

**COVID19
IMPACT ON
VOLUNTARY
SECTOR
ORGANISATIONS**

ACOSVO is about excellent voluntary sector leadership in Scotland and our work is underpinned by peer support, good practice sharing and leadership development.

Through supporting the sector's leaders during Covid-19, our members have shared their stories, supported each other and showed amazing innovation, resilience and endurance. We wanted to capture and share some of these stories as a snapshot of how the sector has continued to be an essential part of the response to this global pandemic and how our leaders have risen, and continue to rise, to each new challenge.

We have started this document with an ACOSVO case study to set the context, but this publication is about telling our members stories.

Some have made the adjustment well, whilst others have struggled with the technology and the new way of working. It feels like a new organisation in some ways and a continuation of the same organisation in other ways.

The main issue now is 'soldiering on' for an unspecified period with continuing uncertainty.

Digital ways of working will be more integrated into our work in future as mainstream. Third sector organisations are immensely fleet of foot and creative/ flexible/ imaginative and will find new ways of working and finding solutions.

An emotional mixture of complete loss, fear (for my team/ members/ community), quiet/ calm, panic, grieving (for recent international partnership potential lost and years of work on the edge), guilt (as can't do more), anxiety (of what is to come), gratitude (for our organisations agility) and the list goes on.

Staff feel guilty if they are in furlough as they want to help the business

80% of staff are furloughed (47) and 13 remain at work charged with trying to save the charity. It is quite a burden on those remaining because they realise the seriousness of the situation. (...) Our very future is at threat. If we are unable to open soon our three centres will close permanently.

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ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF OFFICERS OF SCOTTISH VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS Pat Armstrong

Type of organisation: Support organisation for third sector leaders

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

Our services have all moved online and are now mostly offered free rather than charged events. This means that a worst case scenario of no events or income generating activities over the next six months would mean a reduction of around 65k to our income this year (almost 20% of our turnover)

How has it impacted you as a leader?

It has meant an increased workload through the additional challenges of moving the team to online working, adapting our services to provide immediate support for our members through a range of calls and support options ([more info here](#)) and also a move to gather intelligence on impact on the sector and its leaders ([Resources for Coping with Covid-19](#)). This has meant being busier than ever in a fast changing situation with some hard decisions around whether to furlough staff (we took the decision not to), how to adapt to new risks and reduced funding and how to ensure well-being with the team as well as increasing support to our members. It has also involved increased updates with the ACOSVO Board, more regular team and senior team meetings and more regular support interactions with our members.

What has been the impact on staff?

Staff have had to adapt to working from home from both a logistical and technical perspective, with the possible adverse well-being and team morale challenges and an increasing and ever-changing workload. They have had to be adaptable, resourceful and work at pace.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

The impact on sector leaders has been huge – as you can see from the case studies that follow. As well as increasing our offers of support, mentoring, and a membership bursary, we have also been gathering intelligence and learning from the situation through analysing our support calls and gathering case studies.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

We have already heard about member's organisations who may not survive, leaders feeling overwhelmed and unable to see a way forward (and thus leaving the role), increased stress and sleepless nights when trying to see how to keep people's jobs and the organisations alive, increased workloads in delivering services while applying for funding, changing delivery models, managing teams remotely and providing increased support on reduced income.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

That there will be lessons learned on how we can work differently, how we can imagine a different future based on that learning – and that the importance and impact of the sector is recognised.

Blogs:

[Leadership and Being Human](#)



SCOUTS SCOTLAND

Katie Docherty

Type of organisation: We are a charity for children and young people delivering skills for life via youthwork, adventure, outdoor experiences, learning and friendship. We have 40000 young members and our work is delivered by 12000 adult volunteers

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

We have suspended all face to face Scouting. Cancelled events and closed our campsites and residential centres. We have produced an indoor programme called the Great Indoors to allow our adult members to deliver an exciting programme to our children and young people via online resources. We have greatly increased parental involvement. Already 2000 children have camped at home either by building dens or camping in the back garden. Every week our children and young people continue to learn skills for life from our adult members and are recognised by badges and awards.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

It is hard to be in a situation where I am trying to minimise the demise of the charity and am focusing on keeping the doors open.

What has been the impact on staff?

80% of staff are furloughed (47) and 13 remain at work charged with trying to save the charity. It is quite a burden on those remaining because they realise the seriousness of the situation.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

Young people are missing out on outdoor and adventurous experiences. Many are missing opportunities to take part in international camps that they have been planning for 18 months. They are missing their friends. We are offering a great programme but its not the same. Children without access to technology or with parents who chose not to access it are missing out.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

We have had to close our 3 outdoor residential centres and furlough 80% of our staff because we are experiencing a such dramatic loss of income £1.5 million so far. Our very future is at threat. If we are unable to open soon our three centres will close permanently. If we are unable to reopen soon we will be unable to collect membership fees from parents. This means that we will no longer be able to deliver safety, safeguarding and insurances and other vital services that enable Scouting to take place at a local level. This will lead to the closure of Scouting in Scotland and it will only be able to continue for young people if England Scouting can take over. Although we have been fortunate to receive a small amount of funding from the government, it does not go nearly far enough to offset the crippling losses that we're facing. We are trying to speak to government about the vital role that we can play in helping to rebuild society during and after this crisis, and the support that we need to be able to do this, but so far there has been no real response. We are finding all other funders are taking a similar approach and there is no support for organisations like ours. The only thing that is keeping us afloat is the UK Government Job Retention Scheme. If it ends so do we.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

At the moment, I must admit that it is difficult to find anything hopeful in the emerging future. However, what I have seen from our volunteers, young people and their parents over these past weeks gives me hope. Scouting has been a part of our society for over 100 years. What we deliver improves the lives of young people in every community across Scotland. I see it every week with my own children and in the Scout group I volunteer with. Society truly would be poorer if Scouting was lost, and so I must have hope that we will survive and one day thrive again.



RESONATE TOGETHER

Angela Beardsley

Type of organisation: A social enterprise, limited company by guarantee with an asset lock-in.

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

Our Alloa venue closed on the 17th March. All income ceased, all interaction (creativity/ wellbeing/ business start-up/ etc) ceased. All contracts ceased. Individuals in our team went straight into front line one-on-one work with food/ medicine/ mental health support. All our team are volunteers, no staff. No budget for individual support, team members have been paying for other peoples food/their fuel/etc.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

An emotional mixture of complete loss, fear (for my team/ members/ community), quiet/ calm, panic, grieving (for recent international partnership potential lost and years of work on the edge), guilt (as can't do more), anxiety (of what is to come), gratitude (for our organisations agility) and the list goes on. Logic impact on me: processing of all extra/different financial income/ matters/ resilience for our organisations/ funding/ negotiations/ etc, counsellor to our team and community members (average 60 calls a day), food distribution/ health guidelines/ clear communication etc etc. As a leader, one of my main strengths has always been to drive positivity/ enthusiasm/ solution finding for our team and community and I feel that the day to day basic and real need for survival far outweighs the 'what next', it is a different 'story' to engage people to contribute to the immediate response rather than the innovative 'future' change. It has made me realise how much I personally need to be contributing to the big picture solutions, for when I drop off a food bag, I walk down the garden path, head full of the real poverty plight heading our way and I wonder if I have the personal strength to give another big push for another ten years through under investment and systems blockages.

What has been the impact on staff?

Many of our team (all volunteers) have considerable mental health challenges which immediately began to increase. Many have physical health challenges and this lockdown has also meant increased weight gain etc. Surgeries have been delayed, cancer ops have been put back and at the end of a phone dealing with a team member whose sister just passed, but she cant attend the funeral, well it is hard. On the positive side, many of our team have said they are 'only' surviving because of our network of support.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

Loss, detachment and mental health issues predominantly. Many are running out of meds, so psychosis is on the increase, many are now in fear of coming out of their houses, so are not able to get food etc. Many do not wish to use the food banks etc for they do not want to admit their need.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

For people/ community: intense poverty/ increase in crime and complete 'community' hopelessness.

For our organisation: My own resilience to 'try this all again'. Losing many of our core team/non returners because I don't think 'business' will ever be the same and I don't think a 'new normal' will be anywhere normal. Our organisation, Resonate is about a 'community belonging and flourishing' and our local community will take many, many years to find their daily life patterns again... especial as we are always, massively underfunded and for years have already been overwhelmed from all the local mental health service cuts by our local authority.

