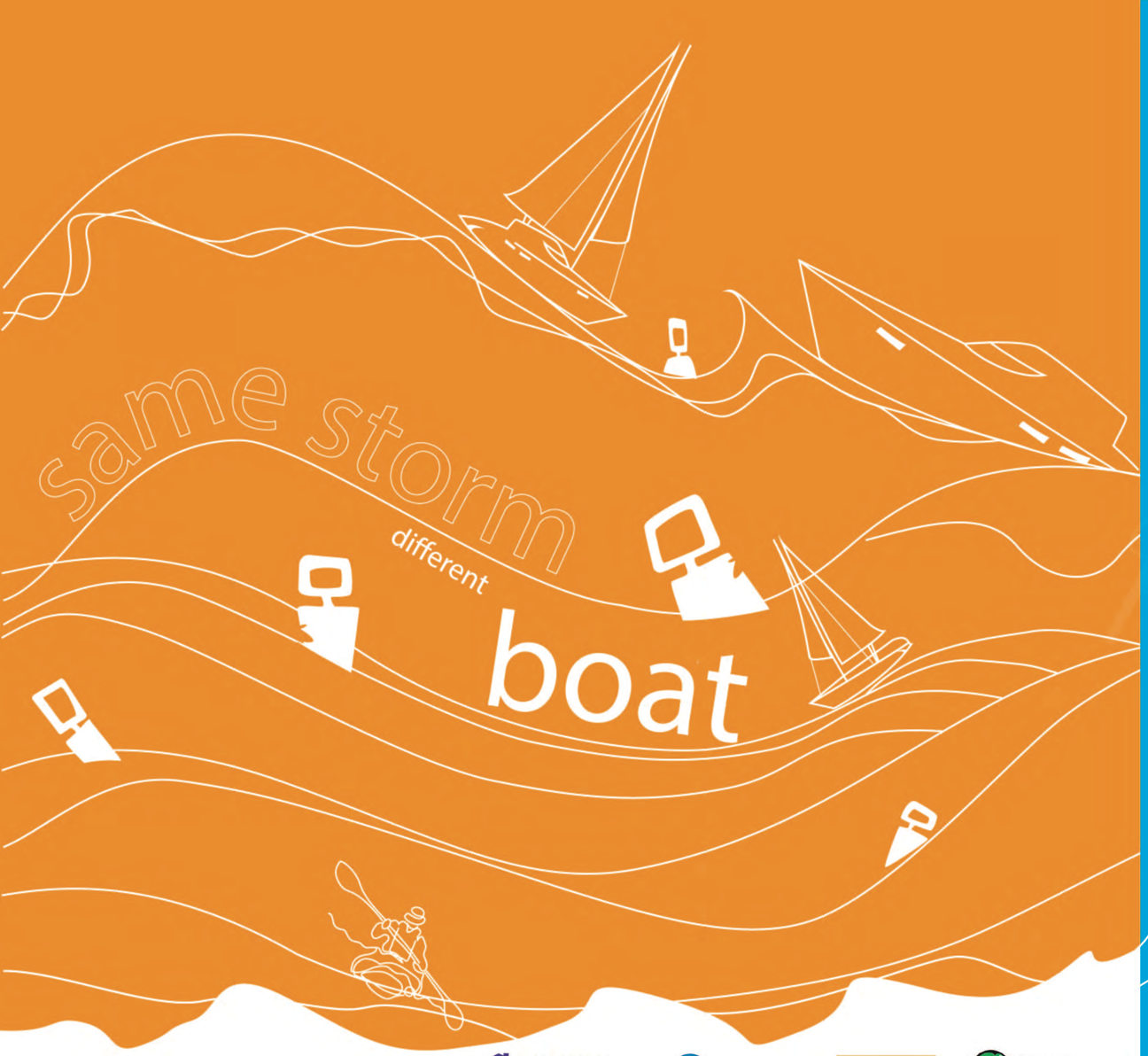

Inverclyde council

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

greenspace scotland
ParkPower
Transforming urban spaces for green energy

CVS Communities and the Voluntary Sector Inverclyde

INVERCLYDE CULTURE COLLECTIVE

RIG ARTS
a socially engaged arts and film charity

Co-Created Community COVID Memorial

Consultation Report 2023

Remembering Together

INVERCLYDE

RIG ARTS
a socially engaged arts and film charity

Background

Remembering Together is Scotland's Covid Community Memorial Programme managed by Greenspace Scotland with funding support from the Scottish Government.

