

# OUTREACH to OWNERSHIP

IMPACT EVALUATION

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PREPARED BY:



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

'Outreach to Ownership'(O2O) is a cross-border research pilot programme that explores innovative approaches to inclusive community engagement across culture sector organisations in Scotland and England. Managed in partnership by Historic England (HE) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES), the project is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

This evaluation report focuses on understanding the **impact** of the Outreach to Ownership Project, taking a 360° view of the short-term impact of the pilot and the five projects on the individuals, organisations and communities involved. Bright Culture consultants have led the evaluation and gathered data and evidence throughout the project to understand and explore project outcomes and learning. A separate evaluation report accompanies this one, detailing findings and learning related to the **process**, with some inevitable cross-overs. This summative impact report focuses on answering the following enquiry questions:

1. Has the hub facilitated the development of **skills** and **knowledge** for partners and communities?
2. What was the **impact** and **effectiveness** of the different **research methods** used?
3. Has the project enabled real opportunities for **co-curation** and **ownership sharing** in the delivery process?
4. What has been the **value** of the project for the **individuals** and **communities** involved?
5. What **lessons** have been **learnt** during the project which may impact future activity?

We cannot fully understand the impact of the five individual projects yet, as this will be demonstrated by peoples' ongoing attitudes, behaviours and interactions over the medium to long term. This evaluation provides short-term feedback and insights from partners, stakeholders, and audiences related to project delivery and the impact of involvement in the wider O2O pilot project. The learning and evidence from the pilot also suggest what effect longer-term investment and projects could potentially achieve.

## 2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY & EVIDENCE

To understand the project's impact, we have used multiple methods to capture feedback and learning from the Partners and HE/HES. This has taken the form of regular check-ins with project partners and HE/HES and creating the structure and resources to support partners in collecting evidence and recording feedback from the communities and stakeholders involved in their delivery. Methods & evidence used to inform this evaluation have included:

- Development of the Evaluation Plan and structure at the beginning of the project, which identified overarching impact and process enquiry questions.
- A question bank of critical questions that project partners could integrate into their research to collect feedback from audiences and stakeholders.
- Start-up meetings with project partners to understand project plans and provide evaluation support.
- Monthly calls with HE/HES to discuss project delivery.
- Group mid-point and end-of-project online evaluation workshops with all partners to review the project process.
- Delivery of a workshop for partners on collecting evidence & data.
- Impact reports completed by each partner summarising their projects' impact on their organisations, audiences and stakeholders.
- End of project meetings with each project to explore the impact of their projects and their experience of being involved in O2O.
- End of project meetings with HE/HES to discuss the process and impact of the project.
- An online stakeholder feedback form, used across all five projects to provide comparability and completed by 25 stakeholders.
- Research reports produced by each of the five projects.

## 3. THE PROJECTS

Five pilot projects were delivered across England and Scotland as part of the O2O pilot by the following Partner organisations: Heritage Lincolnshire, MSDS Marine, Moder Dy, Scottish Council on Archives, The Art House, The Churches Conservation Trust, Heritage Trust Network, Historic Churches Scotland and Churches Trust for Cumbria; supported by Hub partners Historic England (HE) and Historic Scotland (HES).

Each research project was bespoke and unique in its heritage or cultural interest area, the communities it worked with, and the delivery structure. Project partners identified research questions, which they sought to answer through research and consultation with their communities, with delivery taking place February- September 2022. Methods used included: stakeholder and community surveys, online & in-person workshops, pop-up events, exhibitions, participant observation and desk-based research.

The project's individual-specific findings and outcomes can be found in their detailed research reports. For context within this report, summaries of the five projects and their focus are included below.

**Building on History** was delivered by Heritage Lincolnshire in partnership with communities in Lincolnshire and Nottingham. The aim was to explore the potential of a co-created digital tool to recognise diverse heritage.