Challenging but can be overcome: Permanent closure of the building, our 'connecting centre'. We are agile and so can adapt, but to what, is the question...

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

A true understanding that volunteers have been the foundations of the UK. A recognition of the ACTUAL work that is required each day to keep a

community/ country moving. The real investment that is needed in the right places. An equal/covenant approach to collaboration. A more local focus, for our small county of Clackmannanshire does not produce its own food, its own energy etc to look after its own people... so I would love to see a global network of localisation communities that are focused on ensuring they are truly self-sufficient.



CHILDREN'S HOSPICES ACROSS SCOTLAND

Rami Okasha

Type of organisation: A Scottish charity and a company limited by guarantee

For almost 30 years, Children's Hospices Across Scotland - better known as CHAS - has been caring for families and their babies, children and young people by offering palliative care, family respite and support. Since CHAS was founded in 1992, two hospices have been built, we have developed and expanded a homecare service and we have established a presence in hospitals and communities, providing vital care in every setting. Our services cover the whole of Scotland.

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

Like many other organisations, the impact of the outbreak on CHAS has been profound. In what has become a rapidly evolving situation, we have found that decisions around our service provision required to be made at an equal pace and that supporting children and families during this time of extreme uncertainty has required innovative and creative thinking.

More specifically, government directives around social distancing and self-isolation have made an already challenging situation more demanding. Concerns around infection transmission amongst clinical staff in addition to a national availability shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) and a general fear of the unknown have required careful management and prudent decision making.

Like many other charities, we've also had to cancel, pause or postpone many high profile fundraising events which has had a direct effect on our income. As a result our fundraising team has had to rapidly accelerate innovative and digital ways of working.

We therefore identified four long term priorities at the start of the outbreak- we are focussing primarily on:

- Delivering our services;
- Supporting our people;
- Sustaining our business;
- Providing tailored and effective communications.

We're delivering services virtually, working in partnership with the NHS to deliver packages of care for children, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our staff, engaging with staff, volunteers and other key stakeholder and are redeveloping our fundraising strategy in order to ensure the financial sustainability of CHAS.

We have also taken the decision to focus on emergency end of life and unplanned care, as this is incredibly important and where we need to be for families.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

I took up the role of Chief Executive at the start of February and could never, ever have imagined that a little over six weeks down the line I would be leading the organisation through what is generally considered to be a global crisis! Like many others, I have had to adapt and be agile and encourage that same agility and nimbleness of thought in others. We have had to respond at pace to the situation and that has also required key strategic decisions to be made at equal speed, and lead a team of staff, volunteers, service users and stakeholders through significant ambiguity.

Communication has been a key feature of my leadership during this time and I think it is fair to say that my communication with all of the CHAS community has been fairly relentless since the start of the outbreak. In a time of crisis, rumours can be unhelpful and can serve to muddy the waters. We've managed to instil a sense of order to inform people when decisions are taken and have developed a programme which enables us to communicate rapidly with all of our constituents.

I think it's also fair to say that I don't know all the answers and as such I've called and drawn on the immense capabilities of my team. We've come together as a Pandemic Taskforce, but many of the decisions which are made are taken by managers. This collaboration has instilled a sense of confidence

in the management team and has helped to facilitate collective leadership and autonomous decision making at different levels in the organisation.

What has been the impact on your staff?

Our staff are naturally generally worried- they are worried at work, worried at home and fearful for their loved ones and for the future. CHAS, like many other organisations, made the decision to place a number of staff on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. I was truly heartened to see so many staff willingly agree to be placed on furlough- they could see how this could benefit CHAS and safeguard its long term financial sustainability. That said, anxiety amongst staff is still widespread, so myself, my senior team and managers have sought to reassure the staff and volunteers through a series of targeted updates. Zoom has now become a way of life for us and it is a key way as to how we interact and communicate with staff and volunteers.

The rest of our staff who aren't hands on doctor and nurses, are working from home and are supported by our terrific corporate services team who ensure that our staff are able to be connected and to work safely.

We have also had to stand down almost all of our volunteers, which was a difficult but entirely necessary decision to take. Volunteers are the lifeblood of CHAS and we rely on them for almost every aspect of our work. Similar to our staff updates, we've been keeping in touch with volunteers via Zoom, providing them with information as to how CHAS is responding to the current crisis and ensuring that we keep them engaged and connected with CHAS.

Despite the worry and concern, I am inspired every day by the creativity, innovation and passion which is demonstrated by every member of our team. The creation of our Virtual Hospice is a prime example of this- we're still managing to support children and families, but in a different way. We have staff members making kindness calls, checking in with families to see if there is any way CHAS is still able to help, we have staff delivering storytelling sessions to children and their siblings and we also have nurses and doctors on hand to offer health and medical advice. We've been able to implement new ways of working in such a relatively short space of time and to the benefit of children and families. The dedication and commitment demonstrated by everyone in CHAS is nothing less than inspiring.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

Knowing that your child will die young is the hardest thing, but the pandemic has made family's situations even more stressful- children with a life shortening condition are particularly vulnerable. However when this pandemic crisis is over, we want our families, our people and our partners to say that "CHAS was there for us".

We know from families that the development of our virtual services has been a positive lifeline for families and that it has been able to provide both emotional and practical support to children and families going through the hardest of times.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

We've now passed the peak of the (first?) outbreak and we're at the stage where the government is soon to announce the next phase of the lockdown process. There is a huge amount of uncertainty around what the new normal will look like, for clinical and office based staff and if anything gives me cause for a sleepless night, it's knowing whether CHAS will be able to adapt to the next phase effectively and continue to support children and families to the quality to which we aspire.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

I know that we've managed to adapt and have proven our resilience in dealing with the most devastating of crises. I know that CHAS will come out of the pandemic, stronger and wiser. I'm hopeful that the virtual services we have developed for children and families during this pandemic will endure and will serve as a lasting legacy to all those whose incredible creativity and dedication brought it to fruition. And Zoom usage will continue!!

LOCH LOMOND
& THE TROSSACHS
COUNTRYSIDE
TRUST



**LOCH LOMOND AND
THE TROSSACHS
COUNTRYSIDE TRUST**
Natalie Stevenson

Type of organisation: A very small environmental charity with two full time members of staff, two part time sessional workers and around 60 volunteers. The organisation has very close ties with public bodies. Core funding is primarily public sector and planning gain, project funding comes through other third sector organisations and is currently focused on health, volunteering and active travel projects.

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

Like everyone we had to cancel all face to face activities and move to working from home. It took a week or so to settle into this routine and begin to deliver our work online. Our funding has been unaffected to date as we had already received core funding for 2020/2021, although we do have unconfirmed project funds that we hope we won't lose in the future. The team came together really well, embracing technology and supporting our volunteers and beneficiaries to join us online. This has been achieved through an increase in social media activity and via Zoom. Unfortunately one of our projects would have struggled to deliver its original outcomes at this time and so the board took the decision to postpone this work and furlough the member of staff employed to deliver it. Our funders have been very supportive and flexible with us which is great to see.

Whilst the initial impact was less than for some organisations, the long term impact is more severe. Our work relies on activities in groups outside and on visitors and tourists coming to our area. None of the work we do is frontline or seen as essential at this time. We have real fears that long term we will not be able to deliver the activities that are in line with our vision and that this vision will not be aligned with future funding priorities. As an organisation we are also in a development phase, working towards increasing both our capacity and resources in order to ensure we are sustainable in the future. As a result

we had ambitious fundraising aspirations for 2020 that required successful grant applications and new projects to be started. Without this our organisation will survive but not be able to develop, this will have a significant impact on our long term viability.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

Before COVID-19 I had been struggling with the development of the organisation. Despite having some great project ideas that had received a high level of support and engagement we had several failed funding bids that knocked my confidence. The landscape in which we were operating was becoming increasingly risk adverse, once funding didn't materialise partners were stepped back rather than coming together. I felt there were an increasing number of barriers to getting new ideas up and running, although support for projects could always be found.

The need to respond to the COVID-19 emergency actually gave me some focus and drive that was missing previously, some time to focus on the present was useful and I was immensely proud of my team. Once that emergency phase past however and thoughts turned to post lockdown planning I struggled to see myself able to deliver those future projects and goals the organisation needed. I have been in the role for a long time and often wondered if someone with fresh eyes and new energy would be better placed to lead it at this time.

