterstones' promising to feature exciting events, as well as selling books and coffee. Waterstones is also the retail partner to the Aye Write! and Wee Write! festivals, providing pop-up shops to handle on-the-spot sales. Festival sales are a significant proportion of the store's annual book sales and are reported by staff members on the Aye Write! PAG to be as significant as the pre-Christmas sales volume.

WHSmith, stocks books in all of its 16 Glasgow stores, although 10 of these are small outlets within hospitals or bus and train stations. Titles stocked tend to be bestselling fiction, biography, educational and travel books. WHSmith are retail partners for the Richard and Judy Book Club, the TV celebrities' curated book list.

Fopp, a chain that began in Glasgow, specialises in music, film and books and had 50 UK stores at one point – two of its remaining eight UK stores are in Glasgow. Books tend to be related to the worlds of popular culture, music, film and TV.

The Works is a national chain selling books, gifts and stationery. Books are generally sold at a deep discount and include popular fiction, non-fiction, children's, and general interest books aimed at the gift market.

The larger Sainsbury's and Tesco stores also sell a very limited range of books, but may shift these in high volumes, particularly when their size enables them to discount titles.

Independent bookshops

In such a large city, with three universities and a rich literary heritage, one might expect to find more independent bookshops than seems to be the case in Glasgow.

There are only two independent bookshops, which cover a wide range of genres and do not fall into the category of ‘special interest bookshop’, although they have each sought out a niche.

Hyndland Bookshop stocks a carefully curated selection of ‘beautiful coffee-table books’ alongside literary fiction, Scottish interest and Gaelic language books.¹⁸⁹

Oswald Street Bookshop is also something of a niche. It specialises in ‘books about Scotland, by subject, content or author.’ According to the shop website this is a decision born out of pragmatism:

The purpose of focusing on Scotland is not to be narrow but simply to differentiate ourselves from our competitors and offer a range and depth not available in mainstream bookshops – or even online.¹⁹⁰

These Scottish books may be on history and culture, comedy or crime-fiction. Oswald Street is also renowned for stocking perhaps the most comprehensive selection of Gaelic language and culture books in central Scotland.

Special interest bookshops

The remaining retailers of new books tend to specialise: John Smith, the educational bookseller, has an outlet in each of Glasgow’s three university campuses; The Lighthouse stocks books on architecture and design; Glasgow’s museums and galleries offer books related to their particular exhibits, such as Charles Rennie Mackintosh, transport, natural history, modern art or local interest.

Aye-Aye Books and Tell It Slant each provide an outlet for local writers publishing (or even hand-writing) their own work. Aye-Aye Books is based within the

¹⁸⁹ ‘5 of the Best Bookshops in Glasgow | WOW247’
<<http://www.wow247.co.uk/2015/04/16/best-bookshops-glasgow/>> [accessed 26 March 2018].

¹⁹⁰ <http://oswaldstreetbookshop.com/about/> [accessed 27/5/2016]

Centre for Contemporary Art, and stocks locally-produced small-run publications, poetry pamphlets, zines and a selection of art and design books.

Tell It Slant is a café/venue/poetry bookshop and sells pamphlets alongside general release published work by local authors.

Scotland officially recognises three native languages: English, Scots and Gaelic. The Gaelic Book Council has a shop on site which sells books in Gaelic, but also English language books on Gaelic culture and history.

Calton Books, in the east end of Glasgow, calls itself 'Glasgow's Independent Radical Bookshop'¹⁹¹ and stocks books and other related materials around interests including Marxist thought, Irish Republicanism, anti-fascism, anti-austerity, and the Palestinian conflict. Calton appears to be the only independent or special interest bookseller not located in the city centre or west end of Glasgow.

Second-hand and antiquarian books

Glasgow has a small number of second-hand bookshops. These are also predominantly in the centre/west end of the city. A notable exception being the long-established Young's Interesting Books, in Shawlands, probably the most bohemian area of the south side of the city.

Voltaire & Rousseau, Thistle Books, and Caledonia Books are all situated in the west end of the city. Cooper Hay Rare books is in the city centre.

Charity shops

The amount of books sold through charity shops is a significant proportion of all book sales, yet is largely overlooked by industry and research. Most charity shops in the city sell books that have been donated and which are usually, although not always, second-hand. Some shops put considerable effort into sorting the books by genre and

¹⁹¹ <http://www.calton-books.co.uk/books/>

author, but others do not. For the majority of Glasgow's population, the closest book for sale is likely to be in a charity shop.

Oxfam has nine charity shops in Glasgow, six of which sell books alongside other items, and three of its specialist bookstores: Oxfam Books.

In 2015-16 Oxfam's nine Glasgow shops generated £449K in book sales from 142,000 books, with an average selling price (ASP) of £3.16, higher than the UK and North of England/Scotland ASPs, which were £2.46 and £2.39 respectively. The ASP in Glasgow can in part be explained by the greater proportion of Oxfam Books stores, which tend to command higher prices for their stock.¹⁹²

Oxfam Books has in a sense taken on the mantle of the independent bookshop, offering a wide range of stock that may not be found elsewhere and with a focus on atmosphere and community. These elements are displayed in the web-page for the Victoria Road, Glasgow branch of Oxfam Books & Music.

Oxfam Books and Music on Victoria Road in Glasgow is set in a bustling and diverse area of the city. Having increased its popularity with its customers due to its friendly and helpful team, and its retro music shop ambience, people come from all over to visit it. It is very much a part of the local community and provides a place where people can meet. Offering a wide and diverse selection of books and records (some of these rare and valuable), as well as comics, magazines, videos, DVDs and other items such as posters and t-shirts, this Oxfam is a must on your list to do.¹⁹³

The customer perspective with regard to bookshop provision is illustrated in this online review of the same Southside Oxfam Books shop:

¹⁹² Figures provided by Oxfam GB Shop Support Team 1/6/16 (via email)

¹⁹³ <https://oxfambooksglasgow.wordpress.com/about/> [accessed 27/5/16]

The Govanhill Oxfam is one of the many Oxfams that specialise in books. Because of their extensive network, they are very effective in terms of pricing: it is rare to find an old record or first edition at a bargain price, but it does have a very well-appointed selection, with plenty of books arranged by specialism.

[...] not the cheapest, but usually fair, with lots of vinyl and even comic books, now and again. The specialisation of charity shops in recent years has made them less of a joy to browse, but this stands as something of a Southside oasis, almost compensating for the lack of a proper book shop.¹⁹⁴

Live literature, reading and writing groups

Live literature is something of an umbrella term used to cover diverse activities, such as book festival author events, storytelling sessions, poetry readings and competitive slam poetry events. These are all different experiences, tend to be delivered in different settings and, although have some overlap, are attended by significantly different audiences. Some live literature events are used to share and develop new work, while some, typically within Waterstone's bookshops and the Aye Write! festival, lean more towards the promotion of books for sale.

In Glasgow, as elsewhere in Scotland, there is a burgeoning and energetic movement of live literature events, which range from artistic and contemplative to edgy and even combative. These are more commonly referred to as 'spoken word' events, the term acting as a subcategory of 'live literature' and encompassing performance poetry or storytelling and slam poetry events. There are more than 25 regular monthly or weekly spoken word events in Glasgow, and more which take place sporadically. The Blue Chair, Last Monday at Rio, Fail Better, and Inn Deep are some of the regular live literature events taking place in Glasgow pubs, cafés and community facilities, some with a regular home, others more mobile. It has also

¹⁹⁴ Comment on Yelp review page for Oxfam Books Victoria Road
<http://www.yelp.co.uk/biz/oxfam-glasgow-3> [accessed 27/5/16]

become more acceptable for spoken word or poetry to be performed at open mic events, which were primarily set up for musical acts.

It is difficult to keep track of which events are on in the city and when and where they take place, even for those engaged within the spoken word scene, as demonstrated in various social media posts seeking information (see below).

Glasgow, I made this list. Is it right? Not sure of monthly dates of Loud Poets or High Flight or St Louis open mic or Seeds of Thought or St Mungos... What else have I missed?

Monthlies

- First Monday - Spangled Cabaret @ Queen Margaret Union 8pm
- First Tuesday - Words and Music @ Pollok Ex Serviceman's Club 7:30pm
- First Thursday - New Material @ St Louis Cafe 9pm
- First Friday - Project Cafe Open Mic @ Project Cafe 6pm
- Second Tuesday - Allsorts Cabaret @ Katie's Bar 7:30pm
- Second Tuesday - Indeep Poetry @ Indeep 7pm
- Second Tuesday - Trad/Folk Sing/Spoken Word around @ Duke's Bar Finneston 7pm
- Second Wednesday - Live Poets @ Strathclyde University Union 6pm
- Second Thursday - Fail Better @ McChuil's 8pm
- Second Friday - Tall Tales Storytelling @ The Blue Chair 6pm
- Third Monday - Aloud @ Queen Margaret Union 7:30pm
- Third Wednesday - Sonnet Youth @ Drygate 7pm
- Third Wednesday - Queer Theory Cabaret @ Nice and Sleazy's 7:30pm
- Third Thursday - Extra Second @ The Blue Chair 6pm
- Third Saturday - Faith/Unbelief Open Mic @ Bearsden Baptist Church 3pm
- Fourth Tuesday - Indeep Poetry @ Indeep 7pm
- Last Monday - Last Monday at Waterstones @ Waterstones Sauchiehall Street 7pm
- Last Friday - Express Yourself @ Project Cafe 6pm
- Last Friday - Glasgow Poetry Mafia @ New Hellfire Club 7pm
- Last Sunday - Sunday Jam @ The Blue Chair 3-6pm
- Last Sunday - Sinister Wink @ The Bungo 8pm

Weeklies

- Every Monday - Acoustic Night @ Nice and Sleazy's 10pm
- Every Wednesday - Broadcast Open Mic @ Broadcast 11pm
- Every Friday - Necropolis Sessions @ Cathedral House Hotel 8pm

Figure 10: Request for info on Spoken Word events in Glasgow¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Request for info on Spoken Word events in Glasgow. From Scottish Poetry & Spoken Word Facebook page [October 2017]

Bram Gieben was Scottish Slam Champion 2015 and is very well known in Glasgow's spoken word community and beyond. His commitment to words is demonstrated on the page as well as the stage; he is also a journalist, novelist and writer of short stories. He carried out an online survey of the Scottish spoken word scene in 2015, to try to capture some of the demographic data about who was attending these and how often, and to identify some of the challenges and opportunities for the spoken word scene. When I interviewed him in 2016, he acknowledged the survey 'wasn't very scientific' but did elicit a response from more than 50 performers.¹⁹⁶ He uses the terms live literature, spoken word and performance poetry almost interchangeably.

Gieben's article about Scotland's spoken word scene in online magazine *Bella Caledonia* describes a significant movement of committed members:

[...] within the big cities, a picture emerges of a vibrant, busy, and welcoming space. 65% of those surveyed say they go to between one and four spoken word events a month, with 28% attending 5-10 events, and 8% attending 10 or more.¹⁹⁷

The picture Gieben describes, and which is also evident in the online activity on Twitter and Facebook, is that a high proportion of the participants are performers as well as audience members. They form a network of producer/consumers of cultural activity, which may partially explain their uneasy fit within the more traditional book festival setting of Aye Write!. Gieben talks of 'the ghettoization of the scene' by which he means the fragmentation of spoken word events as the scene grows and people gravitate towards those whose style and content they are most comfortable with.¹⁹⁸ He says he is aware of tensions between page and performance-oriented poets, and between older and younger performers. Gieben feels some older people felt

¹⁹⁶ Interview: Bram Gieben, 2016.

¹⁹⁷ <http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2015/12/09/performance-poetry-and-spoken-word-in-scotland-part-1>

¹⁹⁸ 'Interview: Bram Gieben'.

intimidated by the energy, language and intensity of the young, and some younger performers say they were put off by the measured pace and polish of the older poets with more traditional forms. There are diverse events on offer and people can choose to only visit those events which suit them. The downside of this, according to Gieben, is there is not as much diversity or exposure to unexpected work or challenging forms as there was previously, when the scene was smaller and more focussed.

In a similar vein, it is difficult to say how many book groups/reading groups are running in Glasgow as they are not all promoted or open to the public. Some book groups are arranged among friends, or in settings such as churches and workplaces. The library service offers to support book groups whenever asked and can arrange for multiple copies of requested books to be gathered from across the city and delivered to one community library.

In 2016 there are currently 35 book groups that meet regularly in Glasgow libraries¹⁹⁹. Anecdotal evidence and accounts from library staff would suggest these are predominantly attended by women.

Even those book groups are set up independently can be reliant on the availability of resources and expertise from Glasgow Libraries. The Scottish Writers Book Group meets in Hillhead Library and expressed their lack of control over what books were made available to them:

SWBG1: Stephen. That's one thing I think we have no control over and at one time we had Mary [Greenshields]²⁰⁰ in the Mitchell

SWBG1: ... and she was a vital cog in the wheel and she's just gone.

The whole thing doesn't work on the same level now. You have a contact person here in Hillhead library who is lovely, helpful, top marks Stephen, we don't have any complaints about Stephen.

[...]

¹⁹⁹ <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/books-reading/book-groups/Pages/home.aspx>

²⁰⁰ Former librarian who championed book groups and live literature events, and was instrumental in starting the Aye Write! book festival.

SWBG1: And they have no control over what Mitchell send to them.

SWBG3: It's just about the availability...

[...]

SWBG1: Who is doing the buying in Mitchell? You know it goes right down the line. And yes, we are now getting a better quality, but for a while there it was too easy to chuck Tartan Noir at us, and really some of it is not well written. You know you can read so much but there is a limit and I think that, you know, just because you're reading Scottish work, it doesn't need to be a low level of work, you know?²⁰¹

Writing groups are another section of the Glasgow literary scene that are difficult to quantify. Each of Glasgow's three universities runs formal, well-respected creative writing programmes with alumni who have achieved and are achieving significant success. Beyond the academic setting, writing groups exist in libraries, workplaces, homes and community centres. Like reading groups, these can be difficult to track as many are informal or not promoted publicly. Some take place in Glasgow library premises, and there are others within libraries that are not listed by Glasgow Life.

Some creative writing groups are supported by Glasgow Life's Community Learning team which provides experienced tutors. These groups have a range of aims and scope, including improving general literacy, wellbeing and mental health activity, capturing local history, and the workshopping of material intended for commercial publication. Some of the groups in the last category are supported by other literary organisations listed above, such as the Federation of Writers (Scotland) and the Glasgow Science Fiction Writers' Circle.

Glasgow has a long and rich heritage of literary engaged groups of people, and much of what we find in literary Glasgow today reflects the same desires to produce, share, critique and discuss literature that were present 50, 100 and 200 years ago.

²⁰¹ Interview: Scottish Writers Book Group 29/6/2015, 07:55

This is noted by Weiss in her thesis ‘The Literary Clubs and Societies of Glasgow during the Long Nineteenth Century’.²⁰² Her work explores the literary groups formed in church congregations, schools, workplaces and clubs across Glasgow. Like the literary communities of today, these were engaged in sharing works of literature, gathering to discuss what they had read, performance of poetry, and production of written work that was then circulated through hand-produced society magazines.

Putting literature on the map

Mapping has always been a political act, whether in the claiming of ‘new’ territories, choosing between Mercator or Galls-Peters as a global projection method, or in deciding which elements are given prominence. Decisions around methods of representation can distort or clarify, foreground or render invisible. This applies both in physical and symbolic mapping of territories.

In a physical landscape, distance and relative location can be complex and contested concepts. ‘Central’ may mean accessible to some and impossibly far to others. In a city, at certain times of the day, a journey which could take 10 minutes by car can be over an hour by public transport, or even impossible. Individual economic and physical resources also modify and distort the available landscape. You might live across the street from a bookshop but if you have no money, it is not an available resource of access to literature.

Mapping is also slippery in symbolic terms. What does ‘local’ mean? Do I actually have to move to ‘move on’ with my life? And to add to the complexity, literary Glasgow is affected by additional dimensions of power such as ‘top down’ and ‘ground up’.

In the development of a literary strategy for a modern city there are many challenges. Not least is the problem of resource placement within a complex

²⁰² Lauren Weiss, *The Literary Clubs and Societies of Glasgow during the Long Nineteenth Century: A City’s History of Reading through its Communal Reading Practices and Productions* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Stirling, 2018)

landscape of social, physical and cultural connections and barriers. In any attempt to support readers, writers and publishers, these connections and barriers must be mapped and understood. This understanding must underpin a strategy to seek to enhance the flow of ideas, opportunity and assistance across the city community.

The physical mapping of literary Glasgow's resources is important but must be understood alongside other forms of distance, from opportunity and barriers to access which result from poverty, health issues, caring responsibilities, digital isolation or lack of motivation.

The map of literary Glasgow is constantly moving, not only with time but with internal and external influences. From an individual perspective the topography is changing even faster and presents a different landscape to each citizen. For the development of a reading/writing city this is a great challenge, but also a great opportunity. The following two examples from the research process illustrate these:

- During participation in Glasgow Life's 2015 Vision for Glasgow Libraries consultation, I shared a focus group in Baillieston Library with an elderly retired couple. They had lived nearby all their lives, loved the library and visited regularly, despite mobility challenges. They spoke of their regret that they would no longer be able to visit the library. On exploring this further, it was because they had seen a notice on the lamp-post outside announcing forthcoming parking restrictions on the main road, and this would make the library inaccessible to them.
- In Chapter Four J is introduced – a young volunteer at Sunny Govan Radio. J's interest in hip-hop music was noted by the radio station's Development Worker, and he had been encouraged to find out about spoken word performers. When staff discovered rapper and poet George Mpanga (George the Poet) would be appearing at Aye Write!, they called to request a media pass for J and a colleague. J spent most of his time in the Govan area, had never been to The Mitchell library, and would not have been able to afford the £8 ticket. He left with a signed book of George's poetry and a declared mission to 'get everybody into poetry'.

These two anecdotes illustrate the frustratingly arbitrary and surprisingly simple things which can change the landscape of accessibility to literary Glasgow. A parking notice halts life-long library goers, and a phone call broadens a young man's experience of literature and poetry. It can be the things positioned between literary Glasgow and an individual which present a challenge or an opportunity. This fits with Comunian's statement on 'the importance of micro interactions and networks between creative practitioners, the publicly supported cultural sector and the cultural infrastructure of the city'²⁰³ as the real source of cultural strength and development. The map of literary Glasgow is different for everyone, but the encouraging news is it is flexible and can be re-drawn in unexpected ways.

The Aye Write! Book Festival is connected to many of the aspects of literary Glasgow surveyed in this chapter. In the next chapter, a closer analysis of Aye Write! sees how the issues it struggles with point towards areas of significance for a potential strategy.

²⁰³ R. Comunian, p. 1157.

Chapter Three: Aye Write! Glasgow's Book Festival

*Life is a festival only to the wise. Seen from the nook and chimney-side of prudence, it wears a ragged and dangerous front.*²⁰⁴

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Viewpoint is everything. Aye Write! Glasgow's Book Festival is positioned as a significant element of Glasgow Life's commitment to literature and reader development in the city. It connects the library service, the creative industry of local writers and publishers, the city's arts and festival calendar, Glasgow City Council, cultural branding of the city, and efforts to develop community literacy and reader engagement. Beyond Glasgow Life, many others also have a perspective on the festival: readers who want their interests served; writers and publishers with new works to promote; booksellers with stock to shift; educators who anticipate leverage for their literacy efforts; poets seeking a platform; and funders and partners looking for evidence of impact from their investment.

With demands and expectations coming from so many directions, it can be challenging to identify what success means for the festival, and where the point of equilibrium might be found. This chapter documents the search for the purpose and position of Aye Write! and observes ways in which the balance has shifted subtly over the duration of this research. While the strategic aims of the festival have remained constant, they have been tested and their application refined in response to challenging economic pressures and structural changes within the organisation. From the perspective of the team which steers the festival, this has brought about a period of reflection and a need for innovative approaches to move the festival towards sustainability, while maintaining the connection with its core ethos. The innovative approaches applied have unlocked new working methods for the festival with the potential to improve connections with the communities it serves.

²⁰⁴ Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Essay VIII: Heroism." *Essays: First Series* (1841): 221-240.

From the outset of this research project, it was acknowledged Aye Write! would feature strongly. Not only because it was specifically mentioned in the brief for the AHRC-funded collaborative studentship as something which should be responded to²⁰⁵, but also because my supervisor on the Glasgow Life side of the project was the Director of Aye Write! as well as Head of Libraries and Cultural Festivals. The Director stood down from both posts in September 2014, during changes to the organisational and governance structures of Aye Write! and Glasgow Libraries, an event which marked a period of transition for the festival.

In October 2013, at the beginning of the research period, I was invited to sit in on, and play an active part in the planning groups for Aye Write!, particularly the Programme Advisory Group (PAG). This embedded role afforded an invaluable opportunity to witness and be an active participant in the struggles and mechanisms of the festival during that period. In particular, this allowed me to observe and participate in this period of transition from within the festival team and then compare the experience with the perceptions of others towards Aye Write!, gathered through interviews. This process uncovered significant gaps in the festival's connection with Glasgow's literary communities. Importantly, it revealed some of these gaps were brought about by effective pursuit of Aye Write's stated aims within the environmental and fiscal constraints it finds itself, rather than by a failure to do so. This points towards the need for an informed re-evaluation of the festival aims and possible adaptation of the festival model to mitigate or accept these gaps.

I was also able to access meetings of the groups for Community Engagement and Creative Learning, Operations, and the children's book festival, Wee Write!. This access was invaluable and greatly enriched the research project. The Glasgow Life staff I interacted with as colleague, researcher and observer were welcoming, generous and candid. I do not believe this project could have achieved the same level of insight without this collaborative relationship with Glasgow Life and with Glasgow Libraries in particular.

²⁰⁵ See Appendix II. *AHRC PhD Studentship: Developing Literary Glasgow*

Aye Write! Book Festival is seen from multiple viewpoints in this chapter, each limited and easily contested, yet woven together they present a convincing narrative. Beyond the preliminary material which gives some historical and statistical context to the festival, the participatory ethnography and data from interviews and documents reveals the struggle of a festival attempting to maintain the integrity of its ethos, while embedded within a large civic cultural organisation.

The chapter demonstrates the multiple aims of Aye Write! exist and operate in tension with one another; that these can be negotiated to bring about successful outcomes, but their combined effect is to create an undesirable gap in the festival's reach. It also documents changes in the festival's conceptual model over a three-year transition period, and proposes a potential future model. Pragmatic decisions taken in the festival planning and delivery stages are considered against literature on creative industries, cultural policy and cultural consumption, and these connections are illustrated through a set of mini case-studies from within the operation of the festival.

As per the methodology section of the introduction, three main sources of data are drawn upon here:

1. Interviews with people from across the spectrum of literary Glasgow, both within Glasgow Life and beyond.
2. Documents, including Aye Write! internal documents, as well as promotional and public-facing material, and documents relating to the Aye Write! festival, Glasgow Libraries or cultural policy generally, from Glasgow Life or Glasgow City Council.
3. A three-year period of participatory ethnographic research within Glasgow Life, centred on the Programme Advisory Group of Aye Write! but including access to other aspects of festival planning and delivery, and involvement in Glasgow Libraries' visioning process.

The main focus in this chapter is to reveal the layers of narrative which surround Aye Write!: the story told in strategy documents; the story observed in the

organisational ecology of the Aye Write! teams; the story as performed to festival-goers; and the story played out in the tensions between organisational structure and stated ethos.

The stated aims of the festival are considered against the realities of the delivered festival experience, and the expectations of the literary community and the general public. The chapter argues successful pursuit of the festival aims as currently expressed, has opened a gap into which valuable members of Glasgow's literary communities fall, and that reconsideration of the conceptual model of the festival is required to address this. The chapter closes with a section on how a festival such as Aye Write! might step back from a focus on the mechanics of what it does, to an examination of why it is doing it and for whom.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Aye Write! Glasgow's Book Festival was launched in 2005 and has run annually since 2007, usually over nine to 11 days each spring. The festival grew out of Glasgow Libraries' efforts to bring regular author events to Glasgow in response to interest from book group members. The festival is still delivered by Glasgow Libraries and is focussed on The Mitchell Library.

Aye Write! hosts between 160 and 200 book related events each year, with the programme primarily made up of events in which authors speak about their new book to a theatre-style audience, or a selection of authors are brought together around a single topic – again, usually connected with their newly released books. Additional festival events include The Books That Made Me strand, in which celebrities from popular culture, politics and sport speak about books that are important to them. Creative writing workshops and community engagement events make up the balance of the festival schedule.

In 2015 Aye Write! sold 11,259 tickets with over 1,000 further attendances at free events during the week. In 2016: 17,733 tickets over 168 events.²⁰⁶ During its first 10 years, the festival took place almost exclusively within The Mitchell Library.

²⁰⁶ Aye Write! *End of project monitoring report* for Creative Scotland, 2016

It was clear during the early meetings I attended, the festival leadership was strongly in favour of maintaining the relationship between place and event. Suggestions contrary to this position, that the festival could spread across other locations, even in the form of ‘fringe’ type events in neighbouring cafes, pubs and restaurants, got little traction. Later conversations with colleagues revealed this had been a cause of frustration but there was also recognition that the synergy between The Mitchell and Aye Write! was important in the establishment and branding of the festival.

The model evolved between 2014 and 2017 and expanded beyond The Mitchell to other locations within Glasgow, and beyond the spring festival period to include stand-alone events and the occasional mini-series of talks at other times of year. This was initially driven by economic and pragmatic reasons but was also about reconnecting the festival with its core aims, as discussed later in this chapter. Developments around programming and ticketing also subtly changed the focus for the festival as it strives to grow its audience and serve its reader development agenda.

The ‘Glasgow Book Festival 2015-2018 Development Plan’ claims the festival is unique among UK book festivals as it is positioned as a ‘core function of the Glasgow’s library service, delivered by Glasgow Life and rooted in the cultural life of the city’²⁰⁷. While the festival gains great benefit from this particular relationship with the city’s leading cultural organisation in terms of the integration with strategy and access to resource, it is potentially constrained by the accompanying requirements to fit within a larger organisation and to conform to certain strategic and political considerations.

Aye Write! sits at the intersection of a discussion on the creative economy, reader development, city branding and social inclusion. The story of Aye Write!’s contribution to Glasgow as a reading, writing and publishing city can only be

²⁰⁷ Aye Write! Glasgow’s Book Festival 2015-2018 Development Plan Proposal (internal working document)

understood in the context of the internal and external relationships which drive and shape the festival. These relationships and their impacts are explored in the following sections, but are by no means static. Internally the organisation has been negotiating changes in governance since the strategic oversight of the festival was transferred from Glasgow Libraries to Glasgow Arts in 2014. The wider vision and strategy of Glasgow Libraries was also under review for most of the research period from 2014 to 2016.²⁰⁸ In the world beyond Glasgow Life, economic changes were impacting publishers, booksellers, funders and the ticket-buying public. Any pressure on resource leads naturally to an examination of scope, and it would seem timely for Aye Write! to be doing so.

Aye Write!'s promotional materials state a general aim to 'celebrate the best in national, international and local writing'²⁰⁹. Like most literary festivals, Aye Write! pitches itself as a celebratory gathering of book-loving people invited to take on the role of audience in a series of author events. But Aye Write! differs from most festivals in its explicit commitment to reader development in the city, running year-round events, including free community engagement and creative learning events in addition to the charged, ticketed offering of the commercial programme, and acting as the 'parent' festival of Wee Write!, Glasgow's book festival for children and young people.

The Programme Advisory Group (PAG)

I was not immediately aware how significant my position as a participant/researcher within the Aye Write! team would be. It quickly became apparent this was one place where the conflicting forces of literature and literacy, community and politics, funding and access collide and are navigated. The Aye Write! PAG is one of six distinct

²⁰⁸ A Vision for Glasgow Libraries, Glasgow Life, 2016

²⁰⁹ Aye Write! press release 2014

but overlapping groups which contributes to the delivery of Glasgow Life's book festivals.

The PAG's remit is, as the name suggests, an advisory one but it is here discussion takes place on matters such as dates and length of the festival, key themes for the forthcoming programme, ticket pricing structure, use of venue spaces, relationships with funders and partners, marketing approach and programme content. Each one of these matters is negotiated in a space between organisational and financial requirements of Glasgow Life, the creative vision of the Programmer and the PAG, and the commitment to the core aims of the festival. As a result, the PAG was a rich research environment for exploration of the issues facing the festival and the structures and assumptions which influenced decisions.

The PAG comprises a combination of Glasgow Life staff and members from outwith the organisation. During my involvement, the Libraries Manager, Festival Manager and Programmer were core members who drove the agenda, and additional Glasgow Life marketing staff also attended at key times to contribute to discussion on marketing approach or to give feedback on progress. The majority of group members were personally invited by the team from other facets of Glasgow's (and Scotland's) literary community. These included publishers, writers, academics and the manager of Waterstones' Glasgow bookstores.

Aims, objectives and expectations

It is important to consider how Aye Write! fits within the Glasgow Life structure, and in particular how this informs the aims, objectives and expectations of the festival. Glasgow Life's commitment to supporting and developing literature in the city finds its main expression through Glasgow Libraries and the services and activities this provides; from physical and e-book lending, to parent-child reading sessions, to providing access to IT and information. Work on improvement of functional literacy takes place mainly in the overlap between the Libraries and Communities sectors of Glasgow Life, supporting ESOL learners, provision of adult literacy classes and community-based creative writing workshops.

Aye Write! sits completely within Glasgow Life, and in its delivery is primarily within the realm of the Glasgow Libraries' sub-brand – understandably so since it was born out of Glasgow Libraries' commitment to reader development and continues to be heavily reliant upon library staff at all levels of its operation. Unusually for a festival of this scale, there are no full-time posts associated with Aye Write!, rather, each aspect of planning, development and delivery is handled by one of a number of sub-groups consisting of senior members of the Libraries and Arts teams, joined by colleagues from within Glasgow Life, such as marketing or community learning specialists. These sub groups are completed with extra-organisational input.

In the course of Glasgow Life's internal organisational changes, the strategic management of Aye Write! has changed. Until 2014, Aye Write! was managed and delivered by the library service but since has combined this with a closer formal strategic relationship with Glasgow Life's Arts division, which has broader experience in festival delivery, events and audience development. Glasgow Libraries and Glasgow Arts also work closely with Glasgow Communities to more effectively support literacy efforts and to build stronger relationships with readers who do not currently attend Aye Write!

A period of such organisational commotion could easily pose a challenge to the identity of a literary festival, particularly one which has no small, permanent team at the centre of it. The technical difficulties and differences in approach between the organisational sub-cultures were in the main resolved at higher management levels within Glasgow Life, meaning there appeared to be minimal operational impact. From an audience perspective, any change in the festival delivery was minimal, and evolutionary rather than radical. This was helped by the fact Aye Write! is rooted in values championed across the organisation, and has a distinct identity assisted in no small part by its association with The Mitchell Library.

The audience experience is often what people think of when considering a book festival and understandably so, for this is where the festival lives, breathes and speaks. Most audience members, even those who attend year after year, may be unaware of the technicalities of the delivery of the festival or the structures which shape the programme, yet these forces ultimately determine everything which

translates into experience: the timing and location of the festival; the pricing and inclusion policy; thematic strands; and the values implicitly or explicitly supported by the festival, which define both it and its direction.

The definition of reader development was discussed in Chapter One and found to be difficult to pin down, even within Glasgow Libraries, and over one short time period. It would be difficult to imagine any library service without some sort of reader development strategy built in to its activities. However, a book festival is not a library service. There is no particular requirement for a literary festival to assume the role of serving a community's desire for reader development, but this role has been intrinsic to Aye Write! since its launch in 2005.

In the festival's 2014 Aims and Ethos document the position of the festival is claimed to be:

derived in a Reader Development ethos to nurture a strong reading culture in the City of Glasgow, fostering a culture of celebrating reading, writing and literature with a strong focus on ensuring that reading is a valued activity from the earliest age, and that the consequential benefits of reading are realised through a lifelong love of reading.²¹⁰

The statement makes it apparent the festival is rooted in the language of the library service, with reader development as the driving force, alongside a strong sense of responsibility towards the city community. This is confirmed by Mary Greenshields (MG), the former librarian who was instrumental in developing the live literature programmes which grew into Aye Write!. In an interview carried out during the 2015 festival, she reported it was a range of events, designed to encourage readers and writers of various levels and to bring them together, which prompted the formalisation of a series of events into the festival proper.²¹¹ While other book

²¹⁰ Aye Write Aims and Ethos. Internal Document 2014.

²¹¹ Interview: Mary Greenshields 22/5/15

festivals across the UK undoubtedly have an aspect of reader development to varying degrees, the Aye Write! festival claims it as its reason for being.

This might be news to the audience member. The festival experience tends towards a high quality, semi-formal style and seems to scarcely acknowledge these fundamental development aims. It certainly doesn't make them explicit. Indeed, during the Aye Write! festival, there are free community engagement programme events taking place: 14 in 2015 with an estimated 1,035 in attendance (Headlines, 2015), yet for years these only appeared in the brochure and publicity as a footnote, if at all.

By contrast, Wee Write!, sustained largely by income from its parent festival, clearly fits the bill as activity which aims to 'nurture a strong reading culture'.

The drive towards a high-profile festival, with a 'high quality artistic vision'²¹² which is also able to 'nurture' reading communities, creates a substantial challenge for the festival and results in many points of tension across the planning and delivery cycle. This ambitious and challenging vision is apparent in the internal 'Aye Write! Aims and Ethos' document (2014):

Aye Write aims to: Develop and deliver a programme that exploits the high quality artistic vision of the festival bringing the best of Scottish, National and International authors to the City [...]

The festival is derived in a Reader Development ethos to nurture a strong reading culture in the City of Glasgow²¹³

The most palpable point of tension is raised by these dual aims of the festival: celebration of literature as a 'middlebrow' leisure pursuit (after Driscoll's description of a particular socio-demographic which appears to inhabit literary festivals)²¹⁴, and

²¹² Aye Write! Aims and Ethos. Internal Document. Nov 2014.

²¹³ Aye Write! Aims and Ethos.

²¹⁴ Beth Driscoll, *The New Literary Middlebrow: Tastemakers and Reading in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

the desire to have a positive impact on literacy and reader development. While these aims are not in direct opposition to each other there is a constant negotiation taking place around the priority each has in relation to the other. Within this negotiation, other issues arise around identification of cultural value, cultural consumption versus production, and the basic question of who Aye Write! is for. Structural issues, resources and economics also play a part, as do internal and external political considerations.

The multi-faceted identity of Aye Write! is recognised by those involved in running it. In an interview for the *Dundee University Review of the Arts*, Stuart Kelly, literary journalist, Booker Prize judge, and Guest Programmer for Aye Write! 2014, likens the book festival to literary journalism. He also identifies the 'duty towards literacy and social inclusion' which comes from the library service roots of Glasgow's book festival:

It's been a pleasure working with Aye Write! I'm very proud of the programme. It's like literary journalism, in that you are balancing the well-known and the more esoteric, the Scottish and the global, action and non-action, genre work and literary work. Book festivals seem to me to be taking the place once occupied by literary journalism, introducing readers to work they might not otherwise have come across. Glasgow's literary festival is the third biggest festival in the UK, very different to Hay and Edinburgh in that, being held in the Mitchell Library, it has a more permanent presence, and therefore a more obvious duty towards literacy and social inclusion.²¹⁵

Kelly clearly appreciates the importance of balance as a factor in responsible festival programming, but it is his notion of book festivals supplanting literary journalism which provides the most revealing insight. Literary journalism thrives on novelty; new works of literature, the latest writers on the scene, and new information

²¹⁵ <https://dura-dundee.org.uk/2014/02/24/interview-stuart-kelly/> Dundee University Review of the Arts. Int Susan Haigh.

about established authors and their works. Book festival audiences have come to expect this year's prize-winning books and their authors will feature in the big literary festivals, and promotional material from those festivals demonstrate how highly regarded those names are when it comes to drawing in audiences.