The project is working with local partners and commissioned artists in all 32 local authority areas in Scotland to co-create collective acts of reflection, remembrance, hope and healing with communities across Scotland. The project aims to honour the people we have lost and to acknowledge the way that covid is affecting us all through each area co-creating a covid community memorial.

Remembering Together has offered a place to connect, to reflect and to create. It is about creating together, being part of a process to commemorate those who have lost their lives, those who have experienced loss and change as well as celebrating the ways in which Scottish communities have come together during the most difficult times.
www.rememberingtogether.scot

Remembering Together Inverclyde Phase 1 Community Consultation has been led by RIG Arts in partnership with CVS Inverclyde and Inverclyde Council.

RIG Arts is a multi-award winning, socially engaged arts charity based in Inverclyde that brings professional artists and the community together in a collaborative and creative way to affect positive change in people's lives and their environments.

RIG design and deliver a dynamic programme of creative projects, workshops, training opportunities, exhibitions, public artworks, and events. RIG Arts uses creativity to work with people to affect change in Urban Regeneration, Climate Change, Heritage, Mental Health and Access to the Arts.
www.rigarts.org

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Short Survey

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1 Introduction

Over the course of six months, RIG Arts facilitated a series of workshops, discussions and pop-up events, with the aim of holding a space for participants to share their experiences of the pandemic. We were aware that there would be a wide range of stories to share and that for some it may be a more difficult conversation to have. There was also a sense among some that they wanted to move on, and not be reminded of Covid at all.

These conversations also considered what a memorial was or could be, and from a local perspective what that could look like, where it might be, and what form would it take. Part of this engagement was to broaden people's ideas of what a memorial could be, introducing a wide range of examples from gardens, music, events, trails, performances to processions. A simple visual resource folder was created, with images helping to begin this discussion as well, and over time we developed a power point to use for the same purpose. Later this was adapted into a powerpoint presentation.

The team itself consisted of three artists, Carolan McPherson, a Graphic Designer & Illustrator, Seamus Killick is an artist and art therapist in training and Samantha Macgregor who is a visual artist and arts psychotherapist. While bringing different skills to the project we also have a shared background in participatory art practice from working with RIG Arts, the lead arts organisation. With arts and mental health a priority for the team, we all felt strongly that having a space to talk about the challenges of the pandemic was of great value in and of itself.

