

# Shieldfield Art Works



## 2024 Annual Report

**Thank you** so much for your support of our work here at SAW. We have some wonderful feedback on our 2023-24 programme to share with you, but before we fill you in on all the activities undertaken over the past year, we'd first like to draw your attention to our recently refreshed articulation of **SAW's vision for the future, and the values we hold** which inform how we carry out our work.

**vision &  
values**  
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Secondly, we are excited to announce the **activity we are planning for the next year to 18 months** which builds towards this vision and for which your continued support is vital.

**future  
plans**  
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Thirdly, we hope you will also be encouraged to read **a summary of our activities and the impact they have had during 2023-24**. There's some brilliant quotes from participants which illustrate why SAW's work is not only fun but crucial for many people's wellbeing.

**2023-24  
programme  
review**  
pages 4-7

Finally you will find **SAW's financial summary** so you can see how we spend the money we have been entrusted with and that we are so grateful for. Many thanks for helping SAW's work continue.

**financial  
summary**  
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# Shieldfield Art Works



## OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Imagine a future where our society has embedded cultures of care, curiosity, and creativity, leading to:

- Increased access to the arts, and through arts participation, an increase in connection, personal confidence, and positive mental wellbeing.
- The flourishing of our local area of Shieldfield, where injustice is challenged and voices previously unheard are raised up.
- New conversations & spaces created where ideas of purpose, meaning, faith and theology are accessible and can be explored by all.
- A culture of deep reflection and true rest.
- Encounters with awe, wonder, beauty and joy are possible every day.
- A world that seeks justice and has a rooted engagement with the issues hindering it.
- Mutual sharing of knowledge to inspire and provide practical support.
- A net-zero green building for SAW which is fully accessible.
- Long-term, sustainable funding for SAW.

This is the vision we strive to create through our work.

## OUR VALUES

Underpinning our vision and mission are our values. These are the roots and cultures that fuel our cause. They are the doing-words that we live by.

- We are caring, curious and creative
- We champion the power of art & creativity
- We enable creative encounters with awe, wonder, beauty and joy
- We share hospitality, connect genuinely, listen and respond to our communities. As a Christian organisation, we believe each and every person has inherent worth, reflecting the image of our creator. So we seek out stories and voices which aren't often heard.
- We work for the good of our city and the world
- We are bold, ambitious and audacious
- We don't shy away from challenging topics or complex conversations. Our work holds in tension both the light and the dark, joy and suffering, buoyant and heavy.
- We reflect deeply about our beliefs and how they bring meaning and direction to life
- We aim to work at a healthy rhythm. As a Christian organisation we believe humans are designed to rest and reflect, as well as work.

# Shieldfield Art Works: Our future plans

This academic year we need to raise 150K to continue to run all of our programmes. As well as our ongoing regular groups (explored further in our programme review), these are the other projects that your support will go towards:

**November - December 2024 // Craft Action Exhibition** - the first exhibition of work by our Craft Action Collective. See our programme review for further details. Material costs funded by the Newcastle Cultural Investment Fund (NCIF) at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland.

**January - April 2025 // Songs of Solidarity and Strength (PART ONE\*)** - Songwriting and recording sessions reflecting on and inspired by life in Shieldfield. Songwriters Gareth Davies-Jones and Bronwen Davies-Jones will help participants forge observations and responses into lyrics, songs and creative soundscapes. SAW has been awarded an NCIF grant to fund artists' fees and recording studio hire, however SAW staff and overheads are not covered by this grant.

**\*We are also seeking funds to cover PART TWO of this project**, funding the promotion, dissemination and further performances of the songs later in 2025; As part of this, another artist will join the sessions to create animated videos to accompany the audio for online/wider promotion.

**February - March 2025 // Take Over 2025** - SAW's annual programme showcasing emerging artists, see programme review for further details.

**April 2025 // Jagged Edges** - An exhibition produced externally, exhibited at SAW with SAW staff support. A group of artists with lived experience of abuse in a church context approach the Passion narratives from their own perspectives and through different artistic mediums, co-create their own Stations of the Cross. Project costs and a contribution towards SAW's costs will be covered by funding from the Diocese of Newcastle.

**May - June 2025 // Gallery refurbishment** - An urgent gallery refurbishment is needed to stop ingressing damp, which will likely require significant funding. We are in the process of asking tradespeople to assess the damage and recommend solutions.

**July - August 2025 // Painting for Fun Annual Exhibition** - held annually at SAW, see our programme review for further details.