While this attachment to novelty as a driver for book festival programming is understandably attractive to seasoned readers who want to experience the latest and greatest in the craft, those same books are not necessarily the most appropriate first steps into readership for reluctant readers, or those who are just beginning to develop basic literacy skills. This poses a challenge for the festival. Is it possible to elevate and celebrate the best of current literature while maintaining accessibility for those who do not have a specific interest in the latest works of literature?

Another aspect of literary journalism which may be reflected in the book festival is the concept of an expertly curated or filtered selection of works presented to facilitate more trouble-free selection of literature for consumption. Book festivals generally, and Aye Write! in particular, aim to be much more than shop windows for publishers, yet within the festival model there is a strong directional aspect to production and consumption that is challenging to overcome, and which can work against the inclusive and reader development aims of the festival. This directional model is hinted at in the Aims of the Festival statement mentioned above.

High quality literature is brought to the city; the citizens are nurtured to read it. It is possible, depending on outlook, to see echoes of colonialism, or at least paternalism, in these words, but a generous reading would recognise their emergence from the library service and the heritage of facilitating access to literature for those who would not otherwise have that opportunity.

Katrina Brodin, Glasgow Libraries Programme Manager (Reader Development & Literacy) relates the concept of reader development to the Public Libraries Act (1854) in her position paper on Reader Development, written as a contribution to Glasgow Life's 'A Vision for Glasgow Libraries' document:

Reader Development is set in the context of the original Public Libraries Act (1854) which, from its original inception aimed to ensure that public libraries

would provide facilities for self-improvement through books and reading for all classes, not just those who were wealthy enough to afford their own private libraries and collections.²¹⁶

It would be inappropriate to make too much of this bringing of literature as a unidirectional system, particularly since great writers frequently acknowledge the importance of reading as sustenance for their craft, however it does reveal a subtle bias towards framing the citizen as consumer. There is no place in this statement for citizen as literary producer, and it is this omission which is recognised and resisted by some literary and community groups within the city. This is explored and discussed in subsequent chapters.

Aye Write!'s 'duty towards literacy and social inclusion' is acknowledged within internal Aims and Ethos documentation, promotional material, press releases and team discussions. It is also reiterated by staff members in interviews for print and online media. Bob McDevitt, upon taking up the post of Aye Write! Guest Programmer in 2014, is quoted in *The Herald* on the scope of the festival:

Reading is a truly empowering experience that can fuel our imagination and our emotions. I am very much looking forward to growing the festival and featuring authors and events from a wide range of genres which I hope will appeal to as many people from across Glasgow as possible.²¹⁷

McDevitt and the PAG are naturally keen to programme events to attract an audience. In the main, this takes place without audience input, other than conversations within the PAG about what might work, supplemented with anecdotes on the preferences of people connected to the advisory group. The range of

²¹⁶ Brodin, 'Reader Development Plan - Nurturing a City of Readers'.

²¹⁷ Aye Write! Book Festival Dates and New Guest Programmer, *The Herald*, 18/12/14.

<http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/news/Pages/AyeWrite!BookFestivalDatesandNewGuestProgrammer.aspx> [accessed 2/8/15].

experience and outlook represented within the PAG is broad, and individual insights and comments are heard.

While the PAG acts as a sounding board and contributes ideas for thematic strands and special events, the core of the programming activity happens within the relationship between the programmer and UK publishers. Typically, the programmer will spend much of September and October in communication with publishers about their releases up to the festival dates in March, and in negotiation over availability of authors for the festival. While the core belief in Aye Write! as a festival, with reader development at its heart remains, the practical drivers of attendance (ie ticket sales) and publisher/author support (ie book sales) push the festival towards a consumer model. Festival attendees are likely to be readers and may well become 'developed' in some way, but they are also customers who purchase a ticket, and often a book.

The organisational structure of those staff members and volunteers involved with planning the book festivals appears unremarkable at first, yet this structure suggests a tension between what Aye Write! states as its ethos and the realities of festival delivery. The Organising Structure and Meeting Groups chart for Aye Write! is replicated below:

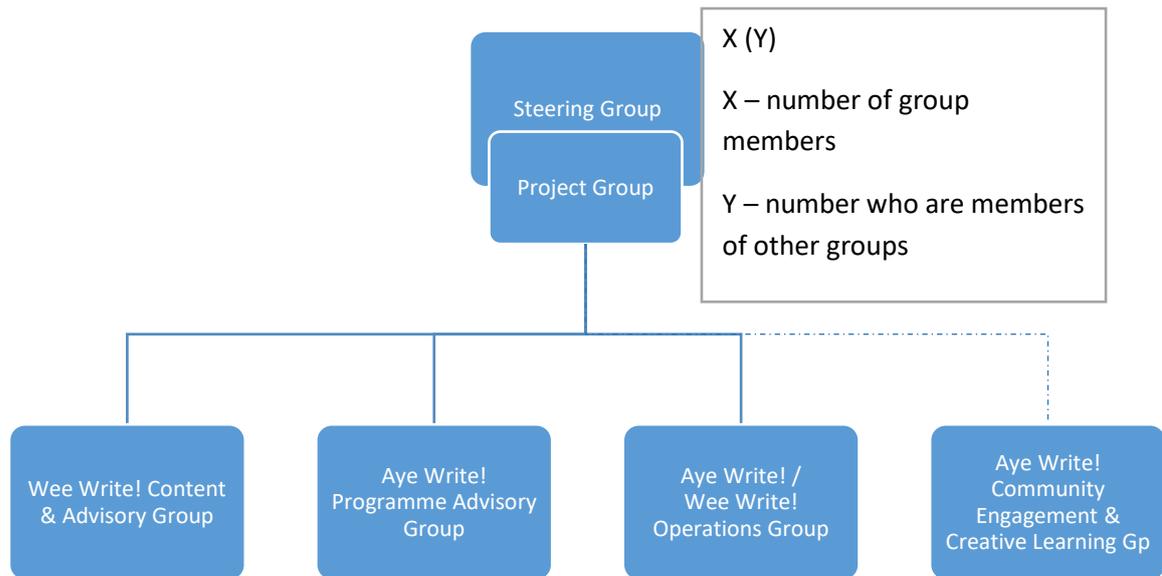


Figure 11: Organising structure and meeting groups

Overall strategic direction and decisions on issues of significance are taken by the Steering Group, which is formed by members of Glasgow Life’s senior management team (Director of Cultural Services, the Head of Communities and Libraries, and the Head of Arts) alongside the Libraries Manager, a senior Arts Producer, the Aye Write! Festival Manager, and the Programmer. The last four of these members meet on a more regular basis as the Project Group, carrying out the detail of festival delivery under the authority of the Steering Group.

Content, operations and outreach duties are spread between the four subsidiary groups; two provide advice on programme content for Wee Write! and Aye Write! respectively, and a third is concerned exclusively with the technical and event management aspects of the festivals within the Mitchell Library. All three of these groups have a direct connection with the Project Group through shared members: one in Aye Write! Operations, two in Wee Write! Content and Advisory Group, and all four members of the Project Group are represented in the Aye Write! Content and Advisory Group.

The surprise comes with the fourth of our subsidiary groups: the Aye Write! Community Engagement and Learning Group has no shared personnel with the Project Group or Steering Group. Two of its members do appear in other groups, however, one on each of the Content Advisory Groups. Given the strong commitment to developing a culture of reader development and community engagement, outlined in the 'Aye Write! Aims and Ethos' document, it seems strange the Community Engagement and Creative Learning Group would be so lacking in integration with the network of groups planning the festivals. A sample of the 'Scope of Meeting Groups' document which accompanies the Organising Structure chart affirms responsibilities for the Community Engagement Group are central to overall aims:²¹⁸

4. SCOPE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CREATIVE LEARNING

This group will have the responsibility of devising a programme that reflects the aims and ethos of the festival with direct focus on:

- Forums/events to celebrate and acknowledge the successful learning and engagement in literacy activity in the City for learners
- Events to support greater reader development and library, learning and arts offer engagement (including World Book Night)
- Delivery of a creative learning programme that encompasses the written and spoken word
- A programme that supports greater engagement in Gaelic Language and Scots language events
- A range of volunteering opportunities to support wider engagement in the festival and a clear consistent recruitment process with clear role descriptions
-

The outcomes of this work will be increased social capital and connectedness with our audiences with the programme.

Figure 12: Aye Write! 2015 Community Engagement and Creative Learning Programme Design Brief

These responsibilities are clearly aligned with the fundamental reader development and literacy aims of the festival, and yet the Community Engagement

²¹⁸ Community Engagement and Creative Learning Programme Design Brief, Aye Write! Scope of Meeting Groups Document, 2015.

and Creative Learning Group had no strong voice on the overall strategic direction of the festival, or on the programming side. The only programme-related function this group was involved in was those events slots set aside by the Project Group specifically for community-oriented literary activity, such as an ESOL celebration event or literacy event.

Additional slots under the banner of community engagement were handed over to and curated by Glasgow-based literary groups St Mungo's Mirrorball, Scottish Writers' Centre, and The Federation of Writers (Scotland). This structure changed following the 2016 festival, and Community Engagement team members were included in and invited to contribute to the PAG. This was at least in part triggered by my input into discussions on the structure, conversations with the Literacy and Reader Development Manager, and the sharing of early draft thesis material with Library staff. This recursive and evolving relationship between researcher and subject is one of the challenges of participatory ethnography, particularly embedded within a group which seeks to bring about change. The ethical and conceptual issues are reflected on in the Conclusion to this thesis.

A series of interviews conducted during 2014 and 2015 sought to uncover a broad range of viewpoints on literary Glasgow. In each of these the interviewee was specifically directed towards commenting on Aye Write! and its place in the sector, if they had not already done so naturally.

One of the early interviews I conducted was with Julie Fraser a community arts worker in the south of Glasgow. As she spoke about the community arts and literacy work she was involved with, it was clear Aye Write! appeared not as some momentous event on the calendar of these projects, but as one aspect among many opportunities and interactions within the services she delivered:

So I was running a group in the hospital and I was also running a group on a Wednesday night in the Pollok City Realm which had some local guys coming along but also three guys from Leverndale came with staff from the hospital; out of the building to come and attend this class on Wednesday night so that was a huge thing as well. Together we produced this little book called *Wise*

Guys, which they designed and put together and they all took a different topic. [...]

Somebody was interested in gardening, somebody was interested in reviewing, but their level of literacy was very basic but it's amazing what they achieved. We did little bits of scrap-booking and stuff. This was launched at *Aye Write!* [...] I'm always a bit wary of publications of new work because they tend just to be done and then they sit on a library shelf but this has actually been used as a resource I think around other groups. So they designed it and put it together and we worked with the marketing guy at *Glasgow Life* as well. They wrote a song and stuff. So this is over a long period of time.

[...]

P: So as well as doing things in the communities with the groups that are there, you're tapping in to the central resources?

J: We always take groups out. We participate in *Aye Write!* with the literacy groups. The creative writing groups will come along to things or we might go and see a play. We use museums a lot for inspiration for writing.²¹⁹

Aye Write! has three aims, and this presents a challenge. Each of these was acknowledged at different times within the PAG meeting, relating to relevant aspects of programming or delivery. It was surprising to me that there did not seem to be discussion or agreement about how these related to each other; which, if any, had precedence; or how conflicts between them could be managed.

Each of the three main aims of the festival: Cultural placemaking, Audience development, and Reader development, is justifiable in its own right. Difficulties can arise when these are enacted simultaneously within the festival, even when they do so effectively, and inadvertently create a distinct gap in the middle of the festival where Glasgow's active literary community should be. This is brought into sharper

²¹⁹ Interview: Julie Fraser 9/3/2015. 00:19:27

focus when competition for resources causes difficult choices to be made between these aims.

A further challenge of these multiple aims is the difficulty in identifying what should or could be counted as success.

What does success look like?

Aye Write! is, by design and aspiration, a complex entity. There is no simple story here of attendance figures and book sales amounting to a definitive measure of success or otherwise, for the aims and ethos of the festival reach well beyond the festival week and the walls of the Mitchell Library, into the homes and imaginations of the people of Glasgow. These aims have grown out of the mission of the Glasgow Libraries service and also out of the development plan for Glasgow Life. That is not to say these make identical claims on the festival. Glasgow Libraries is focussed on reader development, while Glasgow Life adds to these aspects of community and societal gains portrayed in the first two of Glasgow Life's Strategic Objectives:

SO1 - Glasgow citizens will flourish in their personal, family and community life (through regular participation in learning, sport, cultural and creative opportunities).

SO2 - Enhanced skills and learning among (and contribute to the employability of) our citizens.²²⁰

The aims and objectives of the festival are therefore coming from slightly different directions: explicit objectives within the documents of Aye Write!, Glasgow Libraries, and Glasgow Life, and the underlying necessity of managing the festival in a way which meets its economic parameters and resource limitations.

Aye Write! has chosen not to dilute its aims to place reader development as a secondary objective. This is a courageous stance as it places the festival in a

²²⁰ Glasgow Libraries and Glasgow Communities Service Plan 2014

vulnerable position in which it could feasibly have record attendance figures and box office takings, but still fail in its ambition. The realities of what it means to 'nurture a strong reading culture' were not well defined within Aye Write!'s documentation at the beginning of this research project. However, in 2014-15 attempts were made to concretise this in work by Aye Write!'s PAG, and in the wider context by Glasgow Libraries as part of their ongoing consultation process.

Aye Write!, as a subset of Glasgow Libraries and Glasgow Life, illustrates some of the main challenges faced in a city-wide approach to literary development. Economic imperatives push the festival organisers towards a model which continually serves last year's audience, while struggling with the questions of community engagement and audience development, and particularly with the vision of the festival as a mechanism for reader development. Frequently throughout the series of programming meetings, senior Glasgow Libraries staff members will voice a reminder that 'we have to break even'. This curtails some of the wilder ideas but also focusses the programming on events likely to sell at least 80% of their ticket allocation – whether the events are planned for the Main Hall (capacity 650) or a smaller space, such as the Stirling Room (capacity 35).

The feedback mechanisms for the system may actually be entrenching this position as the voices heard through audience feedback forms and online surveys are the voices of festival attendees – the majority of whom have been before and state an intention to return again (as examined below). The obvious danger of using this type of audience feedback in any measure of success is that resources are focussed on serving the stated desires of those who approve of the status quo and minimising the things they object to. This may be an appropriate way to operate if the potential audience members, targeted under the commitment to reader development, share the same tastes in content and style as the majority of the current and past audiences. However, this would be a huge assumption, and demographic and anecdotal evidence suggest it is not the case.

This problem is a feature of taking a standard policy approach which may work fairly well in simpler systems, even other festivals, and applying it to a more complex setting, without taking account of that increased complexity.

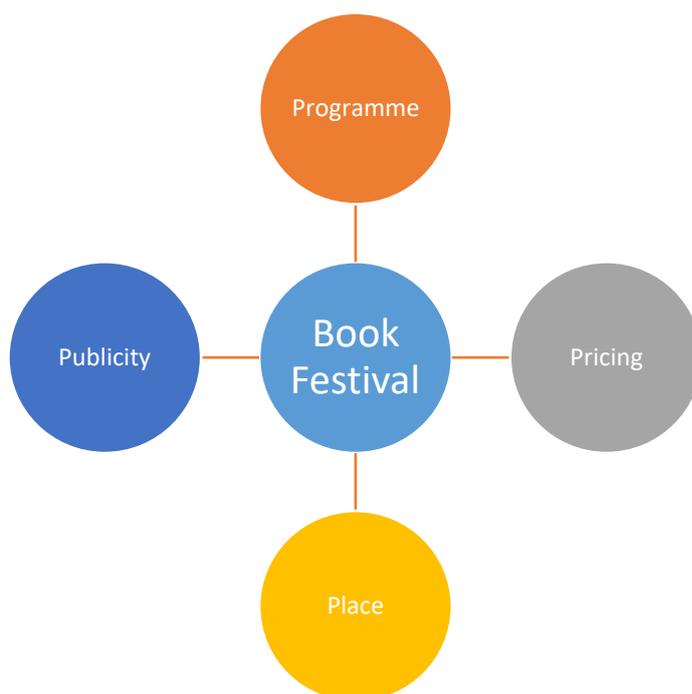


Figure 13: Four factors of a simple book festival model

A book festival free of any socio-political aims beyond the festival itself, may have a fairly simple structure. If the success of a book festival can be measured by the number of attendees, their level of satisfaction and meeting the necessary financial targets for the event, then this can be approached by taking simple measurements and adjusting a set of parameters appropriately. While a successful outcome is not guaranteed, the organisational team for such a festival has four main areas of activity which it can apply itself to: Programme, Pricing, Place and Publicity. If these are done effectively then, barring unforeseen events or negative external influences, the festival has a chance of being counted a success.

The organisational structure of Aye Write! appears to acknowledge and support this model and is designed to attend to all four corners of the model. The Content Advisory Group meets regularly to plan the programme, with consideration given to balance of content between literary fiction and non-fiction, and more populist titles.

The potential for ticket sales is always a matter of interest and discussion, but The Mitchell Library has a range of venue spaces of varying sizes and can therefore accommodate niche and new author events, not likely to attract a large audience.

Programming attempts to reflect some themes and anniversaries of significance locally and internationally, including Glasgow Life's thematic foci for the year, such as Glasgow's position as UNESCO City of Music in 2015, or the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. Another element of influence on the programme is of course the availability of authors and the demands put upon them by the publishing cycle. The Guest Programmer is in constant communication with publishers and agents in an attempt to confirm attendance. While the programme tends to be the main focus of these meetings, there is also time given to discussion of marketing strategy, media partnerships, brochure design and ticket pricing.

Coordination of the physical environment of the festival is handled by the Operations Group, which consists entirely of Glasgow Life staff, including venue managers, librarians, technicians and an information officer. This team organises staffing, ticketing, signage, sound and light and catering, and has a significant role in organising the physical and technical infrastructure which optimises audience experience.

With these teams in place covering programming, pricing (which includes managing costs as well as ticket prices), place and publicity, the 'simple' book festival model is complete.

Aye Write! conducts a paper and online survey of some of its customers. Customer feedback from 908 completed paper and online forms in the 2015 customer survey suggests the festival achieved a high level of customer satisfaction, repeat attendance and programme approval. In 2015, 76% of respondents had previously attended Aye Write!, with 97% stating they were 'very likely' or 'likely' to return the following year.²²¹

²²¹ Aye Write! 2015 Customer Survey Results (unpublished).

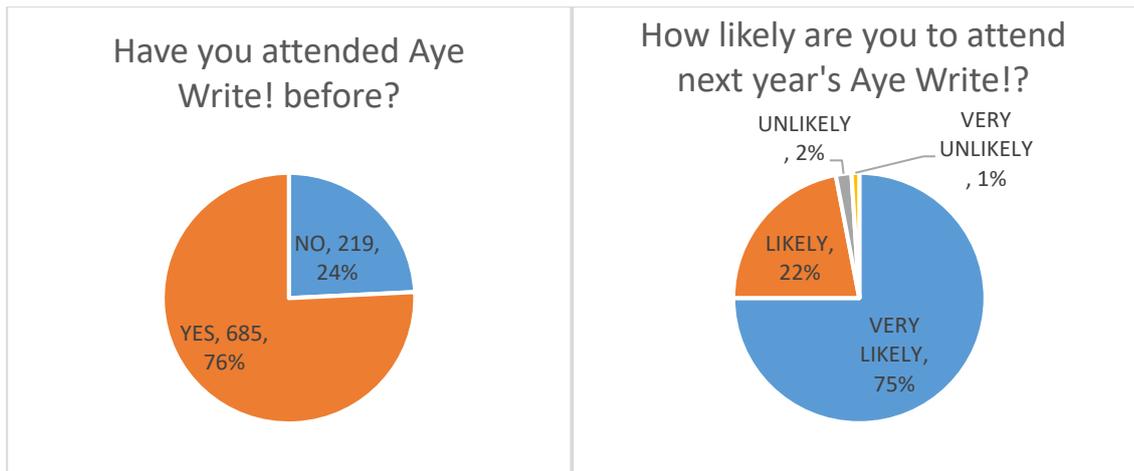


Figure 14: Aye Write! 2015 customer feedback – Attendance

These would be encouraging figures for any cultural event, and this approval is reflected through the responses to questions of programme and place.

The questionnaire asked audience members to rate Aye Write! on Venue and Choice of Events.

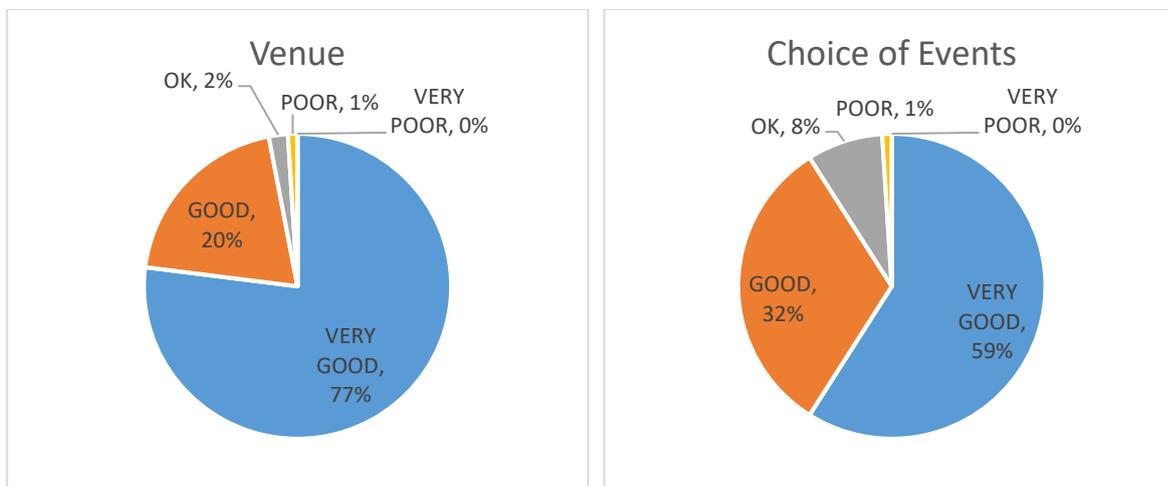


Figure 15: Aye Write! 2015 customer feedback – Venue and Event Choice

97% of respondents rated the venue 'Good' or 'Very Good', 91% rated the choice of events 'Good' or 'Very Good'. Once again, these responses would suggest the festival is successful.

However, other statistics give some cause for concern and may indicate areas of tension between the potentially divergent identities of the festival. On the basis of our simple model of a book festival above, this is all good news: high level of returning customers, high customer approval, high customer perception of value for money.

Similarly, the demographic breakdown of respondents should give no great concern, unless the demographic profile of participants has some relevance to the aims of the festival, which in the case of Aye Write!, it may well do.

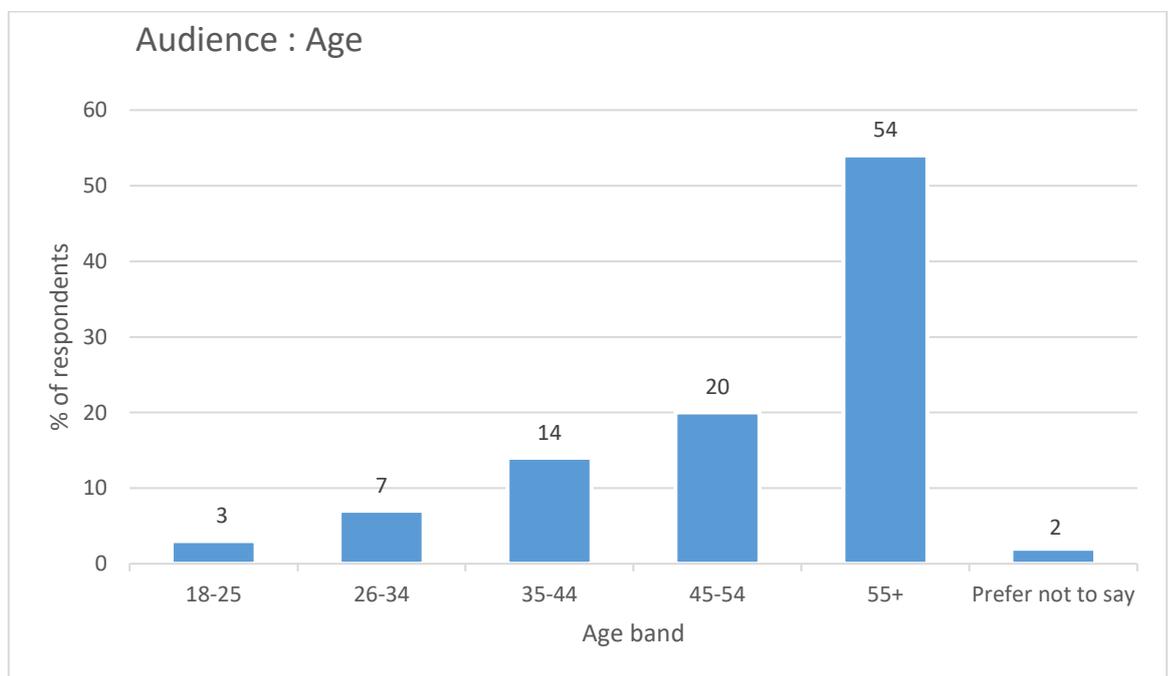


Figure 16: Aye Write! 2015 customer feedback – Age²²²

While it is striking there are more attendees over the age of 54 than in all the other age bands combined, this chart is misleading. The first two age bands have a width of eight and nine years, the next two 10 years each, and the 55+ band has no specified width, but encompasses respondents across at least three decades and possibly four or five. This can tell us little more than what can be gleaned from

²²² Data from Aye Write customer feedback forms 2015.

anecdotal evidence or a general first impression of visiting the festival on any given day: most of the attendees appear to be aged around 40 or above (74% of respondents are 45 plus), most of the attendees appear to be female (75% of survey respondents identify as female), most of the attendees appear to be of white ethnic origin (98% of respondents identify as white).

There are many weaknesses in this type of customer feedback process. It may be of some use for the generation of broad-stroke marketing profiles, but it serves little purpose in any strategic oversight of the festival. The surveys completed are by a small proportion of the people who attend, and there's no way of knowing if they are a representative sample or if certain types of people are more drawn to complete such surveys. Since paper surveys are offered to audience members exiting each event, it is also possible some may have completed more than one. These problems aside, all the flawed survey data from every year of Aye Write!, and the general observations of staff about audience demographics, offer nothing to challenge Driscoll's sketch of the typical book festival as:

attended predominantly by middle-class women, promote reading practices that are emotional, earnest and highly mediated, inflected by respect for literary stars and enmeshed in the commercial structures of the publishing industry.²²³

While it may reflect some general truths about the festival, the customer survey discussed above has little in common with the aims of the festival. For a book festival with no agenda or aspiration beyond successfully delivering its own scheduled events, the sort of feedback outlined above would simply be benignly unreliable but for Aye Write!, which has the complexity of operating with a portfolio of wider aims nested within other layers of organisational objectives, this system is inadequate. The survey data may be of use to some other layer of organisation within Glasgow Libraries or Glasgow Life, but there is little correlation between the

²²³ Driscoll.

information sought in the survey and the data required by the organisation to direct the festival towards its stated aims. To a certain extent this is a symptom of a more fundamental issue with Aye Write!, and hints at an organisational identity issue.

Does Aye Write! have an identity crisis? Why is it the public face of the festival appears to be distanced from the community/reader development work which is its stated aim and active agenda?

Perhaps the answer is found in the other aims of the festival and the stated strategic objectives of Glasgow Life 'to enhance and promote the City's local, national and international image, identity and infrastructure'.²²⁴ Placemaking and city branding is important to all cities and is an idea Glasgow has embraced since the 1980s. The outward image of a festival may be different from the underlying objectives, in fact in some cases necessarily so. Aye Write! has to achieve economic sustainability and its main income stream is book event ticket sales. In the competitive field of literary festivals, high quality authors and exclusivity are currency. One of the problems of this is it then may run counter to the reader development/inclusion agendas. A polished and mature festival may be an easy sell to some people, yet be off-putting to others who are less comfortable in the environment.

In 2015, 76% of attendees had been to the festival before, which suggests the format and offering works well for those people.²²⁵ This is good news, not least because it implies it may be Aye Write! which is the attraction, rather than specific authors, as the line-up changes year-on-year. The concern is the festival then gets locked in to a cycle of serving those people who are happy with the format and becomes averse to the risk associated with any change of the offering in an attempt to attract new audiences. In happier economic climes, this risk might be manageable for a short time in order to re-focus on the central ethos of the festival, but in a tightening

²²⁴ 'Business and Service Plan'.

²²⁵ Customer Survey Results 2015.

budget, break-even situation, the pull is naturally to keep serving last year's ticket buyers.

Programming, partnership and promotion

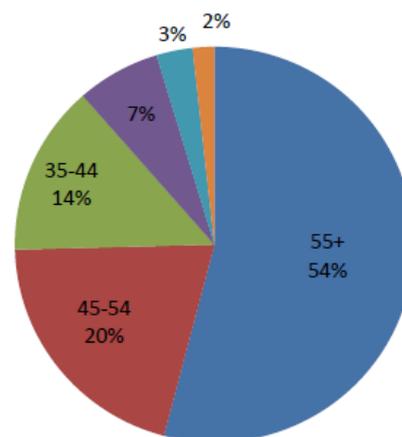
Good programming is crucial to the reputation of the festival and also to the economic health of the model. The need to break even means around 80% of all tickets must sell. This brings enormous pressure to the PAG and to the Festival Programmer in particular. The variety of the spaces within The Mitchell is useful as events can be programmed anywhere from the main Mitchell Theatre to the smaller rooms, hence careful planning can minimise the chance of empty chairs. Even so, issues of space and ticket demand are only part of the story. The Programmer and PAG group need to be sensitive to the publishing world's business cycle and aim to secure authors for the festival who have had a work published in the past year (preferably in the few months preceding Aye Write!, or even planned to launch at the festival). As the programme fills up, decisions are to be made balancing exciting new works of literary fiction from relatively unknown authors, 'celebrity' writers, works championed by local publishers (possibly timed to launch at the festival), and books which work with the current year's thematic strands.

While there is a distinct level of pragmatism involved in the programming process, this is informed by a team inclined towards bringing great literature to Aye Write!, while recognising the value of books which tickle the taste buds of a Glasgow audience.

As stated earlier in the chapter, the demographic breakdown of the Aye Write! audience by age and gender, conforms closely to the stereotype of book-festival-goers, and has remained almost static for the past five years.

Audience Stats: Age

55+	54%
45-54	20%
35-44	14%
26-34	7%
18-25	3%
Prefer not to say	2%



Gender Female – 75% Male – 25%
 (5 respondents preferred not to say)

Figure 17: Aye Write! 2015 Customer Survey Results – Age and Gender

With regard to attendance, it seems Aye Write! is struggling to keep hold of its reader development/inclusion ethos. At the programming meetings, consideration is repeatedly given to the missing audience. Young adults and young men in particular, are conspicuously absent, mirroring the experience of the wider library service.

In 2015, three events attracted a higher than average proportion of young men: Scottish author Irvine Welsh; a debate on Spanish football; and Glasgow comedian Kevin Bridges. The young adult audience remains elusive and does not sit comfortably in the programming for either the children’s book festival or Aye Write! in its current form. A peer focus group tasked with finding solutions, is being considered.

Marketing of the festival is an area where the demographic issues are highlighted against the economic drivers. *The Herald/Sunday Herald* newspaper group is one of the formalised external partners of the festival and a main distributor of the festival brochure, as well as providing editorial coverage up to and during Aye Write!. This is a great benefit to the festival and in return *The Herald* has the first call on any Aye Write! stories and author interviews. The chart below illustrates its significance in getting festival information into the hands of attendees.

Do you have a copy of the Aye Write! programme?

Yes – 81% (764) No – 18% (180)

Of respondents who answered 'yes',
'How did you get your copy of the
Aye Write! brochure?'

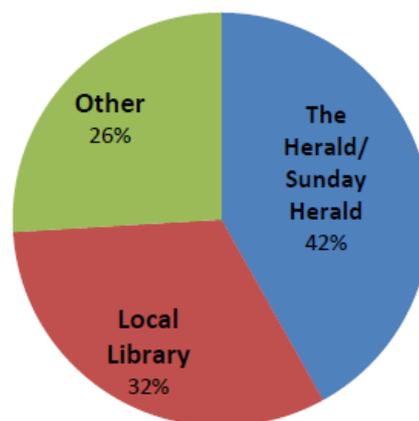


Figure 18: Aye Write! 2015 Customer Survey Results – The Programme

The Herald/Sunday Herald demographic information for 2014 shows its readership is 70% ABC1, 66% over the age of 35.²²⁶ This makes it a good choice for reaching Aye Write!'s existing audience or those most likely to attend, and therefore a good bet for maximising ticket sales, but it does not necessarily support the goal of enhancing reader development and inclusion. If you do not read *The Herald* and do not go to the local library, how would you find out what is on at the festival?

There seems to be a cycle here where the economic imperatives push towards a programming and promotion strategy, which entrenches the festival's demographic position. Before asking how that cycle can be broken, it is worth pausing to consider whether it should be. At many levels the current situation works: the festival usually meets its financial targets; the events are a high-profile showcase for the city; customer satisfaction levels are high; 97% of visitors intend to return next year. It would be foolish to make changes to the festival which might threaten its current areas of success and fiscal viability, without giving serious consideration to the real ethos behind the festival and ensuring all stakeholders are clear on the goals. If it is concluded that Aye Write! does indeed exist to drive a reader development ethos

²²⁶ <http://www.statista.com/statistics/380743/the-herald-newspapers-monthly-reach-by-demographic-uk/> [accessed 03/08/2015 07:25]

forward and change needs to happen, then it would be wise to manage it in a way that maintains the current audience and goodwill, and builds upon it.

My interview with community learning worker Julie Fraser revealed frustration that Aye Write! seems designed to serve a literary audience at one extreme and have a literacy focus at the other, but is missing out on what she called 'community literature' – writing produced by groups she works with, who are engaged with creative writing for a range of recreational, therapeutic and personal reasons but have no particular literacy issue, and no great leaning towards getting work published. Speaking of the Aye Write! community events:

...it's very sealed up. They're speaking to themselves. I always have a thing about that, why's it [community writing] not on the main programme and it's just full of literacy learners and part of that is great, on the main stage, but it's been going so long now you think, could you move that on a bit?²²⁷

This apparent gap in the book festival is in part caused by the multiple focus of the aims pulling in different directions. That gap is widened by the drive towards success in each area. The effect is magnified by the pressures of economic imperatives, which force more distinct and polarised choices to be made with regard to allocation of resources.

In agreement with Fraser, a similar opinion has been expressed by other groups of people actively engaged with literature, who feel there is no natural place for them within the festival programme: slam poets and some self-published writers of local history. Both groups, actively driven to produce and disseminate literature, have spoken to me in interviews of their belief that Aye Write! is not a festival which can accommodate them as participants.²²⁸ Even members of a book group which meets regularly in The Mitchell expressed the feeling they are unwanted when the

²²⁷ Interview: Julie Fraser, 9/3/15

²²⁸ 'Interview: Bram Gieben'; Interview: Brian McQuade, 2016.

book festival comes around, arriving for their regular meeting only to be turned away as the space is in use.