Personally I struggled with the lockdown restrictions changing my work, social and physical activity routines. Loosing the connection to the office, friends and colleagues was one of the fears I had about moving on from this role. Once I realised that connection had already been lost, and with an increased focus on life at home, health and wellbeing, I began to think about a different future and the need for change. I resigned from my role during the fifth week of lockdown. I am now trying my best to support my board with my hand over and I hope that despite all the challenges, as the pace of work is reduced at this time, they will be successful at finding a new leader with the energy and drive to lead the organisation over the coming months.

What has been the impact on staff?

The staff team have been fantastic. We began working closer together and the

teamwork was great to see. Everyone learnt new things and thrived on the new technology which has made me immensely proud. After we got through the initial emergency phase we needed to furlough one of our full time members of staff. We were able to do this whilst continuing to offer them full benefits, we will be monitoring this situation carefully as government advice changes. Our volunteers are still fully engaged and work for the remaining staff team is sufficient. There will undoubtedly be some anxiety around me leaving as I have been with the organisation longer than anyone else and there will of course be changes with a new leader coming in.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

Many of our beneficiaries fall into the most at risk and vulnerable categories and so need to be isolating at this time. By moving our services online we are still able to support them and encourage them to be connected and active through COVID-19. Video conferencing has been a powerful tool and being able to see each other has lead to tears, joy and laughter at a time when many are struggling. For beneficiaries without access to the internet we are ensuring we stay connected via phone and post.

We also benefit the natural environment. During COVID-19 we haven't been able to undertake any work to look after our important habitats but we should be able to pick this back up once restrictions are lifted.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

As mentioned above, that our long term viability will be affected by a change in focus for funders, the changing audience for our work and by the impact of the economic recession that will hit everyone hard. Given that we were in a position of needing to grow our capacity and resources this situation creates a lot of pressure to achieve these goals during a difficult time.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

That the organisation will be able to find fresh enthusiasm and a new direction, and that this direction will be meaningful and impactful and drive the successful growth the organisation needs.



GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE Craig Green

Type of organisation: Further Education
College actively supporting voluntary sector organisations through community learning programmes

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

The College has in general moved to online learning support and providing results based on learner performance prior to the shutdown and is currently planning changes to provision which will take into account social distancing requirements.

Most of the community learning programmes have been interrupted because the community venues are currently closed. However, the Community Achievement Awards are still supported online for community organisations (both adults and youth groups) who are delivering community relief services for vulnerable people.

The learning centres which make up the John Wheatley Learning Network, almost all of whom are voluntary sector, are all closed, so we're currently unable to provide them and support our partners to provide digital inclusion support services.

CLD Workers unable to deliver normal services (e.g. youth work) are engaged in CPD exercises and the provision of online information. Some are engaged in further development of online services. We are currently considering furlough arrangements.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

I'm used to partly working from home and that so many others are now online has simplified some communication.

We are now having to rethink the ways in which:

- community partners will be affected by social distancing;
- our support capacity will be affected by social distancing;

- we can exploit and further support the recent increase in the use of digital technologies to support work affecting communities

What has been the impact on staff?

So far employment has been continued and furlough potential is being considered.

Glasgow City Council has been very supportive of agencies in receipt of Integrated Grant Fund who are now unable to deliver the services they would have expected to, and they have encouraged the devotion of resource to support for vulnerable people in communities, and encouraged developmental work.

Staff have adopted Microsoft Teams and Zoom as the primary means of face to face support and have adjusted easily to the new skills required.

General uncertainty has adversely affected staff.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

Most beneficiaries are now without the support of the learning programmes we and our voluntary sector partners deliver, which has serious implications for the social support that they gain as part of the process. Our learning programmes are delivered in community settings which deliver a wide range of community support – we're the digital inclusion and learning wing of those services.

What are your greatest worries about in the emerging future?

Digital exclusion – the crisis has led through need to the adoption of digital technologies for delivering and supporting community services and in the context of social distancing many of these practices will become routine (which is a good thing) but there will be many who are unable to participate because of digital exclusion.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

That the crisis had led to widespread adoption of digital technologies by voluntary (and public, for that matter) sector agencies which will assist in wider and more effective collaboration.



EDINBURGH DOG AND CAT HOME

Lindsay Fyffe-Jardine

Type of organisation: Animal welfare rehoming charity

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

We have had to stop most income related services (such as rehoming) and events but we continue to have dogs and cats in need come to our door. We've estimated a loss of at least £650,000 in income and the longer restrictions stay in place this will soon surpass £1million with no mission or fundraising income being generated.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

I'm a new CEO in an organisation very vulnerable to the impact of this crisis with difficult decisions to make that no CEO wants to make, let alone in their first 100 days. Its been a challenge not to have had time to establish my ways of working and expectations with trustees and staff. It is a role that adds so much stability and value but feels very pressured at times.

What has been the impact on staff?

More than half of our staff have been furloughed which has been hard on those placed in the scheme as many feel a sense of loss of being connected to our mission. There is huge pressure on the team left behind with a general sense of unease about the future of the organisation. Although I know during this they feel they have been communicated with and supported.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

We continue to take in dogs and cats in need during lockdown and our dogs and cats already with us still need the same standards of care which they have been given. We have been supporting people from across the community with our pet foodbank and working with partners to help them get this to those affected.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

I am concerned about the financial recovery and in turn future of the organisation. I know that changes will need to be made to support this but we are at the mercy of external forces we can't control. I want my charity to still exist in the future.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

I am hopeful of the resilience of my team and how creative and resourceful they have shown themselves to be. I am excited to be able to build a more nimble and more focused organisation as a result of this crisis.

Blogs:

[Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home CEO](#)



SCOTTISH SEABIRD CENTRE

Susan Davies

Type of organisation: registered conservation and education charity with a 5 star visitor attraction

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

We faced a very immediate financial cliff edge that saw us start to take steps, in early April, to prepare for winding up our Charity. Our charitable activities rely heavily on the income that comes from our not-for-profit visitor attraction, a largely seasonal business. When our doors closed in mid-March our main income stream ceased but we still have bills to pay and refunds to pass onto customers for wildlife boat trips that have had to be cancelled.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

There's an intensity to the decision making. You have to juggle a wide range of balls quickly - supporting the Trustees with sound information, raising awareness with stakeholders to try to generate tangible support, rather than just messages of support, and ensuring the staff and volunteer team are kept well informed. Whilst there are very short term needs to address you have to keep focused on the medium to long-term. That's necessary to stand the best chance of charting a course through the crisis. You don't switch off, you are constantly reassessing whether you've pursued the right things, made the right choices, done the best you can for the Charity and your team. You have to push the inevitable self-doubt to the back of your mind and keep the resolve.

What has been the impact on staff?

The vast majority of our team have customer facing roles whether it's serving in our cafe or retail areas or delivering educational activities in our discovery experience, learning hub or through our outreach programme and our practical conservation projects. Most of these activities stopped the day our doors closed. We had to take steps to furlough our staff - 90%. Many of those staff were preparing for the busiest part of the tourism season when they're

on their feet all day and that just stopped overnight. They are anxious about the future and frustrated that they are not allowed, due to the strict furlough rules, to do anything for the Charity. It's hard not to feel disempowered in that situation, although we still keep in touch on a weekly basis and have our duty of care responsibilities at the forefront of our minds.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

Our services all but ceased because of the need to furlough our staff team to minimise expenditure. We are able to keep a very low level of educational activities going by switching from face-to-face to digital resources, but the benefits of having a space that can be used by the community and face to face interaction with over 4000 children a year has been put on hold, not to mention engagement with more vulnerable groups and the practical conservation work we undertake to protect seabirds and coastal habitats.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

The uncertainty. We don't know if we will be able to pull the funding required to see us through to the end of our Financial Year (Jan 2021) together. We are making plans for reopening without any real certainty as to what will/will not be allowed, what the timing is and how that will affect our financial viability. We were charting a course of broadening our funding base to improve our financial sustainability and that will need to be accelerated with new corporate partnerships.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

The level of support from within the local community, from visitors from further afield and from partner organisations has been heartening. People are openly telling us how much they value what we do and also stepping up to defend us when ill informed comments are made. People genuinely want to see us succeed. We'll keep working extremely hard to try to get us to our 21st anniversary, this time next year, and in a much stronger position than we are now with new partnerships to the fore.