Community members across the two localities were given ownership of facilitating events in partnership with Heritage Lincolnshire and community connectors. The workshops explored communities' heritage with people from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. The project research questions were:

- How do different communities understand the concept of heritage?
- How do different communities recognise, share or commemorate their heritage?
- How do different communities feel about the future of their heritage?
- What barriers do different communities face when engaging with their heritage?
- Is a digital toolkit an effective way to engage marginalised communities with their heritage and the designation system, encouraging co-production and ownership?

**The Everyone's Stories Matter** project was delivered by Scottish Council on Archives (SCA) and focussed on research that explores the obstacles and opportunities around managing community archives in Scotland. The project gathered evidence from community organisations, groups and professionals to inform future decision-making and practice in Scotland's community archives. The research was undertaken into the critical areas of archive usage and access; archive and memory loss; engagement and inclusivity; skills, resources and capacity building; profile raising, partnership and collaboration opportunities; wellbeing; and the role of SCA. Project participants were asked to share their experiences of contributing to and using archives, and SCA delivered training in digital archiving. The research questions were:

- How easy is it for researchers and users to access community and heritage organisation archives?
- How inclusive are community and heritage organisations in terms of representing a wide range of people in the community?
- How do different sections of the archives sector vary in terms of response? For example, urban versus rural populations; geographical variations?
- Do communities have the relevant skills and knowledge to create sustainable and accessible archives?
- How do communities interact and engage with official local authority or university archive repositories?
- What are some of the most common reasons for archive and community memory loss?
- What are the challenges of managing digital archives?
- What are the wider impacts of archives on society, e.g, life enrichment, well-being, mental health, and community cohesion?
- In what ways can SCA support community and heritage organisations in the future?

The **Inclusive Island Heritage** project principally sought to explore inclusive heritage engagement in Scottish island communities focusing on Skye and Shetland but with data collection extending to the Western Isles. MSDS Marine and Moder Dy co-managed the project, with the former leading the Skye-based work and the latter leading in Shetland. Both organisations have bases in their respective island communities. Key partners were also chosen from local Skye & Shetland communities, including the Museum of the Isles, Sleat Local History Society, Skye and Lochalsh Access Pane, Archaeology Shetland, Ability Shetland, Shetland Archives and the Moving on Engagement Project.

The central research question was: **How do we achieve inclusive heritage engagement in the Scottish island communities of Skye and Shetland?**

Focusing on a series of objectives:

- Identify island audiences & determine a baseline of heritage engagement.
- Identify challenges to engagement in island communities, in contrast to mainland areas, & possible strategies for overcoming these challenges.
- Test and evaluate key potential recommendations while exploring differences between island settings.
- Evaluate project data & experiences & provide recommendations for how engagement with heritage in island settings could be improved in future.

**Makey Wakey** is a partnership project between The Art House and the Ridings Shopping Centre in Wakefield (TRSC). The project began in 2019 and was initiated as a pilot project to trial a new interim use of spaces model. The Art House had a network of artists, community groups, and social enterprises all needing access to space; meanwhile, TRSC was a city centre shopping mall with an ever-growing list of empty spaces. The Art House now manages 20 spaces in TRSC as a result of Makey Wakey.

Over the nine months of the Outreach to Ownership project, the Art House worked collaboratively with community partners to develop a series of workshops & a survey exploring the impact of Makey Wakey.

This research has played an essential role in the development of Makey Wakey as the Arts House grow the programme & shares the project and its impact on Wakefield with other organisations across the country. The project focussed on answering '**What is the impact of Makey Wakey on its partners, participants, visitors, and the owners of TRSC?**' in response to a series of aims:

1. **Assess where we currently are.** Establish a baseline of information to evaluate our growth in the future.
2. **Challenge our assumptions.** Are we achieving what we set out to?
3. **Find new ways of supporting our partners.** Can we do more?
4. Build our project to be in a strong position to deliver a nationwide expansion of the MW model.