This failure to find a place for and welcome some groups of literate, engaged readers, is in part an unintended consequence of moves towards success in other areas. Aye Write! is continually, and increasingly in the years of this research, under financial pressure to break even. This comes from pressure on Glasgow Life's funding which in turn comes from Glasgow City Council budget cuts and realignment of resources. At the simplest level, this polarises programming on two priorities: events which will sell tickets to generate much needed income; and events which support the greatest literacy need. The former tends towards events built around new book releases from high-profile authors and topical celebrities, the latter is in part satisfied through Wee Write!, although within the Aye Write! programme ESOL and community learner events are programmed and some of these are large, high-profile events. The keen amateur writer, book group organiser and self-directed reader can fall between these two priorities.

The third stated aim of cultural placemaking can also contribute to the widening of this gap: promotion of Glasgow as a cultural destination implies the target audience is beyond the boundaries of the city. Again Glasgow-based literary producers and active community readers are overlooked. Any loss of engagement with active readers and writers in Glasgow can only weaken the festival and its aims. The development of Glasgow as a strong reading city will depend on (formal and informal) community reading champions, such as these people the festival does not actively seek to reach.

There are some opportunities for engagement with the festival in more of a producer/performer role, but these are facilitated through existing literary groups such as St Mungo's Mirrorball and the Federation of Writers (Scotland), which host events mainly as a platform for their members. There is no way into the festival for the local self-published author, the committed book group organiser, the spoken word artist, or the community reading champion, other than as audience member and consumer. There is justification for each of these roles, but the challenge for Aye Write! is dealing with the contradiction which arises from this, whether choosing to

acknowledge and accept the contradiction, amending the festival model to reduce it, or in forming a strategy beyond the festival to mitigate the effects.

Evolving festival models

The idea of book festival audience member as consumer, fits awkwardly against the reader development ethos but is a crucial part of the system which drives the festival and enables it to continue. Audience and reader development are joined by cultural placemaking and these three overlapping, and at times conflicting, elements are at play within Aye Write!. There has been a gradual evolution in the understanding of the relationship between these three elements. Early conversations with staff members involved in delivering the festival revealed there were at least three distinct visions of what the festival actually was, and these were struggling along in parallel, with a slightly disjointed attempt to hold each in equal regard.

To those defending the promotion of traditional books by publishers over giving space to locally produced writing, poetry or other literature in the form of spoken word, Aye Write! is a 'book festival' (with emphasis on 'book'). To those who saw the festival as the pinnacle of the work of Glasgow Libraries and bemoaned the focus on ticket prices and book sales, this was a 'libraries festival' designed to celebrate Glasgow's library heritage and encourage increased access and lending rates. And to those who saw in the festival the potential to encourage reading and writing development across the city, this was a 'reader development festival'.

These contrasting visions all have justification with the 'Aims and Ethos' and other documentation around Aye Write! and Glasgow Life's commitment to literature. It is about building audiences for high quality literary events; it is about supporting reader development across the city; and it is about projecting an image of Glasgow as a culturally attractive destination which celebrates literature. That Aye Write! attempts, and succeeds, at any of these is commendable, although this identity crisis has caused tensions within formal and informal meetings. This initial stage is represented below; the festival holding three main aims without any explicit recognition of hierarchy or conflict.



Figure 19: Three Equal Aims of Aye Write!

The foregrounding of audience development

During 2014 to 2015, an increase in the financial pressures on the festival at the same time as Aye Write’s period of transition, forced a re-evaluation of approach. Aye Write! was under instructions to break-even as Glasgow Life/Glasgow City Council would not be able to make up any shortfall. Unfortunately, this coincided with missing out on a substantial amount of funding from Creative Scotland and difficult decisions had to be taken around ticket pricing and priorities for the festival programme.

While reluctant to diminish any of the community engagement events, the programming and management teams acknowledged audience development was crucial to the sustainability of the festival, and success in this area would make all other areas of development possible. The festival model now looked more like Figure 19, in which audience development is the main driver for other festival activity.



Figure 20: Audience foregrounded

Since ticket prices had increased through necessity, it was felt any audience unease over this could be mitigated by sharing information about what that ticket income

achieved for the city. Information displays were used throughout the Mitchell Library and between events to inform the audience about the festival's reader development efforts, and in particular about the Wee Write! Children's Book Festival, to which audience members were encouraged to donate via SMS message.

The three drivers

Even as attempts were being made by the Aye Write! team and Glasgow Life to grow the festival audience, innovative ways of sustaining and progressing reader development and placemaking were being woven into the new model. Aye Write! author events were programmed across the city in locations outwith festival time and beyond The Mitchell. The hope of the team was this could help break down barriers to new audiences and give a higher profile to reading and writing across the city.

In 2016, in an attempt to further support reader development, create a wider socio-geographic reach for the festival, offset rising ticket prices and grow the festival audience, there was a small-scale trial of Community Ticketing, in which free tickets to a limited selection of Aye Write! events were made available to community groups through reading and literacy workers. It was challenging to the team to put appropriate systems in place at short notice. Even so, this initiative was regarded as a success as, even with the distribution of free tickets, festival attendance and ticket income both increased by a significant amount.

For Aye Write! 2017, Community Ticketing was expanded to make 10% of tickets available for each event of the festival; even those projected to sell out. Aye Write! satellite events continued to take place across the city throughout the year, but serious issues with the fabric of some of The Mitchell Library venues meant much of the building was unavailable during the festival. As a result, the festival had to either scale back or break out into other city venues. The decision was taken to see this as an opportunity rather than a threat. For the first time, Aye Write! ran simultaneously across three venues: The Mitchell Library, The Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA), and the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. By this point it was clear the festival had moved to a third working model, Figure 20, in which audience, reader development and

placemaking were intertwined and each could play a part in driving the success of the festival.



Figure 21: Three Drivers

Ticketing is one of the instruments of festival planning with a significant, direct effect on audience numbers and demographic. Pitching the ticket prices too high, or too low, could spell financial disaster. Every member of the PAG could recount anecdotes where ticket price is or is perceived to be a barrier to some people, and this is borne out by reports from members of the Community Learning Team, Community Library staff, and has been stated in interview by publishing professionals, writers and book group members. One former librarian who has experience of active involvement with promoting the festival, lists ticket price as one of a range of potential barriers to participation:

I mean the ticket price £9 that's a barrier for some people. A building like this, is a barrier for some people. The bus fare can be a barrier. But there must be some people who even if you laid all that on for them they still wouldn't come -

because they think that's not for them.²²⁹

The issue of barriers to attending or participating in Aye Write! is a complex one which can take many forms particular to each person. A reduction in ticket pricing alone will not solve the challenges of participation, but it is clearly a high-profile factor expressed as an area of concern by community workers, authors, publishing industry professionals, librarians, and active readers and writers who are non-attenders at the festival, such as those discussed in the following chapter.

Aye Write!'s own evaluation process does not capture this view. The completed customer survey forms suggest there is no significant issue around ticket pricing. This is contrary to the views of community-facing library and literacy staff as in the quote from Mary Greenshields (MG) above. However, as indicated by the demographic of survey respondents earlier in this chapter, most of those who completed customer survey forms are over 45 years old, received their festival programme in *The Herald/Sunday Herald*, and around 50% have the means to travel to the festival from outside Glasgow. This suggests they are likely to have more disposable income than the typical target of community-based reader development work.

²²⁹ Interview: Mary Greenshields at Aye Write! Festival 22/4/15

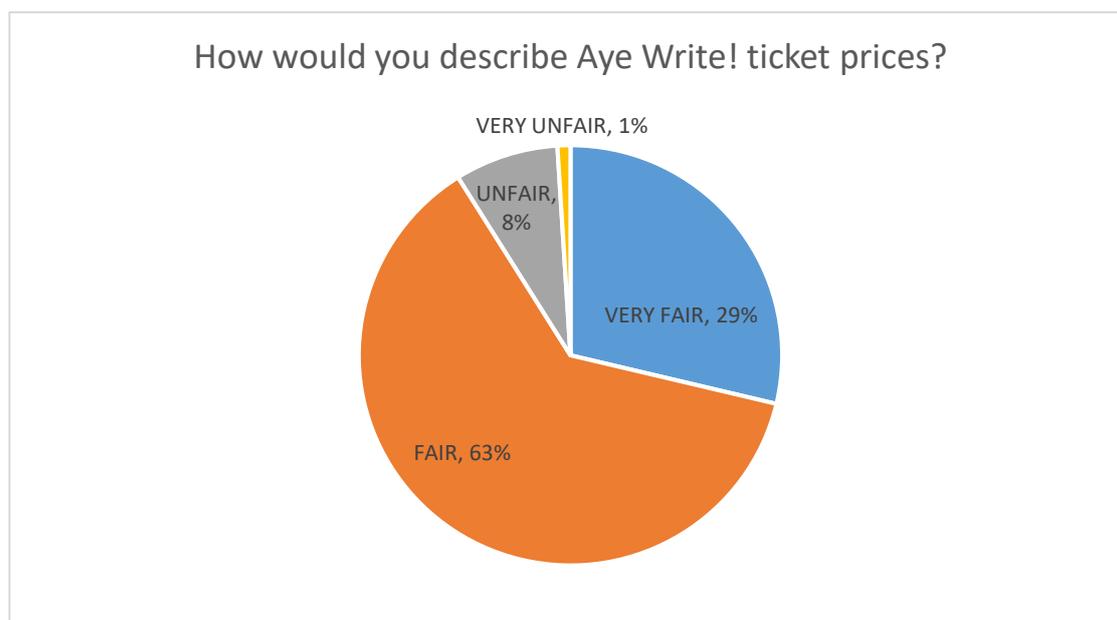


Figure 22: Aye Write! 2015 Customer Survey Results – Ticket prices

When asked to describe Aye Write! ticket prices on a scale of Very Fair to Very Unfair, 92% of respondents say Aye Write! ticket prices are either Fair or Very Fair. This is not necessarily a surprising statistic since those who regard the ticket price as Very Unfair, or Unfair, are unlikely to buy a ticket and therefore will not be in a position to complete a customer survey form. This simple fact is key to one of the big challenges for Aye Write! – the success of the festival in the eyes of those who attend is not necessarily success in terms of the aims and ethos of the festival.

The financial position of the festival at the end of 2015 was such that it was imperative to not only break even, but to address some of the shortfall from previous years. With this pressure on the finances of the festival, the delicate balance of the dual aims of the festival was challenged. Ticketing is one issue which illustrates some of these challenges in a very practical way. Until 2015, Aye Write! operated a flat ticket pricing structure; tickets for every event were priced the same, whether it was a well-known author in a sold-out theatre, or a debut writer of a niche book in one of the smaller rooms. In part, this was driven by a desire to maintain a spirit of equality across the festival – that each author was of equal value without respect to their celebrity or track record of success. In parallel with this, each author was paid a

standard fee (of £150 in 2013-14, increased to £180 in 2015, and £200 in 2016). This equity was spoken of within the team as a positive value of Aye Write! and one the team felt strongly about. Similarly, a festival goer could choose from the entire range of events on offer and would not have their choice restricted to a subset on the basis of ticket price.

With the festival under financial pressure from within Glasgow Life, the sustainability of this ticketing model came under scrutiny from within the Programming and Management team. While the principles behind the model were universally regarded as commendable, it had to be recognised this came at a cost. High selling events, such as those featuring Irvine Welsh, crime fiction's Christopher Brookmyre, or local comedian Limmy could feasibly have brought in more money if their tickets were allowed to be priced higher than those of debut authors. Indeed, since these events were held in the 400 capacity theatre, a £2 increase could yield a potential £2,400 increase in income across the three events. It was also proposed events with predictably low attendance figures, such as most debut authors, should be priced below the standard ticket price; while these events rarely cover their costs, it was still regarded to be better for both the author and the festival to have an audience of 20 paying £6 rather than eight people paying £9.

Some in the programming team expressed concern about this approach and pointed out popular events are the ones most likely to be a draw for the target groups within the communities the festival aimed to engage with, but making the event more expensive would work directly against that aim. The PAG did not take this issue lightly, and it was raised and debated over several meetings. A major concern expressed was the danger of entrenching a feeling of elitism if the most popular, engaging and celebrated events were the least affordable, therefore leaving the obscure, the unknown and the least popular as the only affordable option for many.

In the absence of a commitment to reader development, this decision would be an easy one and an obvious way to maximise income and so protect the sustainability of the festival. However, no one in the PAG was in any doubt ticketing policy had a direct bearing on the core aims of Aye Write! and there was agreement any negative impact on the reader development agenda should be avoided or mitigated. A creative

solution was crafted which used variances in ticket prices to both maximise income and improve accessibility of events for target groups.

Overall, the programming team recognised in the absence of guaranteed, sustained financial backing from Glasgow City Council or a major external funder, the only responsible way to proceed would be to attempt to create a sustainable model for the festival, and variances in ticket pricing were part of that solution. In order to mitigate the potential negative effect of this change on accessibility, to address ongoing concerns about affordability of events generally and reconnect with the fundamental aims of the festival, it was proposed to introduce Community Ticketing.

Community Ticketing was a plan to make free tickets available to targeted communities through partners and outreach teams, in the hope people who would not usually attend the festival because of the cost, could be supported to do so. In 2016 ticket price variances were introduced: £9 standard ticket price; £6 for 'Introducing' debut author events; £10 or £12 for high demand events. A total of 430 free community tickets were allocated across 24 events. In this initial trial these were selected from events not predicted to sell out, either due to low demand or because scheduling meant they were placed in a venue with a larger capacity than they might have needed. Naturally there was concern over whether these changes would make things better or worse, but the outcome was a positive one – at the 2016 Aye Write! festival there was a 15.9% increase in ticket volume, and a 22.7% increase in income on the previous year²³⁰.

The 2017 edition of Aye Write! kept the same ticket pricing structure, and the decision was taken to set aside 10% of all events and allocate them to Community Ticketing, a total of around 1,600 potential free tickets over 175 events. This 10% rule was also extended to the Creative Writing strand of workshops. There are typically around 16 of these tutor-led events; subjects include topics such as 'Creative Writing: What you need to know about character', and 'Writing Television Drama'.

²³⁰ Brodin, *Aye Write End of Project Monitoring Report 2015-16 v1-1.pdf*.

These have a flat fee of £15 per session, are usually delivered by local professional writers and tutors, and are programmed separately from the author/book events.

This bold move may appear counter-intuitive at a time of economic difficulty, but indications are this has helped, or at least not harmed, attendance figures and income. Between the 2015 and 2017 editions of the festival, Aye Write! saw a 26.2% growth in Ticket Volume and a 36.4% growth in Box Office Income²³¹. This was an impressive result for a festival in transition and under financial pressure, distributing more free tickets than ever, and maintaining a 70% audience retention rate. It was also part of a process of moving the festival model towards one which works more holistically, and away from the idea that promotion of high-value events and support of reader development are aims in opposition to each other.

The Aye Write! team now holds a fairly universal view that nurturing readers and finding ways to engage them with the festival, will improve the depth and breadth of audiences. This is not a ground-breaking concept, and it seems this view has always been there within the festival team. But it does appear this simple concept may have become obscured under the pressure to keep attendance numbers up and meet financial targets.

The rebalancing of the relationship between attendance and income targets and the reader development agenda, is reflected in the 2017 festival's debriefing document produced by the Festival Manager and the Programme Manager ('Reading Development and Literacy').²³² The introduction states 'Aye Write! aims to lead in the forging of an effective, sustainable model for city-wide literary development'. The relationship between tickets, turnover and literary development is also confronted head on:

While targets in ticket sales, attendance, turnover and book sales/loans are all essential measures in their own right, Glasgow's book festivals exist to support

²³¹ Festivals Highlights – 2017 Editions

²³² Festivals Highlights – 2017 Edition

literary development for all and it is in this that the success of the festivals will truly be displayed.

The Community Ticketing initiative does appear to show promise, but it would be over-reaching to suggest it is responsible for increase in ticket volume and income between 2015-2017. Rather, it is one element within a portfolio of changes through which the festival is evolving. Community Ticketing is also still in a developmental stage and has some way to go before its effects will become clear. The systems around promotion and distribution of those tickets need to be developed, as it proved more difficult than the PAG anticipated. In 2017, of the 1,700 potential free tickets, only 309 tickets were actually redeemed by visitors to the festival – this is around 50% of the tickets requested by community groups and less than 20% of the Community Tickets available.

There are issues here around raising awareness of Community Ticketing, which is currently carried out through community networks rather than through open marketing. This is in part due to caution over the potential impact on ticket purchasers. Promotion is not the only challenge; it is also recognised by the PAG and the Community Engagement Team that ‘freebies can be seen as having no value’,²³³ and free tickets are no use to someone who does not have the means to travel, or to arrange childcare. These may well be significant issues for those Aye Write! is trying to attract.

An additional challenge to Community Ticketing comes from a less obvious source. Ticketing for Aye Write! is handled through Glasgow Life’s box office system. The box office handles payments online and over the phone, prints tickets and issues them. The festival is charged by the box office for this service at around £1 per ticket. This has been an area of disquiet for those in the team tasked with balancing the books, particularly as other Glasgow Life festivals have a different arrangement. Box office charges for the book festival can amount to £15,000 in a single year. To put this

²³³ Meeting notes: Member of the Community Engagement Team, Feb 2017.

in context, it is approximately equal to the cash total received from corporate sponsorship in 2017. This is shown as a cost to Aye Write! and can effectively make the difference between profit and loss, even though the money is still brought in to the Glasgow Life 'family'.

In the case of Community Ticketing, the box office charge would still be applied for any physical tickets issued. In 2017, this could potentially have resulted in up to £1,700 in additional charges for producing free tickets, even though these will not have placed any burden on the online or telephone purchasing system as they are distributed through community networks. For this reason, Community Tickets are not issued as physical tickets but operate on a guest-list system, with a staff member checking names at the door. The effect of this on Community Ticketing redemption is unknown, but from personal experience and that of other PAG members, a promised guest-list place feels less certain than a physical ticket and this may partly explain the low uptake. If this is the case, then it is another example of organisational structures and systems which work contrary to the aims they are designed to support.

Events within the Aye Write! schedule not based around authors or celebrities talking about books, are gathered under the collective term 'Community Engagement & Learning Events'. Aye Write! has always had a proportion of its programme dedicated to Community Engagement & Learning Events; the Community Engagement part of this programme has three main strands, with some overlap.

The first strand is developed by Glasgow Life staff who work on literacy, learning and creative writing programmes within community groups. These events provide an opportunity to gather, celebrate and showcase the work of those groups, such as Glasgow Learning's celebration of writing from ESOL learners. The 2017 Home Ground event, showcasing writing by and about people with experience of homelessness, was programmed within this strand of the festival.

The second strand is space within the programme and festival, given over to specific literary Glasgow groups, as mentioned earlier in this section.

The third strand consists of free public events around issues or special interest. Scottish PEN sponsors an event which raises awareness of the plight of

political prisoners and asylum seekers, and I have organised research-related events alongside researchers from the Universities of Stirling, Glasgow and Strathclyde.

Even though the festival grew out of author events held within community libraries, the Aye Write! festival established a focus on events at The Mitchell Library. This likely helped consolidate the festival as a serious and high value event, but potentially at the cost of the community ethos on which it was founded. There have always been occasional author events beyond The Mitchell and the festival period, but from 2015 these began to be programmed and promoted in earnest as Aye Write! events. The need to raise funds to offset missing out on Creative Scotland funding was a major driver. It also has multiple benefits of making it possible to bring authors to the city who are not available in the main festival period, allowing the use of larger venues, such as the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, to maximise potential audience, and enabling events to take place within community libraries under the banner of Aye Write!. These satellite events are now an important and embedded part of the programme.

This chapter is not seeking to determine a successful model for Aye Write!, but to show how some of the practical, organisational and emerging issues faced by the festival have brought focus to questions of value and purpose. The preceding material in this chapter demonstrates success can look different from different perspectives, and choices had to be made about which aims and values were fixed, and which were more flexible. The practical responses of a book festival to its environment will change over time, as the opportunities and challenges which confront it also change. This research has followed the transition from Aye Write!'s period of establishment and placemaking, through its strong identification with The Mitchell, to a more open and permeable model which takes the strength of the 'festival brand' to other places and communities.

The chapter also highlighted the intentional and unintentional effects of choices made within festival strategy. These effects play out in its demographics and also in the perceptions of the festival which exist beyond the events themselves, such as in the form of placemaking and recognition. Some effects of strategic decisions are in opposition to the festival aims, even though their seeds are planted within those

aims; efforts towards 'reader development' and 'bringing high quality literature' have created an unintended gap through which reading champions can fall.

The festival could potentially find success in clarifying its aims and serving those alone. It could be argued returning consistently high audience numbers, generating a sustainable income, and using this to support reader development events and Wee Write! is a commendable goal. However, if Aye Write! seeks to address the gap highlighted in this chapter (and explored further in the next two chapters), and create a place for active readers, local writers, the spoken word community and book group members within the festival, then the audience/consumer strand of the model is not adequate. Furthermore, this gap group should be a rich source of literary champions already embedded in communities throughout the city, and any serious strategy for literary development must engage with them.

Figures earlier in this chapter illustrated the three main elements to which Aye Write! is committed and the relationships between them. It is arguable there is an element missing: Glasgow's literary community. Not just publishers, published authors and literary sector professionals, but keen readers who inspire others to open a book; self-published writers who share their work locally within their communities; book groups; bloggers; and spoken word performers. It is difficult to see how any of these people can find a way into the festival other than as a consumer/audience member. At the moment their options are limited to a small number of partly curated new writing or poetry reading events.

Those steering the direction of Aye Write! may decide it is neither practical nor desirable for the festival to accommodate these 'gap' people; but if so, another way should be sought to support their active inclusion within the broader scope of literary Glasgow. Otherwise a large number of people who are voluntarily and habitually engaged with literature may become increasingly bitter that Glasgow's book festival has no place for them.

Consideration of literary Glasgow as a system provides a useful perspective on the success or otherwise of individual elements within it, particularly those elements

intended to have broad influence over the city. Resilience of any ecosystem is a factor of infrastructure, connectivity and variety, and a lack of any of these elements weakens the system. A contrasting threat to the system can also be brought about by the dominance of an individual element, as a towering tree hinders undergrowth with its shade. Major cultural programmes bring threats and opportunities to a cultural ecosystem, such as Glasgow's literary community. They also make powerful declarations of value through their actions, as conscious and unconscious decisions are taken on what is supported, what is promoted, and what is celebrated. Excessive promotion of the value of one particular type of literary engagement could be detrimental to the whole.

A literary festival which seeks only to provide a satisfactory audience experience to repeat customers, could potentially achieve such a thing without causing significant ripples across the system, but a festival positioned as the city's officially sanctioned flagship literature event, with the stated aim of celebrating and developing local reading and writing, cannot successfully exist without engaging with the literary ecosystem. The elevation of the festival's significance actually increases the marginalisation of those who through choice, accident or design find themselves not included in that series of events. Seeing that flagship repeatedly set sail without them brings discouragement which can turn to resentment. There comes a point when it must be considered whether literary audiences are being pursued at the cost of reading champions.

The next chapter documents encounters with committed readers and writers who are already reading champions within their community but have little or no interest in involvement with Aye Write!.

Chapter Four: Reading the Waves – Launching a (Reader)Ship in Govan

In the previous chapter, Aye Write! is seen to be an extension of Glasgow Life’s work towards reader development across the city. One of the festival’s primary aims is to support reader development through strengthening connections with those communities which appear to be under-represented among its audiences. The underlying assumption in drawing this connection between audience and reader engagement, is people from these communities are disengaged from literary activity. In this ethnographic account of Sunny Govan Community Radio (SunnyG) committed readers, writers, poets, playwrights and reading champions are found who engage with each other, with localised literary networks, and even on a national or international level, but not with Glasgow’s book festival. Some of the reasons for this lack of engagement with Aye Write! were expressed explicitly in interviews conducted at SunnyG, recounted below. Other potential factors were uncovered through observation and participation in SunnyG’s activities over an extended period in 2015 and 2016.



Figure 23: Outside SunnyG

SunnyG operates from a primrose-yellow converted shop unit on Govan Road, on the ground floor of a sandstone tenement, sandwiched between a hairdresser and a community gallery. Less than two miles from the Mitchell Library, it is separated from the city centre by the River Clyde – any journey between the two involves a longer route via bridge, tunnel or ferry. The unit is surprisingly small, around five metres glass frontage on the street by 10 metres. Within this space are two sound-proofed broadcast studios, a toilet and a kitchen. The remainder of the room is open plan and functions as office, hot-desk space, information display and social area. SunnyG has been broadcasting home-grown shows and local voices since 1998. Initially only on air for a couple of weeks during the summer on temporary licences, then on a permanent online channel; since 2005 the station has held a full-time community radio broadcast licence. The location has changed during that time, from a disused police station, to a former industrial site, to the current Govan Road premises in the centre of the community. SunnyG also acts as a local information hub, provides access to training and is a supportive social space for volunteers and visitors.

My period of ethnographic research at SunnyG uncovered aspects of literary engagement in Glasgow contributing to a deeper understanding of issues of cultural participation and pointing to significant elements in the way cultural value is ascribed and recognised.

In exploring the nature of literary Glasgow and how it might be developed, I considered it important to find voices beyond the established networks of writers, publishers and librarians that contribute to *Aye Write!*. In particular, I was keen to speak with readers and non-readers in those Glasgow communities less likely to be represented in the audiences of *Aye Write!* or in the membership of Glasgow's literary networking groups. In April 2015, I had a chance meeting with two young men from Govan as they emerged from their first book festival event. The meeting led to some fruitful and challenging encounters with people from the community radio station in which the young men were volunteers, and an opportunity for me to participate in the activities of SunnyG as a volunteer.

This chapter gives an account of my research with SunnyG and focusses on encounters with people that highlight three areas of significance to this research:

organisational ecology and its impact on participation; identity as a factor in engagement with literature; and questions of cultural value and ownership.

Each element has been distilled from a combination of semi-structured interviews, informal conversations and participant observation between April 2015 and May 2016, while I was an irregular volunteer at SunnyG, working towards and broadcasting book-focussed radio shows. The staff and volunteers were made aware of my position as a researcher and my interest in local people's attitudes towards literature generally and Aye Write! in particular.

The bench

On my third visit I arrive at 10am, just as Jim, SunnyG's Outreach Worker, is opening up and turning the lights on. Jim asks me to help lift a heavy wooden bench out onto the pavement. During opening hours this bench is placed outside, its back against the window, facing the Govan Road traffic. The bench is robust and rugged, hand-made by a local craftsman from wood reclaimed from a demolition site. Jim tells me it's the best community engagement tool ever made. He says people are happy to take a seat, and stop for a smoke and a chat, or even a rest if they're making their way along Govan Road from the underground station to the new hospital.

The placement of this bench physically alters the way in which the organisation connects with the community. It creates a welcoming, transitional space where community and organisation engage in dialogue, free of barriers. There is a commitment involved in passing through a door into a space controlled by someone else, and an acceptance there is a clear power and ownership transition between one space and another. Kay and Burrell write of the 'drawing of boundaries' being 'a political act', and that 'lines of demarcation' function to 'exercise power'.²³⁴ The bench blurs the boundary between inside and outside, its existence declares a transitional space, and its use by SunnyG staff and passers-by leaves the ownership and purpose

²³⁴ Karen Dale and Gibson Burrell, *The Spaces of Organisation and the Organisation of Space: Power, Identity and Materiality at Work* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 2007).

of that space negotiable. It offers a service to people passing by, without any requirement for them to commit to engagement with the organisation. It is also used by staff and volunteers, each of whom has a slightly different network of local people who may be inclined to stop and talk; and introductions are made here which connect people across and around SunnyG.

The bench is effectively a boundary object –operating in both the physical and symbolic realms, allowing and guiding interaction between agents simply by its existence. The concept of boundary objects was first introduced by Susan Leigh Star in her work on artificial intelligence and the institutional ecologies of scientific communities, in which she explored the interface between groups that made use of a shared zone of communication.²³⁵ This was developed throughout her career and applied in areas of organisational studies, architecture and information systems design. Reflecting on the concept in 2010, Star reiterates the three components which define boundary objects: ‘Interpretive flexibility, the structure of informatics and work process needs and arrangements, and, finally, the dynamic between ill-structured and more tailored uses of the objects’.²³⁶

The SunnyG bench meets all three elements of this criteria: as an object interpreted in different ways, both situation and perspective dependant (an engagement tool, a resting place, a symbol of Govan’s manual labour heritage, an informal communication space); as an object which serves the practical need for staff and volunteer respite from the intense activity of the radio station, and which facilitates informal and semi-formal intra-organisational communication (for example, I observed staff members intentionally joining individual volunteers on a cigarette break on the bench, to deal with sensitive issues); and the bench also exhibits this dynamic flow between incidental (ill-structured) and deliberate (tailored) use.

²³⁵ Susan Leigh Star, ‘Chapter 2 - The Structure of Ill-Structured Solutions: Boundary Objects and Heterogeneous Distributed Problem Solving’, in *Distributed Artificial Intelligence*, ed. by Les Gasser and Michael N. Huhns (San Francisco (CA): Morgan Kaufmann, 1989), pp. 37–54

<<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B978155860092850006X>>.

²³⁶ Star, ‘This Is Not a Boundary Object’, p. 601.

Star is very clear boundary objects grow out of local information needs, “They are essentially organic infrastructures that have arisen due to [...] “information and work requirements,” as perceived locally and by groups who wish to cooperate.’²³⁷ While the bench as a raw object was made for a specific purpose, the bench as boundary object is just such an organic infrastructure emerging from local information needs. It serves related but distinctly different purposes for the SunnyG organisation and the community, connecting the two through these interactions and the modulation between interpretations and uses. The boundary here is not indicative of an edge or periphery which marks the separation of two spaces, but is ‘a shared space, where exactly that sense of here and there are confounded’²³⁸

The significance of the bench grew on me over the course of my participation and ethnographic observation at the radio station. Jim’s statement about the value of the bench as a community engagement tool stayed with me from the day I helped carry it, and the bench became for me, a way in to an understanding of SunnyG’s relationship with the local community and also the nature of the organisation itself. Some of this developed from reflection on my own sense of frustration about the apparently ill-defined borders to the work SunnyG was doing and the way information flowed informally, and often unpredictably, between the street and the station. There were multiple occasions when I arranged to be at the station at a certain time and for a specific purpose, and very few of those turned out as originally planned. Sometimes there were unforeseen technical issues around the broadcast or recording equipment which brought about a change of plans, but on other occasions the person I had arranged to meet was not there, or the staff member I had arranged to work with was in the middle of dealing with some urgent event. Unforeseen events happen, but I struggled with both the lack of a formal communication channel about changes, and the presumption I would be fully informed about what had been happening with the station, equipment, volunteers and community in the week or two weeks since I was last present. Information appeared to circulate in a cloud of

²³⁷ Star, ‘This Is Not a Boundary Object’, p. 602.

²³⁸ Star, ‘This Is Not a Boundary Object’, p. 602.

snippets: a quick conversation at the kettle; a five-minute chat outside at the bench involving four different conversations as people arrived or passed by; or an exasperated rant about the latest local injustice, stage-whispered across the room.

I did not witness any of the staff, volunteers or visitors being uncomfortable with the way information flowed, but most of them were in contact with SunnyG or each other on a daily basis, or certainly more regularly than I was. This fluid, organic and free-form communication contrasted with the Aye Write! meetings, scheduled months in advance, and the systems, protocols and documentation required within a public sector organisation.

Each organisation functions in an appropriate way for the network it is attached to. Aye Write! works to the schedules, protocols and systems required of it; SunnyG operates in a way which appears chaotic in comparison, yet is well aligned with the unpredictable circumstances of their volunteers and with many people in the Govan community. This may partly explain the ease with which I observed local people of all ages enter and use the facilities in SunnyG. Primary school children would come in to use any free computer, shoppers would stop for tea and a chat, people would drop off or pick up food parcels. The alignment between the communities either side of the glass shop-front resulted in minimal cultural jarring for people coming in to the station. This is not the norm for a media centre or a certified training facility, both of which would be expected to present unnatural environments for young unemployed people, recovering addicts, or elderly people with multiple disabilities. These are just three of the many characteristics of visitors who appear to feel at home in SunnyG.

The bench is a boundary object between Govan and SunnyG, a place of shared ownership and use, but it is also a physical manifestation of the fundamental characteristics of SunnyG as an organisation: informal, open and in dialogue with the community. In time I realised my frustrations with the operations of Sunny Govan Community Radio were based on expectations of a certain mode of communication. The fluid, responsive, informal and chaotic way SunnyG operated, was one of the things that made it easier for people to access and connect with it.

SunnyG is itself effectively a boundary object between the people of Govan and the opportunities the organisation aims to connect them with. This aligns with Star's three components of a boundary object as quoted earlier in the chapter.²³⁹ SunnyG clearly displays 'Interpretive flexibility' as evidenced in my observation of its use as a stopping point, a creative outlet and a resource centre, among other interpretations. My frustrations outlined above were mainly in the second component mentioned by Star: 'the structure of informatics and work process needs and arrangements'. Whether by design, evolution or instinct, the informal and unstructured methods and processes of communication within SunnyG create an unthreatening environment to many of the people in the community they seek to work with. This is potentially at the expense of more effective engagement with funding bodies and organisations, such as Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Life, as discussed later in this chapter. While at SunnyG, it was easy to get caught up in unanticipated events, and I observed many instances of Star's third component: the 'dynamic between ill-structured and more tailored uses'. I have been at the radio station to talk with volunteers and visitors about books and become engaged in activity around food donations and local democracy. I have also witnessed impromptu legal advice given to young people, and staff and community rallying to blockade the eviction of a refugee family. These unplanned and reactive uses of SunnyG are set against the regular schedule of a broadcast media organisation.

It is difficult to imagine a commercial or public sector organisation allowing itself to be constantly drawn into activity not central to its business, yet to SunnyG this dynamic between uses is a natural extension of its mission to create a community which gives people a voice and supports them to overcome structural inequality. As a small organisation unconstrained by policy and procedure passed down from a higher level, SunnyG can allow its ethos and aims to determine the shape it takes. By stark contrast, Aye Write! has an equally strong ethos but does not have the independence or agility of the smaller organisation to quickly adapt in response to opportunities or threats. The same resources and structures of Glasgow Life that

²³⁹ Star, 'This Is Not a Boundary Object'.

benefit the book festival also constrain its activities, and channel the ambition of the team leading it through systems and policies which may fit the organisation more than the people Aye Write! aims to connect with.

Jim frequently expresses his pride in the relationship SunnyG has with Govan; they are part of the community. While the three staff and numerous volunteers at the radio station broadcast music and talk shows on all kinds of subjects, Jim sees the mission as something greater than what goes out on the airwaves, a mission strongly rooted in Govan as a place and the identity of its people.

Govan and SunnyG

Govan is an area of Glasgow with a proud history and a less glorious recent past. As a town, it predates Glasgow and there is evidence of continuous settlement here since at least the Middle Ages. Some, including a local writer we meet later in this chapter, contend people have been making this place their home for 6,000 years.²⁴⁰ Its position on the south bank of the River Clyde made it a place of strategic importance for the early Christian church in Scotland, for Viking settlers and in more recent times, for the shipbuilding industry.

From the mid 19th to the mid 20th century, Govan was the heart of the most important centre of shipbuilding in the world, producing over 3,000 ships.²⁴¹ The winding down of this industry from the 1970s, and the lack of any viable local employment to fill the void, contributed to the decline of Govan into a place marred by poverty, crime, poor housing and lack of opportunity. Despite recent attempts to regenerate the area, through improved housing and attracting film and TV industry companies to move into the area, the legacy of the decline has left its mark. The Glasgow Indicators Project published findings which demonstrate the continuing

²⁴⁰ Brian McQuade, *Govan and Its History from Early Times to the Present* (Lulu Press, Inc, 2014).