**Spring 2025 - Autumn 2026 // Fallow Phase** - We are considering how we shape our entire programme (including regular groups) around the idea of rest and rhythm. An ambitious, multi-year and multi-partner programme to get people thinking and talking about the importance of rest and reflection, create an ongoing legacy and resource (using materials in our archive developed in earlier projects) and position SAW as a place of rest, reflection and retreat.

**Will you help us reach our target of 150K to make our plans a reality?**

Here are some ways you can help:

- If you are an individual, **become a regular giver** by visiting [saw-newcastle.org/give-to-saw](https://saw-newcastle.org/give-to-saw). We are currently offering anyone who gives £20+ per month complimentary art prints.
- If you are a trust/grant provider **we'd love to have a chat with you** about our work and how you could support us. Cheques in the post are always appreciated and conversations to build relationships are really good too.
- Be an ambassador for us. **Share our work** with a friend and ask them to become a regular giver, or share our work with a benefactor/grant body who could support our work.

**GIVE TO SAW**   
[saw-newcastle.org/give-to-saw](https://saw-newcastle.org/give-to-saw)

## PAINTING FOR FUN



Our Painting for Fun groups continue to bring joy to Tuesdays and this year, due to increased demand, we have increased from two sessions per week to three! With a focus on painting as a way to relax, the group is run by retired GP Kim Fewell and provides a weekly safe haven to chat, be creative and be with other people in a no-pressure environment. 50-60 participants attend each week across the three sessions, meeting for 50 weeks of the year, with all materials provided free of charge. Most sessions are full, and we have a committed group of regulars - some of whom have been coming for years.

We have been delighted to see Painting for Fun members attending other activities at SAW in the past year, and to encourage engagement with our exhibition programme we have hosted specific times when members of Painting For Fun come to see and chat about the exhibition. This facilitates more in-depth conversation in a relaxed environment, in addition to people popping in to see the exhibitions individually. To further encourage Painting for Fun members' in their artistic practices, we have programmed a series of three 'Creative Advice Lunches' for November 2024, where established artists will visit SAW to share about their practices and SAW team will share how to write a proposal for the *Take Over* exhibition opportunity at SAW.

This year at Painting for Fun:

- 110 individuals have taken part in the sessions
- 102 paintings were installed in the annual exhibition
- Over 400 paintings were completed in the sessions
- 100% of participants surveyed said that being part of Painting for Fun has had a positive impact on their mental wellbeing.
- The average wellbeing score of participants increased from 48 to 55 on The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS has a mean score of 51 in general population samples in the UK.)

Participant feedback:

"It has given me a community, a sense of belonging and a positive effect on my self-esteem".

"I have M.E. I lost my job and hobbies due to M.E/CFS. I suffer anxiety and depression due to the above. When I eventually managed to come, it has changed my life. I honestly do not know where I would be now without it".

"It has brought me into contact with people I wouldn't have met in my ordinary life, which is very enriching and enjoyable"

"I suffer from anxiety and depression and having somewhere calming to come to and be creative has a positive uplifting effect"

"I was suffering from a depression and since attending the art class I have been coping without taking medication. I also believe being able to talk with the other people who attend about normal everyday things help. I always leave feeling relaxed"

## SHIELDFIELD GROWS



Shieldfield Grows is our collaborative community growing programme, delivered in partnership with Dwellbeing Shieldfield.

This year we have had:

- 30 weekly growing sessions
- 7 local families adopting a growing plot within the SAW Garden
- 6 workshops with professionals
- 5 trips to local community gardens
- 3 community festivals (Summer Solstice, Winter Solstice and Harvest Festival)
- 3 'Little Growers' childrens' sessions
- 8 'Lettuce Eat' bring & share lunches
- A thriving Shieldfield Growers WhatsApp group

Participant feedback:

"I met lots of lovely people and gained more knowledge about gardening and plants."

"Seeing the incredible display of wild flowers coming up in late Spring and early Summer that we had all taken part in planting was so uplifting and rewarding. And then picking herbs and vegetables to be eaten in a delicious shared meal is so satisfying and seeing the children getting involved from an early age is heartwarming."

"I love the Shieldfield Grows group helping to create the garden, planting apple trees and learning so much about growing and eating your own produce is such a joy!"

## CRAFT ACTION COLLECTIVE

A twice-monthly group for anyone wanting to creatively challenge and respond to injustice, in gentle, careful ways. The group talk and make together, using the medium of craft and print to stand alongside others and respond to different issues. The group enables connection, increased confidence in expressing opinions and encouragement to be actively engaged and making positive change in our communities.

