



2023

St Rollox Community
Outreach Project

A background photograph showing a group of diverse people, including women and children, smiling and looking towards the camera. They are in a classroom or meeting room, with a whiteboard visible in the background. The whiteboard has the words "Renewable Energy" written on it. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter.

ANNUAL REPORT

ST ROLLOX
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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PROJECT MANAGER'S REPORT

Welcome to St Rollox Community Outreach Project.
Serving New Scots and the community of
Sighthill, North Glasgow.

It only takes a quick glance at our world, our news app or listening to stories from those around us to know a constant of the last year has been change. That is no less true at St Rollox Community Outreach Project.

This has been another year marked with transition as we finally settle into our new building, a new project manager appointed and with the needs of those we support constantly shifting with ever changing policies and laws. However, St Rollox has over the years proved itself to be resilient and ultimately faithful in its aim to meet the needs of those who come through our doors.

We are continually reminded of both the privilege and the challenge of supporting asylum seekers, refugees and the community of Sighthill.

Their lives are often marked with trauma, mental health, housing issues, barriers to learning or returning to work and impossible financial pressures but we continue to work towards St Rollox being a place of refuge, support and family.

One individual shared **'this is the one place I can breathe'**. What a testimony.

We are so thankful to be in this position and as always incredibly grateful to all those that make this possible; our funders, those

who donate, our phenomenal team of 20+ volunteers who work tirelessly each week, church support and partners.

This has allowed us to continue with our ESOL classes, sewing class, walking group, advice, emergency food support and drop in services.

We are also excited to have relaunched the fruit barra and established a new job club. We continue to explore the unfolding vision of growing food in our allotments to develop a 'farm to table' initiative.

There are many more programmes and ideas in the pipeline which we are excited to share as they come to life. Above all, we are thankful to continue to have a space to sit alongside people, hear their stories, journey with them through challenges, advocate for better futures and support them to create safe relationships and integrate into communities.

We continue to look to all those who support us as we grow and develop to meet the overwhelming needs of the individuals and families who are part of our community. What a joy and a challenge.



RACHEL CLARK
Project Manager

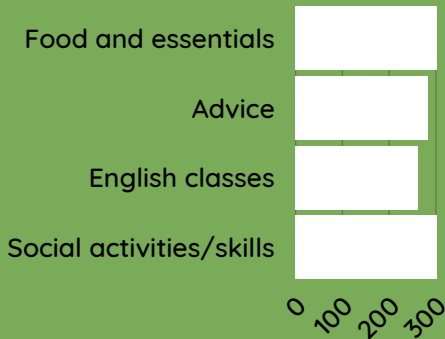


HIGHLIGHTS

Our diverse community has seen individuals and families from Iraq, Syria, Eritrea, Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Algeria, Brazil, China, Kuwait, Kurdistan, Portugal, Ivory Coast, Lebanon and Pakistan this past year.



ANNUAL VISITS PER PROGRAMME



90% VISITORS ARE WOMEN



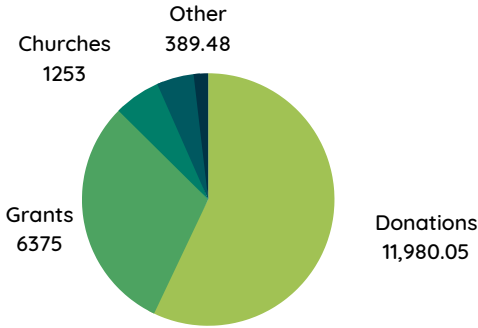
Our Internationals have travelled across the world and we have the privilege of welcoming them through our doors.

Each week we see an average of 70 individuals and families.

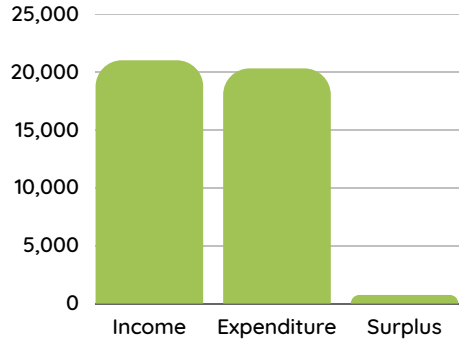
In 2022- 23, 90% were woman with the highest percentage from Iraq and Syria.