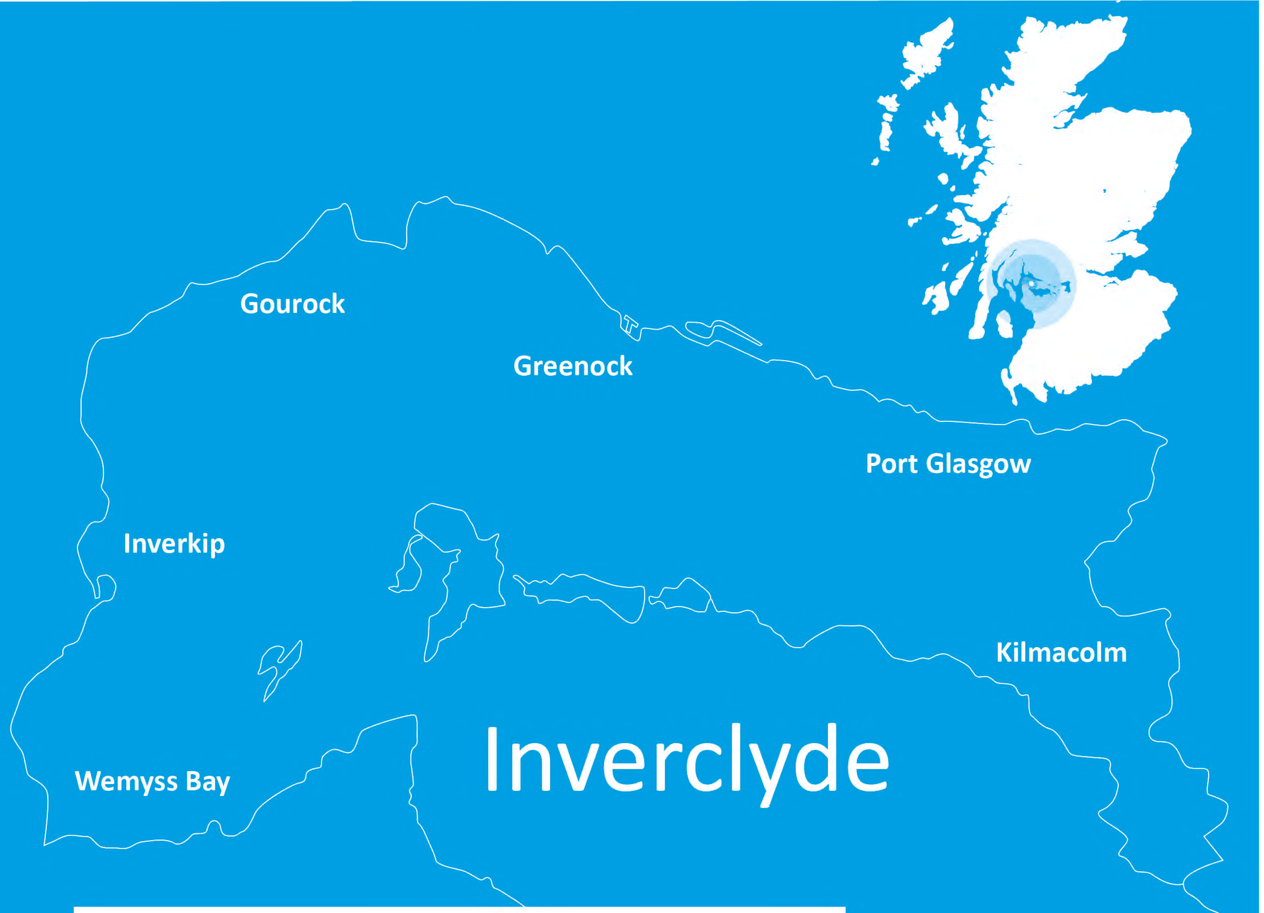
2 Method

The overarching methodology adopted by the team reflected our interest in collecting the lived experience of local people and how best to capture those stories. Using the co-creation model helped us develop a more equal relationship between the artists/researcher and participants, and we often found that each conversation would inform our process and transform it. RIG Arts has a wealth of contacts in the community. The ability to link to local groups and organisations whom we have worked with in the past, and having those connections gave us a lot of scope to access a wide range of local people.

Session notes were written up by the team, reflecting on the dialogue, the themes that arose for the individuals in the group, and these insights are used throughout the report, to illustrate the process. These sessions gave us an opportunity to have very in depth and at times quite moving conversations as people shared their stories and had the opportunity to be heard.

Another strand of our research was the surveys, with the long survey of 22 questions developed over the summer, which asked for quite a lot of in depth information. As the length was proving to be a bit of a barrier for some, we introduced a shorter questionnaire to use at pop up events. This was designed to be more accessible and quicker to complete, and we found this helpful at sessions in public spaces where we were relying on people stopping by for long enough to engage them in a conversation.

Art making was not always the most obvious way to start a conversation for the adult groups, however, we found it useful at events to have art materials available and that would often engage children while we could speak to their parents or grandparents. For the sessions in Craigmarloch and in Ardgowan we utilised the Colours of Covid workshops to help the young people represent their experiences of the pandemic.



Inverclyde	Area Codes	Participants	%
Wemyss Bay	PA16	3	2
Inverkip & Greenock South West	PA16	54	38
Gourock	PA19	29	21
Greenock central	PA15	29	21
Port Glasgow	PA14	18	13
Kilmacolm	PA13	7	5

* Short & Long survey - 140 participants disclosed their postcode

Conversations 3

The concept of simply sharing stories became our inspiration as artists and researchers, trying to piece together a wide range of perspectives on the same subject. For some this was a traumatic one, with loss, isolation and anxiety common themes and throughout the project the artists offered a safe space for people to share and be heard, perhaps articulating a feeling they have been carrying for a long time. Developing a kind of a therapeutic ear, one that listens but does not judge, we heard many tales along the way and would use these observations to develop a deeper understanding of the impact of the pandemic and the lockdown.

All data was being collated and uploaded to SurveyMonkey and our shared drive for analysis

WORKSHOPS DELIVERED

Total : 42 Sessions, Over 451 Participants
Existing Local Group - 24 Participants total
Adapted to work with Your Voice's Long Covid Support Group.

LOCAL ORGANISATIONS - 90 Participants total	
Belville Community Garden	12
The Inverclyde Shed	8
Geek Retreat Greenock	5
HSCP RT Group @ CVS Inverclyde	2
HSCP RT Group @ CVS Inverclyde	1
Man On Heat & Eat	10
Cardwell Garden Centre	11
Long Covid RIG	12
Broomhill Hub	17
Cross Sector - Alliance Board	12
Cross Sector Zoom for Access/Health Workers	0
OPEN PUBLIC - 86 Participants total	
Tesco Port Glasgow	6
Parklea Branching Out	60
Greenock Oak Mall	15
Geek Retreat Event Night	5

