



# **Creative Dundee**

## **Strategic Plan Summary**

### **2025–2028**

Creative Dundee centres creative practitioners and communities as powerful catalysts for collective good. Built by, with and for the local creative community, equity and access are at the core of all that we do.

Our purpose:

- We facilitate collaboration, nurture collective leadership and support people to imagine and act together to benefit our communities and place.
- We equip creative practitioners with opportunities, connections, space and tools to strengthen creative communities in Dundee, with the ambition of enabling a more confident and optimistic tomorrow.
- We hold spaces to convene perspectives, striving to improve current conditions and future opportunities for creative practitioners and city residents.

Creative Dundee is a resourceful community, grounded in a deep understanding of the city and the strengths, needs and challenges facing creative freelancers, collectives, businesses, workers and students. We exist for the cultural life of the city rather than our own primary agenda.

Four key pillars – Amplify, Connect, Collaborate, Cultivate – guide and inform all that we do, alongside three evolving, intersectional themes: Justice, Wellbeing and Sustainability.

We are expert collaborators, generative investors and vocal advocates for creativity and culture. Collective leadership is key in creating inspiring spaces to visualise tomorrow, harnessing experimentation, and encouraging and cultivating community leadership to ensure equitable and inclusive futures for all.

Creative Dundee is committed to ensuring that creative practitioners and communities are resourced and supported to bring their strengths and skills to complexity.



## **Brief history, structure and scale**

Creative Dundee started life as a blog in 2008. The aim was to amplify innovative people and projects which were not being profiled elsewhere, and to be a focal point for creativity in the city. The organisation was constituted as a company limited by guarantee – a social enterprise – in 2013. We have grown our programme activities and nurtured our community to achieve this aim, becoming a registered charity in 2025.

We generate income through a mixed income model by trading activities, reinvesting profits into creative businesses and the local community. Reaching our 15th year anniversary in 2023, we had commissioned 446 creative practitioners; undertaken 1,260 local, national and international partnerships. In January 2025, we have grown to an organisation with five staff, equivalent to four full time staff, and have invested over £2,000,000 into Dundee's creative communities.

Creative Dundee has an extensive track record of working in collaboration with communities and across sectors and demographics. We work at the intersection of equalities and creativity – prioritising access and engagement to ensure people are at the heart of the conversation, strategy and practical collective action.

## **Building on our current programme and approach**

Our current activities span creative industries networking, sector development opportunities and events; and resourcing, supporting and advocating for creative practitioners.

We are generative across our programmes, creating opportunities within the local creative ecosystem and resourcing a range of creative activities, such as illustration, photography, writing, design, filmmaking, facilitation, insight sharing, speaking and much more.

We also act as a creative archive for the city, preserving 15 years of cultural and creative industries activities and events on our website. This is a valuable resource for communities to reflect on the city's creative history, celebrate achievements made along the way and inspire future activities.

The organisation has demonstrated its capabilities far beyond its original intentions as a creative industries network. We have grown through the pandemic, demonstrating our ability to lead through change and transition, and we've not gone back to 'normal' – we are more focused than ever on equity and liberation.



## Vision, Mission and Values

### Vision

Dundee is an inspiring city where creative communities and residents make their ideas and ambitions happen, with collaboration and opportunity shaping the city's future.

### Mission

Creative Dundee centres creative practitioners and communities as powerful catalysts for collective good. We do this by:

- Enabling people to imagine and act together to benefit our communities and place through facilitating collaboration and nurturing collective leadership.
- Equipping creative practitioners with opportunities, connections, space and tools to strengthen creative communities in Dundee, with the ambition of enabling a more confident and optimistic tomorrow.
- Holding space to convene perspectives, striving to improve current conditions and future opportunities for creative practitioners and city residents.

### Values

Our commitment to inclusivity and fairness is deeply ingrained and ever evolving in our mission and values – this shapes our activities, working practices and leadership to support and engage with communities. We are:

- **Generative:** actively supportive of and responsive to our community, enabling people and our place to flourish.
- **Caring:** working responsibly and openly through programming and communication that is welcoming, inclusive and accessible.
- **Mindful:** continuously and flexibly improving practices, building solid structures and fairer ways of doing things.
- **Advocates:** using our embedded power to constructively influence and challenge, leading positive change for social impact.
- **Forward looking:** strengthening ability and capacity by purposefully learning and reflecting, centring collective strengths, balance and wellbeing.