²⁴¹ Dalglish, C., Driscoll, S.T., Maver, I., Shead, N.F., and Shearer, I. (2009) *Historic Govan: Archaeology and Development*. Series: The Scottish burgh survey. Historic Scotland: Edinburgh, UK. ISBN 9781902771625

impact on the population in 2012.²⁴² Compared to the Glasgow average, people in Govan were 48% more likely to be claiming out-of-work benefits, 29% more likely to be in income deprivation and 20% more likely to be limited by disability. Young people were 69% less likely to be in employment, education or training.

The socio-economic troubles of Govan have seeped into popular culture – the area a by-word for deprivation, crime and lack of opportunity. When BBC Scotland produced the *Rab C Nesbitt* television series in the late 1980s, Govan was an unsurprising choice as the setting for the fictional alcoholic anti-hero and his poverty-stricken band of underclass friends. The mainstreaming of the image of the area has contributed to cementing this negative identity and normalising the hopelessness experienced by many of its people. SunnyG is one of many community initiatives based in Govan offering support, training or diversionary activity for the people of the area. Its 2015 statement of ‘Vision, Mission and Values’ in 2015 is general rather than specific, and could easily belong to one of the other community-facing organisations based on the same street, such as Tea In The Pot or the Drop In Café:

[...] to create a community that is creative, inclusive, and speaking with its own voice, where people are equipped to take on challenges, participate in opportunities, and achieve their own potential.²⁴³

The omission of radio broadcasting is interesting, indeed it is not found anywhere in the document. Clearly, the broadcasting is incidental to the main aims of SunnyG. This is revealed in the accounts of conversations with staff and volunteers which follow. The phrase ‘speaking with its own voice’ is significant and is suggestive of the issues of identity and representation that arose repeatedly through my research with SunnyG, which are central to this chapter. Combined with SunnyG’s mission statement below, it reveals the idea of a created community in which people are supported to overcome barriers and develop their voice:

²⁴² ‘Profiles | The Glasgow Indicators Project’ <<http://www.understandingglasgow.com/profiles>> [accessed 20 September 2016]

²⁴³ *Sunny Govan Vision, Mission, Values*. March 2015

Sunny Govan's mission is to create a safe, welcoming and supportive space where people facing marginalisation, barriers to participation in the community or structural inequality can nurture their skills and talent and start to realise their potential. This space provides a platform for expression, encourages dialogue, and facilitates people to inform and influence one another and the wider community.²⁴⁴

Within this statement, the SunnyG space is identified as a place of refuge ('welcoming', 'supportive') from externally generated problems ('marginalisation', 'structural inequality') in which inherent talent and potential is assumed and realised. The last sentence reinforces the importance of voice; ; 'expression', 'dialogue', 'inform' and 'influence' are here given direction, within SunnyG and out towards the 'wider community'. There is an activism in the language in contrast to that used within Glasgow Life's Community Learning and Libraries documentation and approach, which tends to focus on the more passive language of engagement and participation – terms that fit more easily with cultural consumption than with cultural production.

The tension between these two models of the place of community within the cultural sphere, is a central challenge with Glasgow Life's cultural policy and plays out within Aye Write! Book, SunnyG and among communities such as the performance poetry/live literature scene.

While SunnyG is distinctive in many ways, it shares the essence of its mission of support in overcoming barriers and development of potential with many other community organisations in Glasgow, and in other cities. SunnyG does not have a particular remit or aim built around literature or reader development; on and off-air discussions around books emerge from the interests and activity of the community of staff and volunteers, rather than from any formalised development strand. There is nothing to suggest these talents and interests differ in any great degree from those

²⁴⁴ *Sunny Govan Vision, Mission, Values*. March 2015

which may be found among members of other community-based organisations in similar areas.

Becoming involved

As referred to in the introduction to this chapter, my journey to SunnyG began with a chance meeting in a corridor of The Mitchell Library, waiting in line to buy a book by George the Poet, following his Aye Write! appearance. I was in awe at the simplicity and power of the poetry, and thinking about how the audience demographic was noticeably different from many other Aye Write! events – younger, more diverse in ethnicity and style of dress – when two voices behind me caught my attention, exuberant and impassioned about the ‘amazing’ event. The voices belonged to two young men, aged about 18 or 19, dressed in sportswear and baseball caps, who spoke in a particular Glasgow accent and dialect identified with the youth subculture of peripheral housing estates and areas of urban deprivation. As someone who grew up in one of those estates, I recognised it immediately. It is not an accent you are likely to hear often during Aye Write!. This, along with their very vocal enthusiasm for the event, is why they stood out. They could have been from Castlemilk, Easterhouse, Drumchapel, Riddrie or a dozen other locations in the city. The accent is more socio-economic than geographic in nature.

The young men were from Govan and were as excited as I was about the event we had just attended. We got into an animated conversation about George and his poetry: they thought he was ‘amazing’ and were going to go back to Govan to tell everybody about him. They also declared they were going to get into poetry ‘in a big way’. They were both volunteers at SunnyG and involved with the local hip-hop scene. Someone at SunnyG had suggested they go to see George the Poet, so Jim had called one of the librarians at the Mitchell Library on behalf of the young men and requested two guest list places for them as representatives of the radio station. Following the event, they waited in line to speak to George, whose manager wanted to hurry him back to the hotel. Seeing their enthusiasm and how important it was to them, one of the Glasgow Life staff members intervened on their behalf and they were able to shake George’s hand and speak with him for a minute or two. They managed to raise

enough money between them to buy a copy of George's book, which he signed for them.

I called SunnyG a few days later and spoke to one of the young men. He agreed to meet with me at the radio station to talk about their experience at Aye Write!. That meeting was confounded by repeated cancellations and did not take place, but it brought me to the door of SunnyG and a small literary community that challenged some of the spoken and unspoken assumptions about reading and cultural participation which I had observed in myself, and in those I shared meetings with to discuss the future direction of Aye Write! and Glasgow Libraries.

Negotiation of credentials

The first time I open the door to SunnyG, I do so into a chaos of sound. It's difficult to know what's going on and who's in charge. A couple of teenagers and some older people are on the sofas at the far end of the room, someone appears through a door nearby carrying four cups of tea. A man wearing headphones is hunched over a laptop, three conversations seem to be going on at once, until I realise one of those conversations is emanating from a cheap radio on the table beyond the sofas. There are two small side rooms, which I recognise as recording booths and through one of the windows I see, but don't hear, two people laughing around a microphone. Seconds later that laughter erupts from the radio and the people on the sofa look up and join in. I'm aware of movement to my right and realise that there's a man at a desk tucked into the corner, his laptop fighting for space among piles of paper, books and CDs. The man approaches with a cheery smile and asks if he can help. This is Jim McMillan, SunnyG's Outreach Worker.

I introduce myself and explain I'm here to meet JL, one of the two young men from SunnyG who had come to Aye Write! a few weeks earlier. The meeting had been arranged by phone just a few days before. It turns out he's not here today. Jim asks the people on sofas if they know when he's coming in next. Three conflicting answers come back. No one's sure, he's been having some problems, I can leave a message if I like.

I tell Jim a bit about my research project: books, reading, communities. He lights up immediately and hands me a paperback off his desk. 'This was dropped in yesterday,

by a local writer. We're going to get him in for an interview.' He opens a drawer and pulls out a bound A4 book, 'Do you know Brian McQuade? He's one of our volunteers – this is one of his: 6000 years of Govan History'.²⁴⁵ Jim continues to pull books out of filing cabinet drawers and piles of folders – some have a direct connection with Govan, in content or through connection with the author, others with Glasgow more generally: Sir Alex Ferguson's autobiography, a crime fiction novel, a rock musician's tales of life on the road, a children's book on Mary Barbour and the rent strikes of 1915. Jim wraps a story around each book: an author who's been in for interview, or is coming in, who lives in Govan or who did once. Identity features strongly in Jim's conversation. We trade similar opinions on the value of reading and how, especially for a young person, it can open up possibilities beyond the immediate environment.

Jim is not from Govan but grew up nearby in Pollok, an area with similar economic and social challenges but a less notable history. I'm originally from yet another southside housing estate, with matching problems and reputation. We trade stories of poverty and community and the value of books as a window to other worlds. We find common ground in many areas, including periods of employment in community work and a belief in personal development. For some reason I still feel compelled to reinforce I'm not part of some unspecified establishment. Between anecdotes and humour, it feels as though we're negotiating our credentials.

Jim does not ask me outright whether I work for Glasgow Life or one of the universities, but through casual mentions of academics who 'don't really get what Govan is about' and critiques of local and national government decisions, it is clear there is suspicion about the value of any top-down involvement in the community or the project, and the motivations behind such activity. Jim is sceptical of the ability of people and organisations at a distance to make policy decisions affecting communities such as Govan. He believes the solutions are already within the community, all that's lacking is resource and opportunity. As the conversation continues, it becomes apparent there is

²⁴⁵ McQuade.

another important element in play: the vision to see beyond negative narratives of Govan.

Jim talks about the power of expectation and belief on the direction a life takes, that while there are young people elsewhere in Glasgow who grow up with the expectation of university or a career, or simply that life might be a positive experience, too many young people in Govan have been trained to expect no such thing. The reputation of the area weighs heavily on them. The expectation is a limited life featuring alcohol, drugs, unemployment, crime and poor health. Jim sees one of the missions of SunnyG to support young people in thinking differently about themselves, their community and their potential. He speaks in terms of stories, the ones young people are told about their situation in Govan from outside, that poverty and unemployment are things to be ashamed of or are even deserved, that young Govanites are expected to be unemployed or involved in crime.

Jim tells me there's been a rise in use of the police stop-and-search policy in Govan. He had intervened earlier that day when two police officers searched a teenager for the third time in a week, again finding nothing of note. While he accepts there are problems in Govan which require police intervention, he is sceptical of the state generally and its role in both creating and solving these problems, but he refuses to let these challenges be used as an excuse for the people he works with. 'There's no point me telling people what they should learn or do. I ask them to think about what they can do today that'll make tomorrow different. There are a lot of tomorrows.'

He tells me about the young people who come in for advice or to use the computer and over time get training to put their own radio show together, and who gain skills and confidence on the way. He says lack of hope is the biggest challenge facing local youngsters. 'We know Govan wasn't always like this, it was once thriving and proud, but they've never seen that.'

Opportunity

Heather McMillan is SunnyG's Project Manager, and the person who began the radio station after identifying a need to share information about local community projects.

She is full of energy and enthusiasm and an obvious genuine concern for everyone in and around the SunnyG community. She often drops what she is doing to meet someone at the door and ask about some situation they are dealing with in which she is obviously already a confidant: health, financial problems, eviction threats, family issues, simple hunger.

When I first meet Heather and mention my interest in books and reading she gets very animated and is immediately making plans to start a book show on SunnyG. 'Have you read The Alchemist?' I reply I have; a long time ago though. 'It's great,' she says, 'whenever I see a copy in the charity shop or boot sale I buy it!' She tells me she gives the book to the young people who come into contact with SunnyG, that most of them enjoy it and it changes the way they see themselves and the world. 'I tell them to pass it on when they're done with it.'

Heather, Jim and I schedule in a date to talk further about a book programme and what form it might take. Jim has already broadcast interviews with some authors and has a couple more lined up in the next month, but these are ad hoc and not part of a regular show. We decide a more regular book show would be a great thing and agree to bring some ideas to our next meeting.

I was delighted and inspired by my initial encounters with both Jim and Heather. Not only because of their enthusiasm for books and reading, but because they considered them to be powerful allies in the work they were doing in the community: books could displace negative thinking and provide alternatives; books could rewrite what young people had been led to believe about themselves or Govan. I had expected to go through a long process towards convincing a community radio station to commit to a book show, but instead they were already doing it, and saw it as part of their mission of enabling voices and sharing positive ideas.

Things appear frantic when I return to SunnyG a week later as arranged, and it is quickly clear there won't be an opportunity to discuss a book show today. There's a problem with some of the broadcast equipment, it's probably not covered by warranty, it might be expensive to fix, and one of the studios is out of commission. Heather is pacing the room and speaking on her mobile phone, Jim and Steg, the station's Technical Manager and resident DJ, are scheduling reruns of programmes to cover any break in

transmission. John 'the taxi', and a couple of people whose names I don't get, are keeping out of the way on the sofas. Tea is made and Jim and Heather take theirs outside.

*John appears to be in his mid-fifties, and wears a distinctive 'bunnet' hat, of the type once commonly worn by working-class men throughout Scotland and northern England, which doesn't come off when he's indoors. I'm not sure whether 'the taxi' moniker is a current or former profession, or for some other reason, but I don't ask. He tells me about his show – mainly country music, or more specifically Americana and American folk music. I tell him what I'm doing there and from his shoulder bag he produces a creased paperback, *Filth* by Irvine Welsh, which he's just begun reading. He loves Welsh's previous books, concedes they're not to everyone's taste, but defends them as a form of magnified reality.*

Heather comes back in, is taken by surprise when I mention our arrangement to meet to discuss the book show and suggests talking about it another time. Jim's already gone. I tell her I'll come in next week and leave.

The environment at SunnyG seems to balance on the edge of chaos. People come and go constantly and it is rare to have a conversation without another, or multiple other conversations crossing over and through. Subjects are brought up and spoken of briefly before being lost in multiple questions and instructions. My conversations with John 'the taxi' were fragmented and episodic but always interesting.

*On my return, I see John 'the taxi' come out of the front door as I approach. He lights a cigarette, takes a seat on the bench and chats briefly with an old man passing by. We talk for a minute then I ask him how he's doing with the Irvine Welsh book. 'Aye, *Filth*. Nearly finished it. You can borrow it when I'm done if you like. Hilarious! Dark, but hilarious.' I ask where he gets books. He tells me they're mainly borrowed, passed around by friends, some bought from charity shops, some borrowed from the library. John had loaned *Filth* to Brian before he'd read it and had forgotten who had it until Brian handed it back to him a few weeks ago.*

We're joined by K, a young man pushing a mountain bike, and cigarettes are exchanged. The bike was donated by a SunnyG listener so K could take part in a

fundraising cycle that weekend. The fundraiser was cancelled due to bad weather, the back wheel wrecked on a pothole on the way home. 'It's fixed now', K tells us. John goes back to the Welsh books, he's previously read Marabou Stork Nightmares and Trainspotting ('much darker than the film'), and also 'That book of short stories he did. There was one set here, across the street.'

Heather comes out and joins us. K tells her there are two plain-clothed police officers along the street. He has just been stopped and searched, for no reason he can see other than pushing a bicycle. Heather is angry but K shows no emotion, just wanted to let her know. Heather stubs out her anger with her cigarette and we return to the conversation about books. She tells me more books have been sent in since we last spoke. Heather, John and I discuss what we might do with a regular book show. We're still standing by the bench, talking over the noise of buses and fielding the occasional greeting from people passing on either side of the road.

We consider reviews, author interviews, asking volunteers to discuss what they're reading, a debate on book versus film adaptation. I propose John could talk about Filth and how it compares with other Welsh books. He's reluctant to commit as he is already doing the music show. I suggest Jim or I could do the show and ask John about the book and chat about it for a few minutes. 'Aye, maybe' he says.

*It is beginning to rain, and as we step inside John speaks enthusiastically about a book he read recently, *The Wind That Shakes The Barley*²⁴⁶, have you read it?' I reply that I haven't. 'It's about Burns, the life of Burns, but a young Burns. It's dramatised, like Nigel Tranter's history²⁴⁷.' John goes on to say how the Burns book brings the story to life. 'The facts are the facts, but he puts dialogue roon about it.' Jim joins in the conversation and then presses a slim new paperback into my hand. *Scotland's Future History*, by Stuart McHardy.²⁴⁸ It has just arrived, sent from the publisher, Luath Press. I have a look at the blurb on the back cover, it looks interesting, re-evaluating Scottish*

²⁴⁶ Barke, William James, *The Wind That Shakes The Barley* (Edinburgh, Black and White, 2008)

²⁴⁷ Nigel Tranter was a historian and prolific author of fictionalised novels featuring historical characters and events from Scottish history.

²⁴⁸ McHardy, Stuart, *Scotland's Future History* (Edinburgh, Luath, 2015)

history in the light of new archaeological findings and techniques. Jim agrees, 'It's right in line with what I was saying about Brian's 6000 years of Govan.' He tells me to keep it and read it, 'We already got one from the author when it came out a few weeks ago.'

We talk further about the possible radio show. Heather wants to put a jingle out to promote it. I say I would like us to have a clearer picture of what form it will take first and how regular it will be. The consensus is a mix of author interviews, and opinions and reviews from the local and listening community. We each agree to begin to put some material together for a launch in a month or two.

'Here's Brian' says Heather, who is facing out towards the street. A man with long, grey-brown hair and a long grey-brown coat comes in, shaking the rain off. Jim stands up, 'Have you met Brian, Paul?' I haven't. We exchange handshakes and brief introductions. Close up, I realise he's not as old as I first thought, but there's no room left on his face for any more character. It's not a good time, Brian is agitated and goes on a rant to Jim and Heather. A friend of his has been 'lifted' and charged with non-appearance at court, even though they had attended as required and were turned away by the clerk, who dismissed any protests as they weren't on the list. Brian is furious at the injustice. When he calms down a bit, Heather tells him about the plain-clothed officers and the stop-and-search incidents and he shakes his head. Switching gears, he opens a drawer in the cabinet by Jim's desk and takes out a glossy white A4 book which he hands to me. 'Here's my new one. Well, it's actually my first book, but this is a new edition.'

I had heard Brian's name mentioned many times before I met him. Almost everyone I spoke to in Govan about my interest in books and reading asked 'have you met Brian?', often with an air of reverence mixed with fondness. On the SunnyG website his Wednesday radio show is listed as 'Sir Brian McQuade – arts for the masses'.²⁴⁹ The mock title applied by locals in acknowledgement of his qualifications and endless knowledge of art and local history.²⁵⁰ Our paths did not cross for the first

²⁴⁹ <http://www.sunnyg.com/wednesday.html>

²⁵⁰ Having left his approved school early and without qualifications Brian joined an access course at the age of 46 and went on to gain joint degrees in Fine Art and Art History from Glasgow University. His

few weeks of my time at SunnyG Radio, it seemed I had always just missed him. I had, however, met his books, pressed into my hands by Jim and Heather.

It was clear staff and volunteers regarded Brian as a local literary celebrity and there appeared to be great pride in him. Brian has self-published three books, although the first of these, *Sir John Lavery and His Use of Photography at the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1888*²⁵¹, was put together with some assistance from the librarian and archivist at The Glasgow Art Club. Each of the books is simply produced in A4, perfect bound, mono print. The second of his books, *Seven Painters who changed the course of Art History*, was published in 2012 and unlike the others, has colour printing on the front cover. Brian's most recent book, *Govan and its History from Early Times to the Present* extols the importance of Govan and its inhabitants during successive periods, from the Neolithic, in broad sweeps and sets the current challenges of the area into a vast historical context. The books are sold online through Amazon but also directly from the SunnyG office and other community groups around Govan.

own story and that of his discovery of Sir John Lavery's photographic plates have been featured in the Scottish press.

http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12441114.REVEALED__THE_SECRET_OF_THE_GLASGOW_BOY__THE_ROYAL_PAINTING_AND_SOME_OLD%E2%80%A6/ [accessed 4/8/2016]

²⁵¹ Mcquade, *Sir John Lavery and His Use of Photography at the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1888*, Th. A. M. van Asperen, Glasgow, 2006

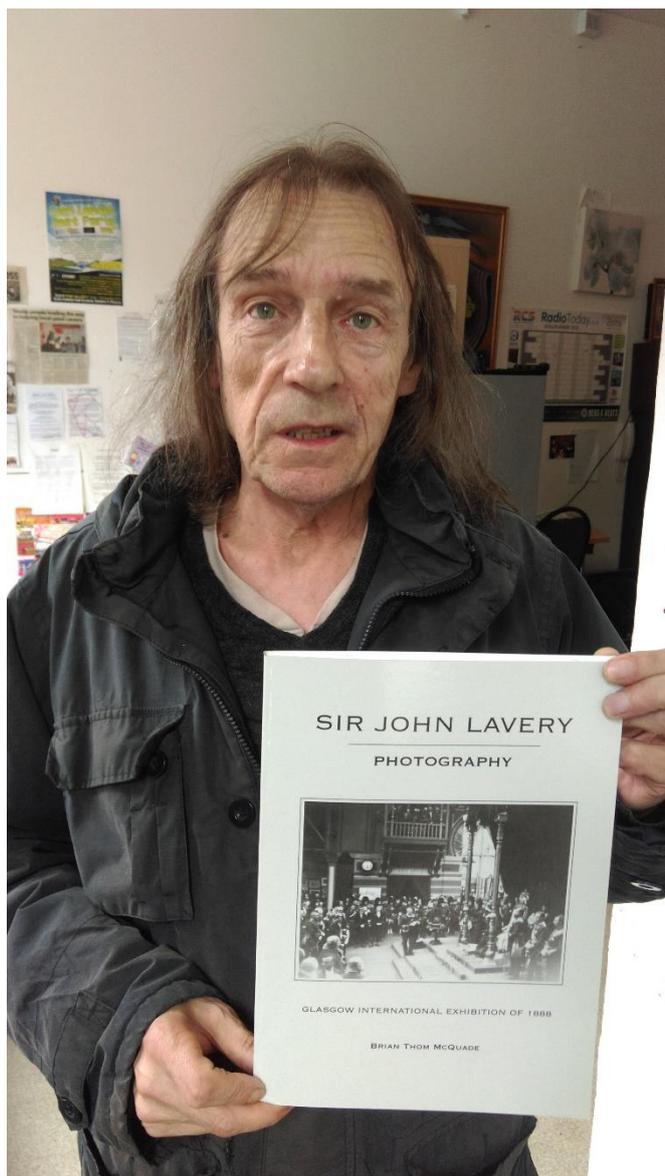


Figure 24: Brian McQuade with a copy of his book

Brian hands me the copy of *Sir John Lavery and His Use of Photography at the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1888* and tells me the story behind it. The book itself is full of black and white photos and reproductions of paintings. I recognise the painting of Queen Victoria's visit to Glasgow in 1888, which I had seen two months earlier in the Kelvingrove Museum and Art Galleries. Lavery had been commissioned to paint this historic scene, which features a seated Queen Victoria giving audience with around a hundred dignitaries, officials and military personnel in attendance. Brian tells me Lavery had been accused of using the contentious modern technology of photography in the process of creating this work, since the likenesses of the

individuals in it were so accurate, but Lavery denied this slur on his artistry. While Brian was a mature student at the University of Glasgow he was sent on placement to the Glasgow Art Club and was asked to help clear out rubbish following a fire which destroyed the archives. Brian spotted what he recognised as photographic plates among the rubbish and saved them from the skip. He later examined these and recognised elements of Lavery's painting. These were the studio photographs Lavery took of the dignitaries in order to create his historic painting. Brian points out to me the irony of him as a former bin-man discovering such treasure in a pile of rubbish. The book compares the photographic plates with Lavery's paintings and points out background clues, which confirm the location and date of the photographs, and even show previously unknown paintings Lavery was in the process of completing.²⁵²

I ask Brian how his books are produced, and whether he has a publisher. He did have one, he says, someone at the Glasgow Art Club helped him get the book published and printed but became ill right after the launch at which he sold 96 copies; since then he has been taking care of it himself. He arranges for the books to be printed in short runs, when he has enough money, and sells them online and through local outlets priced at £9.95. He says he makes a small amount from each copy and allows the outlet to keep £1 as commission. 'It's the way to go. I'll get 100 printed and sell them in the coffee shop and the wee museum, then get more done. It's the only way.'

I express my surprise Brian has not got a publisher to take this on, particularly as he claims to have had orders from people interested in photographic and art history worldwide. Brian is doubtful of the traditional publishing model, he feels let down by it in the past and has more control over this way of doing things. I suggest a good publisher may be able to take care of the business and marketing side and help him reach a larger audience. He admits there may be some merit in.. I ask him about the rights to the work and whether it is possible for him to take the book to another

²⁵² There was a version of Brian's story published in the Herald newspaper in 2006. http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12441114.REVEALED__THE_SECRET_OF_THE_GLASGOW_BOY__THE_ROYAL_PAINTING_AND_SOME_OLD_PHOTOGRAPHIC_PLATES_HIDDEN_IN_A_DUSTY_ARCHIVE/

publisher. He seems unsure about what I mean by the question but tells me he has the rights to do whatever he wants with the book and has unrestricted access to and use of images of the photographic plates, even though they are held in the Glasgow Art Club archive. I offer to pass on a copy of his book to a publisher I know for advice, someone who might be interested in producing an edition with better quality images. Brian tells me he is willing to give it a try and hands me a copy. I buy an additional copy for myself. I contact the local publisher, send the book and an outline of Brian's story. There is still no response three months later.

Value and ownership

My time spent with SunnyG Radio was in parallel with my involvement with the Aye Write! PAG and other Glasgow Life activity, such as participation in the 'Visioning for Glasgow Libraries' process. Occasionally these would take place on the same day and it allowed me to see that issues such as the placing of value in literary activity, were being raised on both sides of the river. The Aye Write! 'community' voiced concerns about helping individuals, and particularly those from under-represented communities such as Govan, to see the value in reading generally and participation in the book festival specifically. Meanwhile the SunnyG community expressed concern their literary activity was not valued by the city generally or by Aye Write! specifically.

Early in my relationship with SunnyG, I told Jim about my ongoing involvement with Aye Write! and participation in the PAG. He physically recoiled at that information and told me Aye Write! was more interested in people from the west end and Bearsden (more affluent areas) than Govan. When I enquired further, he backed up his position with the information Brian had been snubbed by the festival after offering to speak on his *6000 Years of Govan History* book.

Sometime later I had the chance to ask Brian about this. His version was he had called and left a message for the Festival Programmer, offering his services, and his call was never returned. He could not recall who the programmer was at that time or exactly what year this happened. Brian did not seem affected by this to the same extent as Jim but did see it as an indication what he had to say was not considered

particularly valuable. I shared some insight of the pressures I was aware of from my experience of the programming side of Aye Write! and told him it was regarded among the team that local interest and history events tend to do well at the festival. Brian shrugged and then pointed out with some pride that the Mitchell Library had purchased a few copies of his book to put in stock.

On another occasion I had a conversation with Heather about collecting stories from the Govan community. With some bitterness Heather told me they had done that in the past. They were in the middle of gathering stories when there was a funding call for exactly that sort of work – gathering community stories across Glasgow to be collated into a database and used for publication. The funding would have been enough to sustain SunnyG for a year. They applied for the role and were turned down, later finding the funding was awarded to a larger non-community-based cultural organisation. Shortly afterwards, someone from that organisation approached SunnyG, said they understood they had a collection of community stories and asked if they could have them. The request was refused.

Heather felt SunnyG as an organisation and the work they were doing, was valued less because they worked directly with the community, and cultural organisations not based within communities, have an advantage in accessing funding as they are somehow considered more professional by funding bodies, or perhaps are better at speaking the same language as them. It is understandable Heather could come to this conclusion, even if there are many other factors involved in such decisions. In her example, the community stories may well be the same, as evidenced from the approach by the successful organisation, yet a community-based organisation does the work and another professional cultural organisation is somehow put in a position to collect that work and get the funding. The perception in the SunnyG team was organisations such as theirs are not valued by civic and national agencies to produce cultural material of any quality.

The placement of funding can of course be a concrete expression of value. Funding does not come easily to SunnyG, and seems to be an ongoing challenge for the station, with small amounts gleaned from community funds, trusts and advertising revenue. At a noisy and lively SunnyG fundraising event at Glasgow's ABC

venue in 2016,²⁵³ an announcement was made from the stage about the lack of funding from the local authority: 'Most of you probably don't know this, SunnyG gets no funding at all from Glasgow City Council. What do you think of that?' Resounding boos and shouts of 'shame!' from the audience members. The subtext is Glasgow City Council [GCC] should be funding the project, although why and how is not explored. Perhaps there is a general feeling that GCC have the responsibility of supporting worthwhile activities in the city: road repairs, cleansing, home helps, community radio? While I do not know exactly what funding opportunities SunnyG has tried to access, or why they have been unsuccessful, I can see it could be challenging for funders to engage with an organisation which values its people and its mission to the detriment of its administrative structures.

Some support agencies have recognised the value of the work SunnyG does without requiring change to a more conventional working model. At the same fundraiser, Heather was delighted to tell me she had recently heard from someone at the Scottish Book Trust who had invited the station to be involved with Book Week Scotland and sent a cheque along with the exhortation to 'keep doing what you're doing.' For a small organisation on the cutting edge of community work, this endorsement of their approach from a national agency meant a lot. I happened to be in the SunnyG office when the officer from Book Week Scotland had visited earlier in the year, and we had a good discussion about the work being done there. We both agreed what SunnyG does for and in the community is not easily represented on a funding form and its value is better experienced in person.

A more personal expression of being undervalued arrived in a discussion with Martin J Taylor, who runs the 'Alive from SunnyG' Scottish music show along with Sam, another volunteer. Martin is a playwright and director, originally from Kirkcaldy, who studied at The Drama Centre in London and has staged a play at Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre starring Richard Wilson. He feels the creative industries are virtually closed to people from working-class backgrounds, unless they

²⁵³ The event took place on 19 August 2016.

allow themselves to be subsumed into middle-class culture, including modification of their accent. He gives James Kelman as an example of someone who has railed against this same issue and is kept on the fringes of Scottish cultural life in the category of unpredictable genius.

Martin is particularly concerned about losing the representation of dialect in written and staged works. He questions not only who gets to decide what is the acceptable form with which to communicate, but who gets to decide who decides this. As a playwright who values working-class stories and dialects in his work, he feels he is side-lined by funders and commissioners who are increasingly, in his opinion, from a privileged background and more homogenous in education and outlook. This issue has been raised in recent years by celebrities, critics and academics, such as Friedman et al (2016) who identify an 'unequal distribution of cultural, social *and* economic capital'.²⁵⁴

While Martin does not see any sort of middle-class conspiracy, he does regard it as a combination of limitations on the opportunities available to working class cultural producers as a result of economic pressures, combined with a lack of recognition of value in material from working-class sources.²⁵⁵

Analysis

Attendance and participation

The first point worth making here is the illogical nature of the assumption around non-participation in literature based on non-attendance at a festival. The literary community in and around SunnyG has a love for reading, writing and sharing literature apparently undimmed by their lack of attendance at the book festival. Aye Write! initially grew out of efforts to support and encourage readers in the city, and its core ethos is around the support of reader development.

²⁵⁴ Friedman, Sam, Dave O'Brien, and Daniel Laurison. "'Like Skydiving without a Parachute': How Class Origin Shapes Occupational Trajectories in British Acting." *Sociology* (2016): 0038038516629917.

²⁵⁵ Interview: Martin Taylor, 2015.

There is no doubt there is value in attending the book festival, and many readers and writers clearly get a lot out of it but at some point, it appears attendance of festival events transitioned from being an opportunity for readers, to being regarded as a measure of literary engagement. There is no justification for this and one of its results is the potential disregarding and disenfranchising of active engaged champions of reading and producers of literature.

Identity

Reflecting on the initial encounter with Jim and SunnyG Radio, I was able to see the significance of the negotiation of credentials. The repeated portrayal of Govan as a place of hopelessness is what SunnyG is trying to fight against, and what Jim and his colleagues have been trying to help people overcome. As a result, they are protective of the community and wary of people, well-meaning or not, who might add to the problem by misrepresenting or selectively representing the area.

Within this negotiation, the issue of identity is a crucial element. The SunnyG team, in common with community projects all over, occupy a difficult space in terms of identity. They do not accept the identity applied to Govan from without, even while they might accept some of the raw statistics on which it is based, perhaps because the narrative it tells is missing the richness of their own experience and community history, but also because to do so is to accept that there is little hope of change. On the other hand, there is also a resistance to the notional ideal identities they feel society presents – a media-championed one in which celebrity and wealth are measures of success. Or an imagined middle-class existence that appears to involve making what, for many, would be unaffordable lifestyle choices, and taking on the cultural trappings championed as appropriately valuable by public and private sector organisations. Either of these options would effectively require a disavowing of working-class heritage and identity, essentially succumbing to the contentious Cultural Deficit Model.

The particular delight taken by SunnyG staff and volunteers in highlighting writers with a Govan connection, is part of this drive to place value in the Govan identity and inspire local people to be better versions of themselves, whatever that

means for them, without losing sight of their heritage. Additional literature seems to be tested against these local values. There is a common thread in the literature spoken about and shared by John ‘the taxi’, for example: works about or written by Karl Marx, Robert Burns, Woodie Guthrie, Irvine Welsh, which give voice to an undervalued underclass and recognition of their cause. Along with the celebration of local writers, this points to a great deal of importance being put on literature which speaks from where they are, socio-politically as well as geographically. This is also reflected in the way Heather, Jim and Steg speak about SunnyG’s mission as ‘giving voice to local people’, a statement repeated often in newspaper articles about the station.²⁵⁶

While nurturing a belief in the value of local voices and local writers such as Brian, against a perceived civic culture which does not see that value, an invitation to purchase a ticket to see a writer from elsewhere is not particularly attractive. From this perspective, an invitation from Aye Write! to attend is almost an invitation to betray heritage, and to attend appears as an effective acceptance there is little value in the work being produced locally. A similar attitude was expressed by some members of the spoken word/performance poetry community, as outlined in the next chapter.

I never did speak to JL about his experience at the George the Poet event and did not try to pursue him after the first month, but Jim told me what the lads had said on their return from the festival. They thought George was fantastic, were really inspired by him, but felt out of place in The Mitchell. Jim said they were both a bit overwhelmed by the grandeur of the building, and once seated at the event in the Main Hall, JL said he looked around and thought ‘There’s no one here like us’. I have no reason to doubt this account of the young men’s experience at Aye Write!, whether recounted accurately or in some way channelled through a particular viewpoint of what the festival is like and who it is for – it reveals a general perception of identity as a factor in participation.

²⁵⁶ <http://www.scotlandnow.dailyrecord.co.uk/lifestyle/heritage/sunny-govan-radios-positive-impact-3452153>

Truth

In revisiting my notes from multiple visits to SunnyG, I began to see truth as a recurring theme. Or, more specifically, the theme was concern about how words relate to reality. This emerged within Jim's account of the discrepancy between the media's reporting of Govan and the lived experience of the community. Jim saw a role for SunnyG in addressing this discrepancy, particularly for young people. The concept of truth was also brought up by John 'the taxi' in his defence of Irvine Welsh's books, and in his description of *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* as a factual account but with 'dialogue roon about it'.

Two of Brian McQuade's books relate to truth: *6000 Years of Govan History* attempts to give a truthful account of Govan's heritage, and *The Photography of Sir John Lavery* uncovers the truth about Lavery's controversial use of photography in his portraiture practice. These examples are each related to the concept that what has been said about a subject or person or community, needs to be aligned with truth. It fits with the mission statement of SunnyG, to 'give voice to the community', perhaps implying versions of their experience projected onto Govan from outwith the community are further from the truth. There is a connection here between the lack of literary engagement anticipated in Govan, and the truth of a vibrant and natural community of people engaged with it.

Boundary objects

The SunnyG bench acts as a boundary object between organisation and community but it is also possible the organisation itself may be considered a boundary object.. Edwards (2005) observes that boundary objects are 'hybrid, networked and mediated domains' which need not be material.²⁵⁷ Thinking in these terms could be a useful way to understand the SunnyG organisation itself. While I found it challenging

²⁵⁷ Edwards, Richard. "Contexts, boundary objects and hybrid spaces: Theorising learning in lifelong learning." (2005).

to make any progress with the development of the radio show within an organisation so apparently unstructured and chaotic in its day-to-day environment, and in which communication is informal and ad-hoc through local face-to-face interaction, it strikes me this environment may be much more comfortable to some of the people SunnyG seeks to work with – particularly the young people not in education or employment who live in a world closer to this dynamic on a daily basis. These young people may find it difficult to engage with the highly structured and formal systems of government agencies, educational establishments or the benefits system, but SunnyG in its informality and flexibility, acts as a boundary object between this community and its routes to progression.