FINANCES

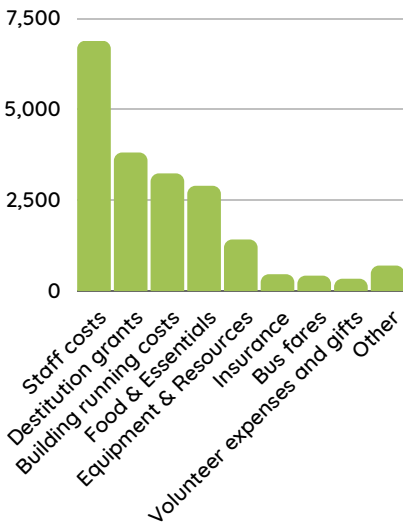
INCOME



SURPLUS



EXPENDITURE



Our finances at a glance show our main income from grants; donations from individuals and churches.

Our key expenses are staff costs, running costs, food and essentials and equipment for our programmes.

This money is vital to effectively support those in our community and the need is ever-growing.

EMERGENCY PROVISION

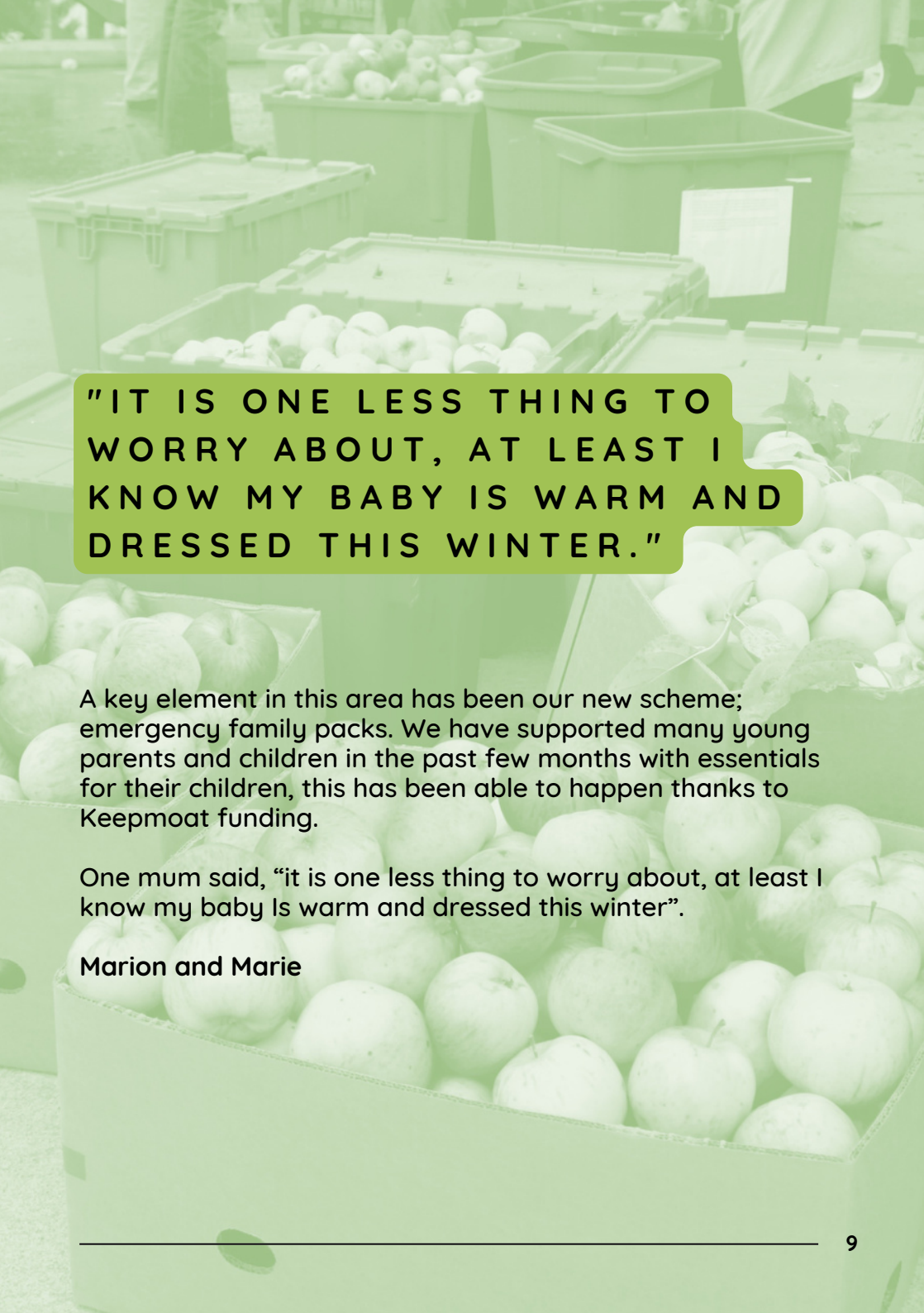
St Rollox has continued to provide food and essentials to those most in need due to destitution, benefit failings or impossible financial pressures.

