

"Poverty doesn't make an area. It is the community spirit that makes an area."



Understanding Glasgow Films Launch

Tuesday 16th April 2013, 9.30am – 12.30pm

The Lighthouse
11 Mitchell Lane
Glasgow, G1 3NU

Introduction

By way of introduction, Bruce Whyte explained the background to the creation of the Understanding Glasgow (UG) site and why the films had been commissioned. The UG website provides a broad set of indicators to describe and understand the city. While undoubtedly a major strength of the site, statistics alone cannot bring the culture, warmth and vitality of Glasgow's people to life.

So in late 2012 the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) commissioned Fire by the Water to create a series of films, to be set in and around Glasgow, which were to reflect the lived experiences of Glaswegians and let people tell their own stories.



The four films: *Working Men*; *Sense of Place*; *Young Mums*; and *Bolting Doors, Mending Fences* illuminate a wide range of issues such as belonging, friendship, discrimination, community strengths, families, etc. Bruce encouraged participants to react to the films, discuss them and to think how they could be used.

Simon Parsons, Producer and Director of the UG films, noted that the typical stories in the media, all too often portraying despair and violence, present a picture of Glasgow that he did not recognise and that these films set out to tell different stories.

Andrew Lyon of the International Futures Forum chaired the morning and lent his expertise in co-ordinating the discussion that followed. It was particularly fortunate that almost all of the participants who took part in the films attended the launch and their reflections enriched the subsequent discussions.

Each film was shown in turn, followed by a discussion at each table and then a plenary discussion. Participants were encouraged to not only comment on whether they liked the films but to discuss how they might be used and who should see them.

A summary of the discussions during the morning is provided below.

Overall responses

General comments on the films were that they were full of life and provided fresh insight into life in Glasgow. Participants described them as inspirational,

thought-provoking, providing a great sense of perspective, and also said that the films should be viewed with an open mind to reap the most benefit from them.

A number of themes were evident in all four films. The presence, absence and ultimate importance of intergenerational relationships were noted across all the films.

Some prevalent stereotypes came up in discussion: the welfare system was dysfunctional; younger people have no aspirations or ambition; all young mums are the same; that you shouldn't interact with children, or that they are all evil (the demonisation of kids by the media). The films were seen as countering in a small way the predominantly negative media coverage ('bad' estates, teenage parents etc) which doesn't reflect the reality of the participants' lives.

A query was raised as to how to promote sustainability in local initiatives and widen participation beyond "strong voices" of particular individuals as featured in the *Sense of Place* and *Bolting Doors, Mending Fences* films.

There was also the idea of 'households' evolving – the films showed/mentioned single parents, young men and older people living in single-person households as well as the more 'traditional' family unit of parents and children – which is reflected by recent Scottish census data.

There was a general sense that the films could be used as conversation starters to trigger dialogue and idea-sharing about the different themes and topics raised in the films. It was felt that some facilitation may be needed in order to use the films as a resource of this kind, but that they could be used in many different subject areas including health improvement, equalities, public sector service provision and education.

Specific groups were identified whom it was thought would have a specific interest: such as NHS Health Scotland health improvement training, community-led health networks, Scottish co-production network and the health improvement and inequalities group at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

Responses to each film

Working Men

Themes that shone through were the intergenerational links between Peter and Anton (the *working men* featured in this film), respect for relationships, community spirit and empowerment, changes in gender roles and



how work availability has changed over the years, i.e. in years gone by, employment was widely available if you wanted it.

There was mention of Govan's poor media image and coverage and how this isn't reflected by Anton's experience of living in the area. The idea of the changing nature of work and the difference between just earning and doing meaningful work (stacking shelves in a supermarket vs. building and finishing a product) was a resonant observation.

The film challenges stereotypes and shows that aspiration exists within communities, however back up and support is needed. Most young people want to do well, they want to work or to go onto further study or education, but are unable to do so due to economic reasons. The impact of the imminent welfare cuts were felt to be likely to have a negative impact on communities.

How could the film be used?

- as a training tool for health and care professionals within the Curriculum for Excellence
- as a resource for an external audience as a conversation starter to:
 - raise awareness
 - challenge stereotypes

Sense of Place

Responses to this film were that it presented a very positive picture and was motivational and inspirational. The passion and great community spirit was evident. The film built up a sense of anticipation for what was about to happen in the Belville community in the East End of Greenock – the film showed something that was *going* to happen as opposed to a case study of an established project or activity that has already happened.

The strong connection to place was highlighted, and the pride in the area too. The strength of the community comes across very powerfully. The Community Trust has built up a sense of ownership and empowerment and there is a shared



responsibility for the plans they have for the area. This initiative was seen as creating change in a positive way, but change borne out of desperation. If these communities aren't spoken about, they will disappear.

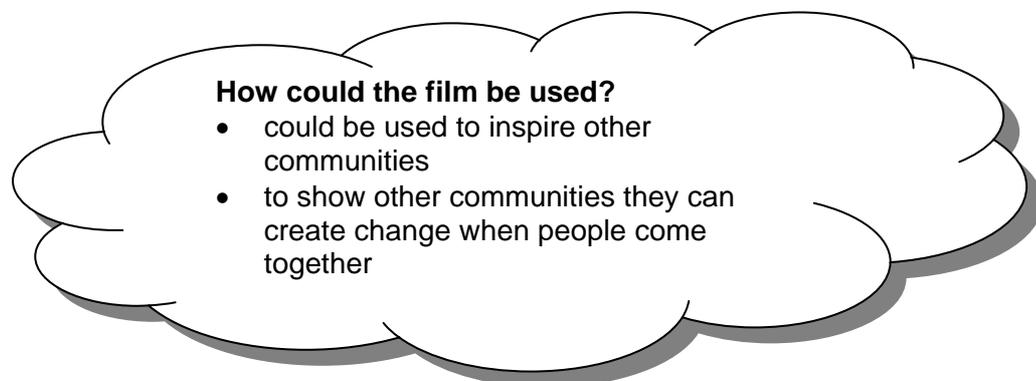
Participants felt it was great to see investment in the area to create greenspace and that people are willing to stand up for their community and take ownership and responsibility within the community. It was observed also that local politics has to be made important for the local community, to get people involved.