**Bridging the Gap** is co-created by multiple delivery partners, including the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT), Historic Churches Scotland (HCS), Heritage Trust Network (HTN) and Churches Trust for Cumbria (CTfC). The project explored how communities play an increasingly important role in taking ownership of and managing places of worship.

These spaces face complex issues as they struggle to remain relevant as places of worship whilst being important community & heritage assets. However, the challenges and opportunities to do this are under-researched from a community perspective, particularly in rural areas where the issues are potentially more complex. Using existing networks, the delivery partners worked with selected sectoral stakeholders and a small selection of rural communities in southern Scotland and northern England to explore issues surrounding sustainable community ownership of historic churches.

**This project aimed to explore, through inclusive community engagement, the barriers and solutions to sustainable community ownership of historic rural places.** With a focus on three research questions:

1. What are the barriers to sustainable community ownership of rural churches?
2. How have these barriers been overcome?
3. What do communities need to overcome these barriers?

## 4. PROJECT REACH

The O2O project has had extensive geographical reach across England and Scotland, enabled through a range of community partnerships and stakeholder support. Delivery areas included Lincolnshire, Nottingham, Cumbria, Wakefield, the Isle of Skye, Shetland, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stornoway and Scottish borders. A diverse range of stakeholders and communities were engaged through the five projects and their activities, further details of which are shared below.

- Across the O2O projects, at least 441 took part in 30 workshops either in person or online.
- Additionally, a further 159 people responded to surveys.
- Deepened or created relationships with 79 community groups.
- It is estimated that 652 people attended pop-up events and exhibitions.



Image of a group of children with their workshop leader graffitiing a wall from the Building on History Project

In Lincolnshire and Nottingham, the **Building on History** project engaged eight communities from diverse backgrounds, including people with Black, Asian or other minority ethnic heritage; young people under 25 (school-aged children and young people aged 16-25 outside of school); people with disabilities; and people who are disadvantaged by their social or economic background or circumstances. Groups included: Caythorpe Veterans group, Linkage Community Trust, Mojatu Foundation Angolan Women's and Children's groups, Ukrainian child & teenager refugee groups, and Skate Nottingham.





Image of a person holding up a piece of printed fabric from the Makey Wakey Project

In Wakefield, the **Makey Wakey** research project engaged with a range of organisations that provide support to people, including Star Bereavement, which provides support and empowerment to children and young people when someone important to them dies or is near the end of their life; the Merrie Collective, a creative collective of young artists; Stride Theatre, an organisation delivering weekly workshops, predominantly to learning, disabled adults and children; and CoActive a charity who deliver creative sessions and support for learning disabled adults. In addition, 74 people engaged with their survey, which included artists, people from the LGBTQ+ community, people with learning disabilities and autism, people with low socio-economic backgrounds, vulnerable adults & children and asylum seekers and refugees.

In Scotland, the **Inclusive Island Heritage** project enabled collaboration between organisations who had not worked together previously on Skye, Shetland and the Western Isles, including MSDS Marine, Moder Dy, Museum of the Isles, Sleat Local History Society, Shetland Archives, Ability Shetland, The Moving on Employment Project, Archaeology Shetland, Skye and Lochalsh Access Panel. Audiences at most events were primarily island-based, and 90% of all participants lived on the islands where the project was based. The events were targeted mainly at island communities using island networks, local notice boards, & internet groups. Pop-up events & exhibitions attracted a mix of islanders & non-islanders.



Image of a group of people looking at a landscape from the Inclusive Island Heritage Project

The **Bridging the Gap** project and its four delivery partners engaged with a broad group of sector stakeholders, which included: the Architectural Heritage Fund, Built Environment Forum Scotland, Church of Scotland, Churches Trust for Cumbria, Development Trusts Association Scotland, Heritage Trust Network, Historic Churches Scotland, Historic Religious Buildings Alliance, National Churches Trust, Plunkett Foundation, Rural Churches For Everyone (Newcastle Diocese), Scotland's Churches Trust and The Churches Conservation Trust. Through the delivery partners' existing networks, the group also worked with a small selection of rural communities in southern Scotland and northern England, who are involved with the ownership, care, or management of one or more historic places of worship.