Blogs:

[Scottish Seabird Centre - 30 Days into COVID Closure](#)



MARYHILL BURGH HALLS TRUST Melanie Farrow

Type of organisation: We are a charity limited by guarantee and working to a social enterprise model, where we aim to be self-sufficient. Any 'profit' is reinvested in either our building or our community engagement programme around heritage, culture and arts.

We are a community led organisation that brought a large historic building back into use for the community by the community.

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

As an organisation whose focus was on self-sustainability, we have now found this to be to our detriment. With only 20% of our income coming from grant funding, the rest being from earned income.

Our event space hire, equipment hire and catering commission has been lost overnight and for the foreseeable future accounting for 32% of our earned income. Office space rental is our main income stream and as the spaces mainly accommodate small businesses, we hope that they will be with us by the end of the year and that people will not cut back and see office space as a major cost or look to downsize.

The only funding we had was for a project related post which ran out on 31st March. The post was to be funded by the Trust for a further 3 months, but as we haven't been onsite this person has been furloughed.

We had 210 paid visitors for our exhibition booked for the 30th March, just as lockdown kicked in. We had a waiting list for a further event evening and this was the first time we had taken the step of charging. The momentum and impetus we had gained with this, as well as sponsorship and fundraising opportunities have now vanished after taking years to build up.

We had taken the step of advertising to the tourism market, which has now been ineffective, as well as the valuable funds and time invested gone.

Family and kids Easter programmes were cancelled, with only some being able to be transferred online. This also meant missing our involvement with a festival, which was also cancelled.

Volunteering, work placements and internships were all stopped, when we had to close the building to the public. Our tenants still have access to the building.

Due to all the buildings being closed close by, we have increased security at a cost to us and are hearing regularly of damage and issues in the surrounding area. This gives us a worry going forward.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

I have always been able to react to crises due to the nature of roles I have held, so this has not been an issue for me. Even something of this magnitude and being 'unprecedented', I have found it an opportunity for us to look at how we operate and our income streams and business model. We are still in the process of completing this.

Where it has been hard is being on my own and now responsible for absolutely everything. I have had to adapt to writing funding applications on my own and learning about one aspect of our organisation, which previously I oversaw the member of staff but didn't look at the minutiae and detail.

If anything it has developed me and moved me on in my own strengths and skills and I am enjoying being able to 'get on with things' at home with no interruptions, where in the office environment and being in an open office, this time is unfortunately very scarce (even when hiding in a meeting room!)

What has been the impact on staff?

We had two members of staff. We were already running on a very lean / tight staffing structure. Funding for the other post finished on 31st March and the Trust had committed to 3 months of covering the salary. We decided to furlough this member of staff whilst not on site and unable to complete as much community engagement. This will be the case until the end of June (or when the furlough programme is stopped). We will be looking to apply for funding for this post on any reset / restart areas, as this is mainly what this post will be about with the community engagement sphere.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

Our volunteers are feeling lost without their regular sessions with us. Interns and work placements were unable to finish with us, although we have tried to support them as much as possible in completing any work. We have been supporting and doing as much as we can with our volunteers. The public have been unable to access the building / services, organisations and events since the 18th March. Our Easter holiday programme we partly completed online. The great partnership working we were beginning to forge including the summer programme of events, will be significantly impacted. How they can go ahead will be unsure and dependent on government guidance, as many are set to take place outdoors.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

Funding and response has been, quite rightly, focused on the immediate effort and on the ground. My worry is the recovery / restart / reset phase and the funding for this. Being an events space and heritage / tourism building with a community focus, we are certainly an organisation that will (partly) be looking at earned income streams that are significantly impacted for the longer term and we are going to have to look at alternative strategies. Having been efficient in moving away from a funding model with 80% of income earned, we have at present lost 32% of that overnight. With costs set to increase as we hit 10 years of operation and a building beginning to need additional larger scale repairs, this could not have come at a worse time for us.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

The partnership and the various organisations we had started working with on a joined up approach in the local community have been extremely heartening pre pandemic. We hope seeing the community effort and people's coming together can be harnessed going forward and rather than being invested in only their own organisation or group, they see the greater good and synergies of working together for community purpose. That funding sources will also see that there are benefits to easing application processes and that demonstration is easy to do when there has been an on the ground response.



PATHS FOR ALL

Ian Findlay

Type of organisation: Third sector organisation

Paths for All staff complement is 30 FTEs and its budget is approximately £9 million, of which approx £7.5 million is distributed in grants to third and public sector organisations. Over 90% of this funding comes from the Scottish Government and public sector organisations.

Our main business is delivery of public health, transport and environmental policy. The focus of our work is on promoting physical activity by significantly increase the number of people who choose to walk for either leisure or everyday short journeys.

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

On a practical level the transition to forced homeworking was smooth as we had already invested in, developed policies and created a culture of remote and home working.

Our activities associated with group activities have been significantly curtailed. However due to the increased emphasis on walking and cycling as a means of everyone enjoying their once-a-day outdoor exercise overall, the demand for our services has increased.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

I am busier than I have ever been. Initially, my main focus was business continuity and resilience, rather than the impossible of ‘business as usual’. Securing our funding was fundamental and meant that we did not need to furlough staff or apply to any of the resilience funds. A privileged position to be in. Staff well-being has been paramount. 40% of the organisation’s staff have childcare responsibilities.

Latterly, as well as the above, there has been an increased focus on contributing towards initiatives associated with promoting health and well-being during lockdown (e.g. promoting ‘safe’ walking, temporary road reallocation measures) and an increasing focus on post-lockdown planning.

Overall, it has been noticeable that the focus of my energy has switched from working ON the organisation to working IN the organisation. I have enjoyed this change of focus and it has felt right.

I have spent considerably less time travelling, which is great. The pandemic has demonstrated for me that for those of us lucky enough to be able to work from home, we have for years spent a lot of time and the earth's resources and contributed towards climate change by unnecessary travel. Face-to-face meetings and events will always be very important, but many business-type meetings can be just as effectively carried out online. I will not be travelling as much post-lockdown.

What has been the impact on staff?

This has been mixed. Those impacted most have been those with childcare responsibilities. However, with a growing realisation for us all that some lockdown measures are likely to continue for the foreseeable and undefined future, I think we are all becoming increasingly anxious as to what the future holds. Initially, I think most of us thought that we'd be in lockdown for 2-3 months and then the world would return to normal. It's becoming ever clearer that this simple model of lockdown one month, no lockdown the next is false. This level of uncertainty is hard. I've been extremely proud of and humbled by how the staff team have not only coped with the last couple of months but have continued to be highly productive and are helping many people through this worrying time.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

We have continued to offer grants to third parties to help ensure their business continuity and resilience. We are still providing guidance and support, but through Covid-19 impact lenses.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

I'm worried that we revert back to the unsustainable, unnecessary practices of the 'old normal'. I sincerely hope that we can 'build back better' in terms of the sort of society we all want and have glimpsed during lockdown in terms of our own health and wellbeing and that of the planet on which ultimately we all depend.

I also worry about ongoing funding for the third sector. We are all ultimately going to have to pay monetarily for the impacts of the pandemic, which means the public purse will be under increased strain. I find this frustrating as pandemics such as this have been predicted for some time and the impacts of the pandemic have been so catastrophic due to our lack of investment in preventative health care. Scotland remains the ‘poor man’ of Europe and so we are most vulnerable to health crises such as coronavirus.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

I am hopeful that we can ‘build back better’. I believe we need a step-change, a paradigm shift in our social norms, our values and the way we all live. I’m a great believer in emergent strategy. It is so often the unplanned, not the planned, that present the biggest opportunities (and threats) to us individually, in our communities and workplaces, to our nation and even to our planet. It is the unplanned that can create the step changes and paradigm shifts. Wouldn’t it be marvellous if one of the outcomes of the deeply worrying and traumatic time we find ourselves in due to the climate emergency and now the Covid-19 pandemic is a step-change that gives much greater priority to our individual and collective health and wellbeing and that of our planet.



SHETLAND AMENITY TRUST

Mat Roberts

Type of organisation: a deed trust that looks after the cultural and natural heritage of Shetland

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

We have lost a third of our income circa £930,000 which is commercial received from events, holidays lets, donations, and entry fees. The net loss on this is circa £300,00. This sum normally fills the gap in funding we receive from our local authority and Shetland Charitable Trust.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

We have closed all our sites and building, moved to home working, furloughed 32 staff but had to retain the staff funded by public money.

Leadership has been challenging, staff cohort generally not very resilient with no previous experience of disruption of any kind to fall back on. The reaction to the pandemic has covered the spectrum.

