

# Cross-Party Group on Culture and Communities

25 February 2025, 6-730pm, online

## Minutes

### Present

#### MSPs

Foyso! Choudhury MSP, Convener.  
Clare Adamson MSP.

#### CPG Members and Guests

Angela Adams-Gray – Articulation, Helen Apsey - Northumbria University, Phoenix Archer - Creative Lives and Scottish Civic Trust , Jayne Ashley - South of Scotland Enterprise, Bryan Beattie - Creative Services Scotland, Philippa Cochrane - Scottish Book Trust, Morvern Cunningham, Fiona Doring - Impact Arts, Lindsay Dunbar - Coaching for Creatives, Leo Fakhrul - Mamba Sounds, Mark Geddes - South of Scotland Enterprise, Georgia Grainger - Federation of Scottish Theatre, Stuart Hay - Royal Incorporation of Architects Scotland, Ica Headlam - We Are Here Scotland, Graeme Howell - Shetland Arts, Rosemary James-Beith - Creative Glasgow, Suzanne Lofthus – Cutting Edge Theatre, Douglas Lonie - There Is An Alternative, Pdraig MacAoidh, Trevor MacFarlane - Culture Commons, Amy McNeese-Mechan - Edinburgh Council, Helen Moore - Scottish Contemporary Art Network, Eve Nicol, Eddie Nicols - Scottish Parliament, Bronwen Nixon, Ann Packard, Joseph Peach - Culture Counts, Arusa Qureshi, Nancy Riach - Arts Culture Health and Wellbeing Scotland, Jason Rose - Museums Galleries Scotland, Laura Simpson - Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop, Jo Timmins – Lyra, Angela Watt - Resonate Together, Kathryn Welch - Culture Counts, Katharine Wheeler, Ola Wojtkiewicz - Creative Edinburgh, Samar Ziadat - Young Women’s Movement.

### Apologies

Apologies taken as read

### Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the last meeting were proposed by Foyso! Choudhury MSP and seconded by Nancy Riach

### Welcome

The convener welcomed attendees to the meeting of the Cross Party Group. The convener thanked previous secretariat, Lori Anderson for her work and contributions to the group, and welcomed Kathryn Welch as the new secretariat. The secretariat introduced this as the first meeting in a new thematic series for the Culture and Communities CPG, which over 15 months will explore “big ambitions” for culture and communities in Scotland.

## Introduction – Scotland's Makar

Scotland’s new Makar - Pàdraig MacAoidh opened the meeting by reading two poems in both Gàidhlig and English - Deireadh an t-Samhraidh/The End of Summer and An Tonn/The Wave. Pàdraig also shared his observations that *culture is a mix of the learned and the accidental*, that it allows us to *fail better and in unexpected ways*, and that it lies at the heart of our communities and connections, forming the basis of *our jokes, whisper and earworms*.

## Discussion - “Big Ideas”

The meeting then moved to the main portion, for which attendees were each invited to speak for one minute about their 'big ideas' for an aspirational, effective and ambitious vision of how culture and communities might work together as we look to the future. The ensuing discussion was wide-ranging, forward looking and aspirational, with 25 attendees sharing a fascinating range of ideas – from the visionary to the practical.

In the discussion a number of key themes arose, including:

- Scotland’s rich diversity of black and global majority artists and creative practice, and the importance of celebrating, connecting and profiling that.
- The work required to make equal access to performing arts for marginalised and disabled people a reality.
- The presence of culture already within all communities, and the role of artists and culture as ‘social glue’ and as essential catalysts for innovation, equity and resilience.
- Culture’s transformative role and potential in health and education, and the importance of embedding culture in public health, education and place frameworks.
- The work required to ensure that arts and culture are available to all children, regardless of background.
- The possibilities in terms of forging better links between culture and other areas of the policy agenda.
- The practicalities of enabling and supporting cultural lives (through funding, infrastructure and pathways)

Further analysis of these themes and the input shared will be used to inform the structure of the coming meetings of the CPG, and to define key areas of exploration for the group’s discussions.

## Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be discussed by the chair and secretariat and circulated among CPG members in due course.

**Added later:** Please save the date for the next meeting of this CPG, scheduled for Wednesday 18. June 2025 at 6pm. The meeting will be hybrid; in person in the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, and online via Zoom.