Image of a group of people listening to a presentation from the Bridging the Gap Project

**Everyone's Stories Matter** project team identified heritage & culture sector community partners and created a project steering group of community representatives from Community Archives and Heritage Group Scotland, Your Community Voice, Tasglann nan Eilean (Hebridean Archives), Govanhill Baths Archive and Scottish Council on Archives. As well as online engagement through Smart Survey, Zoom workshops, & social media, the project engaged with representatives of community groups in three distinct geographical areas: Glasgow, Edinburgh and Stornoway, with participants tending to be older. Community groups taking part included: Milltown Heritage Group, Scottish Fisheries Museum, Cramond Heritage Trust, Loch Ard Local History Group, Cupar Museum & Heritage Centre & Deaf History Scotland.



Image of several groups of people talking from the Everyone Stories Matter Project

## 5. FINDINGS: SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

**'Every group had a different take away from it, because every group came to it differently.'** Project partner

**'It provided an opportunity for people to learn new skills and get the knowledge that, given our relatively remote geographic location, is not always that accessible.'** Stakeholder

The O2O project has facilitated the development of skills, knowledge-sharing, and learning for partners. This has been achieved through a mixture of capacity-building workshops and working with new Partners, stakeholders, facilitators and community members whilst undertaking their research. This has been supported by an embedded ethos of learning and sharing within the structure of the O2O project and encouraging reflection and critique.

The capacity-building workshops have positively impacted partners, and learning has taken place. The partners frequently mentioned throughout the evaluation that this part of the project has been positive and increased their knowledge and confidence. The online workshops also enabled geographically widespread organisations to collaborate and share experiences and learning, which the partners found incredibly useful. The **process evaluation** report explores challenges around the structure of this support and the time required to commit to the capacity-building strand.

**'I was new to research, so me being the person who explains it to all the communities was really difficult because I wasn't really certain about what it entailed, so it was difficult to translate what we were trying to achieve..... I think that's why I appreciated the capacity building and support... that gave me confidence.'** Project partner

**'I've learnt a lot about evaluation and all the other capacity-building workshops that the project has offered, it's been very helpful to me, and I'm passing that on with the other work I do in community archives and heritage groups, it's hugely beneficial.'** Project partner

During reflection, project partners talked about how the project provided the space to explore their research with no fixed goal or set of outputs to meet at the endpoint and how this is refreshing from the usual way of working on funded projects. Whilst delivering responsively has challenges, as you have to be very flexible, it has increased partners' confidence in developing work that reflects community interests and awareness of issues that might arise in working in this way.

Project Partners also shared how the consistent advice, support and safe space created by HE/HES and the project structure was a real asset to the project and enabled open communication and learning.

**'It's been a kind of luxury project – in that we've had so much support from the funders, but also just being able to talk to you in a safe space has been really good and really important. It's something that just doesn't happen with most projects.'** Project partner

Many Partners feel they have gained a better understanding of community engagement, what works and what doesn't and what good practice entails.

Working with their communities, they have had the opportunity to share, explore and trial new engagement and data collection strategies. It was noted that in post-covid restrictions, there are still challenges and anxieties around bringing people together. Partners demonstrate that they know and understand the barriers to engagement for the people they work with and support, and this learning is informing project delivery and methods used.