This year, we've thought about: hope and how to find it; river and ocean pollution (to tie in with *Oceans of Kindness*); climate change and eco-friendly materials. Crafts have included: drypoint printing, mobile making, making stamps with cork, letterpress printing and paper marbling. There is a committed group of regular attendees whose confidence continues to grow.

In November 2024 we will hold the first exhibition of work made by those who attend the sessions. As well as providing affirmation and satisfaction for the group's members, this will raise awareness of the issues their work focuses on, and challenge visitors to the exhibition to consider how they might respond to injustices in society.



Participant feedback:

"It gives me time after work to learn new crafts and meet new people and gives me a sense of worth. My mental health is better as it gives me a balance of work and pleasure and I look forward to classes"

"Craft Action Collective has helped my self confidence. I have met some lovely people which has helped with loneliness. Doing whichever craft activity we are doing makes me feel more positive and happier."

## SAW REFLECTS

SAW Reflects are events at SAW where we gather to reflect, either on our exhibition programme or the wider world. Over food and discussion we dive into how an art work or occasion relates to ourselves, our world and our beliefs. It's a relaxed space open to all, with the hope of providing a bit of creative nourishment, space to think and 'be'.

In our 2023-24 programme:

- 109 individuals took part across 8 events, considering 5 different art exhibitions at SAW and 3 wider themes (New Year, wonder, thankfulness).
- We formed a 'SAW Reflectors' focus group to provide insight and feedback about SAW Reflects
- 3 discussion evenings held alongside the *Take Over* series of exhibitions saw a particularly high turnout (30-45 visitors each time),
- At Eastertime, 16 individuals who attend regular groups at SAW came together for a 'thankfulness meal' to hear and share what takes place at other SAW groups. This attracted a lot of positive feedback and is something we would like to build on and hold annually to enable further cross-pollination and communication across the SAW programme.



Participant feedback:

"Always feel good after a SAW event. It is probably a mix of doing something different, reflecting on creativity and the whole positive energy that pervades SAW without being overbearing".

"I felt really connected and inspired by the discussions happening around me, and SAW provide a great space for being with open-hearted people".

## EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

Throughout the year we present a thought-provoking programme of art exhibitions alongside corresponding engagement events, workshops and publications in order to boost SAW's impact beyond what is possible through the display of artwork alone.

Here's a summary of our 2023-24 gallery programme:

### SeeSAW // September 2023

A creative experiment which invited you to get crafting, making & drawing. Hands-on activities for everyone, such as connection mapping, obstacle course making and drawing, designed to help our team see how people perceive SAW, what they see here now and what they'd like to see in future.

Feedback gathered during SeeSAW included:

"There may be no steeple, or rows of pews to sit on. No stained glass windows. However the love that wraps around this building just continues to grow. The garden is so well cared for, a delight for all to see. A quiet place for reflection and yes even for me. I love SAW."

"SAW is an arts organisation that is interested in how art and faith/theology can interact with one another. I attend SAW Reflects events where people have deep conversations about all sorts of things and it sparks ideas in me and connects me to others."

### Asking for It // October 2023

A photography exhibition to highlight and change opinions towards historical and current tendencies toward victim blaming, especially in cases of sexual and gender based violence.

Visitor feedback:

"The exhibition provided real food for thought...it clearly showed the startling disparity between the 'real' and 'ideal' world, and societal perceptions around consent."

"I looked at the issues from a range of angles - me as a young woman, an older woman, an ex police officer, a mother... powerful stuff! It definitely needs to be viewed by a much wider audience, to get that conversation started around when people are perceived to be 'asking for it'".

## EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS CONTINUED

### 100 People film screenings // November 2023

The premiere (at Star & Shadow Cinema) and subsequent screenings (at SAW) of '100 People: A Portrait of Co-Existence' - a feature film which was the primary output of a project commissioned by SAW and led by artist Andrew Wilson. 100 People used an experimental approach to film-making which aimed to support people who either live, work or play in Shieldfield to collaboratively identify and articulate their stories.

#### Visitor feedback:

"Made me consider what it means to be community and think about the differing needs of different groups (and how easy it is to only think of ourselves)."

"I was deeply moved by the sense of community and history which the film creates. It feels deeply specific to Shieldfield but also speaks in a much more universal way about our world."

"The film was very thought-provoking and made me think about my own connection to the community, and my role in shaping it. I really enjoyed different people's stories and perspectives, it made me laugh."

The impact of this film and awareness of it continues to grow - in November 2024 a screening will be held at Tyneside Cinema for which tickets sold out very quickly.