ART BUS - 57 Participants total	
Inverkip Marina	12
Finlaystone Country Park	15
Gourock Farmers Market	30+
Cathcart Square	0

COMMUNITY CENTRES - 56 Participants total	
Coppermine / Gourock - Scouts Hall & Warm Space	30
Branchton Comm Centre - Parents & Toddler Group	15
Inverkip Hub Football	0
Cargill Centre Kilmacolm	4
Clune Park Resource Centre Port Glasgow	7

SCHOOLS 67 Participants total	
Ardgowan Primary	18
St Columba's	20
Craigmarloch	29

3

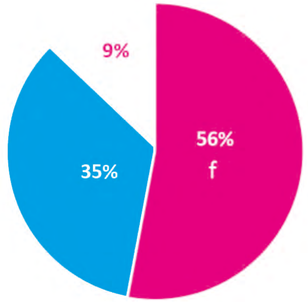
YOUTH GROUPS - 55 Participants total	
Open Studios	10
Rock School	20
Arts & Mind under 13s	15
Arts & Mind under 18s	10

ZOOM - Participants total	
Inverclyde Royal Hospital (IRH) Hybrid/Team	3
Inverclyde Royal Hospital (IRH) Hybrid/Team	1

Cross Sector - 0 Participants (Explained under Cross Sector Sessions)
We offered 2 hybrid zoom sessions to increase access to participation in the project. Though engagement was low on these, we still feel it was worthwhile to offer and would do so again in the future

After these sessions the artists and team determined that we would make better use of our time to do more sessions in existing groups. As despite our efforts, the turn out for the Art Bus sessions was poorer than we predicted.

3



Short & Long Survey -
144 participants disclosed their gender

Gender	No. Participants	%
Female	80	56
Male	50	35
Neutral	14	9

Short & Long Survey - 188 responses 140 participants disclosed their age

Age Range	No. Participants	%
9-18	41	29
19-20	10	7
21-20	5	4
31-40	5	4
41-50	23	16
51-60	18	13
61-70	17	12
71-80	14	10
80+	7	5

4 LONG Survey Analysis

The original survey was developed in the initial phase of the project and was developed to capture a picture of what people's experience of the pandemic had been like. We were aware that there would be many variations of lives lived, from key workers to those working from home. Families dealing with childcare and home schooling feeling overwhelmed at times while others felt isolated and forgotten. The survey was accessible via a QR code available on the flier which we promoted across Inverclyde.

The survey was broken into the following subheadings:

- Impact of Pandemic on Individual
- Impact on Work/Life Balance
- Impact on Communities
- Loss and bereavement
- Memorial Questions

The method of analysis makes use of a word art generator where the more frequently used words or phrases are given a larger font size, which gives the emerging themes prominence by making them more visible.

5 SHORT Survey Analysis

Q1. How did you feel during lockdown?

Answered 97 Skipped 2

Q2. What activities helped you through the pandemic?

Answered 97 Skipped 2

5

Q3 Did you find any positive aspects of Covid?

Answered 96 Skipped 3

More time less rushed

Community spirit

People reaching out

Working from home

New hobbies

Other

5

Q4 What kind of memorial should Remembering Together be?