**'It feels like we've only just started... it feels like we've got a really good springboard to set off from, it was a short project, a pilot study, but it's got everybody talking, it feels like we're all on the same page now.'** Project partner

**'We've got a good understanding now of where we can target new events and new projects now... one of the legacies for us is that we have a really good relationship with organisations.'** Project partner

Stakeholder feedback tells us that projects enabled people to develop their skills and knowledge in various ways. For example, some stakeholders learnt practical skills such as surveying, web design, research, indexing, and cataloguing. Others enhanced their community engagement skills, developing more creative ways to engage with communities. In addition, some gained experience working with people who speak different languages, and some were made more aware of cultural, social and educational differences regarding understanding and exploring heritage. It has also allowed stakeholders to learn from other organisations' work and the challenges and successes they have faced.

**'My involvement in this project has given me the opportunity to explore parts of our archive collection that I was previously less familiar with.'** Stakeholder

**'Supporting the workshops has built my confidence tremendously and allowed me to go into future workshops knowing I am even more well-equipped and experienced to do a great job. I really enjoyed working with lots of different groups of people, some of which I had not yet had the opportunity to work with in my career yet.'** Stakeholder

Engagement activities have increased knowledge and understanding of people's varied interests in tangible and intangible heritage and what people value. Projects have also enabled more significant connections between stakeholders and communities, providing spaces to explore, debate or spark interest in heritage issues. Participants enjoyed sharing information and learning from each other, particularly when two groups met for the first time. Within the Makey Wakey project, the facilitators noted increased participant confidence in creative activities; and pride in participating in useful research where their opinions were valued and mattered.

The **Building on History** research with participants has explored how pictorial icons used to represent types of heritage are perceived differently. It also listened to communities such as Skate Nottingham about the importance of their evolving heritage. The **Inclusive Island Heritage** project pop-up events have encouraged islanders who may not have previously engaged in sharing their stories sparked by an interest in archaeology finds.

## 6. FINDINGS: RESEARCH METHODS

Projects have used various research and consultation methods, including in-person and online surveys, pop-up events and exhibitions, workshops (online and in-person), and desk-based research and literature reviews. Methods were adapted to meet the needs of communities, responsive to whether the engagement was sought from participants and stakeholders with whom the partner organisations had existing relationships with or new audiences. Partners also agreed that having several mechanisms in place to gain feedback had been vital in enabling access for people to participate, as focusing on just one approach wouldn't have provided the same research results. Partners and stakeholders identify several elements that have been significant in the success and value of different approaches.

**Reaching audiences.** Working with community connectors and organisations who could act as gatekeepers was significant in many of the project's ability to reach people, as they could connect with communities through already established and trusted relationships. Non-traditional methods such as craft workshops and art-focused events were effective methods of engaging new audiences. As were running activities or pop-up displays in public spaces that people frequent, for example, shopping centres (Makey Wakey & Inclusive Island Heritage) and a ferry port (Inclusive Island Heritage).

**Settings.** In-person face-to-face workshops and pop-up events generally worked better than online. However, having a hybrid model and providing online options allowed for a wider geographical reach and increased accessibility.

Providing comfortable and relaxed locations in public or semi-public spaces was conducive to conversation and encouraged feedback and participation. However, as the Makey Wakey stakeholders identified (in response to running sessions in shopping centre spaces), there is a delicate balance between a space's openness and privacy and noise and safety issues that must be considered to ensure that discussions can take place. A Makey Wakey project facilitator from Star Bereavement commented that they noticed young people were more relaxed outside the normal clinical environment. "**When coming out to the community, the children respond differently.**"

Project stakeholders shared what they and the people they worked with valued and enjoyed most about the research and consultation, with the most common response being **'people's opinions being valued'**. Other responses included:

- Coming together as communities and sharing experience
- Meeting new people in communities
- The opportunity to be heard
- Being able to express knowledge and thoughts
- Learning new things.

