

Wordsmith Crafts CIC Annual report (for January 2024 to January 2025)

Introduction

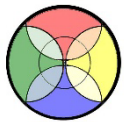
2024 has been the third year of running Wordsmith Crafts as a CIC. We continue to provide people with greater access to the full resources of their heritage, especially those who do not currently access them. The Company is not established or conducted for private gain and any surplus or assets are to be used principally for the benefit of the community.

Our main areas of activity are still described as “Cluaran” and “The Quartz Partnership”. Broadly speaking Cluaran is general Heritage, focusing on hands on activities, interpretation through workshops, and traditional craft sessions including cluaran craft club/maker space. These generate income on an event-by-event basis and through club subscriptions. Quartz is more specifically spiritual heritage conducted in community contexts and within St Johns Church community. St Johns provides financially for one day a week at stipendiary rate. Quartz activities are provided free at point of access, with occasional expenses for materials.



Cluaran – Living breathing heritage. – School visits, Heritage Events, Storytelling (Including online), Heritage Crafts, developing quality formal volunteering and business opportunities.

We have worked with fifteen primary schools in D&G, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Argyll and Bute, and Fife councils. The smallest school was an all age rural primary with eighteen pupils and the largest had around one hundred pupils so we took a team of five. We have worked with young people in less formal contexts providing craft activities for youth groups in Summerhill (Dumfries) and Newton Stewart (Whithorn). Our activities have mainly been carried out by freelance historical interpreters (including Simon working as a self-employed artist), supported by volunteers.

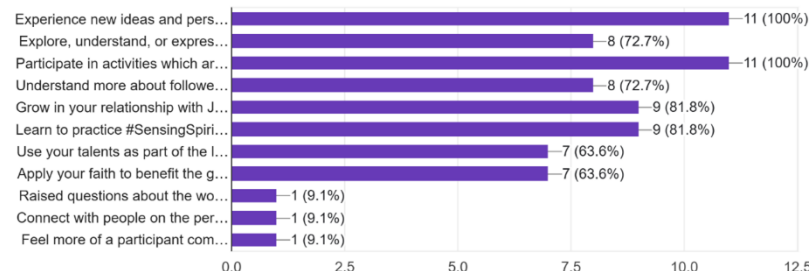


Quartz project – using visual arts to help people explore, understand, and express spirituality. - #SensingSpirituality activities drawing on the Christian heritage of Scotland.

We have reviewed Quartz participants this year to better understand their involvement and willingness to contribute financially. There is support for asking for donations on an event by event basis. Most Quartz events are delivered by Simon, the WSC employee, through the partnership with St Johns and aided by a community of volunteers who he supports. The graphics below describe the range of activities participants have experienced, and how they have benefited from the experience.

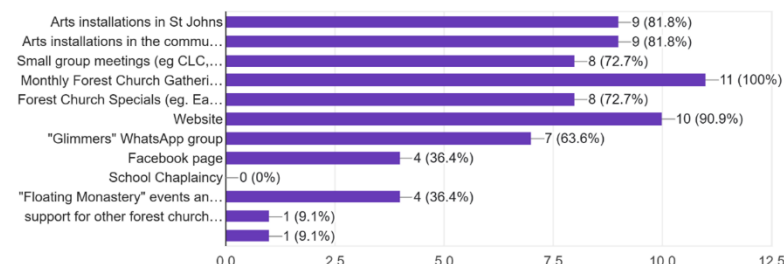
Has encountering Quartz helped you to: (Please select all that apply)

11 responses



Which of these Quartz activities have you experienced (Please select all that apply)

11 responses



Overall a core of 380 employed hours have supported a total of 122 voluntary hours and 277 freelance paid hours. Much of this is skilled volunteering and so the equivalent in kind contribution at events could be estimated at around £2552 (based on heritage lottery fund guidance). The WSC website provides blogs used to record our ongoing activities, and connect WSC to a network of supporters beyond the Dumfries area. You can also download previous years reports from our website www.wordsmithcrafts.co.uk

Review of activity within 2024

An overview of Wordsmith Crafts activities.

Similar activities have been grouped together, some are year long programmes and others one off or a series of events.

Activity	Client/funder	Stakeholders	Benefactors/Social Impact	
Quartz Installations	St Johns Dumfries	St Johns Dumfries Andy Brooke General public	As well as supporting artists with St Johns we have also contributed a tree to the Christmas tree festival https://www.ancient-pathways.co.uk/activities/xpast-activities/sensing-spiritual-itree/	Artist and Quartz member Andy Brooke was commissioned by St Johns to produce two stained glass crosses which were installed in St Johns as part of the Easter celebrations.
Christian Life Community	St Johns Dumfries	St Johns Dumfries	People involved in Quartz have been meeting as a house group every second	Numbers have remained stable

(CLC)			week.	
Community Arts	St Johns Dumfries	St Johns Dumfries Summerhill community centre The Stove Network Caerlaverock Castle HES	We ran free at point of access craft workshops and a feast for the Summerhill community centre youth groups. They sold what they made as part of their participation in the Bruce 750 festival in Dumfries. These funds were then used to run a series of drop in events "Making Christmas" with Stove Network support	This supported work by "Creative Caerlaverock" Mentioned in parliament by Emma Harper thanking groups for their participation in Medieval Bruce Heritage Trust "Bruce 750" anniversary celebrations. https://www.cluaranhaven.org.uk/category/events/making-christmas-2024/
Making Space		Cluaran members General public St Johns	Throughout the year we have developed the Cluaran community by running "Making Spaces" for people to try out crafts. From these we have recruited and trained volunteers to assist in other WSC activities.	These events are run by Simon as a self-employed artist. WSC pays an annual contribution towards the costs of making the workshop space available. Creative responses at the St Johns contemporary service are also researched and prepared at these times.
Forest Church (Specials)	St Johns Dumfries	St Johns Dumfries Elsieshiels Dumfries Churches Asheiri	We have run special Forest Church type events. These include Stargazing at Epiphany, Easter pilgrimage and BBQ on the beach, St Margarets day at Asheiri, and a Creative church building day conference. Numbers for these events are greater than the monthly meetings and they have attracted participants from many churches as well as with no church affiliation.	https://www.ancient-pathways.co.uk/category/easter2024/ https://www.ancient-pathways.co.uk/creative-church-building/