As a community radio station, a training facility and an information hub, SunnyG's interpretive flexibility is inbuilt and the dynamic flow between these interpretations was apparent during this ethnographic study. The modulation between realms and the porosity of the organisation, particularly on the community side, differentiate it from other cultural organisations with a more traditional structure. SunnyG may sacrifice some of its own effectiveness in engaging with formal structures of funding and support agencies, in the process of making itself accessible to their community.

SunnyG is a small organisation operating in one corner of a large city, but the issues emerging here, in relation to literary participation, cultural production and consumption, value and identity have resonance across literary Glasgow. From within Glasgow Life and from the mouths of poets and publishers, similar concerns are raised, even if the assumptions and conclusions are different. The next chapter hears some of those voices and provides an opportunity to compare perspectives on similar issues.

Chapter Five: All on the Same Page

In preceding chapters, I identified some of the challenges faced by public, community and informal groups working across literary Glasgow. This chapter explores the collective nature of literary Glasgow and the spaces between the numerous groups and interests of which it is composed. It positions the diversity of the sector as a sign of strength and potential resilience. A desire for a collaborative framework is demonstrated through the voices of those engaged with literature in the city.

The chapter proposes a complexity theory (CT) approach to understanding what is going on within Glasgow's literary sector, highlighting emergent models of collaborations and the unsatisfied need for a boundary object, as illustrated in the misappropriation of *Aye Write!* as such. The chapter ends with a proposal for a whole sector approach towards some form of boundary object to enable literary engagement across the sector at many levels.

Chapters Three and Four, looked at organisations aimed at promoting literature and supporting reader development. *Aye Write!* and *SunnyG* operate at vastly different scales of magnitude and yet there are themes common to both. They each exhibit a desire to connect with a community of people to bring about positive change. Their work is shaped by their definition of value, and ability to respond to opportunities and challenges affected both positively and negatively by organisational structures. It is timely to step back from individual organisations and consider the broader picture of literary activity in Glasgow and how it does, or potentially could, develop the connectivity across the reading, writing and publishing communities.

Chapter Two surveyed literary activity across Glasgow and found existing literature-related organisations and activities are diverse, almost to the point of incongruity. These come with a range of individual objectives expected to pose a challenge to collaborative efforts; yet not only do collaborations exist but across literary Glasgow, there is evidence of a desire for goal-driven partnership, and opportunities for such are met with energetic support. Where there are tensions

between actors within the sector, such as the spoken word community and Aye Write!, these are often found to have been brought about by thwarted relationship expectations rather than by competition or ill-will.

Recognising the sector as a complex adaptive system allows us to see these occasional collaborations, positive energies and tensions as indicators of an emergent desire for a mechanism or channel to support relationships and release the potential within the system. This chapter argues diversity of purpose and approach should be celebrated; that relationships and micro-interactions across the sector are as significant as any element of infrastructure and should be nurtured; and the emergent potential of the sector could be unleashed by conscious creation of some form of boundary object to ease partnership and collaboration.

Multiple agendas within the literary sector

In Chapter Two the case was made that literary Glasgow exists as a landscape of resources, activities and alliances centred around reading, writing and literature. While there is a sense actors and organisations have an affiliation based on the city's literary activity, there is recognition that perspectives and motivations vary. When I interviewed author and publisher Keith Charters of Strident Publishing, I asked him what elements he would expect to feature in a thriving literary sector. Charters suggests there may be multiple answers, dependent on perspective and specifically on the desired outcomes and activities of each organisation:

Talking about having a 'thriving sector' what does that mean and who is it important to? Glasgow Life will have a set of outcomes they are consciously, or maybe more subconsciously trying to achieve, but I can imagine publishers might have a slightly different perspective, libraries might have a different perspective, [...] so different measures and those measures are going to be dependent on what the actors themselves task to do.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ Interview: Keith Charters, 2016.

Charters draws an interesting connection between the challenge of defining a thriving sector and the diversity of individual goals represented. Endpoint concepts, such as the outcomes, achievements and measures mentioned here, will be significantly different for booksellers, publishers, libraries and literacy projects, and serve to highlight differences between them, rather than indicate potential for relationship. Sales figures, facilities usage and individual reading progress are not particularly compatible measures, yet a step back from the detail of individual activity reveals a potential connection centred on an overarching concept. Each of these organisations engaging with the literary city would readily celebrate an increase in the value individuals ascribe to the activities of reading and writing, and to works of literature as objects and experiences. This is the territory from which collaboration can spring.

The rhetoric around acknowledgment of multiple aims of Glasgow's creative sector is not new. In 2006, and with Glasgow City Council under leadership of a previous administration, Culture and Sport Glasgow recognised within its published Cultural Strategy document there are diverse aims across the cultural sector in general, and acknowledged one of its roles was to support these multiple agendas:

Glasgow City Council has to operate a fine balancing act in distributing its resources, between a focus on the city centre and the wider city, between the range of traditional high culture modes and community owned culture, and also between the very many other interest groups and organisations. Our task is to address these varying demands in a way that sustains creative organisations in an often dynamic and rapidly changing environment, in addition to taking a long term view of priorities in the deployment of staff, revenue and capital. It also means accepting that cultural activity impacts on

the whole range of human life and therefore needs to service multiple agendas.²⁵⁹

This statement is on strategy for culture generally, but the sub-domain of literary culture displays a similar range of challenges. The dimensional factors recognised above are still the ones discussed in cultural debates across the city today. Spaciality, the distribution of resources on a geographical basis between the centre and the periphery of the city, or the balance between 'high' culture and community-owned, 'grass-roots' culture, was a topic of conversation within the Aye Write! Programming and Community Engagement Groups, as it was within the spoken word community, the writers of SunnyG, Scottish Writers' Centre, Weegie Wednesday, and Maryhill Writers' Group.

Time-related factors are also indicated in the statement above, and draw attention to a particular problem faced by the local authority: change can happen quickly, yet a long view must be taken with regard to priorities and deployment of resources. This suggests it is unlikely for a cultural organisation to be effective if it takes a predominantly reactive stance within the sector, and also that an overly prescriptive strategic leadership would be at risk of committing to priorities the sector moves away from or even against.

The logical position is to take an approach based on a commitment to higher level ideals (such as reader development) yet avoid being prescriptive in the way it is carried out or on the secondary impacts of positive development on such ideals. The resources, expertise and infrastructure of a cultural organisation genuinely seeking to support city-wide cultural activity and engagement, should be focussed on nurturing a fertile environment for such activity to emerge and thrive. The diversity acknowledged, what are the implications for organisations operating within the sector and how can this servicing of multiple agendas best be achieved?

²⁵⁹ Councillor Steven Purcell, 'Glasgow: The Place, The People, The Potential - Glasgow's Cultural Strategy' (Culture and Sport Glasgow, 2006), p. 10.

Partnerships depend on finding points of alignment between the goals or values of the entities involved. The success of these partnerships is also dependant on the model in which they operate. In a goal-centred, linear model of literary sector development, it can be difficult to align partnerships between agents seeking different outcomes. A focus on outcomes within literary Glasgow leaves prospective partners wrestling over the merits of participation versus income generation versus artistic value, or even over tertiary outcomes, such as overall reduction in poverty levels among geographic communities experiencing multiple deprivation.

In 2016, while assisting Glasgow Life with workshops which informed the ‘A Vision for Glasgow Libraries’ paper, I was involved in conversations with potential partner organisations in which the relative merits of these outcomes were debated.²⁶⁰ A dependence on these end-point alignments of outcomes, and the resultant disagreements over value and measures of success, can limit the potential partnerships and their opportunities to work together. The difficulty of multiple aims was discussed with regards to Aye Write! in Chapter Three and foreshadows this challenge which also exists on a city-wide, multi-agency scale. The book festival was inclined towards certain outcomes, which became measures of success. Yet conflicting outcomes of financial viability, quality and community reader development were seen to be the cause of something of an identity crisis within the festival. The resolution to this was found in realignment of activity with the festival’s ethos rather than purely towards specific outcomes.

Charters positions the concept of a ‘thriving sector’ as one challenged or undermined by multiple, potentially conflicting, goals. But this is only true if the connectivity of the sector is based on outcomes rather than values. An artificial focus on alignment of goals and outcomes may be a hangover from instrumentalist thinking and a failure of evidence based policy-making (EBPM). A reminder of the words of Edwards and Chapman is appropriate at this point:

²⁶⁰ ‘A Vision For Glasgow Libraries’; McConnell.

the ‘evidence-based’ approach presumes a linear, or at least unproblematic, relationship between cause and effect. In fact, complex systems involve hundreds of nested feedback loops, which result in significantly non-linear behaviour. Change in such systems is at least as much to do with internal structure as with external interventions.²⁶¹

To consider the existence of a ‘thriving sector’ need not be dependent on an alignment of the goals of all those involved. An attempt to achieve goal-alignment would actually undermine the strength and potential which exists, through narrowing scope and placing actors in more direct competition for resources, funding and positive outcomes. In fact, diversity of approach, activity and aim is crucial to resilience of the sector.

Allowing diversity

The development of literary Glasgow is too wide-ranging to be entirely within the scope of any one agency or organisation and it may well be counterproductive to try to make it so. Whether the aim of such development is an increase in the number and scope of literary events; an improvement in functional literacy; more effective nurturing of Glasgow’s literary talent; greater commercial success for publishers, bookstores and even libraries; or a steady increase in the number of citizen-hours dedicated to reading for pleasure and personal growth; there are multiple factors which play a part and many elements of the city-system which can either support or hinder such development.

Any sustainable development of Glasgow’s literary sector must work across all dimensions relating to the production, promotion, consumption and application of literature. Formal, structured efforts, such as those carried out by libraries, community learning workers and booksellers, exist alongside less formal and emergent literary activity, such as friends’ reading groups, workplace book swaps,

²⁶¹ Chapman and Edwards, p. 11.

and spoken word open mic nights. While the variety of motivations and aims of these activities can be considered a great challenge, there is within this diversity a great strength.

The concept of resilience will be developed further in Chapter Six, but it is useful to mention it in the context of diversity. Variety and diversity are recognised as crucial to the resilience of any complex system, whether a rainforest, an immune system or a human social organisation. Diversity is regarded as the first principle of building resilience and is:

widely held to be important for resilience because it provides options for responding to change and disturbance [...] Evidence from several fields of study suggests that systems with many different components are generally more resilient than systems with few components or less heterogeneous components, whether the components are molecules, species, habitat patches, livelihoods, actors, knowledge systems or institutions.²⁶²

A system which exhibits diversity can allow many entry points, which in the case of literary Glasgow, translates to many ways to engage with literary activity and support. The examples of the demographics of Aye Write! audiences, and SunnyG and spoken word participants described in previous chapters, serves to illustrate this principle in action. The variety of opportunities presented: their location, style, cost, culture and expectations, provide a broader selection and therefore greater potential for engagement than if only one of these options was available.

A further positive for literary Glasgow is the various dimensions and drivers are not in direct opposition to one another, and in many ways are complementary. The drive for literary development in the widest sense, is one in which progress in each aspect can and should be beneficial to all others. This is borne out in the interviews I carried out.. Each appears to be supportive of, and in fact celebrates, the

²⁶² Reinette Biggs, Maja Schlüter, and Michael L. Schoon, *Principles for Building Resilience: Sustaining Ecosystem Services in Social-Ecological Systems* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 51.

success of others within and beyond their own discipline and area of operation: publishers contribute to literacy initiatives; literacy workers celebrate the opening of a new bookstore; booksellers help to promote the book festivals.

Jim Carruth, Glasgow's Poet Laureate, expresses this supportive sentiment from the perspective of the St Mungo's Mirrorball:

We are very happy with the vibrancy of the Glasgow scene, from where we were. So, we've always facilitated the idea that members will go away and be involved with their own events and run their own events. Good example: Robin Cairns, member of Mirrorball, runs Last Monday at Rio, others are involved with the Scottish Writers' Centre stuff, the crossover. A number of our members are involved in preparation events. We don't see it as an issue around competition, [...] It's much more robust if it's not just one organisation organising the whole thing....²⁶³

Carruth sees the crossover of activity around poetry, and even the occasional calendar clash, as indicators of a more resilient 'scene'. Mirrorball's commitment to literary Glasgow extends beyond poetry to the promotion of other events through its weekly newsletter:

So what we do is we promote every single literary event in Glasgow that we're aware of in our mailing list, we don't just promote our own. That's sending out a signal. And we've always done that, we've always said 'by the way, here's another event on the same night as ours without... you know we might send out a mailshot event saying here's a Mirrorball event separate, but the listing which we send out weekly we put everyone on.

²⁶³ Interview with Jim Carruth 08/05/2015 24:23

I think that's what we're arguing, we're arguing for a specific issue around landscape, and it isn't about us.²⁶⁴

Two things of interest jump out from this quote and they are related. The first is that promoting other literary events could be considered 'sending out a signal'. The intended recipients of this signal are individual and organisational members of Glasgow's literary community, both within and beyond Mirrorball, as these are the only ones who could potentially receive it. And the signal itself is certainly a statement 'we' (within and beyond Mirrorball) recognise our part in something greater than ourselves. It can only be considered a 'signal' if it is sent into an environment in which this outlook is not the norm.

In the cultural sector, the existence of many groups is tied to measures of attendance and this could potentially drive a protectionist outlook detrimental to the sector as a whole. This is a difficult problem to solve, particularly under conditions of increased competition for funding and the perennial demand to demonstrate 'impact'. A sector-wide increase in the altruistic promotion of literary events would be part of the solution.

Secondly, it is interesting Carruth uses the term 'landscape'. This suggests an emphasis on creation of an environment in which literature could flourish, rather than a focus on specific goals or outcomes. It also draws attention away from any one actor within the sector. The term 'ecosystem' is somewhat diminished by current over-use but an inter-related, co-dependent system is what is being alluded to here.

It is unfortunate Carruth's inclusive and generous attitude towards co-promotion has not always been reciprocated. Two of Jim's poetry collections have been published during his time as City Laureate. It was with some regret and puzzlement that he related to me his books were not stocked in Glasgow libraries. Even at full retail price, it would cost less than £600 to have a copy of each title in every one of Glasgow's public libraries, an obvious way to distribute the work of the

²⁶⁴ Interview with Jim Carruth 08/05/2015 25:28

city's poet. It is unclear whether this was a decision taken by Glasgow Libraries or the publisher, or an oversight from both.

There are other cases in which there is an apparent break-down in goodwill between elements of literary Glasgow. The most notable examples of this appear to spring from unmet expectations regarding potential interaction across the sector. The concerns expressed by the SunnyG team over Aye Write!'s promotion of celebrated non-local writers over what they regard as valid locally produced work, were discussed in Chapter Four; concerns echoed by the spoken word community, as highlighted by Bram Gieben.

But even these opinions do not amount to a wish to diminish one aspect of the system but to elevate and include local efforts. There is a consistent desire for reader development in Glasgow, and a commitment to it which ranges from goodwill, to actual concrete action and resources. This has been demonstrated in publisher, bookseller, educator and community support for high-profile events, such as Aye Write! and Wee Write!; in no less significant support for spoken word events from poets, audiences and publicans; and in the coming together of public, private and voluntary efforts to make literary projects a reality. The Home Ground project and publication is an example of the latter and is discussed in detail later in this chapter. This confluence of mission and energies across the sector is a great asset, but with care it could be more effectively and intentionally deployed towards city-wide literary development.

Even though there is some agreement towards the goal of reader development and improved literacy, the diversity mentioned earlier means those concerned are coming at this from different directions. Literary Glasgow is not homogenous. Below, some of the categories are taken from Chapter Two's Mapping process and applied across the four dimensions within which Glasgow's potential literary development operates, in order to illustrate some of the areas where goals and intentions may be found. These dimensions of the Cultural, Commercial, Civic and Community

frequently arise as factors in Cultural Policy literature, such as Grodach’s ‘Urban Cultural Policy and Creative City Making’.²⁶⁵

Minimal /No	To some extent	Yes

	Commercial	Cultural	Civic	Community
Bookshops				
Publishers				
News, Mags, Journals				
Education				
Libraries				
Writers				
Book Events				
Reading Groups				
Literacy activity				
Book Festivals				

Figure 25: Four dimensions of literary Glasgow and some illustrative examples

Commercial

Direct: Bookshops; Publishers; Newspapers and magazines; Education
 Indirect: Employers (benefitting from staff literacy/support, or from sponsorship of literary programmes).

²⁶⁵ Carl Grodach, ‘Urban Cultural Policy and Creative City Making’, *Cities*, 68 (2017), 82–91
 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2017.05.015>>.

Cultural

Literary output (through writers/publishers); Expression and exchange of ideas; Increased national/international profile of the city; Celebration of local cultural activity; Libraries as cultural hubs; Book and spoken word events.

Community

Increased capacity for local and national representation; Contextualising local experience and knowledge; Improved resilience of communities; Health benefits.

Civic

Support for literacy; Increased engagement in the socio-political life of the city; improved access to health, education and employment resources; Promotion of the city as a culturally significant location.



Figure 26: Four dimensions of literary activity

Some organisations, activities or individual actors fit more precisely in one of these dimensions, but most exist in the overlap between two, three or all four. Booksellers are clearly commercial entities, but some contribute to community and cultural life. Oxfam bookshop in Byres Road, in the heart of Glasgow's West End, operates on a commercial basis to raise money for its parent charity but also hosts community book groups and writer events, and is a fixture in the cultural landscape.

A literacy project taking place within a public library might appear to be primarily a community-centred endeavour, but in practice is much broader in scope. Literacy work, such as the project Julie Fraser carried out with Castlemilk Waves group, incorporated writing based on local cultural experience, making use of civic facilities including the library, museums and archives. It was supported by a local Housing Association; effectively a community-based commercial organisation.

Aye Write! sits at the intersection of these four dimensions. It is clearly a high-profile cultural event and aims to support reader development in the community, as well as show-casing Glasgow's ability to carry out a successful book festival, but is bound to commercial considerations. The festival exists only by bringing in enough ticket sales and sponsorship to sustain it. It is an outlet for Waterstones bookstores, the festival's retail partner, and for the writers and publishers which feature in its line-up.

Importance of partnership working

Many public cultural organisations are evolving away from a model focussed on the administration of resources to a community, to one that recognises their own place within a complex and dynamic system. Hefetz (2017) expresses the need for policymakers to respond to a threefold challenge across multiple dimensions, a

similar to that acknowledged by Glasgow City Council in its 'Glasgow: The Place, The People, The Potential' document, as discussed earlier in this chapter.²⁶⁶

In a cultural choice framework, governments operate different service portfolios and the source of allocation problems occurs due to interdependencies between these functions. Beyond service production costs, there exist variable characteristics such as citizen interest, market competition, and managerial structure and operating behaviour in the aggregate responsibilities governments take. Thus, progressive public administrators need to respond to a threefold challenge: the global versus local challenge to define cultural variability; the leadership challenge to interact with citizens when facing dynamic and heterogeneous demand for public services; and the cross-boundary challenge to develop a collaborative rather than a competitive future.²⁶⁷

The overlap of the dimensions of Glasgow's literary sector and the range of potential partners, means it is necessary for a civic cultural organisation, such as Glasgow Life to employ collaborative working and partnership thinking, but these partnerships can and do take place at varying levels.²⁶⁸ To give an example, Figure 27 illustrates the range of public, private and voluntary sector partners involved in Early Years literacy in Glasgow.

²⁶⁶ Amir Hefetz, 'The Communicative Policy Maker Revisited: Public Administration in a Twenty-First Century Cultural-Choice Framework', *Local Government Studies*, 42.4 (2016), 527–35 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2016.1181060>>; Purcell, p. 10.

²⁶⁷ Hefetz.

²⁶⁸ Peter Matthews, 'Being Strategic in Partnership – Interpreting Local Knowledge of Modern Local Government', *Local Government Studies*, 40.3 (2014), 451–72 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2013.859141>>.



Figure 27: Partnership Involvement: Early Intervention in the Early Years ²⁶⁹

Some of these partnerships might be strategically planned at a high level within an organisation, but often they are nurtured by those tasked with the delivery of a project in a pragmatic, localised process. Mari Binnie, Senior Arts Producer with Glasgow Life, works across the Glasgow North East area and found it necessary for the successful delivery of her programmes to negotiate local partnerships around shared values:

[...] out in the areas it was trying to get partners all to work together strategically. So you would have partners like NHS, Glasgow Life, Glasgow City Council, the Community Partnership and stuff, so that everybody in those areas was all working together some of the same programmes of work to

²⁶⁹ Katrina Brodin, *Transformation Glasgow: A Reading and Literacy Strategy for Glasgow - Business Case* (Glasgow Life, 26 June 2017).

benefit the communities.²⁷⁰

While local knowledge and expertise nurturing such partnerships is invaluable, it would no doubt be made easier if higher level, conceptual partnerships were already in place, allowing Mari and others to select from a menu of appropriate partners rather than reinventing the process with each new project.

The precise nature of these partnerships and the elevation up the management scale at which they occur is important. If the partnership and its expression is dictated too rigidly by higher levels of management, there may be limited scope for tailoring those relationships in the most effective way locally; if the scope is too broad and undefined, there is the risk of a scatter-gun approach with too many uncoordinated aims and local workers being unable to service all of them effectively. Matthews writes of this dichotomy and the use and misuse of the metaphors of strategic vs 'scatter-gun'²⁷¹. He demonstrates that 'strategic' is misused as a linear process through flawed community planning partnerships and local authority leadership:

The original subject of the strategy metaphor – a general guiding the scarce resources to where they can be most effective – has been lost as the concept is stretched to cover a policy act that is meant to solve all the challenges that the area is facing.²⁷²

Neither the misapplied strategic nor the broad 'scatter-gun' approach to partnership working are effective within a complex system. One great challenge in partnership working is the development of a model in which the core project ethos is preserved, while allowing enough flexibility for each of the partner agencies' goals to be satisfied. Glasgow's literary sector encompasses agents with different goals and

²⁷⁰ Interview: Mari Binnie, 16/3/2015

²⁷¹ Matthews.

²⁷² Matthews, p. 460.

models of success, yet some successful partnerships have been achieved at local and even city-wide level, demonstrating the potential within the sector.

In 2003, The Reading Agency (UK-wide reader development charity) sought to bring together publishers and public libraries in a partnership to promote reading at a time when they had an uneasy relationship caused by their different business models around access to books.²⁷³ Yet this partnership, called Reading Partners, was felt to have mutual benefit not only for these agencies but also for communities, readers and new writers aiming to grow their audience. According to Mary Greenshields, this was one of the factors leading to the launch of Aye Write! as a book festival, which connected libraries, communities, authors and publishers.

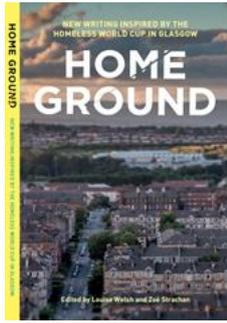
So they started up a collaborative project called Reading Partners between publishers and libraries. [...] And so we have access to readers and publishers of books, and authors and so it was a perfect partnership really. They would give us, as I mentioned earlier, a first time novelist, and how do they get the book read by people? And if they work with libraries and with book groups then we get word of mouth going. And some can do really well.²⁷⁴

Literacy workers within Glasgow's communities list other, less obvious, partnerships which form around a common recognition of the value of literary engagement, even when endpoint goals are diverse. Examples include NHS mental health teams contacting the library service to help support some of their clients, housing associations contributing staff time and financial resources towards creative writing reminiscence projects for the elderly. In each case, the partners did not need to adjust or align their aims, but rather found common ground in an appreciation of the value of literature.

²⁷³ UK DCMS, *Framework for the Future: Libraries, Learning and Information in the Next Decade* (DCMS, 2004).

²⁷⁴ Interview: Mary Greenshields, 2015.

Home Ground



*Home Ground is a powerful and enduring collection of new writing from established authors, learners, students and tutors who have worked together in Glasgow. It is a book of stories and poems that are about people; their hopes and fears, and their trials and triumphs.*²⁷⁵

The Home Ground project is a powerful illustration of the potential for partnerships across the literary sector, which address social issues while remaining committed to the various artistic, commercial, community and educational values of each partner.

In advance of Glasgow's hosting of the Homeless World Cup football tournament in summer 2016, members of the Aye Write! PAG were approached to help set up a cultural legacy project for the festival volunteers, all of whom had current or historical experience of homelessness. By drawing together ideas and expertise, the team proposed an extended series of creative writing workshops, during which the volunteers would be supported to develop their writing in any form they wanted. They would be encouraged to give voice to their own experiences, whether regarding homelessness or not. This led to the development of a strong set of partnerships from across Glasgow's literary community and infrastructure:

- The University of Strathclyde provided tutors, course structure and accreditation for participants who wanted it;
- The University of Glasgow provided mentors from its cohort of Creative Writing MLitt students;

²⁷⁵ *Home Ground: New Writing Inspired by the Homeless World Cup in Glasgow*, ed. by Louise Welsh and Zoe Strachan, 1st edn (Glasgow: Freight Books, 2017).

- Glasgow Life's Communities and Libraries teams provided access to facilities for the course to run, tutors for the sessions and managed the project;
- Freight Design and Freight Books handled all design and production of an anthology of the work, with input from the volunteer participants at every stage;
- Glasgow-based crime writer Lin Anderson and Glasgow's Poet Laureate, Jim Carruth gave optional masterclasses;
- Writers Louise Welsh and Zoe Strachan edited the anthology and contributed some of their own writing.

Aye Write! made the launch of the book a high-profile event on the opening night of the 2017 festival, and Glasgow Libraries made the anthology the 'City Read' for 2017, distributing 10,000 free copies across the city, as well as free e-books, with the support of Waterstones bookshops and Glasgow Life's marketing and publicity team.

The core aims of each of the partners involved were diverse, and even incongruous, yet effective partnership towards a successful project was achieved. The reason for this is more than the flexibility and generosity of each of these agencies, it is that the concept of reading and literacy development is recognised as a universally positive thing for individuals and communities, and therefore creates a strong unifying agenda around which the partnership can commit. There is a spectrum of outcomes from reading development sought and valued by the agencies: from educational attainment, to individual health improvement, increased employment prospects, general happiness and improved social cohesion. While some consensus could be built around these specific outcomes, they could also divide potential partners. It is simpler and more powerful to focus the agenda on the core reader development/support for writing agenda from which all outcomes emerge.

Reading and Literacy Summit

Generating consensus around a greater agenda was part of the thinking behind Glasgow's Reading and Literacy Summit, hosted by Glasgow Life in 2016 to bring together representatives from local and national agencies involved in and committed

to reader development in all its forms. It was a tentative first step towards finding a city-wide solution to Glasgow's issues with literacy and with reader development. During two days of meetings engaging with 70 people, it widely acknowledged the many great literacy and reading programmes being delivered and great work being done, but also the pressures on individual agencies and services meant they didn't have the resources to maintain awareness of, much less a strong connection with, all the other work taking place. There was a strong consensus that to overcome Glasgow's challenges with reading and literacy, particularly against a backdrop of resource pressure, a more cohesive model for partnership and collaboration would be welcome.

The idea of commitment to an agenda as the core of a working model, rather than to some alignment of operational details is one which has appeared in organisational theory. Mintzberg (1994) championed this approach as a more effective way for the management of organisations, and the concept has been held up by Whitlock (2003) and others²⁷⁶. Mintzberg suggests the type of planning which relies on calculating a strategy towards a destination, is not necessarily the best way forward. Rather, gathering consensus and commitment to a journey is needed to generate the energy required to sustain positive development.

The problem is that planning represents a calculating style of management, not a committing style. Managers with a committing style engage people in a journey. They lead in such a way that everyone on the journey helps shape its course. As a result, enthusiasm inevitably builds along the way. Those with a calculating style fix on a destination and calculate what the group must do to get there, with no concern for the members' preferences. But calculated

²⁷⁶ Henry Mintzberg, 'The Fall and Rise of Strategic Planning', *Harvard Business Review*, 72.1 (1994), 107–114; John L. Whitlock, 'Strategic Thinking, Planning, and Doing: How to Reunite Leadership and Management to Connect Vision with Action', in *American Society for Public Administration 64th Annual Conference*, 2003, III, 15–18
<<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/eb7a/3ccac2e2066fdd1d9d8a1fa859c309a1bf0c.pdf>> [accessed 16 October 2017].

strategies have no value in and of themselves; [...] strategies take on value only as committed people infuse them with energy.²⁷⁷

This could be difficult for an evidence-based, conscientious, publicly responsible cultural organisation to accept, particularly when it has an entrenched practice of doing rather than being. However, it is not proposing an abandonment of good practice in, for instance, community literary development, but stepping back to refocus on the fundamental agenda to allow wider collaboration across the sector. A tightly run, under-resourced literacy project may not have the scope or flexibility to engage with other agencies or community partners in a meaningful way, but an overarching sector-wide commitment to a reader development/literacy agenda could form the collaborative framework to support such a project.

Localised reader development projects

The most valuable localised reader development projects cited by interviewees in this research, such as Mari Binnie and Julie Fraser, are constructed as semi-formal partnerships around a shared commitment to the value of the project; exactly the sort of projects that could thrive if the supporting collaborative framework described above was in place. At the moment, these local partnerships are negotiated in spite of a lack of such a framework but could be much more efficient and effective with the support in place.

Julie Fraser has carried out reading, writing and literacy work with patients from Leverndale Hospital²⁷⁸, members of the Castlemilk WAVES project²⁷⁹ and ESOL learners from Glasgow's Chinese community:

²⁷⁷ Mintzberg, p. 109.

²⁷⁸ Leverndale Hospital is Glasgow's main psychiatric hospital and mental health facility.

²⁷⁹ WAVES was a community project for women survivors of domestic abuse in Castlemilk, a housing estate in the south of Glasgow.

Well for Leverndale, obviously I have a partnership with WAVES in Castlemilk so that project puts a little bit of funding in to it and I'm working in Pollokshaws as well – I'm working with the independent literacy project there, it's the Pollokshaws Literacy Project so it's Glasgow Life in partnership with Pollokshaws Literacy Project. I've been doing a WW1 project with them around a local war memorial and we're publishing a book with them as well, I can show you some photos. That was quite interesting because that was a whole different project using a war memorial as a literacy resource, so learning about dates and times. [...] These were guys who hadn't written any creative writing before, so they were purely doing literacy – grammar, spelling, that kind of thing and the feeling was to maybe push them in a new direction so could I go in and well, that's what emerged.

[...] They're local people, they live in Pollokshaws and they were attending this literacy project and we've done quite a lot of work with them, and I did some work a couple of years ago with a group of Chinese women that were going to the literacy project for ESL help but could I come in and maybe do a bit of storytelling like to Chinese legends and stuff like that. So, housing associations, a trust housing in Pollokshaws, I do some work with as well, I work with an elderly unit there and we do reminiscence work again inspired by the local area, so that's a partnership project between Glasgow Life and Trust Housing. So, Glasgow Life, the Pollokshaws Literacy Unit, the work that Pat's²⁸⁰ doing in Castlemilk but also linking in with – which didn't happen so much in the past – linking in with the archivists here and the social history curators. Getting these curators and archivists to come out to Castlemilk rather than sitting here [in the Mitchell Library]. And that's been quite challenging, I don't know why, but Pat's pulled it off and we've had two visits.²⁸¹

Fraser and her co-worker (Pat) Urquhart told me these local partnerships

²⁸⁰ Pat Urquhart, community arts and literacy worker.

²⁸¹ 'Interview: Julie Fraser'.00:18:01.

happened fairly naturally when funding and staffing levels were higher generally (before public sector cuts), but protectionism has made it more difficult. The contraction of resources led organisations to protect their funding and narrow their scope, even though they widely acknowledge working together is more efficient and effective. As Fraser confirmed:

... a lot of organisations, you might have a partnership on paper but it doesn't quite work as well as it could. I don't want to give an example but just whether they're reaching the people they should be reaching, the organisation with the money that is.²⁸²

There is an obvious power relationship attached to the flow of money from a national funding body or local government to the smaller cultural and community organisations that rely on such income. The terms of engagement are dictated in the same direction as the money, even if some feedback with regard to impact or need is encouraged to flow in the other direction. This is problematic for a number of reasons, which are well rehearsed by Belfiore (2007), Brouillette (2014), Oakley & O'Brien (2016) and others.²⁸³ These problems, including the tendency towards policy-based evidence-making in order to keep funding and the justification for it flowing in a two-way exchange, and the resignation with which community organisations shift their principles towards the latest set of buzz words in order to 'play the game' of 'find the funding'.²⁸⁴ Gray refers to the problem of 'policy attachment', in which cultural organisations align themselves and their activities with the most appropriate policies in order to survive.²⁸⁵ Warren and Jones are unsurprised by this state of affairs, noting:

²⁸² 'Interview: Julie Fraser' 00:33:25.

²⁸³ Belfiore, "'Defensive Instrumentalism" and the Legacy of New Labour's Cultural Policies'; Brouillette; Kate Oakley and Dave O'Brien, 'Learning to Labour Unequally: Understanding the Relationship between Cultural Production, Cultural Consumption and Inequality', *Social Identities*, 22.5 (2016), 471–86 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2015.1128800>>.

²⁸⁴ Eleonora Belfiore and Oliver Bennett, 'RETHINKING THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF THE ARTS', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 13.2 (2007), 135–51 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10286630701342741>>.

²⁸⁵ Clive Gray.

[...] in practice large sums of public money have come with strings attached, with organisations finding their own mission and operating principles being subsumed into a local state drive on economic growth and social cohesion. Perhaps, it should come as no surprise that those who control the purse strings can dictate the agenda.²⁸⁶

They recognise the austerity-driven withdrawal of public funding in the UK would be expected to have a significant effect on this relationship. If the funding is significantly reduced, or withdrawn completely, and replaced with a call for cross-sectoral partnership working and new, innovative (ie cheap) approaches in return for in-kind support, as it has, then the power relationship has changed. This is certainly the situation regarding funding and relationships within Glasgow's cultural sector, yet acceptance of this change is slow-moving. In 2015 Warren and Jones wrote:

the withdrawal of public funding as part of UK central government austerity measures is failing to result in a renegotiation of social and cultural strategy by creative workers and organisations whose aims are allied but not identical to those of the national and local state.

In the changing framework of urban policy and governance, the creative economy is a key arena where these debates are being played out.²⁸⁷

The austerity agenda has forced local government and cultural organisations into a new way of working. Although this is through necessity and not choice, there is the potential for positive outcomes and a chance to reinvent the civic/culture/community/commercial relationship. In the language of successive Glasgow City Council documents on Culture and Creative Industries, culture has

²⁸⁶ Saskia Warren and Phil Jones, 'Local Governance, Disadvantaged Communities and Cultural Intermediation in the Creative Urban Economy', *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 33.6 (2015), p1738 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0263774X15614661>>.

²⁸⁷ Warren and Jones.

transitioned from the role of heavy plant in urban regeneration, to a supply ship of economic prosperity, to a vehicle for community cohesion and individual development.