**'We have reached communities which are not normally represented in Heritage. Most participants were interested in contributing and starting a conversation about these issues.'** Stakeholder

**'Workshop leading, I guess communicating would come under this. How research can be more exciting and engaging - and how this can lead to better, more enriched opinions from conversing with other participants, and excellent stories shared that otherwise probably wouldn't come naturally.'** Stakeholder

**'Our experiences have been explored on a deep level. If it was just a questionnaire, then the responses would have been on the surface. Creative responses mean you can go deeper in an easy, non-threatening way.'** Stakeholder



## 7. FINDINGS: CO-CURATION

Definitions of co-creation vary amongst the project partners. For several organisations, co-creation is at the heart of what they do – providing opportunities for people to create together. For others, there were concerns around expectations of communities within the pilot due to the commitment required for communities to be able to do this effectively. There was a consensus that genuine opportunities for co-curation on a community level were challenging within the pilot's short timeframe (explored in the **process evaluation**).

Where co-curation was most feasible was embedding this into delivery approaches at a partner level. Multiple partners or stakeholders often worked together collaboratively to develop and deliver projects. These partnerships are one of the positive impacts of the O2O project. Often these were new relationships, from different locations, across borders, and with different organisational remits. This meant that different skills, perspectives, and skills guided the delivery and creation of approaches and outputs.

For the **Building on History** project, established contacts in Nottingham enabled the team to give community leaders the role of delivering workshops. This gave ownership of the workshops to the community, and Heritage Lincolnshire felt it encouraged deeper and more meaningful discussion. In addition, offering a budget to communities enabled communities to control the delivery of their workshops through their nominated facilitator. This process helped to navigate potential community sensitivities which the project delivery team may not have understood. The result was a more comfortable and conducive environment for community participation during the workshops.

The **Everyone Stories Matter** project worked with partners from the Western Isle Archive service and community groups in Glasgow and Edinburgh to co-create the project plan, survey questions and workshop format. The partners needed more time for co-creation with representatives of community groups and supporting volunteers. Despite the challenges, the project engaged fifty community groups with their work. Again, reflections include that more success was had with groups they had existing connections with because of the trust built with them.

For the **Bridging the Gap** Project, four organisations from England and Scotland came together to deliver the project. The organisations, with different locations, remits and capacities, co-created the project together. Although working together added some complexities to the research, it also gave opportunities for sharing skills, expertise and contacts. Whilst it wasn't easy to get the community groups more involved in much of the planning, there were able to involve them in choosing the format of the sessions.

**"The workshops were incredibly open and flexible – we handed the floor over to them – it was a flexible and free environment to speak in. People were given a voice – I don't think we would have felt that if we hadn't run the sessions in that way."** Project partner

The Bridging the Gap Team reflected how there needs to be sensitivity around setting up expectations of volunteers and participants' when sharing project ownership; and thinking very carefully about what this means practically for people; otherwise, they may disengage.

During the **Makey Wakey** project, co-creation was enabled by one of the key project partners, an arts charity that works with adults with learning disabilities. The project partner delivered a series of workshops and created resources with communities which were used in other workshops. This worked well, and Makey Wakey now has a closer relationship with them. However, sustaining engagement with the partner throughout the project was difficult because the organisation is stretched and underfunded. Once again, working with established contacts who have developed trust with people made it easier to engage and enable opportunities for co-creation within such a short time frame.

The **Inclusive Island Heritage** project shared the project with local partners before applying for funding and at critical stages in the project development, which enabled the exploration of the key themes that fed into the engagement strategy. Partner organisations have enjoyed working together and building up trust and felt that incorporating different viewpoints has positively altered the project's outcomes. The project team shared that some organisations were not used to co-curation and were uncertain of how to participate, and some communities wanted to be steered. The co-curation element gave them the feeling that the organisations did not know what they were doing.

A common theme throughout the O2O projects was that respect and understanding of their concerns, interests and resources is needed when working with community groups. Organisations and funders should not expect to work with community groups the same way as professional organisations, as there are likely to be significant differences. Community groups are often voluntary, led by a few retired people, with small resources. This may mean they meet infrequently, and decisions may involve several people, making communication challenging and time-consuming. One partner reflected that things do not filter through community group networks like professional group networks – it takes longer.