Fair Growing Green mural – Lydia Smith

## Strategic Aims

Creative Dundee will deliver high quality programme activities from 2025–2028, which are vital for amplifying, connecting, cultivating and collaborating with and for the local creative sector. These include opportunities for creative communities to inspire and be inspired, gain visibility, have their voices heard, and play an active role in shaping the city and its creative economy.

We will actively ensure that marginalised and routinely excluded communities are connected, resourced and amplified. By working alongside community organisations to create safe(r) spaces for creative connection and to gain a wide range of perspectives, we will create the conditions that are responsive to the needs of divergent communities.

Creative Dundee’s programme directly invests into the local creative community, to create multiple benefits for different audiences and generate significant public benefit. By actively working with local and national partners, and co-designing locally, we will enhance and deliver our work from idea generation to delivery and practical scaling of projects.

By connecting individuals and organisations across the city, we harness the collective strengths of our team and broader networks, bringing together resources and skills to create a better place to live, work and visit. We ensure excellence and experimentation are at the heart of what we do, delivering high levels of artistic quality through the individuals and organisations we choose to work and collaborate with, and linking Dundee to the rest of Scotland and beyond through projects and events.

### The organisation’s strategic values for 2025–2028:

#### 1. Enabling visibility and voice through our digital platforms

As a key platform for representation and amplifying voices, we strengthen the reputation and understanding of Dundee’s vibrant creative community locally and globally. We platform voices, stories, events and people that shape and strengthen the city’s culture.

We will: maintain our active digital presence; develop practical resources; and actively commission contributors for monthly original provocations.

Outcomes and impact: ensures creative practitioners are visible, supported and actively leading; positive social impact stories of creative communities are amplified; equity is clear through the stories we share; further enhances Dundee’s global reputation.





## **2. Scaling deep through creative economy leadership**

Equipping creative communities to thrive in increased uncertainty through platforms, support, skills, spaces and resources. We curate, organise and convene events and projects which build connection, a sense of belonging and social capital across creative disciplines and career stages to ensure equitable and connected spaces which build community power.

We will: offer opportunities for creative practitioners and communities to take part in imagining and making a better tomorrow by providing space, tools, confidence and agency to amplify their voices and stories.

Outcomes and impact: equitable, connected and safe(r) spaces build community power; creative communities actively and visibly lead positive transformation; demonstrates how critical it is to harness creativity and culture for our everyday lives and to address urgent challenges in society; advocate and engage communities in sharing their stories and truths; prioritises accessibility, inclusivity and intersectionality to address local concerns and cultural sector access.

## **3. Strengthening our core through internal development**

We focus on strength over scale. As a small, experimental and trusted organisation, we are reflective of the sector and our place. We have demonstrated capability to lead through a period of great change and transition.

We will: continue to improve the care we give the people we work with, diversify our leadership and improve our internal processes, aiming to ensure policies are fully reflective of our values.

Outcomes and impact: solid governance and leadership improves team morale and health; inspires and encourages other organisations to improve practices; sustainability of the organisation and local creative economy; further demonstrates the wide and wise value of investment in the arts.



## Delivery

Creative Dundee has a small, dedicated core staff team, each bringing their individual skills, strengths and experiences to their respective roles to enhance our collective portfolio of activities. We will continue to commission a broad range of creative practitioners to bolster our skillsets, increase capacity and provide external challenge to our thinking.

Creative Dundee is governed by a voluntary board of Directors who set the strategic direction of the organisation. Our staff team has specific responsibilities for delivery of our programme.

We're dedicated to rooting Fair Work principles in our policies and processes and are proud to be an accredited Living Wage Employer, paying the Real Living Wage since 2019. We are committed to fair conditions when working and connecting with freelancers, and address this working relationship in our Fair Work policy.

We have solid governance and financial management processes in place. We regularly review and improve our policies, including an organisational handbook, environmental, and equal opportunities policies, and our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is a living, evolving roadmap.

## Learning and evaluation

To monitor, learn from and evaluate the impact of our work, we will continue to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods to monitor progress, outcomes and impacts.

We will continually seek to understand the needs, challenges, and aspirations of local creative communities which are respectful of creative practitioners' energy and time. We will use a variety of tools and approaches which are participative and practical.



[www.creative Dundee.com](http://www.creative Dundee.com)

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