Complexity Theory and boundary objects

Complexity Theory provides a framework that serves to explain and support the issues around multi-agency relationships uncovered in this chapter and previous ones. In Chapter One we discussed Comunian's (2011) paper 'Rethinking the Creative City'. In this she argues that in the drive towards cultural development and the invention of the 'creative city', there has been an unhelpful focus of policy and strategy on 'what a city should have in order to be or become 'creative' at the expense of a deeper understanding of the relationships on which cultural activity is built'.²⁸⁸ This is relevant to literary development in Glasgow as a subset of cultural development. While infrastructure and iconic buildings can be important monuments declaring commitment to an aspect of cultural development, Comunian points to 'the importance of micro interactions and networks between creative practitioners, the publicly supported cultural sector and the cultural infrastructure of the city' as the real source of cultural strength and development.²⁸⁹

In Glasgow there is a danger of making the same mistake and focussing on undoubtedly significant and important elements, such as the role of public libraries and the profile of the book festival, while regarding the essential relationships and interactions across the literary sector as being incidental expressions of cultural development rather than the foundations of it. The success of partnerships and collaborations across literary Glasgow, both formalised and more local and informal, point to what every community literacy practitioner already knows – these are essential elements of successful development work.

²⁸⁸ R. Comunian, p. 1157.

²⁸⁹ R. Comunian, p. 1157.

As part of this research project, fellow researcher Lauren Weiss and I set up a side event, Glasgow: A Reading City at the Aye Write! Book Festival under the Community Engagement programme. As discussed in Chapter Three, we invited researchers, community literacy development workers and workplace learning specialists to come together and talk about their work in a public forum. As well as revealing fascinating new areas of research taking, the event demonstrated reader development work is going on that even Glasgow Libraries reader development team was unfamiliar with. Universities were working with the NHS on innovative learning for hospital staff; the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) and Scottish Union Learning (SUL) supported workplace learning programmes, writers' groups and prison literacy projects. The scope for collaboration and sharing of best practice and resources was enormous.

Those involved in the event have, like the agencies represented at the Reading and Literacy Forum, expressed interest in being part of an ongoing conversation about developing literary Glasgow. Whether it be through a Reader Development Forum, a Researcher/Practitioner Meeting, or the creation of a Reading and Literacy Agenda for the city, this is an example of the kind of structural element described by Comunian, which can support growth.

The value of CT lies in the possibility of understanding the micro dynamics of the system. This allows us to identify the emergence of structures and organisational forms that support and facilitate the connectivity and growth of the system.²⁹⁰

The collaborative work is part of the micro dynamics of the system. There is an emergent desire to explore and consolidate these collaborations.

Rather than attempting to engineer the alignment of goals, a CT driven approach would foster the co-creation of conditions from which a conducive environment could emerge. The first step in this process would be to bring willing

²⁹⁰ R. Comunian, p. 1163.

partners together under an overarching commitment (eg to Reader Development), broad enough to allow cross-sector access yet fundamental enough to inspire passion and action. Subsequent to this would be the establishment of channels of communication across the sector for exchange of ideas, resources, support and to strengthen the potential for collaboration. Boundary objects may be necessary at this stage to concretise these channels, which could take the form of a directory, a manifesto, an online resource sharing site, or even a brand.

In Chapter Four the concept of the boundary object was introduced in the form of the bench, which enabled SunnyG to engage in communication with the community. The idea was further extended to consider whether SunnyG itself acted as a type of boundary object, connecting the local community with potential routes for personal and social development. Could Aye Write!, situated at the intersection between the four dimensions of the sector, and elevated as a high-profile flagship of Glasgow's literary work, also be interpreted as a boundary object connecting communities with aspects of the literary sector they want to engage with?

To expand on the earlier definition of boundary objects introduced in Chapter One, Star and Griesemer described boundary objects in terms of meaning across social worlds:

... boundary objects have different meanings in different social worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognizable, a means of translation. The creation and management of boundary objects is a key process in developing and maintaining coherence across intersecting social worlds.²⁹¹

There are certainly different meanings ascribed to the book festival, as discussed in Chapter Three, and it is not a great leap to see how local literary creatives, such as Brian from SunnyG, or members of the live literature community

²⁹¹ Star and Griesemer, p. 393.

might see the festival as a portal between them and the publishing world. However, Lee (2007) contends boundary objects should also enable and enhance communication across borders as ‘objects that coordinate the perspectives of various communities of practice’.²⁹² In considering festivals as communities of practice, Comunian makes an important contribution to the typology of networks in the festival creative ecology, seeing them as valuable spaces for the development of artists’ networks.²⁹³

Earlier in the thesis, both SunnyG’s Brian and the spoken word community expressed difficulties in engaging with and through the festival in the way they intended. In each case, expectations of what Aye Write! should be or do for them were not met. Whether these expectations or the festival’s response was appropriate is not the issue: it is clear Aye Write! is not fulfilling the coordination of perspectives essential for our definition of a boundary object.

In fact, it is more likely these are just two examples of the misappropriation of Aye Write! as a boundary object in a sector crying out for one. The location of the festival as central to literary Glasgow puts it where such a boundary object might be found: physically and symbolically at the centre of Glasgow Life’s commitment to literature. Glasgow Life conducts a huge amount of activity around the promotion and support of reading and literacy, primarily but not exclusively through Glasgow Libraries. Aye Write! is arguably the most impactful and high-profile expression of the city’s commitment to literature. It is natural people and organisations that want to connect with this commitment, but feel they are on the outside, might see the festival as a gateway.

A more appropriate candidate for an emergent boundary object is the evolving reader development agenda, outlined earlier in this chapter as the object which makes cross sectoral collaboration possible. This ‘agenda’ is unspecific, operating

²⁹² Charlotte P. Lee, p. 308.

²⁹³ Roberta Comunian, ‘Temporary Clusters and Communities of Practice in the Creative Economy: Festivals as Temporary Knowledge Networks’, *Space and Culture*, 20.3 (2017), 329–43
<<https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331216660318>>.

loosely and flexibly according to the interpretation of those accessing it, and therefore does not pose a barrier based on fixed aims and objectives. It is loose enough to form strong cohesion in the sector, which aligns with Allen's (2009) description:

A boundary concept is a loose concept, which has a strong cohesive power. It is precisely because of their vagueness that they facilitate communication and cooperation between members of distinct groups without obliging members to give up the advantages of their respective social identities.²⁹⁴

If not a boundary object, then the reader development agenda is a boundary concept, across which agencies and organisations connect and reach agreement. It may currently be a boundary concept moving towards becoming a boundary object, which could be achieved through a process of formalising commitment to a reader development agenda. The need for this formalisation of the connecting framework for literary Glasgow, brings us back to the role of Glasgow Life as a champion of the sector within a complex system, rather than an organisation which focusses on acting linearly as effectively as possible.

This creation of a loose/strong agenda around which partners could collaborate, is part of the discussions ongoing with Glasgow Life's Reader Development team, and the continuing connections with those who participated in the Reader Development Forum and the Glasgow: A Reading City event. A proposal for a city-wide reader development and literacy campaign to formalise such an agenda was produced by Katrina Brodin (Programme Manager – Reader Development and Literacy), with my input, based on the findings of this research project, and from others within Glasgow Life and external partners.²⁹⁵ This is currently in the hands of the relevant department of Glasgow City Council for consideration.

²⁹⁴ Davina Allen, 'From Boundary Concept to Boundary Object: The Practice and Politics of Care Pathway Development', *Social Science & Medicine*, 69.3 (2009), 354–61 (p. 355) <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.05.002>>.

²⁹⁵ Brodin, *A Reading and Literacy Strategy*.

In Chapter Six, the issues raised by voices from across literary Glasgow are combined with theoretical concepts suggested by the findings, to propose a way forward for the development of literary Glasgow.

Chapter Six: Towards a Strategy

... somehow we need to get into the social atmosphere that these (books) are good things and that you get very good things from them and they are personal and they'll never leave you. You will upchuck those six pints tomorrow. What you have absorbed from a book will never leave you if it actually made a mark. It's this fact, that it has value, that has gone.²⁹⁶

This chapter presents the potential moves Glasgow Life could take towards the development of a strategy for literary Glasgow. These are based on the findings from the preceding chapters around the need for connectivity, the importance of recognising value within literary Glasgow, and the significance of transitional mechanisms, such as the boundary object.

The research project was initially conceived in partnership with Glasgow Life to inform a strategy for the development of literary Glasgow. Within this are the assumptions that literary Glasgow exists in some cohesive form, that there is room for its development, and Glasgow Life should or could play some strategic role. The previous chapters examined literary Glasgow at varying scales: an overview of the sector at city level; a closer look at book festivals and libraries as they balance values and resources, groups of readers and writers attempting to establish their own place within the sector; and individual voices both within literary sector organisations and beyond. The multiple perspectives confirmed there is validity to the assumptions above, and have also demonstrated multiple forces at play in this arena, within and beyond the control of local government.

Efforts to capture a snapshot of the sector are confounded by its dynamic nature: literary Glasgow moves and breathes, here growing through a successful youth literacy initiative, there receding as retiring library staff are not replaced; here

²⁹⁶ 'Interview: Janice Galloway' 15 June 2015.

rising as a local publisher celebrates a Man Booker shortlistee,²⁹⁷ there falling as another publisher folds.²⁹⁸ The sector is fluid and remaining static is not an option. The challenge for Glasgow Life is how to intervene with positive effect.

No one interviewed or observed in the course of this research indicated literary Glasgow was perfect or should remain as it is. On the contrary, poets, professors and publishers all agree with readers and writers that literary Glasgow can be improved. In a sense this is good news for a sector in flux: there is hunger for change, therefore inertia should not be as much of an issue as it could be in more complacent circumstances. This chapter is about the possible direction of that change, the underlying principles and findings which inform that direction, and the tools which could be applied to strengthen the sector through this period and into the new environment. Elements of a potential model for literary Glasgow are proposed towards the end of this chapter.

This thesis presents evidence from across the sector which points to areas to command the attention of Glasgow Life in attempting to fulfil its stated commitment to literary and reader development. The evidence is constructed through layers of multiple voices in interview data; periods of ethnographic study; and examination of organisational literature on policy and position. While these data indicate some gaps and weaknesses in literary Glasgow, they also draw attention to the great opportunity Glasgow Life has to build a new relationship with those individuals and groups which make Glasgow a reading, writing and publishing city.

Money and resources

There is no universally agreed target of dissatisfaction uncovered by this research, yet there are commonalities to the desires held by people across the sector. Most literary professionals and sector advocates interviewed in this research expressed

²⁹⁷ Graeme Macrae Burnett, *His Bloody Project* (Saraband, 2015).

²⁹⁸ Freight Books went into receivership in October 2017.

that they would welcome the availability of more resources, specifically money, invested in the support of reading, writing and publishing.

When I asked writer Janice Galloway what Glasgow could do to support writers her reply was unhesitant:

It's easy, more money. Teachers bring writers into school but they want you to talk about your latest book – it was like this and he said – and to say there's no money in it.²⁹⁹

Pat Urquhart, Cultural and Services Officer for Glasgow Life, told me about the adult literacies classes she was involved in running and mentioned the costs of overcoming access barriers for potential participants and the effect this has, particularly in this case of mothers of young children:

One of the challenges we have is providing childcare, and that's a difficulty for everything that we run, that we don't have any money for childcare so it excludes women with small kids, which is a huge barrier.³⁰⁰

However, Urquhart points out money is available for 'newer and more innovative' work.

In the south we have a South Adult Learning Partnership, which is mainly practitioners, where we come together every six weeks or so. There's pots of money available for developing newer and more innovative pieces of work. [...] We meet together – it's an opportunity to share best practice as well, but what we would do is come up with ideas for developing pieces of work and take it to that group, discuss it and put a bid in for funding. And that covers

²⁹⁹ 'Interview: Janice Galloway' 00:44:20.

³⁰⁰ Interview: Pat Urquhart, 2015 00:11:24.

family literacies, criminal justice, youth literacies, adult literacies, ESL. And sometimes you can get pots of money from those budgets.³⁰¹

Weegie Wednesday is run on a voluntary basis and has no membership fees. According to treasurer, Eleanor Logan, it receives a small amount of funding from Glasgow Life towards overheads, such as speaker's expenses:

I think the problem is resources, so it's people time because we all do it for nothing. We do obviously get a grant from Glasgow Life, we get an annual grant, we apply for some funding and we get it most years. [...] We usually have some kind of project that we put forward for the bid so it's not just 'give us some money to carry on as normal'. Every year we try and look at what the kind of push button points are, what Glasgow Life are trying to achieve within the city and we try and address those.³⁰²

Logan says they insist on paying writers to come and speak:

[...] it's not fair that maybe you pay some people because they're more famous and you don't pay the newbies, because they should be paid.³⁰³

Despite a lack of funding, people within literary Glasgow have found ways to make things happen. Mary Greenshields, despite being retired, still keeps in touch with Glasgow Libraries and the events of literary Glasgow. She recognises funding is an issue, even if other resources are available:

We used to always do events and projects with no funding really. Nowadays we've got the staff and the books, the book fund but not much actual cash.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ 'Interview: Pat Urquhart' 00:18:20.

³⁰² Interview: Eleanor Logan, 2016 00:52:01.

³⁰³ 'Interview: Eleanor Logan' 00:17:38.

³⁰⁴ 'Interview: Mary Greenshields' 00:29:25.

Jim Carruth has had to find imaginative ways to fund the activities of St Mungo's Mirrorball:

most of my activities around the city are a combination of Arthur Daley and Mother Theresa. You know all these homeless poets, bringing them in off the streets, giving them a roof above their head and doing these sorts of deals. You know we don't have very much money so we ...we worked in such a way – we do have to pay the headliner but sometimes it's 'Oh there's a chance to read alongside so and so...' So we try to get our money to go as far as possible.³⁰⁵

Every event we ran until last May was free. Because I had an issue around access to poetry. [...] I think we're putting barriers in the way to hearing words. Poetry can be off-putting as well, but I'm saying well it's not going to be off-putting because of cost [...] the budgets weren't big to begin with they kept shrinking so it was beginning to not add up. I eventually agreed to have a small membership fee – to prop up the funding.³⁰⁶

The Clydebuilt poet's apprenticeship programme, run by Jim Carruth and St Mungo's Mirrorball, is a very simple model, it uses the money he receives from Glasgow Life as his stipend in the role of City Laureate and applies this to sustain Clydebuilt and underpin Mirrorball:

The money goes straight to the experienced poet. We tell them, here's your money and we expect them to develop some of their own work and support the mentees. [...] We use the Glasgow Life money – so we have 2,500 and I take 1,500 of that and just give it to the poet. The other 1,000 we try to run the [St Mungo's Mirrorball] programme with. That's as simple as the budget is.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁵ Interview: Jim Carruth, 2015 00:08:16.

³⁰⁶ 'Interview: Jim Carruth' 00:08:41.

³⁰⁷ 'Interview: Jim Carruth' 00:15:35.

The desire for more money to be spent is not specific to literary Glasgow, or even to cultural sectors. There is unlikely to be any sector that would not welcome extra money, were it available. Literary salons such as St Mungo's Mirrorball and Weegie Wednesday run on a shoestring and substantial voluntary goodwill; publishers and booksellers operate with hope and tight margins; and many keen readers would shudder to find out how little some of Scotland's well-known authors earn. Janice Galloway draws a link between the relative cheapness of books and the effect lack of money in the industry has on writers:

[Books have] never been so cheap, which is one reason why people who write are in trouble. It's harder and harder to sustain some kind of living or make some kind of a plan for even how long you're going to be around. It takes me from three to six years to write a novel, I never know every time if it's worth starting, if I can finance myself for that period.³⁰⁸

Even apparently successful and celebrated publishing companies seem precarious enough to crumble overnight. Freight Books, mentioned in Chapter Two, demonstrated the speed with which a publisher could meet its end. In 2015 Freight Books was awarded Publisher of the Year at the Saltire Society's literary awards; by summer 2017, Freight had suspended any further releases and had advertised for a buyer; by October the company was in liquidation³⁰⁹. I had opportunity to speak with the former and current director of Freight before its closure. While the reasons for the company's decline were contested, it was apparent differences of opinion over strategic direction were a significant factor, and perhaps more so than the overall financial viability of the company.

³⁰⁸ 'Interview: Janice Galloway' 00:02:15.

³⁰⁹ Natasha Onwuemezi, 'Liquidator Takes Control of Freight Books | The Bookseller', *The Bookseller*, 31 October 2017 <<https://www.thebookseller.com/news/liquidator-takes-control-freight-books-660701>> [accessed 17 March 2018].

The precarious nature of small businesses in the cultural sector is likely to be a perennial problem and not one within the scope of this research. The focus here is on Glasgow Life's potential for playing a supporting role in literary Glasgow. Under more affluent circumstances, a local government organisation that valued reader development and support of the literary sector would be expected to channel more money into libraries, community reading initiatives and book festivals. Greater resources, if available, could be invested in efforts to bring about some advancement in reader development opportunities, an increase in literacy staff, and support for writers and publishers. Were that the case, it is possible the existing model for Glasgow Life's interaction with the city's literary culture might continue unchallenged. These are not the circumstances in which Glasgow exists. Economic restrictions continue to contract funding for public services, Glasgow Life's staff numbers are reducing, with restrictions on recruitment imposed in 2014-15, and those who remain are spread more thinly across the areas of need.

Glasgow Life may not be in a position to offer a direct injection of money and greater human resource into the literary sector, and after years of service contraction communities are less inclined to expect such a thing. As unwelcome as this situation is, it has brought about a period in which Glasgow Life's role and relationship with the sector is being remodelled. This need for a new model is an opportunity for change which if grasped, could bring about a transformation in the way literary Glasgow, and Glasgow's cultural sector, evolves.

This transformation needs to be much more fundamental than simply a new, leaner, way of doing the same things. It is a chance to challenge the policy frame and exchange it for one more appropriate for both the needs of the sector and the socio-economic reality in which Glasgow now exists. Whereas in former, less lean times there was a focus on being more effective in the instrumentalist promotion of literature as an antibiotic against poverty and lack of opportunity, resource scarcity has cancelled that prescription. Glasgow Life no longer has the human or financial resources to tackle Glasgow's challenges in the same linear way. This enforced halt to progression in the direction of ever more efficient, targeted initiatives, which rally the creative industries as instruments against poverty, division, poor health,

unemployment and other societal ills, is disastrous viewed through the instrumentalist frame.

Many of the individual efforts in reader development delivered by Glasgow Life, and listed in Chapter Two, have shown some success: Bounce & Rhyme, The First Minister's Reading Challenge, The City Read, Literacy support for young people and ESOL learners, and Creative Writing in Barlinnie Prison all have positive and inspiring stories of individual success, but they also share operating models that require resources to be at least sustained, and preferably increased, in order to bring about continuing and improving impact. If the central plan for using cultural activity, specifically reading, to overcome individual and societal problems is based upon developing projects that work and doing more of these, then a retraction of resources brings an end to that plan.

The complexity frame can be used to bring about an alternate perspective on Glasgow Life's role in reader development and reveal the potential to steer policy in a more effective direction. The new shoots of this opportunity are seen in the vibrant and interconnected allegiances of Glasgow's live literature/spoken word community, in innovative partnerships such as those around the Home Ground project, and in the changing nature of Aye Write!'s engagement with the city. Further clues to an alternative working model are found in the words of those engaged with Glasgow's literary sector.

Beyond the desires for additional resource expressed across the sector – often tongue-in-cheek, such as Janice Galloway's suggestion to 'pay writers to write' and 'put a chocolate bar in every book so schoolchildren will open them'³¹⁰ – the key areas for improvement identified through the participatory ethnography and interviews in this research coalesce around three points, [evidenced in previous chapters]:

- Connectivity across the sector;
- Recognition of value – in local talent, work produced, efforts undertaken and choices made;

³¹⁰ Interview, Janice Galloway 15/6/2015

- Direction – the role of Glasgow Life.

Connectivity

Many voices in this research commented on challenges of connectivity across the sector. For some this was about access to information: how do I find a book group in my area, what spoken word events are going on this month, who can advise me on getting my book published? For others, particularly the established and semi-formal groups of writers, readers, poets and publishers, the concern is the lack of cross-sector communication or coordination of efforts, and the limits this places on the potential of individual groups and the sector as a whole.

The demand for listings on Pat Byrne’s local events and info website, glasgowwestend.co.uk, mentioned in Chapter Two, is evidence of the need for effective communication channels. Another is a tale told by Bob McDevitt shortly after *Aye Write!* 2015:

I phoned John Mitchell and he asked how I was doing. I said I’d just had a crazy couple of weeks doing *Aye Write!* and he said, oh has *Aye Write!* been? John Mitchell, who works for Hodder Education in Paisley, Glasgow and he didn’t even know *Aye Write!* had been on.

[...] I asked how he missed it, 10th anniversary, been on TV and on the radio and he said, I don’t read *The Herald* anymore. There are Glaswegians who don’t read *The Herald* and don’t listen to Radio Scotland who wouldn’t know *Aye Write!* is on. That’s our number one marketing challenge – what do these people watch or read? How do you let these people know or get a programme in their hands? I would’ve thought John Mitchell, former trade committee, Publishing Scotland and part of the Publishing Scotland family; I would’ve thought he would’ve known it was on and come to some stuff.³¹¹

³¹¹ Interview: Bob McDevitt, 2015. [01:01:07]

Central Glasgow literary salon, Weegie Wednesday, should be one of the most connected literary organisations but it struggles with a lack of sector awareness of what they offer, and is frustrated by the lack of mechanism for connecting groups across the sector. Eleanor Logan has the benefit of many perspectives on professional literary activity. She is an active Weegie Wednesday member who recognises the difficulty in finding literary Glasgow information caused by a lack of coordination:

EL: I presume there's an appetite for more collaboration?

PD: Yes, generally but often I think that people don't know what's out there.

EL: Yeah, that is an issue. I don't think it's a big issue but there isn't any kind of pulling together of what is out there in any way. I think they can access information – if you look at *The List*³¹², if you look at *The Skinny*³¹³ – things that are out there but you've got to be proactive in seeking things out. [...] We've been here for nearly 10 years and a lot of people still don't know we exist.³¹⁴

If people within this literary salon who are either professionals within the literary sector or working on developing a writing/publishing career have difficulty finding out about other organisations and events, or raising awareness of their own offer, then people on the periphery of the sector will find it even more difficult. It appears each group operates almost in isolation – communicating with members through email, Facebook group or newsletter. The information is there and can be sought out by signing up to multiple online newsletters and joining Facebook groups, but there is no central repository for the information.. Eleanor recognises this need for a hub of information:

³¹² *The List* is a digital guide to arts and entertainment in the UK. It is run from offices in Edinburgh and the CCA in Glasgow. [<https://www.list.co.uk/>]

³¹³ *The Skinny* is an independent cultural magazine which produces bi-monthly editions in print and online. It began as a 'What's On' guide to events in Glasgow and Edinburgh, but now covers cultural events in Scotland and Northern England. [<http://www.theskinny.co.uk/about>]

³¹⁴ Interview. Eleanor Logan 13/4/2016

Yep, there's no hub, no central hub. [...] I think we would like to do that, to be that – Weegie Wednesday – because it makes sense, one kind of organisation but I think the problem is resources, so it's people time because we all do it for nothing.

[...] We don't have resources to maybe allow to pay somebody, because you need somebody to gather all of that information together.

[...] But I think it makes sense that somebody, especially somebody based at the CCA where we are – it's becoming an arts hub and I know Glasgow Life would like it to be the arts hub, I think, of the city. There's the Scottish Writers' Centre there, I think some of the graphic arts guys are based at the CCA as well – they've got rooms there. It is becoming a growing hub for literature and the arts but nobody's pulling it together, nobody's approaching all of these organisations and saying 'can we do this together, in collaboration'. Each is working in their own little bubble.

[...] In this year we want to get a lot more members, to put their profiles on the website, to form a little bit of a repository of information about writers or not just writers, it's across the arts that we're trying to appeal to: so playwrights, screenwriters. It's not just about literature, it's not just about writing.³¹⁵

What Eleanor is calling for here is echoed by many others in the sector. Funding is recognised as one element of a possible solution, but the call is for a 'pulling together', a 'hub', 'somebody to gather all of that information together', 'collaboration'. This is not seeking a new innovative programme or investment in some elaborate infrastructure, but a move towards a more connected way of working. The information-sharing, space-sharing and strategic alignment sought could take place on a smaller local scale, between individual groups, as it does in small, time-bound ways, such as the localised creative writing and literacy projects delivered by Julie Fraser, but this wouldn't be a comprehensive city-wide solution. An intentional,

³¹⁵ 'Interview: Eleanor Logan'.

sector-wide, framework for such interaction across Glasgow would support multiple instances of localised solutions and therefore strengthen the sector.

Minding the gaps

Within a sector as broad as literary Glasgow, it is not surprising to find gaps where people cannot seem to connect in the way they might like to. However, the frequency with which research subjects point out some gap where they felt unable to make the connection they need, has been notable.

Three literary organisations hold their regular meetings in the CCA: Weegie Wednesday, St Mungo's Mirrorball and Scottish Writers' Centre. Even though some individuals are members of two or even three of these groups, and therefore form some bridge between, members of each have expressed frustration at the lack of coordination between the groups and their efforts. This is a missed opportunity for coordination, and for making use of the great talent, experience and expertise which exists within the membership of all these literary groups, as expressed by Eleanor Logan:

E: I do think we're a genuinely useful organisation but I do feel we could do more.

P: Well there's a lot of wisdom and resources held within Weegie Wednesday [...]. Is that something that could be looked on more of a resource and deployed within other parts of the community in Glasgow?

E: Absolutely and I feel that we should have some way of meeting up... I think we have spoken to the Scottish Writers' Centre, who do something quite similar to us, but I think they want to do their thing and we're doing our thing. It's a shame that there isn't more collaboration between these groups. I think there should be and maybe there would be a role for Glasgow Life and someone like Simon [formerly Literary Officer with Glasgow Life] who could approach me or Liz and have some kind of meeting to think about is there any common ground that we could look at that would be a value in setting something up? Still run our organisations because you don't want to merge

organisations particularly, but there must be some kind of collaborative platform that we could establish.

P: Yes I think so. There's overlap between a few groups at the moment in Glasgow ...

E: Yes and I don't know who does collaborate at the moment. I mean there's the Glasgow Woman's Library which I'm a huge admirer of – it's fantastic that resource. And again I know that writers do know about it but a lot of writers don't know about the fact that that resource is there.

Keith Charters of Strident Publishing also recognises the need for 'bringing everyone together' in a more informal way than the annual book festival:

Actually there is a value in having a book festival. You could say it forces everybody to come together. But it would be useful if there was a better way, a more informal way of bringing everyone together. Now I know that's part of the aim of Weegie Wednesday, in fairness, which I think is a great idea but it needs somehow a heavier weight of support. Or the structure needs to change.³¹⁶

Here Charters implies there is a need for an external coordinating force to help make this happen. He suggests a quarterly get together:

Something like that. Maybe once a quarter. That's a big get together. Publishing, writing, a lot of it is about networking with other people. Actually networking is not that easy to do in Glasgow, in the literature sector. Publishers tend to know each other because there aren't that many of us, so we accidentally end up on the same train at times. I know Adrian well, I know Sarah Hunt well. But that's very different from writers, and writers because of

³¹⁶ 'Interview: Keith Charters'. [00:17:45]

the nature of what they do, write in isolation, most of them. They need to come together. So how do you get them into groups and how do you get those groups to interact with publishers?³¹⁷

A similar story of the desire to connect like-minded people is told across less central parts of literary Glasgow. In 2014, I took part in a few sessions with Maryhill writers' group, which meets weekly in Maryhill Library. The members, who were all women, told me they were saddened there was no regular event which brings writers groups together, or indeed any way they were aware of to share information about what each of the groups is doing.

Aye Write! and The Mitchell Library are positioned as central totems within literary Glasgow, geographically and culturally, yet connections here are also fragile and intermittent. Members of writing groups, performance poets and self-published authors have expressed difficulties engaging with the book festival other than as audience members. Lauren Weiss, who led the Classics Book Group in the Mitchell Library for over five years, recounted how this long-established book group turned up at the Mitchell for their regular monthly meeting only to be turned away by a staff member who told them 'there's a book event on' and their usual room was therefore unavailable.³¹⁸ This lack of connectivity can be a cause of frustration and may also disincentivise people who could otherwise be active local champions for literature.

While it is true those frustrated by these issues could in some cases make efforts to overcome gaps themselves, it seems appropriate for Glasgow's leading cultural organisation to be looking at this. These spaces between actors in a network diminish the network's strength and resilience, and this undermines other efforts towards reader development. These examples are all from within literary Glasgow – how much more difficult is it for those not connected with

³¹⁷ Interview: Keith Charters. [00:18:30]

³¹⁸ Interview, Lauren Weiss 4/2/2015

reading/writing/publishing, or who have limited literacy or other barriers to contend with?

Strengthening connections within literary Glasgow requires different solutions to the difficulties faced by those currently beyond its reach. The first is a solution once in place but later removed. In Eleanor's quote above, Simon [the former Glasgow Life Literature Officer] was identified as the person who might broker the connections and collaborations needed. The Literature Officer was cited by many other interviewees as being instrumental in support of literary Glasgow, including Jim Carruth, Mari Binnie, and members of Hillhead Scottish Writers' Book Group. The Literature Officer's role included finding funding for or setting up and supporting literary groups, many of which are still in existence. That role appeared to act as an important connection between each individual group and Glasgow Life/Glasgow City Council, and between the groups themselves. The post was absorbed and vanished in Glasgow Life's restructuring of 2014 as Arts Officers of all types were recast in generalist, non-specialist roles. Multiple voices within the research would welcome the re-activating of that post, and although they may be making a case for exceptionalism for the literary sector, it could be repeated in other sectors; the call for such a role is worthy of note. Something is missing, and literary Glasgow knows it.

Another approach through which Glasgow Life might respond to desire for support of literary initiatives and a champion of information and coordination, is to embody that role within the organisation's support of the sector. This would put Glasgow Life in the role of champion of the literary sector, a role which features in the proposals which follow.

Outward bound

While recognising the need for collaboration between organisations and institutions, it is important to remember this is only the starting point for literary Glasgow; there is an entire city to engage with. I interviewed Mary Greenshields in the busy 'green room' of the 2015 edition of *Aye Write!*, despite her protest that 'I don't have any answers. I only have experience'. Mary had by that point retired from her librarian post and was helping out at the festival as a volunteer. Her valuable experience put

together some of the same issues covered in this thesis: that the landscape for literary Glasgow is changing, value is different from cost and is significant, and connectivity is part of the solution to literary Glasgow's challenges:

I think bringing people together ... libraries' membership is declining generally, but I think where libraries can really reverse this is – because books are cheap now, people can afford to get books because they're cheaper, you can get them with your weekly shop in the supermarket, that sort of thing. But it's a sort of added value thing libraries can do – bring readers together at an event or in a book group or something like that. That's something I think I would like to see – the libraries all round being used much more to bring people together.

And Glasgow Life has lots of other venues as well. Community venues as well as libraries – there are venues all round the city. In an ideal world, to have book related things going on everywhere. But that's kind of wishful thinking...³¹⁹

Boundary objects

Some connections require more than simply bringing actors into proximity with each other, or the sharing of information. There are circumstances in which a form of translation must take place. Boundary objects, as introduced in Chapter One and illustrated in Chapter Four, fulfil this connection and translation role. Glasgow Life, operating as a champion for the literary sector, would be active in identifying these boundaries and constructing appropriate boundary objects to connect across them. These would be specific to the needs of each situation and could take many forms. Some boundaries may be crossed by making neutral physical space available in which those from different perspectives meet, such as SunnyG's bench, discussed in Chapter Four. Other boundary objects might take the form of a boundary-transcending

³¹⁹ Interview: Mary Greenshields. [00:29:40]

venture, such as the Home Ground project, upon which connections between Aye Write!, university professors, publishers, writers and people who had experienced homelessness could be built.

Creativity is required, as is a commitment to seeing the gaps and constructing the boundary objects needed. Current reporting requirements of public bodies and the pressure on staff to defend their role within the organisation can lead to a form of institutional protectionism. This was alluded to by Community Workers Pat Urquhart and Julie Fraser in earlier chapters. Solidification of the boundaries and edges of organisations and initiatives works directly against the need for connectivity. What is required is more porosity of these boundaries so transitions can be made across them by people and groups who wish to connect.

The misappropriation of Aye Write! as a boundary object by those seeking access into the perceived literary Glasgow community, was discussed in Chapter Four. It is also partly responsible for some of the criticism of the festival. Boundary objects are needed wherever members of Glasgow's communities struggle to find a way into the sector. A supporting framework for literary Glasgow would enable the entire literary sector, including Glasgow Life, to create and manage these.

Landscape of practice

Theoretical and practical work on moving organisations towards more connectivity has already taken place in other fields and cities. This is good news for literary Glasgow. Tools are available if the commitment can be found. To meet the need identified in this thesis, Glasgow Life could champion the creation and support of a framework to enable the emergence of cross-sectoral relationships and communication pathways. This would allow gradual, localised solutions to be negotiated, and adjusted, with the support and resource of a larger network. This problem and proposed solution, is similar to that described by Wenger et al (2002) in

Cultivating Communities of Practice.³²⁰ But where Wenger is concerned with cultivating communities of practice from individuals with overlapping skills and expertise within a single large organisation, literary Glasgow is a nascent community of practice within the city.

There are many parallels between the two. The communities of practice frameworks, challenges and opportunities appear to fit with what has been observed and reported in literary Glasgow. At a very basic level, communities of practice are defined as 'groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis.'³²¹ It does not require a great leap of imagination to see how this definition could be applied to a connected network of people and groups within literary Glasgow.

These are fundamentally knowledge-based social structures in which interaction brings benefit to the individual member and potentially to the wider society within which they exist. They take many forms, vary in size, are long-lived or short-lived, homogenous or heterogenous. They can also operate within or across boundaries and be spontaneous or intentional³²². Wenger's model is defined by a structure made up of Domain, Community and Practice, with each community of practice a unique expression of these elements. By this definition, literary Glasgow is a fragmented and fractured community of practice formed from smaller ones. It is more helpful to apply the term used in Wenger's later works, and to think of literary Glasgow as a 'landscape of practice'. Wenger defines this landscape of practice as 'a complex system of communities of practice and the boundaries between them'.³²³

³²⁰ Etienne Wenger, Richard A. McDermott, and William Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge* (Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press, 2002).

³²¹ Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder. p4

³²² Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder. p26

³²³ Wenger-Trayner and others. p13

Wenger further states communities of practice require provision of supporting infrastructure in order to reach their potential, and also benefit from cultivation.³²⁴ Within literary Glasgow, from Glasgow Life's perspective this role was foreshadowed by the work of the Literary Officer, and now must be taken up in a more strategic and intentional way by Glasgow Life. It also reflects that language of 'landscape' used by Jim Carruth in relation to literary Glasgow in Chapter Five.

Multiple communities of practice exist within literary Glasgow: Weegie Wednesday is defined by its professional, practice-centred approach to literature as a creative industry; St Mungo's Mirrorball by a creative practice approach to (in the main) page-based poetry; Maryhill Writers' Group by mutual social support of creative writing; Glasgow Women's Library connects person-based issues and the experience of women with the words on its shelves. Each of these is effectively a distinct community of practice, and there are many more besides. Each is a potential member of the broader, literary Glasgow, landscape of practice. Each community of practice is defined by its distinct domain, community and practice, but the domain of this city-wide landscape of communities is defined by more fundamental and essential elements within which each of the sub-domains have a place.

Earlier in Chapter Five we discussed the need for a move away from a focus on end-point aims in the attempt to bring about resilient partnerships. The landscape of practice concept accommodates this approach. It is not reliant on alignment of goals, rather on agreed principles and values. Glasgow Life may find by bringing people and organisations together through agreement on broader literary development principles, the scope for potential partners in the literary Glasgow landscape of practice is enormous. This agreement could be framed in a number of ways, such as a declared commitment to the value of reading, writing and publishing and the development of these, or through a more abstract assertion such as: 'Words have power, reading is valued, and writers are on a journey'.

³²⁴ Wenger, Etienne C., and William M. Snyder. "Communities of practice: The organizational frontier." *Harvard business review* 78.1 (2000): 139-146.