Stakeholders were also asked to what extent they thought the research and consultation enabled people to share their ideas and opinions. The feedback was positive and suggests that projects were successful in enabling people to express themselves and feel that this was valued.

**'I only know from the workshop that I attended how good the organisers are at creating the open, trusting context for people to share and listen.'** Stakeholder

**'People have shared their views and opinions freely. Having facilitator-led sessions created environments where people felt more comfortable and able to be honest.'** Stakeholder

**'Excellent to meet people who shared your interests - have contacted several of the people at the workshop.'** Stakeholder

**'I think it has enabled our young people to share their ideas and opinions, often, this does not happen in their lives.'** Stakeholder

## 8. FINDINGS: VALUE

Being involved in the O2O pilot and the five projects has had value for individuals and communities as stakeholders, facilitators and participants in different ways. During the end-of-project reflection sessions, we asked project partners what impact being part of the project had on audiences and partners and what they thought was of most value to them. The responses, whilst mixed, also had some consistent themes.

- Community groups value coming together in person, sharing problems and concerns, and hearing about similar but different circumstances in which people work. There was a strong desire for the activity to occur face-to-face, likely due to Covid.
- People have valued being listened to and involved in workshops and events and having the opportunity to share ideas.
- Delivery helped break down isolation, and people enjoyed being part of a more comprehensive network of people who could offer support, advice, and pool resources.

Stakeholder perspectives were captured through the survey and were positive, with constructive criticism. This included ensuring workshops were pitched at the right level, avoiding 'reinventing the wheel' and ensuring that final reports or findings were shared with the community groups at the end of the project. One stakeholder commented that it was important that the sector not only undertook research and provide guidance but also needed to develop and mature.

**'Have been able to share the information with both our trustees and other groups thinking of doing something similar.'** Stakeholder

**'We are a national network for those looking after historic religious buildings, so this project is very relevant to us.'** Stakeholder

**'It has helped further develop our community engagement and co-creation skills, and it has given us an opportunity to engage with some really creative and excellent organisations and work with HE and HES.'**

Stakeholder

**'Yes, it helped us deliver social value (through engagement) and connect with young people, which is one of our key aims.'**

Stakeholder

**Definitely - increased experience created new connections with communities in our area, provided opportunities for future work.'**

Stakeholder

**"I found it very interesting and useful to be reminded of the challenges volunteers face at the coal face...And that every situation is different and needs its own solution. But at the same time, how much we can learn from each other.'**

Stakeholder

## 9. PROJECT LEARNING

**Communication.** The importance of communication has been vital for all the partners and their projects. Project context at the beginning of delivery is crucial, as is being specific about aims and the target audience with stakeholders. Communicating this must be bespoke, clear and concise for community groups and facilitators. The pilot project was complex with different layers, so complex projects of this nature must consider how to share information and realistic expectations. Also, when communicating with diverse communities, language requirements must be considered as there may be added time required if translations are needed.

**Bespoke Delivery.** Each community group is unique. Therefore, there is no one-size fits all model or resource that will work for all community groups. For example, it was noted by the partners working with island communities in Scotland that each island has its own distinct identity, and you couldn't generalise about island communities' needs and interests. A tailored approach needs to be adopted for engagement.

**Approaches.** Non-traditional means of engagement (craft workshops, art-focused events and pop-up displays) have proven to be good ways to engage new audiences in the projects. If these can be undertaken in places people pass by during their day and spaces people feel comfortable in, this also increases the potential for engagement. Engagement with young people is challenging, and context is key; events with a creative focus or combining nature and culture may be more likely to be interesting to them.