"THIS PLACE IS MY LIFELINE."

Some individuals walk miles each Tuesday to get the resources they need in a place where they feel **"comfortable and welcome"**. One of our Internationals said, "this place is my lifeline". This service is made possible by donations from various churches and the support from North Glasgow Food Initiative and East Dumbartonshire food bank.

We have also relaunched the fruit barra with North Glasgow Food Initiative to enable our community to access fresh fruit and veg at affordable prices each week.

As well as food and essentials, we have been able to support 15 of our most vulnerable over the course of 4 months with financial support, thanks to the household hardship fund. For some this has been vital in supporting their family in basic needs and has given them the dignity of having extra money to use as they choose.



"IT IS ONE LESS THING TO WORRY ABOUT, AT LEAST I KNOW MY BABY IS WARM AND DRESSED THIS WINTER."

A key element in this area has been our new scheme; emergency family packs. We have supported many young parents and children in the past few months with essentials for their children, this has been able to happen thanks to Keepmoat funding.

One mum said, "it is one less thing to worry about, at least I know my baby is warm and dressed this winter".

Marion and Marie

STORIES WRITTEN BY...

Raz

My name is Raz. I came from North Iraq (Kurdistan). My first language is Kurdish. I came to Glasgow in 2004.

In 2005, I found St. Rollox Church very close to my flat. I started with an English class. It was very good and helpful for me and my kids. We made new friends and it is also good for our mental health and I was volunteer in St. R.

"WE MADE NEW FRIENDS AND IT IS ALSO GOOD FOR OUR MENTAL HEALTH."

I learned English in St. R better than at college because when I came I love speaking with others and my kids play with others. St. R. makes us happy and confident build up our knowledge. When we came to Glasgow we found friends at St. R. And they became our first home. Still, I am coming to St. R. For my mental health and meeting my friends.

I would love to say thank you to all the staff and people we meet in the St. R. God bless everyone.

Sazgar

Hello. My name is Sazgar. I'm from Iran. I live in Glasgow. I came here in 2021 for first time my friend told me St Rollox has an ESOL class. When I came here, I was very happy. The teacher is very friendly with a happy smile. I came in (St Rollox) for the ESOL class and sewing class.

"WHEN I CAME HERE, I WAS VERY HAPPY."

I am learning English step by step and learning to sew. Thanks for everyone. The volunteers help me register for college. I need to go to make me speaking and writing and get a certificate for the future.



LEARNING

ESOL Class

Our ESOL classes continue to run on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for all levels; thanks to a dedicated team of teachers and facilitators. We have currently 60 registered learners. ESOL is a huge tool for Internationals coming through the door to meet, socialise, learn new skills and become more empowered to cross the barriers they face daily. This can be as simple as learning to write your own name and identify numbers, to enabling individuals to access safe spaces for learning before being supported to further education.

One highlight of the year has been a young, qualified teacher from Iraq who had been trying to get a college place since 2018. Although she obtained an interview in 2022, she did not get the expected place. Due to good contacts and taking time, we obtained a place for the learner in an SQA class. She has just received her first certificates and hopes for more by summer. St Rollox also runs a high-level conversation-led class; this has led to the participants involved expressing an interest in supporting the wider project. A women's wellbeing group is being shaped and visioned by the group. We are thankful to meet together in person, but recognise all the work that was done during COVID including a zoom class that concluded in Summer 22 allowing Internationals from all over Glasgow to attend.