### Take Over 2024 - three exhibitions selected from an open call // January to March 2023

Take Over is our annual exhibition opportunity for emerging artists, supporting both university-educated artists and those without any formal arts education. In an area where there are occasional tensions between long-term residents and students (due to the high proportion of newly built and privately-owned student accommodation blocks), Take Over gives residents a chance to see student and graduate artworks, and meet the artists themselves at our SAW Reflects events. Students also get to discuss their work and hear feedback from residents, peers and more established artists during SAW Reflects.

#### Visitor comments:

"SAW Reflects [during Take Over 2024] offers an opportunity for emerging artists to connect with the local community in Shieldfield... Comparatively to art school, SAW provides an open, more holistic approach towards facilitating feedback... creating a more balanced relationship between artist and viewer."



### Oceans of Kindness // May to June 2024

Delivered in partnership with the National Literacy Trust. An exploration of the power of words, creativity and kindness sparked by children's imagination. In a world overwhelmed by bad news, what would children like to declare to the world? What do children want and seek for the world? What change can they make in the world?

55 children from Christchurch Primary, Hotspur Primary and Shieldfield Youth Programme wrote their own collection of 'poems of kindness' and then delicately adorned these onto majestic large-scale willow fish lanterns. The final gathered shoal of fish featured in a community parade and exhibition at SAW, before migrating to Ouseburn Festival to become part of a kindness trail.

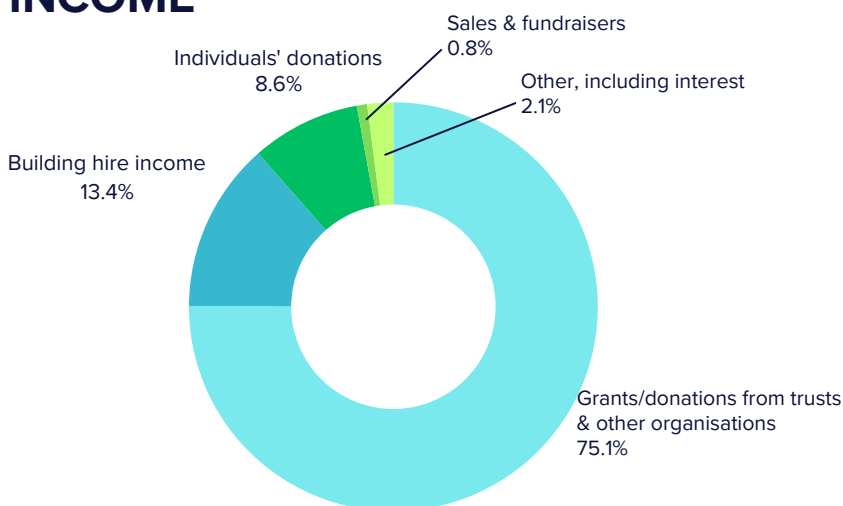
#### Participant feedback:

88% of children thought that the workshops were great or good. They said:

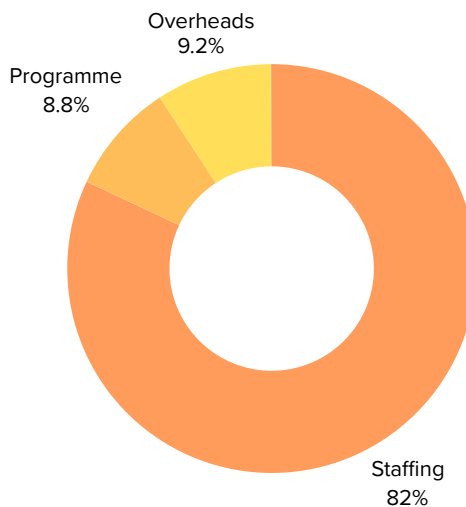
"It was peaceful but also fun to do", "it was good because I love being in different groups doing activities and it was really fun", "I liked saying the poems and sticking", "it was creative and fun".

# Shieldfield Art Works: 2023-24 Financial Summary

## INCOME



## EXPENDITURE



Source:	Amount:
Grants/donations from trusts & other organisations	£80,386
Building hire income	£14,398
Individuals' donations: regular gifts, one-off donations and donations box	£9,225
Sales and fundraisers	£876
Other, including interest & refunds	£2,203

Expense:	Amount:
Staffing	£88,089
Programme (regular groups, exhibitions, projects)	£9,455
Overheads (utilities, fundraising communications, office supplies, hospitality, insurance, training, building repairs)	£9,885

We have been successful in an application to the Newcastle District and Newcastle Central and East Circuit (of the Methodist Church), who will fund the equivalent of one full time post at SAW for the next 5 years.

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