**Ownership & Responsibility.** The projects found that ownership and responsibility are important elements in co-curation and delivery. But what is appropriate and meaningful to people will differ hugely for individuals and community groups. For example, the Makey Wakey project found that the responsibility of caring for and upkeeping the spaces being used, whether mopping the floor or checking the fire escapes are clear, provided participants with a feeling of significance in the community that they are proud of. So, when intending to undertake a co-curation approach, first, you must understand what is of value to the individuals and communities - their '**hierarchy of need**'. Without getting to know your audience first, a co-curation approach led purely by the need of a project is unlikely to be genuinely authentic.

**Timing.** Is repeatedly mentioned throughout both the process and impact evaluation as being one of the most significant components of success. Meaningful community engagement takes more time. Delivery must also consider the impact of trying to deliver at certain times in the calendar year. For example, the summer is challenging to deliver as many community groups take a break, as do individuals. Also, some activity is very weather dependent, particularly for island communities.

**Definitions.** Projects have demonstrated that peoples' definition of heritage is often fluid and flexible and that more traditional definitions of heritage might not resonate. Audiences expressed interest in both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, alongside natural heritage and creative arts. The term co-curation also means different things to people, so future delivery should agree on a collective definition.

**Trust.** Trust is a fundamental building block to delivering community engagement, like having adequate time to deliver. Building trust requires authenticity and respect for the needs and context of the people you wish to work with. Ensuring realistic expectations for delivery can be challenging, so any relationship or partnership must be two-way.

**Digital.** Digital approaches can open up access but can also be challenging. When undertaking online workshops, it can be difficult for people to participate in sessions if they are unfamiliar with the setup or have limited digital skills or resources. The larger the group, the more likely people will be passive as they may not be comfortable sharing online, especially if people don't know each other. If the group is smaller and knows each other, a session may be more helpful, but these need to be carefully facilitated to be meaningful and engaging, which takes skill and experience.

**Volunteers.** The supply of volunteers is declining as much of the volunteer workforce is made up of retired people, so the capacity and skill of volunteers is changing. Post-Covid, there is also an acute sense of volunteer fatigue. As a result, community organisations may struggle to find volunteers who can make regular commitments. The impact of this means any opportunities to engage must start with what will make this attractive and accessible for people volunteering their time. This may mean financial benefits and more volunteer support may need to be built in.

**Barriers.** Within projects, Partners have referred to soft and hard barriers to engagement. Hard barriers can be considered practical obstacles to accessing culture and heritage, whereas 'soft' barriers are psychological/social barriers. Projects found that these 'soft' and 'hard' barriers can differ for those from different socio-economic backgrounds, age groups and levels of educational attainment. This means that barriers to engagement will likely change as individuals get older or circumstances change. Each of the projects identified a range of barriers and needs to be at the forefront of project delivery if engagement and access is to be broad and diverse.

## 10. CONCLUSION

The Outreach to Ownership project has resulted in many positive outcomes despite the short time frame. It has facilitated the increase of skills and knowledge for the Partners, stakeholders and communities through the formal and informal capacity building and the delivery of the five projects. It has provided a valuable space for people to share ongoing learning, explore challenges and develop new relationships.

The research methods have given the project Partners an increased understanding of how communities would like to work with them. Feedback has also provided insight into integrating community decision-making and the opportunities and challenges of co-curation approaches within arts and heritage research.

Learning for the project Partners and Hub Partners, HE/HES, has been considerable. This can lead to community and sector ripple effects and influence future responsive and meaningful community-led research within the sector.

**'This partnership offered an opportunity for our group to access history on a more practical level, and a purpose to their learning – having a role in the research supports their mental well-being with feelings of being needed and, in turn, supports their self-esteem and confidence. Meeting other people outside their usual circle of support reduced their sometimes isolating life experiences. We are always delighted to be included in partnership projects that offer those we support inclusion in their communities and for others to see their abilities in them.'** Stakeholder

**' Getting to partner will everyone here, work alongside them, it has been so refreshing..... I have never done a funded project like this; sometimes you have to battle to know who else is taking part, never mind actually working alongside.'** Stakeholder