There has been no visible leadership from the local authority or any other representative body. The tone has been “keep your head down and it will be all right”.

Trustees have been similarly unresilient.

The really big challenge will be bringing the organisation back together. This will need significant investment in time, money and specialist facilitation is suspect.

I have started listening to a lot of Jazz (very worrying) to help with concentration which is drifting after 8 weeks (we started early as the schools closed a week before the rest of the UK).

What has been the impact on staff?

Hard to tell, in the early days there was a certain amount of concern that furlough would end up as redundancy by stealth.

If I am really honest, I am not certain I know what some are doing. The tech to move to home working has worked in most cases.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

We have moved as much activity online as we can and have had a very positive response. Tens of thousands of people have engaged with online quizzes and social media activity.

Our international supporters have been great and a local giving donation campaign has generated over £10k in 6 weeks. That's a lot for us as we normally only get £16k from museum visitors p.a.

We have had a really positive response from the many, mostly long haul, supporters of our Shetland Wool Week textiles festival. We normally welcome about 1200 people to Shetland for this festival of knitting, spinning weaving, dying, designing, etc. Its worth about £2million to the local economy. One of the big parts of the event is a "Woolweek annual" a book of patterns, images and stories. There is a very clear demand for a Lockdown edition. Let's hope we can do it under social distancing.

The SG response to NGOs has been heavily skewed to the social welfare and care sector. NGOs working in arts, culture, heritage and sport who normally get most of their money from visit fees have been abandoned. A bit like the none C19 patients in the NHS who may become the unseen victims I suspect a number of NGOs and the services they supply to their communities will fall by the wayside due to SG neglect for this part of our sector.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

We are an integral part of the visitor market in Shetland and this may take 2-3 years to recover so we go from a market of 200,000 to 23,000 residents.

If furlough is not continued, we will have to make redundancies.

We will need help for 2/3 years.

The impact of C19 is being amplified by the down turn in the oil and gas sector. Shetland is very dependant on O&G and this will have significant social impact over time. I suspect NGOs in the Aberdeen area will see the same.

Brexit and the uncertainty over the future of fishing and crofting is also having an impact.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

We may have new ways of working and contacting with our users and visitors.

We have discovered the value that people place on our services.

We have discovered that some of the tools we had in place like video conferencing, we use Bluejeans, not Zoom, meant that this bit of the transition was easy.

Its going to be very important not to forget what we have learnt.

The multiple challenges listed above may cause people to come together and look at a Shetland 2050 Vision. It's much needed but there was little appetite for just a thing prior to C19.

The value of the tourism sector to Shetland may also be better understood.

WHALEARTS

WHALE ARTS Leah Black

Type of organisation: A community-led arts charity and social enterprise

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

We are embedded in Wester Hailes, care deeply about our participants, team, volunteers and our membership and the community we serve in Wester Hailes and beyond. We paused all groups, closed the building to the public, but tried to retain and expand on some of our core and essential services which we could provide remotely.

We worked quickly with our team of freelance artists to develop a range of creative tutorials, fun ideas and exercise challenges for people of all ages to do at home. This is a growing resource which lives on our website and is shared each week on our social media channels.

Since 18 March over 5,000 individual art materials and 100 art packs have been delivered in Wester Hailes.

When we realised we had to close the building to the public one of our first responses was to retain food provision and adapt the Community Meal to a Community Takeaway. We set up a social distancing queuing system and now provide a hot meal delivery service.

On Friday 25 April, 120 hot meals went direct to families and individuals', around 30 of these meals were collected as takeaway and the rest delivered to homes through our small network of volunteer drivers. The demand and need is growing and we are now looking at what our capacity is and working with other local partners to ensure we can cook and deliver as much food as possible across the week. With local authority community centres closed we are one of few buildings with kitchens able to cook and distribute hot food in Wester Hailes.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

Similar to most leaders I'd imagine, supporting my team working in a completely different way during a crisis, that team being partly WFH and

partly in the building working safely to support our community - one of the biggest challenges within this is making sure the team stays well. This is something we think about as an organisation anyway, but all the more difficult when you can't just sit down and have a cuppa and a chat with each other and talk over things.

What has been the impact on staff?

My team have all been absolutely amazing — kind, creative, collaborative, looking out for our community, each other. I already knew they were wonderful, but honestly I continue to be inspired by them every day!

We have taken the decision not to furlough. We have developed a system (as far as is possible with a small team) to work in two teams in the building. Some of the team are working fully from home. Our approach currently is that due to local need we will continue to redeploy staff into the above activities for as long as possible.

We are keeping our regular freelance artists and support workers in paid roles until at least the end of their contracts. We will continue to work with them to develop new, interesting, accessible and creative ways to reach and engage with our community.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

We are concerned that — like all of us — families and individuals will struggle with the effects of lockdown, possible increased financial pressures, likely limited access to resources and increased pressure on mental health and family relationships. Isolated individuals without family or support networks feel lonely and disconnected from the community and postal art packs are a way of staying connected.

Not long after 18 April we started a tracker which is checked every day by staff. As a team we call, text or email people to check-in, ask how they are, have a chat, and find out if we can help in any way. As more services appear locally and across Edinburgh we are now referring and sign-posting people into other services.

We have had growing concerns about digital exclusion of vulnerable people who were already struggling with IT. Through an existing digital skills project

in partnership with Prospect Community Housing, SCOREScotland, and CHAI — Wester Hailes Connects — we support vulnerable and digitally excluded people in Wester Hailes. This work usually happens in small group IT drop-in sessions. This project has been adapted to looking at how we can remotely support people to connect to the myriad of social events which have moved online, when many do not have a suitable device to work from.

We have worked with Prospect Housing to purchase laptops for voluntary groups in Wester Hailes — to enable them to join in digitally.

We have also, with Prospect Housing and SCORE Scotland identified 10 individuals and families who would benefit from a device to be able to make video calls from (likely an ipad or tablet) and we have sourced a fund to access these (through our current funder JP Morgan via Good Things Foundation). We will be providing remote support for these individuals in setting up and using the devices.

This is an area in which we believe demand will grow over the coming weeks and in which we feel we have the skills to support people. We have recently added Digital Needs into our Support Tracker.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

As a community embedded and building based organisation generating income through our building we have the added challenge of loss of enterprise income. We have spent years building up the income we earn through our building to a point where around £58,000 of our income in 19/20 was from room bookings, office rentals and our co-working space desk rentals. As soon as we closed the building all room bookings were cancelled. We are projecting that we will lose the ability to earn £3505 per month for as long as we are closed. This is an ongoing challenge for us. We still need to pay for all our building overheads as we are open to continue to provide the services outlined above. Until this point we have not furloughed staff to enable us to continue to provide services.

We have achieved gradually over the last few years what most third sector organisations and arts organisations have been told to strive for — a diverse and sustainable income mix with some income from enterprise activity.

We are beginning to plug some of this loss of income through support from

funders however this will likely continue to be a challenge over the medium to long term, especially since it's difficult to know in which month we can realistically project earned income to start again.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

That we have fewer meetings! And instead more useful and meaningful conversations. And that as community embedded orgs and community anchor orgs are being viewed as integral during the crisis that we can carry some of this forward into the new future and that we see more focus on and investment put into hyper-local grassroots activity.

Blogs:

[Reflections: Third Sector Chief Exec-ing During Covid-19](#)



GLASGOW ECO TRUST **Neil Lovelock**

Type of organisation: small environmental charity and social enterprise operating in local neighbourhoods within one council area

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

We deliver a wide range of events with schools, community groups, housing associations and other local groups many of which are outdoors and involve bringing people together. These have all been cancelled/postponed.

We also offer a range of volunteering opportunities which are no longer on offer.

We have a bike workshop which we kept open for a while but then the landlord made us close - but we are hoping to re-open - there is a big demand for cycle related services at the moment.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

We were coming into our busiest time of the year with plans to grow and expand so all that is on hold.

Any type of crisis provides opportunities and threats. I think I've managed to steer us through the first 6-7 weeks OK and things are still intact. I've had 3 online board meetings which have gone OK.

I've focused on what we have control and influence over and who we are responsible for - board, staff, volunteers, service users, partners, funders.

I've been able to participate in lots of calls and platforms, ie ACOSVO weekly call, that I wouldn't normally have been able to and hear and learn from other leaders who I wouldn't have come across in my day-to-day work.

