



About WHALE Arts

WHALE Arts is a building-based and place-based community-led charity and social enterprise, founded by local people in 1992. WHALE Arts is based in an area of urban social housing with pockets of extreme deprivation (SIMD 2: 2-10%) on the outskirts of Edinburgh.

Our mission is to be the creative heart of thriving community. We work across the community to increase people's sense of place and improve wellbeing. As the cultural anchor organisation for Wester Hailes, we also connect the community to city centre creative provision, access to which can be restricted by geography, travel and cost.

Our core projects and groups focus on improving health, wellbeing and developing creative and interpersonal skills of children and adults. We also have targeted groups for adults and families with disabilities, additional and complex support needs.

WHALE Arts is:

- Community-led - we are embedded in our community, consult with local people, we are a membership organisation, we have local board members.
- A Cultural Anchor Organisation - we are the conduit between local people, artists and cultural opportunities and organisations.
- Place-based - we develop creative programmes and services that have a simultaneous focus on people living in Wester Hailes and the social, geographical, infrastructural, and economic factors of the area and the synergies between the two: people and place.
- Building-based - we have responsibility for a building from which we run a range of programmes, activities and services which are largely free or subsidised and are tailored towards people from Wester Hailes and the surrounding area. We also use the building as an asset from which we can generate income which contributes to our running costs and our unrestricted reserves.
- Strengths-based / Asset-based – we make the most of, and building on, the skills and experiences of local people and assets within the community.

WHALE (Wester Hailes Arts for Leisure and Education) launched in 1992 and was originally based in the Blue Hut on the Murrayburn Greenway. WHALE was launched officially on August 7th, 1992, and saw a balloon launch, a hot air balloon trip as well as live music and street performers.

Over the past 30 years WHALE Arts has grown and continued to adapt and innovate through challenging times, moving to a purpose-built home in November 2000, the same building the organisation works from today. We are in the process of a Community Asset Transfer to buy the land our building is situated on.

Our Strategic Plan has a focus on Arts, Health & Wellbeing; Creative Placemaking; Enterprise, Learning and Skills as well as Development and Improvement of our building.

WHALE Arts Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024

https://issuu.com/whalearts/docs/strategic_plan_whale_2019_-_2024_web_version