

## **Community music – good for the soul, or just a pain in the ears?**

Music is communal. We play, sing, and listen together. But is it more than just like-minded people coming together? Surely, music of all genres lies at the heart of communities and is a force for good.

Music is under threat. Lack of support means that some groups no longer exist. Cuts to music in schools denies the youngest in our communities the chance to participate, develop team skills, and reduce stress levels.

Music is a sense of a place. People need somewhere to practice, participate, perform. The DCB Kessington project just north of Glasgow, now acts as a catalyst and hub for the development of all forms of music and all age groups.

Music is therapeutic. Music enhances health and wellbeing in individuals and communities alike. Music helps people with learning difficulties to improve their communication, interaction and self-expression. Music helps the physically disabled gain some sense of independence and feeling of pain. Music helps to reduce anxiety, and even reduce need for medication, in those with dementia.

Music is transformative. Modelled on Venezuela's El Sistema, Big Noise Stirling fosters confidence and resilience in the area's most disadvantaged children. Music in prisons builds self-esteem, employability and reduces re-offending. Music offers a lifeline to the marginalised of society.

Our programme examines symbiosis between music and communities, through interviews and opinion packages from practitioners across some of these different elements. It will have a distinctive Scottish voice.

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### **Who are we?**

We are all amateur musicians, members of the Dunbartonshire Concert Band (DCB), who have played together for several years. We have a broad range of musical experience and are committed to promoting the benefits of music. We have a diverse range of professional expertise including science, education, health and social work, teaching and research. We now help to deliver the DCB Kessington project, which manages Kessington Hall as a community music & arts facility (on behalf of the local council). Our good contacts with professional musicians and other organisations would help provide depth to our programme.

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