It's given me some space to think about me, my role, the organisation, what we do and why, and more.

We have been hosting weekly calls for organisations in G13/G14 which has

been useful especially staff who are working remotely - will hopefully lead to some more partnership working moving forward.

What has been the impact on staff?

It's been challenging for everyone especially for staff with families and partners who are also at home.

We've had to change the way we work - team calls are more social calls now and 1-2-1s more focused on what we can achieve.

A couple of staff have been furloughed, so we've had to manage that as well. There are some concerns as to how we might get back up and running face-to-face.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

We've not been able to run any of our normal services so it has had a big impact. We are in regular contact with our volunteers and they are missing being involved.

There is a big demand for bike related services so frustrating trying to develop a viable solution whilst staff are furloughed.

We don't offer any frontline services which people are dependent on, so there is a wee bit less pressure there.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

- Staff, board, volunteers, service users
- Loss of momentum
- Funding and income
- So many unknowns it's not easy to see a role for us and if we can see a role then it's not easy to see how we would deliver that. Things are beginning to become clearer.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

- Opportunities to change / improve the way we do things
- Huge focus on people, inequalities, communities, volunteering, environmental issues and more so will be lots of opportunities - but not sure what the delivery model is going to be

- We've migrated to Xero which has been much easier when there's not much else happening! And we can now take online card payments which will help with re-opening the bike workshop!



SCOTTISH COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS Anna Fowlie

Type of organisation: Membership organisation for voluntary sector organisations

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

We have had to pivot to all 90+ staff working from home rather from our 3 sites in Edinburgh, Inverness and Glasgow. For some teams, it has meant doing what they've always done in a different way, others have had to completely change what they do to support the sector's response to the crisis. It has also caused a significant reduction in income – almost all our unrestricted income has disappeared or dropped considerably.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

At first, I went into command and control mode (not my normal style at all) and I was anxious and unsettled. Then I was exhausted, and now I'm finding a bit of equilibrium although I'm still reacting a bit irritably to things that would normally just make me roll my eyes. Thankfully I've managed to keep that in my head or in a rant to a trusted person so far. I suffer a bit from empathy overload so I am really having to stop myself parenting my colleagues! It has though reinforced for me that the massive amount of work I've done on culture and structural change over the last couple of years has paid dividends; we wouldn't have been able to respond so flexibly and collectively as an organisation without that.

What has been the impact on staff?

It's impacting on different staff in different ways, and indeed that changes on a daily basis – everyone has ups and downs. Lots of staff are juggling caring commitments and work and finding that hard. Some people have been under huge pressure with high volume, rapidly changing work while others have felt a bit left out. There has been an outbreak of communication on non-work

things; quizzes, pictures of pets, sharing tips on home-schooling and well-being, mainly using Zoom and Teams. There's even an online stretch class! People are very supportive and mindful of each other's changing needs.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

Our members have all been impacted in different ways.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

From my organisation's perspective, the financial impact is the scariest bit. For me as an individual, I'm feeling panicked by spending much time outdoors and am having nightmares about being in large crowds. Hopefully that won't last! For Scotland, I worry that the economic crash which is already starting to happen will see a knee-jerk focus on old GDP measures of economic success and we'll lose sight of the great stuff that had been happening on wellbeing and inclusion. The all-encompassing uncertainty is worrying.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

I'm hopeful that we retain some of the new ways of working, eg digital shift, less business travel, much more flexibility from the public sector and funders, and proper collaborative working.



VOLUNTARY HEALTH SCOTLAND Claire Stevens

Organisation type: National intermediary
and membership body

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

Sorting out the logistics of home working required investment in new equipment, software packages, contracts etc as we didn't have work laptops or phones and our filing system was not on the Cloud. Additional costs therefore plus a steep learning curve.

Our overall responsibility is to our membership and we moved fast to establish new online ways of engaging with our members, collecting their evidence and stories of the impact on them and their services and service users and feeding this evidence into Scottish Government, NHS and Public Health Scotland. We have pivoted all our work to focus on COVID-19, both the immediate impact on our members and the people they serve (impact on people of the removal of access to many services, loneliness and social isolation compounded by the digital divide and poverty, food insecurity has risen dramatically, etc), also celebrating the speed, creativity and adaptability shown by our sector in reconfiguring services quickly, but also on the longer term unintended consequences of the mitigation measures (e.g untreated cancers will be a big health issue further down the line), the longer term social and economic consequences for health, how will public services and support be recovered longer term etc.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

It has really tested my mettle, stamina, confidence, decision-making, and problem solving skills. I have found myself both energised by the challenge of having to deal with the crisis and at the same time often mentally exhausted/draind by the new demands and by the need to work and engage entirely online/remotely. I have felt guilt at even allowing myself to feel tired/stressed as I'm keenly aware I am 'only' running a very small organisation and that we are not a front-line service deliverer.

I have swiftly had to become a much more confident and adept digital leader and have had to find new ways to support and manage staff. I have had to juggle enormous expectations and opportunities with realism about what can reasonably be done by a team of <4 staff, one of whom is currently off sick with coronavirus.

What has been the impact on staff?

My small staff team have been brilliant, have risen to every challenge with determination, energy, good grace, commitment, flexibility, extremely hard work, speedy problem solving and work-arounds for issues, mutual support for each other and for me. However, it has undoubtedly put a strain on them - home working is not easy, broadband connectivity is not always good, staff have their own personal and family situations and concerns to contend with, one staff member has children to home school, others have parents to worry about, one member of staff is now off sick with coronavirus. I am very aware of staff welfare and trying to exercise self-awareness and not overly project feelings of crisis/urgency/worry onto them, but it is hard when all of us are feeling pretty stressed.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

Our beneficiaries are our members and the people they serve, usually people whose health was already at risk, impaired or very poor, so the pandemic is hugely problematic. People with existing conditions such as cancer are having their needs completely ignored as coronavirus takes precedent over other NHS interventions and treatments. This is having a huge impact, we have surveyed and engaged with our members and documented the impact elsewhere - we have briefings, key messages and blogs on our website about this. You may find some of the blogs useful by way of case studies.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

How to plot a medium to longer term strategy when everything is set to be uncertain for some considerable time to come. The fear that this so called 'new normal' is here to stay; we have always thrived on face to face networking and engagement, and remote engagement is simply not the same.

How we will ever even get back into our office - shared office space with other charities, with desks set very close to each other makes physical distance a non-starter if everyone returns to the building and expects to work normal working hours. The longer term financial impact (we are probably ok for the next six months). Staff welfare, my own welfare. The fear that many of our members will not survive this crisis longer term and that the public will have fewer health charities there to plug the gap, pick up the slack, be there for them. Government and NHS really haven't grasped at all the extent of the third sector's role in supporting people's physical and mental health individually and at a community level, they are going to get a shock when organisations start disappearing.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

Digital ways of working will be more integrated into our work in future as mainstream. Third sector organisations are immensely fleet of foot and creative/ flexible/ imaginative and will find new ways of working and finding solutions. Governments and NHS may realise the need for more kindness and compassion in public services.



GREYFRIARS CHARTERIS CENTRE

Daniel Fisher

Type of organisation: Charity - SCIO

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

Trading income completely stopped, community groups have all been stopped. Immediate concerns have been the main focus; we are waiting to be able to restart the building works so that we can get on with something productive whilst we are empty. The concern is that there is a slow return of groups in the long term and we cannot afford to support the community groups and continue to operate.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

Concerned for staff and the future of the charity, extra workload from furloughed staff, feeling a little cabin fevered.

What has been the impact on staff?

All other staff have been furloughed – loss of income, concern that there will be no work after lockdown is lifted. Most of the staff work alone and are okay with the current situation. I am keeping regular contact with the core staff on a weekly basis, just checking up on how they are doing and pointing out online training opportunities. The other staff are receiving monthly updates (which is normal).

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

Many are feeling isolated and are classed as at risk

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

As our income is based on use of the space a slow return of activities will mean no income in the long term. If group events are not allowed to restart for the rest of the year then we will have no income, also there will be no work

for staff to do and we may have to let our team go or put them all on indefinite unpaid leave if furlough doesn't continue with the restrictions. We are currently undergoing a major refurbishment of the building so we have funding secured to cover operational costs during that time so as an organisation we will survive but we might not have any staff at the end of it besides myself.

Before lockdown, we had roughly 1000 people taking part in activities a week, not including people attending one-off bookings that generate the income that goes towards supporting the groups.