The weak and broken connections and ineffectual communications across this landscape of practice are noted and mourned by the communities and individual members of literary Glasgow. By bringing Wenger's model for the creation and cultivation of a landscape of practice together with the insight delivered by the voices of Logan, Carruth, Maryhill Writers' Group, the spoken word community, SunnyG and many others from literary Glasgow, there is an opportunity to build a connecting framework to allow literary Glasgow to repair and strengthen. This will not happen spontaneously for a number of reasons:

- the size of the sector makes an emergent restructuring unlikely, particularly given the problems of connectivity such a structure would seek to solve;
- funding models have encouraged the definition of clear, attributable outcomes, which leads to a fencing off of efforts and has no mechanism to encourage the altruistic, collaborative activity desired by Carruth and Logan;
- while Glasgow Life maintains a position of control and responsibility above literary Glasgow, rather than acknowledging its position within the complexity of that system, the power and energy which could enable the new framework is withheld.

A Literary Glasgow Landscape of Practice will not happen accidentally despite the acknowledged need and desire for such a construction, but there are ways to move towards this intentionally. This is where Glasgow Life's position as a city-wide cultural force, with vision across and beyond the city, is needed.

Value

In previous chapters the issue of 'value' has emerged, not only in the sense of where financial resources are deployed and in a measurement of return from such 'investment', but in what aspects of literary Glasgow are valued and why. There is also the question of who determines that value, and how it is demonstrated. The issue is not a simple one and is tied to perspective and context.

In the community in and around Sunny Govan Community Radio, the expertise and self-published books of local amateur historian Brian McQuade are valued. In the

short walk from Govan Old Parish Church, where McQuade had given me a guided tour of the Govan Stones, and the SunnyG front door, four local people stopped us or called across the street to acknowledge Brian and refer to one or other of his books. Brian's colleagues at the radio station consider he is not valued enough elsewhere in literary Glasgow.

Hillhead Book Group values the space they are allowed to use in the library and the efforts of librarians at The Mitchell, who gather and deliver (usually) appropriate books for them to read; like the other people who attend book groups across the city, their value as reading champions has not found an outlet.

On a larger and more complex scale, Aye Write! Book Festival is simultaneously valued by different groups for different reasons: by regular audience members as a highlight of the literary event calendar; by some (although not all) parts of the spoken word and creative writing communities as an opportunity to share their work publicly; by Scottish publishers as a platform for new works and their authors; by Glasgow Libraries as a high profile event in their reader development efforts; and by Glasgow Life as a showcase for Glasgow's brand as a culturally significant destination.

Value is difficult, or even impossible, to quantify in terms of currency, yet can itself be a form of currency and as such, it forms directional transactions. Some members of the live literature community, and active readers and writers from the periphery of Glasgow dismiss Aye Write! not because they do not value what is contained within the festival programme, but because they do not feel valued by the festival. This was explained by Bram Gieben with regard to Glasgow's spoken word community's lack of support for an Aye Write! event:

The Luke Wright [London-based performance poet] booking is a big deal. By rights we should all be going along to support that, because he's good. But

most people in the spoken word scene feel excluded, so we won't. It should be engaging with the grassroots.³²⁵

Glasgow Life has staff and systems in place to promote what it achieves as an organisation through media releases and its own website. It is crucial a strategy for literary Glasgow includes consideration of the value which exists beyond the organisation's own efforts, and to actively find ways to acknowledge, celebrate and make use of that value. Support of a landscape of practice would provide opportunity to do this.

The recognition of value may be even more significant during a period of reducing investment of resource in the sector. Glasgow Life's role as principal provider of resource to the cultural sector may be under pressure, but it still has a crucial role to play. The positive transformation of the literary sector depends on how Glasgow Life responds to this changing landscape. Faced with the great and continuing challenges of supporting reader development and literacy, a contraction into a reduced scale 'command and control' position would be a declaration of surrender. When the value placed on literary sector support is represented in monetary terms, what does it say about value for the sector when that money is cut?

Resource cuts imply a lack of value in the community affected, but resource announcements can also declare a lack of value to those who are not consulted in the plans. In September 2017, Glasgow City Council hosted a Culture Summit for the city, with over 200 arts and cultural practitioners and producers invited to contribute their expertise to the city's cultural future.³²⁶ During this summit an announcement was made of a plan to install an artist-in-residence in every ward of the city. This announcement was considered newsworthy enough to merit an article in *The Herald*

³²⁵ 'Interview: Bram Gieben'.

³²⁶ *Glasgow's Culture Summit - Summary* (Glasgow: Glasgow Life, 12 September 2017) <<https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/policy-research/Documents/Culture%20Summit%20Summary.pdf>> [accessed 21 March 2018].

newspaper.³²⁷ The announcement surprised many in attendance, and not necessarily in a good way. As one delegate at my table later described it ‘all the jaws just dropped’.³²⁸ Questions were hissed between members of public and third sector organisations in the form of ‘Did you know about this?’. Some of the delegates were already developing artist-in-residence programmes for their organisations and communities, and there were others who expressed a belief there were already artists in every community and this announcement dismissed these. Most of all, it left the impression that the opinions and ideas of the attendees at the summit were not valued as highly as they had hoped. In this one statement, cautious optimism about the announcement of renewed commitment to the cultural sector from Glasgow City Council vanished. The hoped for new dialogue and relationship between policy and practice suddenly looked as though it could be a top-down process rather than eliciting the support of communities and those who worked with them.

Direction

Literary Glasgow is a complex adaptive system and as such, any attempt to impose control is likely to be frustrating and bear little fruit. An approach that embodies leadership and direction, rather than control is likely to be more successful. What Glasgow Life could potentially offer is support for a new approach to working with and for the literary sector. It could champion a new model of partnership and engagement. The proposed model is one which decentralises control, or to be more accurate, recognises that the system in which it is engaged is a complex one which cannot be centrally controlled. This is an acknowledgment of a reality from which cultural policy, like economic policy, has been hiding.

Across public policy disciplines this is beginning to change. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) confesses to this wilful

³²⁷ ‘Glasgow Needs an Artist in Every Part of the City to Boost Culture’, *HeraldScotland* <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/15531082.Glasgow_needs_an_artist_in_every_part_of_the_city_to_boost_culture/> [accessed 15 September 2017].

³²⁸ Delegate. Glasgow’s Culture Summit, 12 September 2017.

ignorance in a 2017 OECD Insights publication on Complexity and Public Policy: 'Perhaps the most important insight of complexity is that policy makers should stop pretending that an economy can be controlled'.³²⁹

Complex systems do not respond to mechanistic intervention. The predictable and measurable impacts so attractive to planners and policymakers, do not exist in that desired form within a complex system. In explaining the difference between these systems, Chapman (2002) uses the memorable metaphor of trying to hit a target by throwing a rock or a bird at it.³³⁰ In a linear, mechanistic system you could, over time, become more accurate and efficient at throwing the rock at a target. But in a complex system you are throwing a bird, which may never follow the same trajectory twice, no matter how well you throw. This does not mean all is without hope, the complexity approach looks beyond the mechanistic action/reaction interplay to other factors. Among these are the identification of attractors which increase the likelihood of desirable outcomes. Placing birdseed on the target would be a complexity theory solution.

If Glasgow Life can embrace the complexity of literary Glasgow, it is then enabled to use the tools and insights developed within complexity theory. By moving away from mechanistic attempts to improve reader development by constant expenditure of its own resources, on efforts only partly successful, Glasgow Life could be more effective in bringing about desirable outcomes. Efforts could be put into understanding the tipping points between reader and non-readers; building a framework which allows more effective partnerships to evolve; or unleashing the potential of reading champions, currently locked up in isolated groups or struggling to find a way into the literary Glasgow landscape.

In formally recognising literary Glasgow as a complex system, the proposed model would release Glasgow Life from the roles of controller and problem solver.

³²⁹ *Debate the Issues: Complexity and Policy Making*, ed. by Patrick Love and Julia Stockdale-Otárola, OECD Insights (OECD Publishing, 2017) <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/debate-the-issues-complexity-and-policy-making_9789264271531-en> [accessed 13 October 2017]. p16

³³⁰ Jake Chapman, 'A Systems Perspective on Computing in the NHS', *Journal of Innovation in Health Informatics*, 10.4 (2002), 197–199.

The organisation would be cast in a crucial, integrating role, using its reach and resources to support an environment in which literary Glasgow can flourish. It is also a model which embraces a more fluid definition of cultural value, allows actors and communities to develop and express their own definitions of value, and provides platforms for the celebration of those values and resulting achievements.

Co-production and collaboration: not far enough

Glasgow Life's 'Business and Service Plan 2017-18' acknowledges a role for the organisation in support of Communities and Libraries –where a large part of reader development activity is played out – that includes a commitment to 'collaboration' and other slippery community engagement terms, such as 'co-production', 'community budgeting', 'volunteering' and 'resilience':

There will be a continuing focus on building relationships with our key partners to increase opportunities for co-production and collaboration to improve the customer journey and make best use of community-based assets.

Priorities for 2017-18

- Continued implementation of the 'Vision for Glasgow's Libraries' and associated Action Plan.
- Leading the implementation of Glasgow's Community Learning and Development Plan by working collaboratively with key learning partners.
- Supporting Community Empowerment/community engagement to build stronger, more resilient neighbourhoods through co-production of services, community budgeting and the potential transfer of assets.

- Supporting Glasgow's Volunteer Strategy by growing volunteering opportunities and volunteer support across the Company and within communities.³³¹

Reduction in resources has become a fact of local government life. The danger is reduced resources are used as an excuse for a retreat from responsibility. Over the past 10 years there has been an increase in local government rhetoric around localism and resilience. At its worst this could be an abdication of responsibility hidden behind a commitment to community empowerment. Communities are invited to solve their own problems at a local level, and to develop 'resilience'. It is valid to ask where strong belief in the power of local communities to solve their own problems was when there was no shortage of money to spend.

The mirage of resilience

It would be remiss to make any moves towards formulating a strategy without considering the socio-economic situation brought about by the austerity agenda, in particular the ways local government could and have responded to this. Platts-Fowler & Robinson (2016) outline three main phases in local government efforts to mitigate central government-imposed austerity. This begins with '[c]ouncils devising and implementing efficiency measures that reduce the cost of services without a major change in service levels experienced by the public'. In an extended period of advancing austerity measures, the capacity for such efficiency savings is rapidly exhausted and followed in the second stage by more visible cuts and restructuring of frontline service delivery. This response takes a number of forms, including 'dilution

³³¹ Culture and Sport Glasgow, 'Business and Service Plan 2017-18.pdf' (Culture and Sport Glasgow, 2017) <<http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/about-us/Documents/Business%20and%20Service%20Plan%202017-18.pdf>> [accessed 12 November 2017].

of involvement in the provision of certain services' and 'an increasing focus on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable citizens'.³³²

These three phases feature strongly in the backdrop to this research as far as Glasgow Life, Glasgow Libraries and Aye Write! in particular, are concerned. A fourth phase in local government response is a change in relationship between government and community under the banner of 'developing community resilience'. This phase is defined by Platts-Fowler and Robinson:

A redefining of the relationship between the citizen and the local council, with citizens being expected to take greater responsibility for their own wellbeing, as well as for quality of life within neighbourhoods.³³³

Resilience is the term used for this relocation of the responsibility for overcoming challenges, from local government and policymakers to the communities most directly affected by those challenges. It is no bad thing if communities become, are allowed to become, or are supported to become more resilient in the basic sense of that word. Nor is it an inherently negative thing for communities to be 'empowered'. But in both terms there lurks a tacit admittance of the failure of the old policy models and an acceptance of the need for a new one.

Platts-Fowler and Robinson see the drift towards community resilience thinking as a pragmatic response of local government faced with untenable cuts leading to an inability to deliver services, turning at last to the communities they serve in an effort to stir up solutions. The term 'resilience' may be misapplied in these situations – what is required is not simply the ability to bounce back from a temporarily challenging situation or external pressure, as the term is used in an

³³² Deborah Platts-Fowler and David Robinson, 'Community Resilience: A Policy Tool for Local Government?', *Local Government Studies*, 42.5 (2016), p.763
<<https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2016.1186653>>.

³³³ Platts-Fowler and Robinson.p.763

ecological or materials science sense, but a reconfiguring of the relationship between government and citizen.³³⁴

Development of resilience in the mechanical sense would have taken place during times of plenty, or under minor pressure, in order to enable the system to ride out times of rapid, catastrophic change and quickly return to a state of equilibrium. For example, a community which has experienced repeated minor flooding is likely to be more able to cope and recover from a major flooding incident than one which has not experienced any. The experiential knowledge, networks and infrastructure will be in place to cope.

In contrast, communities are being handed the task of resilience development amid fairly catastrophic change, with little hope things will return to a semblance of the pre-existing state. This is not the mechanical or materials science type of resilience, rather an evolutionary resilience. Return to a prior state is not the aim, or necessarily even possible but continuing in a new form is.

Criticism of terminology aside, clearly there needs to be negotiation of a new relationship between local government and community, informed by complexity thinking and moving away from an attachment to a command and control, mechanistic role for cultural policy.

This insight is arriving through many channels. In economics, there is a growing awareness of the need for a new relationship with communities, and a new narrative which incorporates values beyond the financial. In the 2017 OECD compilation, 'Debate the Issues: Complexity and Policymaking',³³⁵ this is recognised as a 'revolution'.

³³⁴ Simin Davoudi and others, 'Resilience: A Bridging Concept or a Dead End? "Reframing" Resilience: Challenges for Planning Theory and Practice Interacting Traps: Resilience Assessment of a Pasture Management System in Northern Afghanistan Urban Resilience: What Does It Mean in Planning Practice? Resilience as a Useful Concept for Climate Change Adaptation? The Politics of Resilience for Planning: A Cautionary Note: Edited by Simin Davoudi and Libby Porter', *Planning Theory & Practice*, 13.2 (2012), 299–333 (p. 301) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2012.677124>>.

³³⁵ Love and Stockdale-Otárola.

At the OECD, we recognise the potential of new economic thinking, drawing on complexity theory, and evolutionary and behavioural economics.

Technological and analytical innovations are driving a revolution in the physical sciences, biological sciences, and social sciences, breaking down the barriers between disciplines and stimulating new, integrated approaches to pressing and complex challenges.

[...] The OECD is part of this revolution and we are already transforming our policy thinking and acting.

Perhaps the most important insight of complexity is that policy makers should stop pretending that an economy can be controlled. Systems are prone to surprising, large-scale, seemingly uncontrollable, behaviours. Rather, a greater emphasis should be placed on building resilience, strengthening policy buffers and promoting adaptability by fostering a culture of policy experimentation.

At the OECD, we are starting to embrace complexity.³³⁶

The seeds of this transfer of responsibility for solutions from local government to communities is seen in earlier regional and national policy documentation. The Scottish Government's response to the Commission on the Future of Public Service Delivery set out a vision for the way public service delivery and the relationship with communities should change:

We will empower local communities and local service providers to work together to develop practical solutions that make best use of all the resources available. The focus of public spending and action must build on the assets and potential of the individual, the family and the community rather than being dictated by organisational structures and boundaries. Public services must

³³⁶ Love and Stockdale-Otárola. p18

work harder to involve people everywhere in the redesign and reshaping of their activities.³³⁷

Notably not only are the individual, family and community the focus and starting point for whatever is built, but this is clearly set in opposition to an approach centred on the requirements and limitations of organisational structures. On the surface this sounds like an admittance of the past sins of top-down regeneration and a commitment to individual and local potential.

However, there is within this statement, and many other similar policy repositioning documents emerging, cause for concern. The power has not moved from the top, but the responsibility has. The argument is made convincingly enough: 'Dictated' is a loaded word – who could choose to live under a dictator after all; even one depersonalised into 'structures and boundaries'? But this is a straw man argument. The choice is reduced to DIY community development versus inhumane dictatorship. An unsympathetic reading of this could find a worrying subtext: there's no money, sort it out among yourselves, the Organisation can no longer provide what you need. This is a marked departure from the regeneration rhetoric of the past few decades, in which investment in infrastructure and services for the benefit of the city was positioned as the local and national government's role and contribution. Matthews and O'Brien (2015) see that phase of regeneration as dead.³³⁸ Welcome to post-regeneration.

Post regeneration

Matthews and O'Brien (2015) assembled critiques of this emerging policy turn and examples of its effects on communities. In an overview of the successive policy

³³⁷ Scottish Government and Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services, *Renewing Scotland's Public Services: Priorities for Reform in Response to the Christie Commission* (Edinburgh: Scottish Government, 2011), p. 4 <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/09/21104740/0>> [accessed 18 March 2018].

³³⁸ Dave O'Brien and Peter Matthews, *After Urban Regeneration: Communities, Policy and Place* (Policy Press, 2015).

evolutions which led to this point, they conclude UK government policy is now in territory beyond the regeneration narrative:

Current policy practices that are privileging the role of communities helping themselves over and above other forms of development, such as large area-based initiatives or spending on large buildings (e.g. museums or libraries), immediately suggest that we are in an era of post-regeneration.³³⁹

The exhaustion of the previous instrumentalist model of cultural policy and desire for a new arrangement between local government and community, would support Matthews and O'Brien's claim we are entering a post-regeneration phase. Regeneration is giving way to talk of evolution and emergence, and at times presents under the guise of 'community-led regeneration', as in The Department of Communities and Local Government's (2011) publication 'Regeneration to enable growth: what government is doing in support of community-led regeneration'.³⁴⁰ Wilkes-Heeg calls this shift towards 'community-led regeneration':

a retreat from regeneration as part of a wider Conservative agenda emphasising 'localism' and the 'Big Society'. Community-led regeneration means, in this view, that regeneration is not a task for government³⁴¹.

While many have criticised the various modes of regeneration which privileged commercial interests and infrastructure development, while paying lip service at best to endogenous growth, the post regeneration era is also open to criticism. This form of community-led regeneration, if used to absolve government of

³³⁹ O'Brien and Matthews, *After Urban Regeneration*. p28

³⁴⁰ Department for Communities and Local Government, *Regeneration to Enable Growth: What Government Is Doing in Support of Community-Led Regeneration* (Department for Communities and Local Government)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5983/2064899.pdf> [accessed 19 October 2017].

³⁴¹ Wilks-Heeg, Stuart. "Urban policy and communities." *After urban regeneration: Communities, policy and place* (2015): 9-25.

responsibility, is not only a poisoned chalice but also demonstrates a potentially dangerous and damaging shift in the social contract. Communities often develop solutions to the issues they face but they have limitations. Urban communities facing issues related to poverty and lack of opportunity may be able, with minimal resources, to develop increased community cohesion, a sense of hope, a response to training needs, but are unlikely to get their hands on the levers of fiscal, transport, housing or immigration policy needed to develop a holistic response. In the post-regeneration landscape, government which walks away while chanting for 'localism' is abandoning responsibility.

What does this mean for literary Glasgow? If the continuing effects of austerity and resource limitation result in Glasgow Life's successive retreats and disengagement from the sector under the guise of a form of cultural localism, then it will be both an abandonment of responsibility and a missed opportunity. A genuine commitment to community empowerment should result in more engagement from Glasgow Life in the sector not less; but in the role of champion rather than controller. It is not an easy transition. This is an uncomfortable way of working for any local government body programmed to problematise community and position itself as the provider of solutions.

Taking on this new role is key to negotiating between the two extremes of local government cultural regeneration activity. An adherence to the belief that government knows best leads to top-down 'fixing' of problems, without allowing for endogenous solutions to emerge. Current austerity-driven moves towards localism and resilience thinking are in danger of taking the opposite extreme: abandoning communities and handing over responsibility, without the power or resource to go with it.

The response of Glasgow Life called for in this research is in one sense a call to the middle ground, but in another is in a different field all together. Rather than choosing between providing a solution, or abdicating responsibility, a better response would be for Glasgow Life to reframe its role to become nurturer of the environment in which solutions can emerge. This requires a shift to complexity thinking and takes courage and vision, as well as time. To move an organisation of people to a new way

of operating is no small task. Fortunately, the technology exists to bring about transition, and is within the area of expertise of literary Glasgow.

A Model for Literary Glasgow

The translation to a new model for literary Glasgow, and specifically for Glasgow Life's relationship with it requires a mechanism. It is arguable the most powerful tool humanity has for bringing about individual and community change is the story. Adjusting Glasgow Life's story about its purpose and role within literary Glasgow, could release the energy for fundamental change. Jensen (2007) makes a distinction between use of the terms 'narrative' and 'story',

Emplotted narratives – stories in this terminology – are central to any form of urban intervention. Whether it be regional planning or urban design, a story is constructed to motivate and legitimate the intervention.³⁴²

In Jensen's understanding, narratives are nested within wider discourses, and a story is narrative combined with plot.

An urban intervention framed by a narrative may then be part of a larger discourse based upon underlying rationales and values, relating to a particular strategy, product, intervention, plan, artefact, etc.

It is possible to view literary Glasgow's existing interwoven motivations and goals in terms of narrative. The narrative turn has been applied to urban cultural development as a way to represent and explain the layers of activity and motivation of organisations and individual actors within this field. While this approach has an

³⁴² O. B. Jensen, 'Culture Stories: Understanding Cultural Urban Branding', *Planning Theory*, 6.3 (2007), 211–36 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095207082032>>. p6

obvious poetic resonance with research towards the development of literary Glasgow, it also helps develop understanding of the sector.

Within the wider discourse around literary Glasgow as an entity, the individual narratives may have differing themes (job creation/education/ poverty reduction) but an overarching story could bring these together – this story needs to be broad and open enough to encompass all the sub-plots.

A new story would not in itself make change happen, but give form to a set of ideas around identity and purpose which may drive subtle or significant change in what is done, or how it is achieved. In some cases the same activities may be carried out but with a different story underpinning their motivations and their measures of success. To give a specific example, even with a new story which acknowledges the place of the organisation within the complexity of literary Glasgow, Glasgow Life may still employ workers to support the literacy development of young people, but rather than justifying doing this because it will increase the average earnings of those young people in 30 years (case made by a delegate during A Vision For Glasgow Libraries workshops), the motivation may be to steadily increase the ability and desire for reading within that immediate community.

As another example, Glasgow Life's website lists a range of news and events from across the organisation's activities, rightly celebrating what has been achieved with public money.³⁴³ A new story for the organisation, which emphasises its role as champion for the city's culture, might celebrate and promote Glasgow Life's cultural successes beyond those for which it is directly responsible. A small change, yet it brings together issues of cultural value, the relationship between Glasgow Life and communities, and potential for impactful partnerships. What message is communicated to a Glasgow community if a local writer sells the 100th copy of a self-published local history book and is ignored by Glasgow Life? And what message is communicated if this is celebrated on their website and through city events, or used as a resource to encourage other communities to explore and record their heritage? A

³⁴³ <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/>

change in the story of Glasgow Life and literary Glasgow could lead towards the latter rather than the former. Stories, both individual and communal, are a powerful technology which can enable change in society.

The new story of Glasgow Life's relationship with literary Glasgow contains the following:

- Value – a belief in the people, organisations and communities which make up the sector, including Glasgow Life's own staff, and recognition of the efforts and resource which exist beyond Glasgow Life.
- Time – a complex system can be influenced and encouraged to move in a certain direction, but cannot be pushed. Complexity deals in the emergent, both slow and fast.
- Understanding – of the nature and principles of complex systems, what to look for and how to see it.
- Action – strategy can no longer be a search for a magic pill. The days of dramatic interventions based around flagship infrastructure projects are behind us. These may make Glasgow appear renewed, but genuine renewal always brings communities along. Action is only ever holistic.
- Engagement – with and in the complex system, acknowledging the organisation is both embedded in the system and is one of the elements which will have to change.

Partnership and power

Glasgow Life does not currently operate as if it is within the literary Glasgow community of practice, but is floating above it. Rather than trying to act *on* the literary sector, a reconfiguring of the organisation's role would allow it to act *within* it.

The journey from above to within is one which moves through discussions on value, power and community. Others have taken this journey and there are resources

available to help with the transition.³⁴⁴ The challenges and opportunities of Glasgow are large enough to keep the thoughts of local policy-makers and strategists occupied within city boundaries; but other cities have faced, and are working through, similar problems. There is a growing body of literature around the concept of collective impact, which documents attempts of city organisations to reconfigure their relationship with community to solve complex and intractable problems.³⁴⁵

This is a difficult solution for any organisation to accept, particularly if it requires an apparent relinquishing of power or status. To an extent, it explains the reluctance of some organisations to pursue this way of operating. Kania and Kramer recognise this reluctance as rooted in organisational identity:

Funders and non-profits alike overlook the potential for collective impact because they are used to focusing on independent action as the primary vehicle for social change.³⁴⁶

In addition to organisational inertia, there are other barriers to the transition to a collective approach to problem solving. Funding processes have conditioned most of our cultural organisations to isolate the impact of their efforts from that of others. Funding applications typically compel applicants to justify spend and position, and promote their own agency in any change as distinct from surrounding activity. This has entrenched our attachment to 'the isolated intervention of individual organizations'.³⁴⁷ The last two decades saw a number of versions of partnership working and collaboration in the public sector, including creation of statutory Community Planning Partnerships in Scotland and an ongoing Scottish and local

³⁴⁴ Mark Cabaj and Liz Weaver, 'An Evolving Framework for Community Change', *Tamarack Institute: Community Change Series*, 2016 <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Events/Multi-Day%20Events/Community%20Change%20Institute%20%20CCI/2016%20CCI%20Toronto/CCI_Publications/Collective_Impact_3.0_FINAL_PDF.pdf>.

³⁴⁵ John Kania and Mark Kramer, *Collective Impact* (Stanford social innovation review Winter, 2011); Sarah M. Milnar, 'Community Engagement and Participation in Collective Impact Initiatives', *College of Professional Studies Professional Project*, 2014.

³⁴⁶ Kania and Kramer. p38

³⁴⁷ Kania and Kramer. p38

government commitment to strategic partnership.³⁴⁸ Criticism has arisen within and beyond this research of a public sector partnership model, which too often sees the powerful (funding) organisation dictating terms and leveraging less powerful organisations towards previously decided goals.

Literary Dundee is both a literary festival and the nexus of Dundee's varied, year-round literary activity. It is funded and supported by the University of Dundee, in a contrasting model to the Aye Write! tie-in with local government. Peggy Hughes is the energy behind Literary Dundee and has experience in this role and previous ones of this imbalanced type of partnership:

And what I really hate about partnership work is when someone comes at you and says 'I really want to do this event, can we just do it with you', but it's not collaborative in any way. They've thought it all through, they know what they want, they know what their agenda is, so it's just kind of 'can we do it in your venue as part of the festival?'. And I think it can be easy as part of a big organisation to come over that way sometimes, to not do back and forth or give and take, or have any conversation. So, I'm always very careful about why are we doing what we're doing.³⁴⁹

Partnership is not in itself a universal good. Peggy here resorts to revisiting the core aims of Literary Dundee in order to judge whether a proposed partnership is beneficial or detrimental. Aye Write! has faced similar challenges within Glasgow Life. A re-stating of the core aims of the festival has been a useful compass to maintain the heading of the festival. For literary Glasgow, a landscape of practice could provide a basis for the emergence of a consensus on core aims and needs of the sector, as well as providing the means to respond to these.

³⁴⁸ Matthews. p453

³⁴⁹ Interview: Peggy Hughes 21/4/2016, 00:21:30

Is now a good time?

Glasgow Life has a wide remit across the city's cultural and sporting activity and each sector has different requirements, or is at a different stage in evolution, but literary Glasgow is right now at the point where a transformation in relationship with Glasgow Life could have the greatest positive effect: the reduction in funding and resources has loosened the grip on instrumental aspirations of direct, independent action on literary development; and mantras of community empowerment and resilience have opened a way for literary groups to claim back territory from Glasgow Life and set the agenda for their needs and wants.

Progress in the application of complexity theory to public policy has built a firm foundation for a new relationship between a public body and the literary sector. Detailed and evidenced reviews of alternative approaches to a collaborative civic-community relationship include work on collaborative governance by O'Flynn and Wanna (2008), Ansell and Gash (2007), and Newman and others (2004).³⁵⁰ An assortment of practical resources have been developed in response to academic work and experience in the field, such as the Tamarack Institute's material on leadership and collective impact.³⁵¹ Closer to home, there appears to be a public commitment from Glasgow City Council administration to co-create cultural strategy.³⁵² In addition, at a national level the Scottish Government has expressed a commitment to the support of literacy and reader development.

What could a new model look like?

³⁵⁰ Janine O'Flynn and John Wanna, *Collaborative Governance: A New Era of Public Policy in Australia?* (Acton, A.C.T.: ANU E Press, 2008) <<http://press.anu.edu.au?p=96031>> [accessed 21 March 2018]; C. Ansell and A. Gash, 'Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 18.4 (2007), 543–71 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mum032>>; Janet Newman and others, 'Public Participation and Collaborative Governance', *Journal of Social Policy*, 33.2 (2004), 203–23 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279403007499>>.

³⁵¹ Cabaj and Weaver; Tamarack Institute, 'Tamarack | ABCD' <<http://events.tamarackcommunity.ca/abcd>> [accessed 31 January 2018].

³⁵² *Glasgow's Culture Summit - Summary*.

A strategy for the development of literary Glasgow begins with a new model for the relationship between Glasgow Life and the literary sector. The starting point is a change in the notional positioning of Glasgow Life's efforts in reader development and literary sector support: from things done to the city as solutions to problems, to efforts which play a part within and in concert with the city. This calls for a significant reframing of the identity of Glasgow Life, but is a process which has already begun through the effects of austerity, service contraction and an increased commitment to localism. To recall the metaphor used by Colander and Kupers, it is a descent from one peak in order to ascend another, higher peak.³⁵³

Within large organisations change can be difficult to initiate and push through. Individuals and departments may demonstrate resistance through habit or culture. This can be difficult to overcome when the current working methods and approach are actually effective at some level, making the case for change a more problematic.

Chapter Two and Three observed Glasgow Life's historical activity within the literary sector as highly effective by some measures. The book festivals are among the largest and most well attended in the UK, thousands of school-children are afforded free access to events featuring the most popular authors and illustrators, the library network has been maintained, and literacy work in communities, workplaces and prisons brings opportunity to hundreds of people. These successes may, with good reason, cause resistance to change, and the desire for improvement can become focussed on doing these things better, more often and more efficiently.

³⁵³ Colander and Kupers.

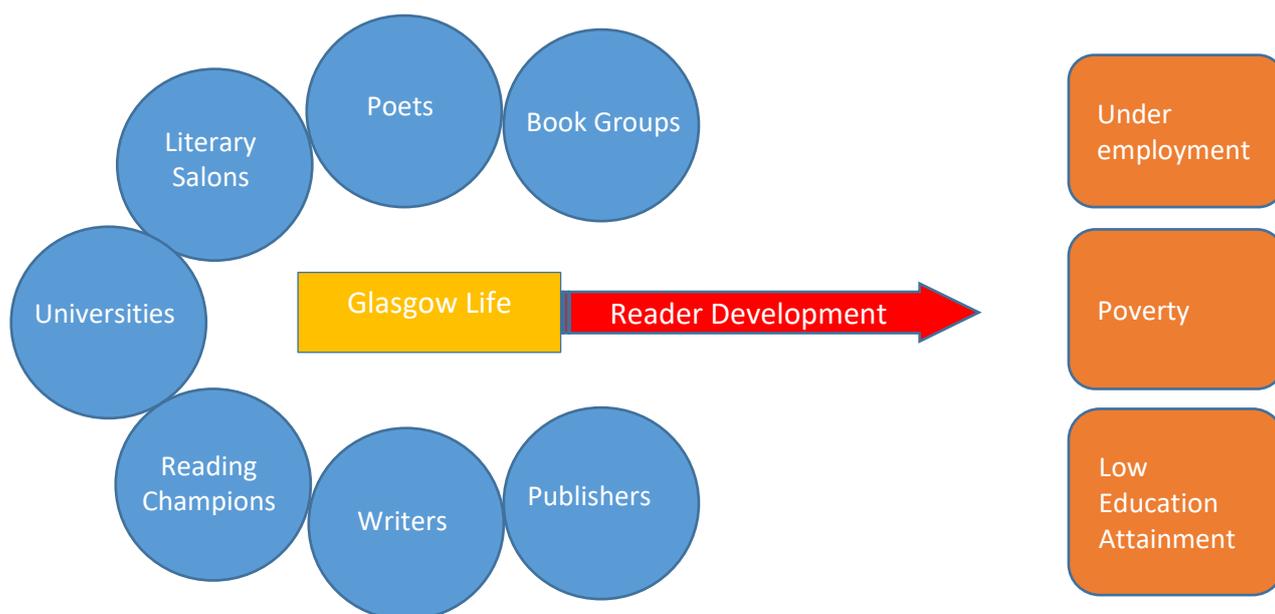


Figure 28: Stage 1 – Glasgow Life’s current, linear attempts to instrumentalise reading and literacy development without engaging with literary Glasgow

Within the complexity frame, it is possible to view this in a different way. In *Complexity and the Art of Public Policy*³⁵⁴, Colander and Kupers refer to this as the ‘Twin Peaks’ problem. Progress and refinement of a particular way of thinking or working is likened to ascending a mountain peak – all efforts are focussed on climbing that slope. However, it may be there is another higher peak nearby, which offers the potential of greater elevation. In order to take advantage of that opportunity, a descent must be made from the current peak, low enough to transfer to the adjacent slope.

It is a hard sell to relinquish progress in a particular direction, even if the potential for greater results is in sight. The austerity agenda and economic pressures on Glasgow Life enforced a partial descent from that first slope through the tightening of resources and the scaling back of staff. It is no longer possible to rely on the option of expanding into more activities, or doing the same things more often, to bring about positive development in literary Glasgow. The old model is not appropriate for the

³⁵⁴ Colander and Kupers. p2-3

circumstances, and plans for progression in many areas have already been relinquished. This has been a painful process and is not a situation anyone would have chosen willingly, but it may have brought about a timely opportunity to remap the journey. From the current position of Glasgow Life with regard to resource limitation and the need for a new relationship with communities, the time is right to consider the potential of that 'second peak'.

This does not require every element of Glasgow Life's work within the sector to cease or even to change but would cast them in a new context. Successful initiatives in literacy support and reader development, Aye Write! and Wee Write! would continue but would be positioned as Glasgow Life's contribution to the complex system of Glasgow's literature-related activity.