Answered 97 Skipped 3

Festival

Gardens

Sculptural piece

Film & performance

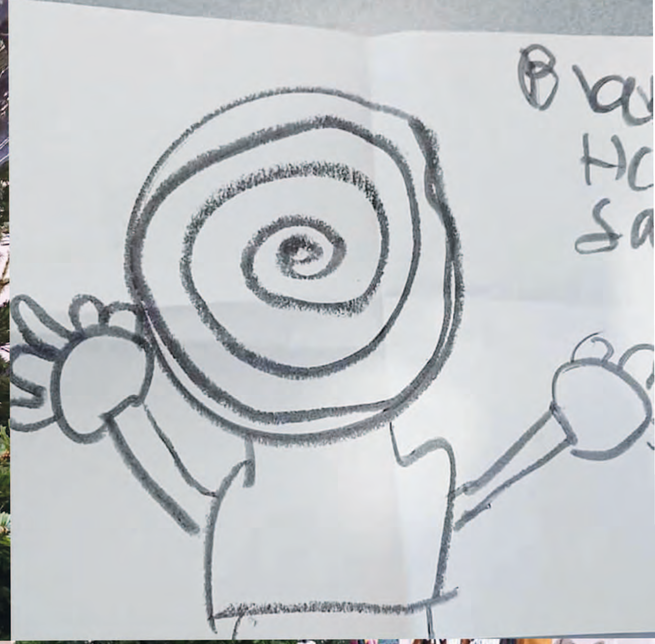
Sound installation

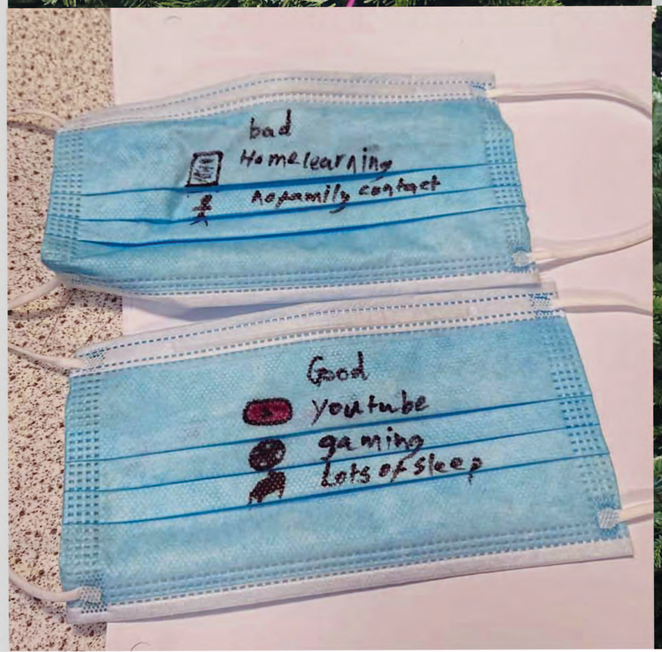
Memorial plaques

Other

benches & trails

Music, poetry & song





9 Conclusions

Our work with the Long Covid Group, showed us that a "memorial" is perhaps not quite the right word, as it implies a finality as if COVID is no longer an issue. The desire to move on, is a natural human reaction, and demonstrates our ability to adapt to the world around us. However, for some, there is no moving forward and it is important to acknowledge this, alongside the many individuals who died from virus, or whose health has been compromised.

Long Covid sufferers want practical steps to be taken for their desire to understand more about the condition, and the artwork could play a role in this by raising awareness of the challenges they face.

Exhibiting the work will also help promote the next phase of the Remembering Together project for Inverclyde which will build on the idea of a collection of different community spaces/gardens throughout Inverclyde which will be linked by the work of the commissioned artist.

THEMES

It was evident from the research that Inverclyde did not have a one single concept of what the Inverclyde Co-created Community Covid Memorial would be. Everyone's experience of covid was unique but common themes did emerge.

The idea of fragments and individual elements existing separately but being connected to a larger concept resonated with many. The notion of something being broken then reconfigured in the process to be able to continue and to move forward was a powerful concept and these ideas lend themself to Inverclyde opting for different site specific memorials in different areas. This opposed to having only one big event or memorial is reminiscent of the sense of keeping local as part of the lock down experience. This should also make the co-created community covid memorials more accessible for those that cannot travel far from home.

Greenspaces and Events

One of the most prominent themes was that a covid memorial should be a place to visit. The idea of gardens as places of growth and renewal as well as offering greenspace to reflect on the past has been a recurring theme throughout the consultation.

The idea of growing plants and using cuttings as a way to connect with others was referenced multiple times especially when discussing the Tree of Hope which resonated with the themes of community spirit, resilience and renewal. Favourite flowers and plants could be a way to remember loved ones, and shared with others through cuttings and seed banks.

A memorial could take the form of a multifunctional land art piece. It could be a QR code linked to an online covid memorial database to share memories or for loved ones to connect.

While these spaces for reflection are private and personal, the idea of bringing these spaces alive once a year for a festival or event, as proposed by "No One Grieves Alone" was popular.

An event can offer a space to share and find mutual support building on the positive aspects of the pandemic in terms of its community spirit and sense of connection. Events could take many forms and be shared digitally and through streaming, connecting different spaces simultaneously.

9 Conclusions

Interactive Artworks

One idea discussed at the final steering group meeting was to build on art works created by the Long Covid group, and for each community greenspace space to incorporate an interactive artwork for each of the towns of Inverclyde. An example could be weaving craft, so visitors could also share stories and weave in flowers or add materials to the artworks that have significance to them.

A Trail

Many participants and respondents to the survey liked the idea of a trail placing a memorial along the Esplanade and river, partly due to the fact it was an important place for many to go for their daily walk.

Recommendations

It is important that the multiple covid co-created community memorials utilise existing community gardens, maintained greenspaces or areas rather than creating new spaces. Accessibility needs to be a key priority and we would recommend that the second stage process engages participatory artists with co-creation experience to involve local communities.