We are normally almost self-sufficient with event income covering our running costs which means that we don't have regular funding to fall back on other than that restricted for during the refurbishment.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

Completing our building refurbishment and opening again to serve the community.



GLASGOW COUNCIL FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Ian Bruce

Type of organisation: Local Infrastructure
(Third Sector Interface)

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

Like many others we are now working from home which all feels a little strange for the organisation. On one hand I can totally see how much of our work in future could be done in this way. On the other I think we are all being challenged by the lack of being in the same space. It's becoming obvious to say now, but it has certainly transformed our use of digital technology.

We have dropped a lot of our regular work in favour of thinking about how we can best coordinate and support the local third sector's response to coronavirus; as well as supporting other organisations to operate as effectively as possible.

Financially it has meant we have had to dramatically change our financial forecasts. We have a conference centre with café and run a lot of training. Much of that income has been lost to us. We have been able to take advantage of the Job Retention scheme and some of the other funding which is helpful.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

As a leader it's weird for me because I'm fairly well known for wandering around the organisation and having little conversations with staff to check in on them. I've really missed those informal connections with people. Using Zoom and Teams isn't just that you aren't in the same room as people, but it also seems to formalise conversations as well. I worry about how our team are doing and whether we are doing enough to support them.

I also really like having a plan of what I'm doing and being able to measure against that. That isn't how we are able to operate and our plans are evolving

by the day. I find that quite stressful, particularly when you're worrying you've missed something or dropped a plate.

What has been the impact on staff?

Our team have been excellent. I don't think our customers saw us miss a beat as we moved people home and changed the work they do. It's a big thank you from me to them for doing that. I am conscious that these aren't ideal circumstances for people. Many have family members to look after, will be worried about their own health and will have found the transition stressful.

People are in different places as well. I know we have staff who are desperate to get back to normal and others who have already identified that they would like to work from home more in the future.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

Our beneficiaries are primarily third sector organisations, and for them it has been really mixed. I don't think any organisations are particularly thriving in current circumstances but we are definitely seeing strong distinctions within the sector. For example, those with secure grant funding are in a much better place than those more reliant on trading or fundraising income, and those who were good at digital before have been better able to transition than those for whom it is new.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

The overall impact on our sector may be challenging. The capacity of government in both Holyrood and Westminster to maintain all of the sector through this crisis is likely to be limited. That will mirror our private sector counterparts. But that has real implications for how we re-build after this. It isn't always as easy to recreate a strong third sector as it might be to restart a private sector business.

Of course, charities and other community led organisations do not have a right to exist. But we do need our leaders to understand the key role that the sector plays in providing key services to help people, services that will be in even greater demand in the next few years of recovery.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

I suppose my primary one is that we really can “Build Back Better”. The economy has been reset and we have seen that governments can spend money to stop people falling into crisis. So how can we all work together to redesign our economy and social fabric.

More practically, I’d love to think that we’ll be able to maintain some of our digital approaches, while ensuring that we achieve digital inclusion. Some of the rapid collaboration and creative thinking we have seen in the last few weeks will also be very welcome.

Blogs:

[The Response of the Charity Sector to the Coronavirus Crisis](#)



BARNARDO'S SCOTLAND **Martin Crewe**

Type of organisation: Children's charity

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

Hugely - both in terms of changes in the way we deliver our services and our organisational income.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

The first 2 or 3 weeks after lockdown were extremely busy but things have settled a bit since then. The main issue now is 'soldiering on' for an unspecified period with continuing uncertainty. Spending a lot of time on internal communications.

What has been the impact on staff?

Very variable and closely linked to people's personal circumstances. For some there is a very significant increase in anxiety and sleep disruption.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

Huge and varied but main ones are impacts on poverty, mental health and child protection.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

Far-reaching and long lasting economic impact as businesses struggle to recover, including charity retail. Increasing numbers of charities going bust over the coming months at the same time as increased demand for charity services.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

That some 'politically impossible' proposals such as universal basic income will now receive serious consideration.

Blogs:

[Finding a New Balance](#)

[Lessons Learned from Managing the Coronavirus Pandemic \(Part 1\)](#)

[Lessons Learned from Managing the Coronavirus Pandemic \(Part 2\)](#)



EDINBURGH REMAKERY

Elaine Brown

Type of organisation: Social Enterprise with charitable status

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

We have had to close all activity and furlough 50% staff full time and remaining managers are on monthly rotational furlough. All income streams have stopped. Cashflow/ reserves only for one month prior to Covid.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

Stressful.! New in post so already facing challenges of that and now having to cope with Covid19 planning. As a leader it is extremely lonely and adds to feelings of isolation. Feel the weight of protecting the business and the jobs of our staff.

What has been the impact on staff?

Staff feel guilty if they are in furlough as they want to help the business but can't under the rules of furlough. Feeling cut off so as a leader having to work hard to keep engaging with them during lockdown to check on well being etc

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

We have many people who still want our services but to protect cashflow we can't provide it!! There is definitely a lack of support to help the third sector to manage demand and supply.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

People will be scared to come in and shop, scared of buying second hand goods (fear of infection) I am worried about how we can safely deliver our services with social distancing.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

Improving our on line presence for the future.

venturetrust

VENTURE TRUST
Amelia Morgan

Type of organisation: Venture Trust is a service delivery charity supporting people experiencing disadvantage and at higher risk. We provide personal development and therapy support to those isolated, suffering financial hardship and in danger of being left behind.

How has your organisation been impacted by the current situation?

Like many organisations, we have gone through a significant transition to respond to the Government advice. Supporting 60 staff to work online from home, supporting their well-being and adapting the working day to balance other family commitments. We were part way through a digital migration so rapidly brought together a 'digital connections' staff group to lead the transition with training, coaching and support to get all staff online and able to access resources. The staff culture group has led on a range of informal get togethers to maintain regular catch-ups for staff.

We decided to furlough only 5 staff – all whom work in the office support roles and unable to work from home. These staff have been superb in their willingness to help in this way.

For our beneficiaries, all our frontline staff were proactively checking in with people and to be a friendly, trusted contact. We surveyed 125 people to understand their current worries and what support they were looking for from us. 80% of people asked for at least a weekly contact. On concerns, mental health, financial support, access to food and data poverty were real issues.

We rebooted all our personal development support from working outside to taking it indoors and online and launched 'Be well, Be connected and Be ready'. We set up new ways of working and new resources plus upgraded our database to track engagements and support needs. Since late March we have been supporting nearly 300 people and placed over 1300 calls/contacts. We wanted to play our small part as part of the amazing national and grassroots response in the UK and Scotland.

We also significantly ramped up our stakeholder engagement – reaching out to all our funders and delivery partners – first to understand how they were adapting and impacted and second, to share how we were still working and being there for people. Our latest engagement work has focused on contributing to a conversation about how Scotland recovers and moves forward, the crisis has shown how we can do things differently and that many people would like to see more change in the future.

How has it impacted you as a leader?

I'm fortunate to have an excellent team of people – really dedicated, collaborative and creative. The crisis has asked a great deal of the team – we're working at pace, normal decision making routes are on hold and we've cut through some processes to ensure we were moving forward to support staff and beneficiaries. For me, ensuring the staff team are well, feel supported and that we were able to present a clear online offer of support to contribute was vital. Much of my time has focused on strategic planning, relationships and engagement work and remodelling our finances.

I've really noticed the pace and the volume of decisions especially in the first few days of preparing for lockdown and initial weeks. I've spent more time on scenario planning to help me help the team by understanding issues and contingencies to triage areas of risk. We went from regular staff engagement to daily briefings and then weekly plus weekly board briefings. I decided that all external comms would initially come through me, that's more directive than my usual style but the importance of clarity on comms and a consistent 'voice' was paramount.

I've also reflected on our own readiness for the crisis and acutely aware that we weren't truly ready – untested business contingency plans and procedures – we've identified that we'll need the space for reflection and learning and there will be time for that.

What has been the impact on staff?

The staff team has adapted incredibly well and worked to support each other. We do have some staff working off the sofa and kitchen table so working from home is challenging. We also have some staff with considerable caring responsibilities so time is pressurised and juggling home schooling etc

remains a challenge. All our frontline staff have found online working more challenging than meeting beneficiaries face to face.

Staff members are keen to have regular updates and to be reassured on plans and thinking with Venture Trust. As a leadership team we've worked really hard to provide regular briefings and to be accessible to keep informal discussions open and flowing.