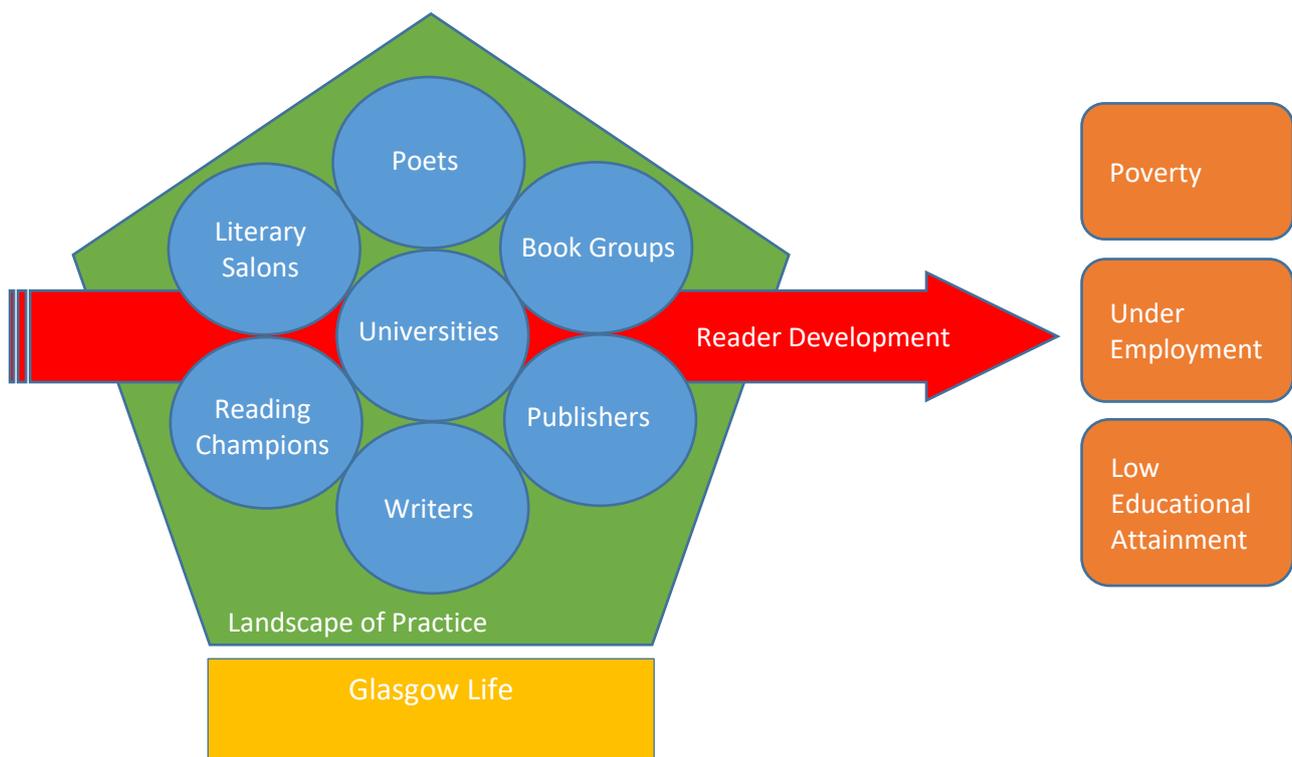


Figure 29: Stage 2 – Glasgow Life supports a Literary Glasgow Landscape of Practice, which increases collective impact on reading and literacy

This new placement of Glasgow Life would cast it in a central but supporting role in a literary Glasgow landscape of practice, providing a framework on which connections are made and partnerships emerge. A designed community of practice requires coordination to give the community basic parameters as a starting point, validity within its domain, tools to connect internally and externally, and help to establish a rhythm. Glasgow Life's reach across the literary sector and beyond makes it the obvious candidate for coordination of such a community, and if it does not take on this responsibility, it is difficult to see where else such support could come from.

Simple, practical measures could be enacted to support a landscape of practice. Some suggestions follow, but would ideally evolve in negotiation with the sector. Measures could include use of physical and virtual spaces. Information pathways, currently weak or missing, could be strengthened by a webpage dedicated to literary Glasgow, to feature content on events, successes, resources, opportunities and calls for support. Physical space could be made available for literary organisation meetings, collaborative reader development initiatives, or to showcase new writing. Glasgow Life's reach on the world stage could be leveraged to support physical/virtual literary exchanges. Public space could be opened to poets, readers and publishers as a resource; and poets, readers and publishers treasured as a resource for activating public spaces.

An important aspect of this landscape of practice approach is that Glasgow Life is not the resource provider and all other partners consumers. The organisations, individuals and communities of practice which make up literary Glasgow, including Glasgow Life, all become available as valuable resources for the city and each other.

For this to work effectively, the partnerships and collaborations arising from this landscape of practice must be driven by alignment rather than power. This is in contrast to other types of partnership working where a larger, more powerful, or funding organisation consciously or unintentionally leverages smaller organisations into modifying their own aims and goals in order to satisfy the more powerful partner. Wenger categorises alignment as a 'mode of being', necessary for sustainability of communities of practice, and defines it as:

making sure that our local activities are sufficiently aligned with other processes so that they can be effective beyond our own engagement. [...] The concept of alignment as used here does not connote a one-way process of submitting to external authority, but a mutual process of coordinating perspectives, interpretations, and actions so they realize higher goals.³⁵⁵

The exciting thing is this is only the starting point. Once a landscape of practice is connected and aligned, it can have a powerful impact on the issues it decides to tackle. In the case of the Literary Glasgow landscape of practice, this could mean coordinated and concentrated effort to engender change in the surrounding literary Glasgow environment – perhaps addressing what in complexity theory is referred to as ‘wicked problems’, such as the literacy challenges of the city and desire for reader development.

Collective impact: putting the landscape to work

The challenge of aligning organisations which have different goals was discussed in Chapter Five, and the same principles apply to cultivation of the literary Glasgow landscape of practice. When the aim of this is to galvanise expertise, resources and energy around a mutually agreed mission or set of values, then the essential elements look remarkably similar to that required for development of a collective impact strategy.

Collective impact, formalised as a theory by Kania and Kramer in 2011, embodies principles of a particular collaborative effort towards a common goal³⁵⁶. Collective impact could be applied as part of the transformation of the Glasgow Life/literary Glasgow relationship promoted above, and would enable the literary Glasgow landscape of practice to engage with efforts to transform the city.

³⁵⁵ Etienne Wenger, ‘Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems’, *Organization*, 7.2 (2000), 225–46 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/135050840072002>>. p228

³⁵⁶ Kania and Kramer.

Collaboration is nothing new, and all the elements of the model Kania and Kramer formalised as collective impact were used in collaborative efforts long before 2011³⁵⁷. The value of this model is primarily in its usefulness in tackling complex challenges in both an effective and inclusive way. It goes beyond public-private partnerships or a series of short-term collaborations and requires ‘a systemic approach to social impact that focuses on the relationships between organizations and the progress toward shared objectives.’³⁵⁸



Figure 30: Five Conditions of Collective Impact³⁵⁹

³⁵⁷ Geoff Mulgan, 'Collaboration and Collective Impact: How Can Funders, NGOs and Governments Achieve More Together', *NESTA, London, 2006*.

³⁵⁸ Kania and Kramer. p39

³⁵⁹ 'Collective Impact' <<http://theforsythpromise.org/collective-impact-1/>> [accessed 13 October 2018].

This systemic approach of collective impact is built upon five conditions, which fit the needs of literary Glasgow outlined above:

Collective Impact Conditions	Literary Glasgow's Need
Common Agenda	An inspiring and galvanising goal.
Shared Measurement System	Aligning what is of value and how it is counted.
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	A removal of insulation around efforts.
Continuous Communication	Connectivity.
Backbone Support Organisation	Glasgow Life's commitment to the sector and to change

Kania and Kramer's original 2011 article in *The Stanford Review* declares: 'Large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on the isolated intervention of individual organizations.' This highlights the framework's relevance to a city such as Glasgow which, while succeeding in isolated intervention, has failed to make a lasting impact on reader development and literacy despite producing numerous writers and publishers. A systemic approach is exactly what is needed, and a fundamental shift in Glasgow Life's approach to its role in Glasgow is essential. This will take time and can happen in stages, if there is a strong enough vision for the direction of travel.

Firstly, Glasgow Life must step back gradually from isolated intervention while committing to increased connectivity across the sector. This would not be a withdrawal from successful work, such as the literacy intervention and support for initiatives such as Bounce and Rhyme, or Wee Write! and Aye Write!, but would rather weave this activity into the wider framework of literary Glasgow. This will be accompanied by recognition of the value of those engaged with literary activity and of the work they produce and the efforts in producing it.

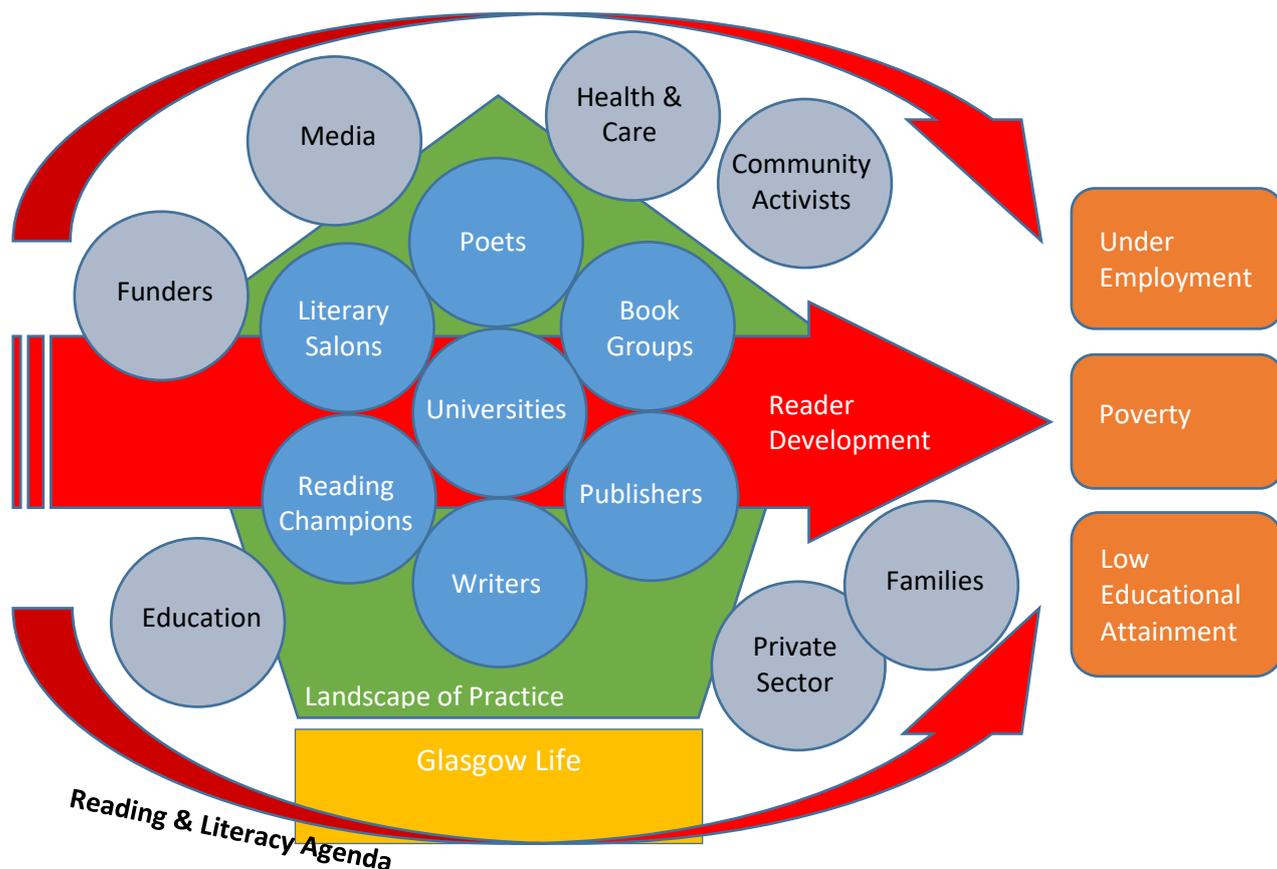


Figure 31: Stage 3 – The Literary Glasgow Landscape of Practice champions a Reading and Literacy Agenda, which draws in wider support.

With this new appreciation, Glasgow Life can commit to a supporting and cultivating role in the development of a literary Glasgow landscape of practice. With Glasgow Life as a backbone organisation, the landscape of practice can commit to a galvanising and inspiring common agenda, for example that of *Reading and Literacy Development*. The collective impact framework, built upon this common agenda, will enable others, within and beyond Glasgow’s literary sector, to express commitment and support for reading and literary in the city.

It may be a long journey but faced with reducing resources and the ultimate failure to turn Glasgow’s reading and literacy around, it is a journey which must be taken.

Conclusion

This research was built around a search for identification of the elements and relationships which might constitute 'literary Glasgow', and attempts to discover those areas on which a strategy for development could best focus. Glasgow Life is the largest cultural organisation in the city and a collaborative partner in this research, which was commissioned to inform a strategy for the organisation's role in literary sector development. The findings here speak directly to Glasgow Life and its relationship with literary Glasgow, but have wider relevance for urban cultural policy beyond this sector and location.

The multi-method ethnographic research documented has outlined the resources held and challenges faced by Glasgow in its ambition for development of the literary sector. Within this research I have clearly identified the will and opportunity for change within the sector and specifically with regard to Glasgow Life's relationship with it. I have shown how potential models for that new relationship, such as a landscape of practice and the application of a community impact framework, can respond to calls for change and satisfy the needs of practitioner groups within literary Glasgow. In Chapter Six I also proposed a staged process for this transition, and evidenced smaller scale successes which should give confidence in the direction of that process.

Two of the recurring themes in this thesis are concepts that might, at first, appear to be in opposition, but actually work together. One is the idea of a broadening out of the concept of literary Glasgow held by Glasgow Life to encompass activity and commitment around reading, writing and publishing in all forms across the city, not just those that are direct efforts of Glasgow Life. The other theme, related to the concept of value, is that resources required for the support and development of literary Glasgow are, in the main, currently in existence within those communities and organisations of which it is made. There is talent, experience and energy within literary Glasgow, unable to fulfil its potential because of a lack of recognition of its value and an inconsistently structured network for its deployment. Some structural

deficits can be mitigated with the placement of boundary objects to improve cross-network communication and exchange, but ultimately the structure has to be transformed by the creation of a new relationship between Glasgow Life and that network. The call here is for a new role for Glasgow Life in its relationship with literary Glasgow, one informed by complexity thinking in which Glasgow Life nurtures a landscape of practice where reading, writing and publishing can thrive.

My research questions were designed to explore the relationship between literary Glasgow and Glasgow Life and to contribute towards a strategy for the development of literary Glasgow. They are: Which factors are significant to the individuals, communities and organisations of literary Glasgow? (RQ1) Which factors are crucial to development of the literary in Glasgow? (RQ2) And, in the light of the answers to these questions, how can Glasgow Life perform an effective role in the development of literary Glasgow? (RQ3)

The initial stage of my research was designed to identify the range of literary activity which takes place in Glasgow, and to gather interview data from multiple sources across it. Analysis of these data was undertaken using multi-stage coding, adapted from a Grounded Theory approach, in order to identify emergent themes. These were then applied as sensitising concepts to subsequent data collection through interviews, document analysis and ethnography. This reflexive, inductive process, carried out across multiple sources, enabled strong themes to be identified and refined. Through this process, answers to the two initial research questions were identified and confirmed. In answer to research question one, 'Which factors are significant to the individuals, communities and organisations of literary Glasgow?', the following themes emerged: *need for appropriate communication channels; value of local talent and resource; role of libraries; effects of limited funding; importance of collaboration; issues of identity and representation; Aye Write! book festival; role of Glasgow Life in the literary sector.*

Research Question 2, 'Which factors are crucial to development of the literary in Glasgow?', sought to refine the factors from RQ1 into those most relevant to the development of literary Glasgow, and to identify additional factors which affect this potential development. This process distilled earlier findings into the categories of

Connectivity, Value, and the Role of a civic cultural organisation within a complex adaptive system. Connectivity encompasses *the need for appropriate communication channels and the importance of collaboration*; Value includes *the effects of limited funding, the value of local talent and resource, and issues of identity and representation*. The Role of a civic cultural organisation within a complex adaptive system encompasses *the role of libraries, Aye Write!, and the role of Glasgow Life in the literary sector*. Additional factors which RQ2 identified as crucial are the identification of literary Glasgow as a complex adaptive system, the continuing impact of the austerity agenda on the public sector, and the community resilience agenda within local and UK public policy.

Research Question Three asks 'how can Glasgow Life perform an effective role in the development of literary Glasgow?' Through combining the answers to RQ1 and RQ2, and in the light of the literature and local findings on boundary objects, cultural value and participation, a model for a new relationship between Glasgow Life and literary Glasgow was proposed. In this model, Glasgow Life acknowledges the complexity of literary Glasgow and adjusts its attempts to influence issues such as literacy and reader development accordingly. This moves Glasgow Life away from an instrumentalist approach towards a complexity approach in which the value of all parts of literary Glasgow is recognised and Glasgow Life acts within, rather than on, that community. Glasgow Life's strategy in support of literary Glasgow would be conducted in collaboration with the sector, with Glasgow Life nurturing a landscape of practice in which solutions to the significant problems of literacy and reader development can emerge. The new relationship would allow Glasgow Life and literary Glasgow to act together to forge a new agenda for literary development, which could leverage other partners as champions and supporters.

In Chapter One I introduced the main theories and concepts underpinning this work through a survey of key literature. This included literature on complexity theory and pragmatism, which establish the theoretical framework for this research and also serve to provide validation for the transdisciplinary nature of the project. Following this, the areas of academic work foundational to an understanding of Glasgow's history of culture-led regeneration and the influences on current cultural policy were

covered. Among these, the challenges of urban deprivation, the spatial metaphors applied within the urban context, and critiques of the instrumentalisation of urban cultural policy lay out the current landscape upon which a strategy for the development of literary Glasgow must be built. The literature surveyed in this chapter provides a foundation for the pursuit of RQ1 and the subsequent development of the data in answer to RQ2. This chapter also introduced concepts with specific application within the field of research: cultural value, boundary objects, resilience and landscapes of practice.

Chapter Two took a panoramic view of literary Glasgow through engagement with the literary sector across professional practice, commercial interests, civic programmes and communities of interest and geography. This established the scope of potential data sources, and interview subjects were selected from this landscape of literary Glasgow.

Chapters Three, Four and Five document specific periods of ethnography and interaction with communities, projects and individuals, which add detail to the picture of what literary Glasgow is now and could potentially be:

Chapter Three documents the Aye Write! book festival and my extended period of participatory ethnographic research in relation to it. As a major event in Glasgow Life's cultural calendar and a crossing point of libraries, publishers, booksellers, authors, readers and audiences, the festival was highly significant for research into the relationship between Glasgow Life and literary Glasgow. My involvement in Aye Write! over four successive years, which included a period of internal change for Glasgow Life, enabled me to examine and refine initial data from RQ1 from within the organisation, while exploring the view from the wider literary Glasgow community. This effectively provided multiple view points on the same issues as they unfolded in real time. These parallel perspectives on Aye Write! and the cultural policy which set its direction were invaluable. Insights from these perspectives informed the development of answers to RQ2 and the subsequent model proposed in response to RQ3.

Chapter Four is an ethnographic account of encounters with people from the community of Sunny Govan Community Radio, who were engaged with literature in a

variety of forms but not connected with Aye Write!. The significance of this is in both the structural reasons for this lack of engagement with the festival, and the insight into perceptions of identity and value emerging from this period of research. Again, factors from this aspect of the research were considered in the light of ongoing participatory ethnographic research with Aye Write!, and the contrasting perspectives enriched the answers to the research questions. The identification of SunnyG's bench as a boundary object for community-organisation engagement is a major finding within this chapter, and informed the subsequent development of a model for the role of Glasgow Life in literary Glasgow.

Chapter Five considers the wider landscape of literary Glasgow and in particular how it is connected. The data on connectivity of literary Glasgow which arose from interviews with community workers, publishers, writers, librarians and poets is examined. On the basis of this, a case is constructed for a landscape of practice which takes into account the complexity of literary Glasgow. This underpins the model for the role of Glasgow Life in literary Glasgow, which responds to RQ3.

In Chapter Six the threads of literary Glasgow's history, current voices, and stated and implied desires are drawn together into a proposed model for the civic-cultural relationship. The issues which emerged from combining these broad and focussed views reveal concrete areas that merit Glasgow Life's attention. These issues have substantial resonance with recent literature on cultural value, cultural participation, urban regeneration and organisational studies.

Limitations

I acknowledge the limitations of this research. The scope of the field, the variety of methods used to gather data, and the range of disciplines drawn upon to make sense of those data, have made this research project challenging. Despite wise counsel from those advising the initiation of this project, I allowed myself to be driven by a mix of optimism, ambition and naivety to press ahead with a broad scope and an even broader hope, believing the key to this research would be found in combining a panoramic view of the sector with specific expressions of concern and value from individual voices. This has necessitated a lack of depth in some aspects which may, in future research, benefit from a fuller treatment. My guilt about this lack of depth in a

few areas is tempered by the hope that either I, or another researcher, will have opportunity to invest more time with the inspiring Maryhill Writers' Group, the unstoppable Fail Better spoken word crowd, or SunnyG's deep anchorage of literary talent, and will be able to share the richness these and other groups bring to literary Glasgow.

The issues emerging from the data were varied and required me to look to other disciplines beyond publishing studies, or even humanities, for explanation and insight. Concepts such as Boundary Objects, Complexity and Communities of Practice were added to the multi-disciplinary toolbox as the research progressed. I took a pragmatic approach to this, acknowledging my experience was limited within those disciplines and concepts, but recognising there was value in my fresh perspective. These concepts and frames were introduced in response to the requirements of the research questions and the need to locate concepts emerging from the data. Academic colleagues with more specific experience with some of these concepts may find reason to critique their application here, but I would hope might also see the potential for widening their application, if appropriate.

As discussed in the Introduction, the collaborative nature of this PhD project was essential to its success and simultaneously a hazard to be negotiated. A significant part of my research was the embedded ethnography undertaken within Glasgow Life. I was a member of the Programme Advisory Group and the Community Engagement Group for Aye Write! throughout the period of this research, and this led to involvement in the Vision for Glasgow Libraries consultation and the development of the *Home Ground* anthology. While always a declared researcher and never an employee, the immersive nature of these roles meant I was frequently caught up in the actions of decision-making and project planning, even when those decisions and plans were the very ones I was researching. When suggestions made by me within those meetings were taken up and implemented, and those changes in direction found their way into the research, it further complicated the relationship between researcher and field. Examples of this include my proposal to increase promotion of Wee Write! at Aye Write! to demonstrate to audiences how their ticket money enabled this additional work for children, and to offset unease about ticket prices, as

well as allowing audiences to feel part of something bigger than a single author event experience. Also, by referring Aye Write!'s PAG back to the core ethos of reader development during debate on a tiered ticketing structure, I was able to provide support for a community ticketing initiative, piloted in 2016 and expanded in 2017. Each of these demonstrate the blurring of boundaries between researcher and collaborative partner organisation, which is both a challenge to the more traditional research approach and a validation of the collaborative partnership model. It was reassuring to read of Dickson's similar struggle with the insider/outsider relationship in a collaborative doctoral post.³⁶⁰

These limitations aside, I remain convinced of the merit in this approach and that important ground has been broken for further research and investigation. I am confident the research has shed light on areas of significance for the application of cultural policy in an urban setting, and on the potential role of a civic cultural organisation within the complexity of the literary sector. This research will be of interest to policymakers within local and national government, to agencies which support the cultural sector – specifically, though not exclusively, in literary sector development – and to those with an interest in approaches to culture-led urban regeneration. Academics within cultural studies, organisational studies, urban studies and social policy may also find cause to engage with this research and opportunities to challenge or confirm these findings in other settings. Acknowledging the central issues of cultural value, complexity and social policy reach beyond the literary sector, it is possible the findings will be applicable across other cultural activity, and may also find relevance in non-urban settings.

As a result of this work, further research is recommended in a number of areas. The effectiveness of deliberately created boundary objects as a means of cultural sector cohesion merits some exploration, and there is scope for work on a typology of such. The misappropriation of Aye Write! as a boundary object was

³⁶⁰ Lesley-Ann Dickson, 'Insider/outsider Positions at Glasgow Film Festival: Challenges, Issues and Opportunities in Industry-Partnered Ethnographic Research', in *Film Festivals and Anthropology* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017) <<https://eresearch.qmu.ac.uk/handle/20.500.12289/5226>> [accessed 14 October 2018].

proposed in Chapter Five, and research into other such instances of surrogate boundary objects may help to refine Star's (1989, 2010) concept.³⁶¹ Further research on the economic and political costs and gains for a cultural organisation that transitions away from an instrumental approach and towards a championing role in cultural development would be welcomed. The application of the concept of a landscape of practice across an entire cultural sector in an urban setting is a challenging one; a comparison of methods of nurturing such a landscape could be explored and examined to develop potential models and methods.

Contribution to existing knowledge

This work contributes to the literature on cultural policy of civic organisations and on book festivals, by demonstrating that a significant community of culturally engaged people are being excluded from civic cultural activities, even those in which efforts have been made to include the most disadvantaged groups. In the case of *Aye Write!*, I identified a gap in engaged readers and writers caused by pursuing simultaneous aims of the financial viability of the festival, and reader development of the most disadvantaged groups. This resulted from a tendency to serve the safest recurring audience for the book festival, while simultaneously attempting to meet a commitment to reader development by focussing on the target group of disadvantaged communities or those with literacy issues.³⁶² The gap between the two groups is where many creative writers and committed readers exist who may find they are no longer served by the festival. A continuation of this divergence in the festival audience leads to the loss of those people who may be most usefully engaged as champions of literature across communities. In addition, if the only role available within the festival model to those who are local producers/collaborators in literature is as a passive consumer, then local champions of literature may be lost to the festival completely. These unintended consequences of the operation of a cultural event by a

³⁶¹ Star, 'This Is Not a Boundary Object'.

³⁶² Driscoll.

civic organisation are worthy of investigation in other locations and other categories of cultural activity.

My work also contributes to the literatures on cultural participation and cultural value by confirming and expanding upon work by Stevenson (2012), Miles (2016), Miles and Gibson (2016), and Taylor (2016), which challenges reasons for non-participation in cultural activity.³⁶³ Disappointingly, it also confirms the policy issues around cultural value outlined by Bassett (1993), have still not been resolved.³⁶⁴ Assumptions were made by Glasgow Life about non-participants not valuing the cultural events on offer. This research demonstrates the reason for non-participation is actually connected to a perceived lack of value in the non-participants' community and culture, as displayed by Glasgow Life. Additionally, when cultural events and activities, such as some of those produced by Aye Write!, make the role of consumer/audience member the only one available to local people, then this will be interpreted by some as a lack of recognition of value in locally produced work. Non-participation in this case is potentially increased in those groups that most value the cultural activity they feel excluded from. This misinterpretation of non-participation was illustrated in the cases of Brian McQuade at Sunny Govan Community Radio in Chapter Four, and Bram Gieben of Glasgow's spoken word scene in Chapter Five.

The identification and demonstration of the significance of a boundary object in facilitating communication and transference between members of a geographical community and a cultural organisation (Sunny Govan Community Radio) is a contribution to literature on the boundary object concept developed by Star (1989)

³⁶³ Stevenson; Andrew Miles, 'Telling Tales of Participation: Exploring the Interplay of Time and Territory in Cultural Boundary Work Using Participation Narratives', *Cultural Trends*, 25.3 (2016), 182–93 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2016.1204046>>; Andrew Miles and Lisanne Gibson, 'Everyday Participation and Cultural Value', *Cultural Trends*, 25.3 (2016), 151–57 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2016.1204043>>; Mark Taylor, 'Nonparticipation or Different Styles of Participation? Alternative Interpretations from Taking Part', *Cultural Trends*, 25.3 (2016), 169–81 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2016.1204051>>.

³⁶⁴ Bassett.

and others.³⁶⁵ I also argued that frustrations with Aye Write! could be explained by the misappropriation of the festival as a boundary object in the absence of any other mechanism to access the sector. Further research on misappropriation of boundary objects could help refine theory on their usage and misuse.

The findings here navigate the movement of local government policy towards a post-regeneration phase under the pressures of continuing austerity, and support the application of a Complexity Theory approach to realignment of Glasgow Life's role within the literary sector, in line with emergent thinking in cultural studies and economics.³⁶⁶ This work also outlines the potential for specific actions, such as the nurturing of a landscape of practice around a commitment to literature and the deliberate placement of boundary objects to enable transactions across the sector. The need for these is drawn from the research and examined against relevant literature, including that found beyond the disciplines of Publishing Studies and Cultural Policy.

This research delivers implications for the realignment of local government policy, particularly when that policy is already in transition, and offers the potential of a new model for the support of community-led cultural development. The research also speaks to those groups and individuals who are active within the literary sector and may embolden them to seek a more effective way of engagement with each other and to demand the support of local government in their endeavours.

³⁶⁵ Star and Griesemer; Star, 'This Is Not a Boundary Object'; Bowker and others; Michalski and others; J. Sapsed, 'Postcards from the Edge: Local Communities, Global Programs and Boundary Objects', *Organization Studies*, 25.9 (2004), 1515–34 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840604047998>>; Cliff Oswick and Maxine Robertson, 'Boundary Objects Reconsidered: From Bridges and Anchors to Barricades and Mazes', *Journal of Change Management*, 9.2 (2009), 179–93 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14697010902879137>>.

³⁶⁶ Dave O'Brien and Peter Matthews, *After Urban Regeneration: Communities, Policy and Place* (Policy Press, 2016); Jack Newsinger and William Green, 'The Infrapolitics of Cultural Value: Cultural Policy, Evaluation and the Marginalisation of Practitioner Perspectives', *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 9.4 (2016), 382–95 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2016.1141791>>; Colander and Kupers; Cairney.

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Appendix I: List of Interviews

Sarah Munro	Head of Arts, Glasgow Life	03/02/14	Notes
Simon Biggam	Glasgow Life	03/02/14	Notes
Liz Small / Ron Grosset	Waverley Books	20/02/14	Notes
David Kinloch	Professor of Creative Writing University of Strathclyde	13/03/14	Notes
Lauren Weiss	Book Group leader	04/02/15	Audio
Willy Maley	Professor of Literature University of Glasgow	26/02/15	Notes
Marie-Elena Heather	Head of Adult Learning Glasgow Life	27/02/15	Notes
Pat Urquhart	Cultural Services Officer Glasgow Life	02/03/15	Audio
Julie Fraser	Writer/Creative Writing Tutor	09/03/15	Audio
Mari Binnie	Area Arts Producer Glasgow Life	16/03/15	Audio
Alison Irvine	Author	16/04/15	Notes
Mary Greenshields	Former Librarian	24/04/15	Audio
Pat Byrne	Pat's Guide	07/05/15	Audio
Jim Carruth	Glasgow's Poet Laureate	08/05/15	Audio
Moira Burgess	Author	14/05/15	Audio
Bob McDevitt	Aye Write! Programmer	20/05/15	Audio
Angela McHendry	Service Manager Children's Residential Services GCC	29/05/15	Notes
Adrian Searle	Freight Books	05/06/15	Audio
Janice Galloway	Author	15/06/15	Audio
Maryhill Writers' Group	Writers' Group	16/06/15	Notes
Jim McMillan	SunnyG	17/06/15	Notes
Scottish Writers' Book Group (Hillhead)	Book Group	29/06/15	Audio
Betty (GWL)	Glasgow Women's Library	30/07/15	Audio
E Matthew (GWL)	Glasgow Women's Library	30/07/15	Audio
Martin Taylor	Playwright/SunnyG	09/12/15	Notes
Brian McQuade	Author/ SunnyG	27/01/16	Notes
Trish Caird	Author/SunnyG	27/01/16	Notes
Bram Gieben	Performance Poet/Scottish Slam Champion	09/03/16	Notes
Eleanor Logan	Publishing Scotland/Weegie Wednesday	13/04/16	Audio
Peggy Hughes	Literary Dundee	21/04/16	Audio
Keith Charters	Strident Publishing	11/05/16	Audio

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Semi-structured – to encourage openness and allow scope for free dialogue.

Three versions, tailored to a specific type of interviewee, classified according to their role/involvement in Literary Glasgow.

A: Class 1 – Employees of Glasgow Life/other sector organisations.

B: Class 2 – Individuals within sector (not employed within a larger organisation).

C: Class 3 – Participants in literary Glasgow activity.

First schedule is an amalgamation of versions **A** and **B** (class 1 & 2) – questions specific to classification are indicated by the corresponding letter.

Second interview schedule is version **C** (class 3).

ALL interviews opened and closed in the same way, as below.

OPENING

- Introduction: name – researcher with the University of Stirling, in partnership with Glasgow Life.
- Title, purpose of research, and role of Glasgow Life.
- Scope of research and intended participants.
- Intended length of interview (with reminder of recording, where applicable).

CLOSING

Responses help build a picture of the sector and contribute to strengthening Glasgow as a literary city.

- Is there anything else you'd like to tell me that may be useful in my research?
[ALL]
- Is there anyone else you think I should speak to? **[ALL]**
- On a personal level, what sort of books do you read? And how do you read them? (Kindle/audiobooks/paper). **[A, B]**

Ask if ok to email any follow up questions.

Thank you.

Interview schedule A & B

A: Class 1 – Employees of Glasgow Life/other sector organisations.

B: Class 2 – Individuals within sector (not employed within a larger organisation).

BODY

ROLE – view of their role within organisation and connections which enable this.

1. Brief outline of your role within [the organisation] and how this relates to Glasgow’s literary sector? [Probe for clarification] **[A, B]**
2. Who else do you work with in order to achieve aims of role? Within [the organisation] or outwith? **[A, B]**

Role-specific questions: **[A]**

Role-specific questions *and* what effect does being a Glasgow-based [writer/agent/publisher] have on what you do and how you see yourself? **[B]**

SECTOR AWARENESS – view of connectivity across sector.

3. Provisional title of research is “Developing Literary Glasgow”. Is there such a thing as ‘literary Glasgow’, if so, what is it? **[A, B]**
or
Does Glasgow have an identity as a literary city? If so, how would you describe it? [probe for clarification] **[A, B]**
4. Strongest connections and collaborations across the sector? Where should links be developed or strengthened? **[A, B]**
5. What, if any, difference would this make to your role/organisation and to sector? **[A]**

What, if any, difference would this make to your role and to sector? **[B]**

6. How could links be strengthened? Who makes that happen? **[A, B]**

IDEAS and COMMUNITY CONNECTION – mechanisms for change, listening to communities.

7. Within organisation, where do ideas for [literary initiatives/new projects] come from? **[A]**

Re: city of Glasgow and its literary community, where do best ideas for [literary initiatives/new projects] come from? **[B]**

8. Do(es) [organisation/department/you] have any significant connection with particular Glasgow communities? If so, what are they? **[A, B]**
9. How do ideas and concerns from a community-level reach decision-makers within [the organisation]? **[A]**

What contribution [could / do] those communities make to Glasgow as literary city? **[B]**

and

Does Glasgow's literary sector reflect or represent those communities? If so, how? If not, why and what can be done about it? **[B]**

VISION – What could be improved and how?

10. Ideal world – what would Glasgow's literary sector look like in five or 10 years? **[A, B]**
11. To help me narrow things down, complete following sentence: "*Glasgow's identity as a literary city could be improved if we had less X and more Y.*" What is X and what is Y? **[A, B]**
12. How does Glasgow Life's Aye Write! festival affect your work, and sector as a whole? **[B]**

Interview Schedule C

Class 3 – Participants in literary Glasgow activity.

BODY

ROLE – view of role within organisation and connections which enable this.

1. How did you decide to take part in this [event/course/class/group]?
How did you find out about it?
What do you hope to get out of it?
2. What other literary [events/groups] have you been involved in?

SECTOR AWARENESS – view of activity across the sector.

3. Do you know about, or have you been involved in any of the following?

Aye Write
Wee Write
Glasgow Women's Library
Weegie Wednesday
Writing groups
Reading groups
Literacy classes
Others [probe for clarification]

4. Effect reading/writing had on their life

Follow on – reading habits

- Last book read?
- Many books at home?
- Read much as a child?
- Preferred reading format? (device, paper etc)
- How often use library?
- Feeling about way libraries are changing

5. Development of Glasgow as literary city: Is Glasgow a literary city? What would this mean to you?
6. How could Glasgow be improved as a literary city?

7. Help narrow things down– complete following sentence: “*Glasgow’s identity as a literary city could be improved if we had less X and more Y.*” What is X and what is Y?

IDEAS and COMMUNITY CONNECTION – mechanisms for change, listening to communities.

8. Consider yourself part of a particular community in Glasgow?
[location/ethnicity/religion/gender/other]
9. How could voices and ideas of community be better represented in Glasgow’s literary community?

VISION – What could be improved and how?

10. Ideal world – what would Glasgow’s literary sector look like in five or 10 years?