Anne, Susan and David

"I LOVE ENGLISH, I ENJOY SPEAKING WITH PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER. THERE IS ALWAYS GOOD DISCUSSIONS ON NEW TOPICS THAT ARE HELPFUL. WHEN I HAVE A HARD TOPIC I DON'T UNDERSTAND AT COLLEGE, THEY HELP ME HERE."



ADVICE & ADVOCACY

We see an average of 7 clients every Tuesday morning. Most present with multiple issues with which they are seeking support. Whilst many of our service users are repeat clients, we continue to see new clients from all parts of Glasgow who have had word-of-mouth recommendations from a friend.

Our most common areas of advice are social security benefits and housing. The latter is probably the most challenging at the current time and we have significant numbers of families in extremely overcrowded accommodation or accommodation which is unsuitable for family member(s) with a disability, as well as homes in a state of disrepair.

We also assist with basic employment, consumer or utility problems. We cannot assist with debt or immigration matters.

It's always a great privilege and joy to be able to improve our clients' situations a little by accessing the income to which they are entitled.

This has been particularly important in recent months when everyone has felt the strain of the cost of living crisis and with so many people facing a negative budget that simply cannot stretch to cover basic essentials such as food, heat and clothing.

Emma and Viviane

"I COME FOR FOODBANK, FOR CLASS, FOR APPOINTMENTS, FOR ADVICE, FOR WALKING. I OWE ALL TO THE PEOPLE WHO WORK HERE, WHEN YOU NEED ANYTHING, YOU FIND IT HERE."

*These former
employees are
now part of our
community.
They are
our future.*

WELLBEING & SKILLS

Walking group

St. Rollox Community Outreach Project is an accredited member of the Scottish Health Walk Network and two of our volunteers, Peter and Sekou have been trained as walk leaders. One of our International women will be going through training soon.

The walks initially attracted up to 10 participants on a Tuesday afternoon. This has ebbed and flowed due to the weather. During February the weather has been better and we have around 5 who walk each week. We are looking forward to seeing this grow as we move into Spring.

Peter

"IT'S ALL ABOUT HEALTH. WE WALK AND TALK. THERE IS JOKING AND LAUGHING AND I CAN MEET PEOPLE FROM MANY DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. IT IS VERY NICE. IT IS ABOUT FRIENDSHIP."

Sewing group

The number of students who attended the classes from April 2022 - February 2023 totalled 292. At the moment we have 20 students on the register and on average 10-12 students attend every Wednesday. We also enjoyed a summer kids class. The group who attend on a regular basis enjoy having access to the facilities the class has to offer and also enjoy the socialisation with other students.

Being able to make and complete a piece of work makes them very happy and they often gain inspiration for their work from other students. Over the past year, a variety of items have been made using our donated fabrics e.g. Slippers, bags, aprons, oven gloves, jumpers, applique, finishing off donated quilts, cord mats, patchwork cushion covers, handbags and jewellery.

This year the focus has been on revisiting key skills; particularly the use of sewing machines.

Our team also get a lot from the group as Karen here states: "What I get from the sewing class as a volunteer is a small increase in self-worth - that I can be a better person by helping others with a skill that I did not think I had the ability to share. Never thought of myself as a person who can communicate/explain things. And in exchange I have the company of very interesting women whose company is a delight."

Linda

FUTURE PLANS

As we journey into 2023 we have various plans along the road. We hope to grow our team and resources to achieve the following goals:



THANKS

Our work is only possible thanks to all those who show an interest, invest their time, their skills, their finances and support.

We want to thank each **volunteer** whose involvement shapes and allows the project to run.

We want to thank **everyone that comes through the door** and makes the community of St Rollox.

We want to thank **all our partner organisations** and supporters; North Glasgow Food Initiative, and ESOL forum.

We want to thank **each church** that has donated money, and items and raised awareness of the project.

Thanks to **our funders**; Keepmoat, Robertson Trust, Allen Lane Foundation, Corra Foundation.





**St Rollox Community
Outreach Project**

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