What has been the impact on beneficiaries?

Significant. Our established trusted relationships have been important as we're aware of their circumstances and crucially we were ready and committed to helping others in similar positions. Many of the people we support were struggling with their mental health and a range of complex life circumstances including poor living conditions, a history of fractured relationships and behaviours associated with offending before the crisis. In seeking support from us, they are also working on transforming their life for the better – to be happier, healthier and in work. We want to ensure they stay well, on a positive path and they feel hopeful about their future. Issues of social isolation, loss of significant adult role models, access to basics are big concerns. They're also worried about their wellbeing and for family and friends.

What are you most worried about in the emerging future?

Deep and more pronounced inequality emerging because of the socio-economic impact of the crisis. We risk storing up a longer term public health crisis witnessed in the impact on people's mental health, relationships, physical well-being and financial worries due to the changing nature of work and business viability.

Our sustainability is a concern – to find the resources to support our work and being able to work effectively in different scenarios of public health advice. I'm concerned about how we weather the long term. In the crisis, most of our funders and supporters have been super flexible and encouraged by our response. Over time, this will inevitably change and ensuring that we work together to reach people in need and provide support is our priority. A collaborative, support approach with some continued 'safety nets' on funding will provide a lifeline.

What are you most hopeful about in the emerging future?

Real change – a recovery which puts wellbeing, inclusive growth and our planet first. We continue to be evidence-led, we listen to people to understand what works and to ensure values of dignity and fairness are reflected in systems and processes. That new learning and perspectives show that we can work differently and be more effective. We cut out red tape and we resign inequality and poverty to history. We've been able to rapidly house people, distribute food, and provide financial safety nets and foster a huge team effort. We can't go back on this... and I hope that the leadership and contribution of the third sector is valued, supported and collaborative working is embraced as a positive force for change.



RELATIONSHIPS SCOTLAND Stuart Valentine

It has been a challenge to lead a Network of 21 Member Services through all of the changes we've faced. Some have made the adjustment well, whilst others have struggled with the technology and the new way of working. It feels like a new organisation in some ways and a continuation of the same organisation in other ways.

Not a single person has complained about what is happening, which is great. I wouldn't have minded if they did, that would have been entirely understandable, but they haven't. Everyone has worked really hard to make the adjustments that were needed.

Funders have been great - the Scottish Government and the Corra Foundation have been very helpful indeed. We've managed to retain our funding without huge pressure to deliver outcomes at this time. Reporting has been relaxed too.

As an organisation, and as mentioned on the blog below, we expect a surge of referrals from clients as the lockdown eases. Families are under significant pressure and this will come out, in time. Concerns around domestic abuse are very real and are already been clearly seen.

We hope and expect to come out of the lockdown intact as an organisation, but we will be changed by it, hopefully mostly for the good. I am aware we really are just at the beginning of this and I expect it to be a long time before we are back to anything that feels like it was before the lockdown.

Overall I'm coping well - I've got a great family and good support network, many others will be struggling though.

We have done a couple of blogs which highlight some key issues for Relationships Scotland and for the families we support. These are here:

[Strong Relationships Will See Us Through](#)

[Research Warns of "Post-lockdown Relationship Reckoning"](#)



ST. ANDREW'S FIRST AID **Stuart Callison**

In the short term, SAFA is in a better position than many charities and indeed other organisations, as we have a successful social enterprise and have been able to build up our reserves over the last couple of years. We are not in imminent danger of closure, and as such have not been eligible for help through the Third Sector Resilience Fund. However, unlike many charities, we do not receive any form of public funding, and since the lockdown, have lost almost all of our income sources, from commercial first aid training, from providing volunteer first aiders to public events, and from door to door fundraising. In the first quarter of the financial year, this amounts to around £800,000 income lost, with staff and other unavoidable running costs and overheads in the period at around £500-550,000.

As I've explained, we are able to survive this in the very short term. However, at the time of writing, we are looking at the real prospect that public events and large scale gatherings may not return until 2021, while continued social distancing restrictions could mean (for example) that we need to reduce the numbers attending courses with the loss of perhaps 50% of our regular training income, for a similar period. The European Resuscitation Council e.g. has just issued guidance suggesting that "during the pandemic", no CPR training is provided for lay people, and otherwise that there requires to be a 2 metre distance at all times, and full PPE (gowns, gloves, masks) provided for both candidates and trainers. Assuming something similar is decided for HSE training, there will again be significant implications. Without some form of financial help during the second half of the year, redundancies are inevitable, and indeed the charity's ability to survive at all may come into question. The currently available grant schemes are primarily for charities providing services which are directly related to client groups affected by the COVID outbreak, which is understandable, but of little help to many charities like ourselves.

The Board of Trustees and Senior Management Team have been as proactive as possible in responding to the crisis. All staff have been kept on at full pay, and the Board chose to absorb 100% of the costs in April. After a month, however, with many staff no longer having any work to do, or else work which was simply not critical in the current situation, we have chosen to place the organisation on a care and maintenance basis, with most staff furloughed for an initial period of 3 weeks. This is partly to stretch our resources as far as possible during a period of recovery.

As soon as the lockdown was announced, we identified those staff and volunteers who were willing and able to help the statutory services, notably the Scottish Ambulance Service. At first, there was an expectation that the SAS and others would require support with patient transport, e.g. at the temporary Louisa Jordan Hospital. However, with the epidemic seemingly past its peak, NHS and SAS capacity has proved equal to the challenge, and voluntary sector support has not been necessary. We have instead switched to a local focus, with volunteers assisting in community efforts to deliver food and medicines to the vulnerable. We continue to seek out new opportunities to assist the national recovery effort, but ideally at least some of these will need to be capable of generating some income for the organisation.



JUDY MURRAY FOUNDATION Melodie Crumlin

We are a relatively small charity which seeks to address the critical need of rising obesity, poor emotional health and well-being and unemployment by creating sporting opportunities in every community that wants them. The organisation delivers in disadvantaged and rural communities throughout Scotland building workforces within those areas. We work with parents, youth workers, teachers and students, encouraging communities to use their own assets to improve their life and place. Over the last 12 months we have engaged with 2133 children, young people, primary care givers, professionals and club members whilst building a workforce of 317.

In line with best practice we have a diversified income stream whilst growing and increasing our impact. However, we do not expect to hit budget of £25k corporate support, or £25k from fundraising events and donations. We therefore expect to lose up to £50k of income over the next 12 months, approximately 38% of turnover, and more than our current reserves. We anticipate losing £20k of this by June, meaning our only 2 members of staff may need to have their hours significantly reduced which will have significant impact on our ability to operate.

At the moment we are focusing our efforts on online activity:

- Phase 1 - SOCIAL MEDIA with a different theme each week to keep our followers connected and to encourage people to remain active. e.g. Our #HeadToeChallenge reached over 24,000 people.
- Phase 2 - ONLINE WORKSHOPS - we are developing 2 online workshops for coaches, club members, parents, youth leaders and students.
 1. Family Tennis
 2. Creating Starter Competitions

Lockdown has presented an opportunity for us all to invest in learning new skills. It has also created an opportunity for tennis to reach out to new

audiences especially families who are constantly looking for ways to stay active together at home. There is a need not only now but also in the FUTURE to empower local communities to be able to deliver free, fun and engaging physical activities for families and children. The current climate caused by the pandemic provides a unique opportunity to provide a place-based approach involving the engagement and upskilling of local parents, teachers and volunteers to be able to deliver family orientated physical activity sessions both online during the pandemic and to prepare a volunteer workforce to be ready to deliver in their communities' post pandemic. We have experienced, from past and present work that we have conducted, not only the sense of achievement that emerges in local communities but also the individual and community resilience that builds as a result. At JMF we want to continue the great work we have been doing in areas of disadvantage and take tennis into the homes of many more people during this #stayhome period.

However, all of this requires an investment of time and resource now and in the future and we have serious concerns for our future.

Additional Blogs:

[Julie Hutchison: Charity CEO Reflections in Scotland During Week 5 of Lockdown](#)

[Julie Hutchison: Charity CEO Reflections in Scotland During Week 6 of Lockdown](#)

[Julie Hutchison: Charity CEO Reflections in Scotland During Week 7 of Lockdown](#)

[7 Remote Work Lessons for Managers During the Coronavirus](#)

[James Jopling: Cross-border Charities and Covid-19](#)