Forest Church (Monthly)	St Johns Dumfries	St Johns Dumfries	We gather every month for Forest Church. Details of numbers attending monthly services are recorded in the St Johns service record book. An average of 8 people meet every month	Records of what we are done can be found on https://www.ancient-pathways.co.uk/activities/forest-church/
Online presence	CIC	WSC Associates General public	We have chosen to adapt our community life to take advantage of the positive ways in which new technology can be used to convey information. We have a presence on the internet. This use of the internet goes beyond simply providing a noticeboard and reporting on activity. It also overcomes geographical challenges to physical access to our activities. It also helps reduce paper use!	www.wordsmithcrafts.co.uk www.ancient-pathways.co.uk www.cluaranhaven.org.uk As well as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts This includes a blog for both Cluaran and Quartz projects.
Ukrainian school online and in person	Lyubotin school	New Scots Ukrainian pupils and teachers Barcaple (Abernethy) St Johns	Working with a local Ukrainian refugee we ran a series of online English chat sessions with Lyubotin school. We then helped initiate, fundraise and plan a respite visit for children and teachers from the school During this we arranged for the Summerhill youth group to welcome the Ukrainians and show them what they loved about Caerlaverock Castle heritage.	More details of this project can be found here: https://www.ancient-pathways.co.uk/category/helpukraine/
Nithraid https://nithraid.org/	The Stove Network	Eco Arts Cluaran members Public	WSC supports this annual festival by coordinating volunteers and artists. It receives a commission which is used to cover materials, out of pocket expenses and free at point of access traditional crafts. Also the use of tents and the	This year the theme was "Riverside Animals" In the run up to the event Volunteers made costumes at the craft club using gathered resources. Cluaran members also shared resources to encourage rowing on the river in Cluaran and various other watercraft.

			Cluaran boat. (<i>any on the water activities not carried out under WSC insurance</i>)	On the day we supported the festivals lead artist by playing the part of a crew of riverside animals.
School visits	D&G Council Glasgow Council George Watsons Junior Clermiston Primary The Whithorn Trust School PTA's	D&G Council "The Vikings" Various schools	We have engaged 4 freelancers and 3 skilled volunteers to visit 14 schools. Visits ranged from a small rural school with around 10 pupils in total to an Edinburgh school with around 100 pupils in one year group. 5 school enquiries did not lead to bookings. The most common reason for this is usually due to cost.	We have used our cash reserves to subsidise some school visits. We have targeted £7 per pupil as an ideal cost. The subsidy has been used to compensate for increased travel costs from our Dumfries base and small school sizes. We have paid freelancers "real living wage" and used volunteers to enhance the pupils experience but not as a replacement for employment. As well as visits from historical characters, we also arrange heritage craft workshops for secondary schools.
Chaplaincy	D&G Council	D&G Council	Through the Quartz partnership we help Dumfries High School meet its "Time for Reflection" requirements	4 assemblies throughout the year, and a presence on other occasions.

Conclusion

In 2024 we showed again that the approach we take to providing access to heritage is valued by a wide range of people. We are grateful to the community support and voluntary hours contributed to WSC. Thanks especially are due to Gary Kirk, who volunteers his time and support to keep the company afloat. None of this would be possible without the support of my wife, Kate Lidwell, who as well as volunteering in the activities also supports me as we continue to work out ways in which WSC can be financially sustainable. Throughout 2024 we have focussed on community development and finding a manageable level of activity for all those involved. I have been employed on the basis of one day a week, primarily for Quartz. I provide other services as a freelance artist and volunteer in the same way as the other freelancers WSC employs. This has stabilised the cashflow, and an increase in "activated" membership for the Cluaran club in 2025 looks promising. More about that in the 2025 annual report though!

Simon Lidwell,

Director, Wordsmith Crafts CIC

Gary Kirk

Director, Wordsmith Crafts CIC (voluntary)



Appendix 1

Financial position

At end of year 31 st Jan	Turnover	Capital and Reserves	Profit/(Loss)
2023	22,170	3,953	3,953
2024	15,588	1,515	(2,438)
2025	15,362	51	(1,464)

Appendix 2

Full text of Options quoted above from the Quartz Survey

Has encountering Quartz helped you to:	Which of these Quartz activities have you experienced:
Experience new ideas and perspectives	Arts installations in St Johns
Explore, understand, or express the things which really matter to you	Small group meetings (e.g. CLC, lent groups),
Participate in activities which are interesting and beautiful	Monthly Forest Church Gatherings
Understand more about followers of Christ and the Church in general	Forest Church Specials (e.g. Easter Sunday, Stargazing, pilgrimage)
Grow in your relationship with Jesus	Support for other forest church activities in Galloway
Learn to practice #SensingSpirituality in your Daily life	Arts installations in the community
Learn to practice #SensingSpirituality in your Daily life	Website
Use your talents as part of the life of St Johns	Facebook page
Apply your faith to benefit the general community	"Glimmers" WhatsApp group
Raised questions about the world we live in and how to respond to it	"Floating Monastery" events and YouTube channel
Feel more of a participant compared to attending a traditional service.	