It was noted that a community leader is needed for this type of initiative, but that they can't do it alone – community support and support from other organisations is also needed. Indeed Alice, the main subject of the film, mentions the apprehension at actually getting the Big Lottery funding and this raises the issue about the importance of a support role to help communities get the most out of funding and how to ensure long term sustainability. The winning of the lottery grant, and the responsibility that comes with it, could serve as an example/inspiration to other communities.

There was also a suggestion that schools could make their own films about their area to give children a sense of place and pride in their area and that this could have a beneficial effect on their community.

A number of community and intergenerational themes started to emerge after watching both *Working Men* and *Sense of Place*.

- By talking to and connecting with your neighbours, you start to feel a sense of community. Equally this can remove or at least reduce the fear of going out at night; by getting to know your neighbours you feel safer.
- More interaction with the older generation was good but there was also learning to be had from older people e.g. new skills such as gardening and helping out on their allotments.
- The media's portrayal of young people is not always helpful or accurate. For example, Alice's comments that people like living in this area of Greenock show how media coverage doesn't reflect the reality of the people who live in the area.



Young Mums

Initial comments on this film were it was very inspirational – “*the girls are a true inspiration*”, thought-provoking and there was valuable learning. The film raises powerful issues about parenthood, relationships and friendship and could be a catalyst for positive change. The strong bonds between the young women were noted.

The film dispels stereotypes and challenges preconceived thoughts about teenage mothers. Again, negative media coverage of teenage mothers does not match these women’s experiences. There is not just negativity in the media but also within services. Teenage mothers can be seen as ‘problem’ service users, but these films could be used to educate service providers that people such as the young mothers in this film are ‘not just statistics’.

The young women demonstrate a sense of aspiration and responsibility for themselves and their children. Again there are intergenerational links in this film. The women are aware of their role in shaping the next generation’s attitudes towards gender roles.

Questions were raised about how services can ensure that the empowerment and confidence the mothers are gaining from being in a supportive school environment is protected as their lives shift from education to work. This example shows the importance of early intervention – and not just for the prevention of teenage pregnancy but for existing young mothers.



There were other specific questions and generic comments. What support do the young mums have in terms of services, i.e healthcare and education? The Smithycroft project is the only project of its kind in Scotland – in general there is no support for teenage mums to continue their education – so we need other projects like this across Scotland?

The comment made by one of the young mums regarding health visits etc was noted – that the healthcare professional speaks to her like a child and when accompanied by her mother or grandmother, the healthcare professional will address her mother or grandmother, not her. This reemphasises the point that there are lessons for service providers in the film.

How could the film be used?

- show the film to other young mothers – help them to link with each other and create strong bonds – (there was comment made by one attendee regarding a teen mum in her area who has her baby and a flat and has no interest in continuing her education)
- show to professionals in education and healthcare together

Bolting Doors, Mending Fences

People commented on the sense of community spirit and the community skills displayed by Alex, the subject of this film. Participants felt that the film could perhaps inspire individuals in other communities to do something similar.

People discussed the sharing of spaces and place, for example the idea that Alex's garden was a community or children's garden and the impact physical changes to your property can have on the community and individuals such as fixing the light and the door can improve feelings of security.

Engaging with young people in the community was also a strong theme; as was the intergenerational link that develops between Alex and the children who help in the garden.



Interestingly, the visual absence of children in this film was noted and prompted a debate as to whether 'PC' policies are preventing informal intergenerational interaction in the community because of fears adults have of being seen to have contact with children. This prompted the question 'what is the protocol for working and interacting with children?' Another comment was that children are "wrapped in cotton wool" these days. Another issue that was

brought up was that of strong individuals working with the wider community – how to support without stifling it?

How could the film be used?

- To encourage greater community cohesion and participation
- As an introduction to a discussion e.g. about interaction of adults with children

Feedback on uses of the films

Participants and others who have seen the films have suggested a range of potential uses for the films:

- as part of subject guides for university librarians
- tenant groups, local community councils, voluntary groups and schools would all benefit from them
- within Community Development as part of on-line resources for the [Health Issues in the Community \(HIIC\)](#) training programme and perhaps for the [Generations Working Together \(GWT\)](#) initiative
- potential uses with first year medical students and postgraduate courses e.g. Regenerating Cities masters course at Urban Studies (Glasgow Uni.)

Following the launch, the GCPH has been invited to run a session to show the films at the national mental health arts and film festival in October 2013. The festival will focus on *mental health realities* and, specifically, wellbeing. It is one of the largest global public health events with 300 events and 15,000 attendees.



In conclusion

We would like to thank those who participated in the films and also everyone who attended the launch event. We believe the films are a valuable addition to Understanding Glasgow and plan to develop more films in the future. The feedback, thoughts and advice we have received (and attempted to capture in this report) will be invaluable in planning further work of this type.

Links to Films

The films can be accessed via the following links: [Working Men](#); [Sense of Place](#); [Young Mums](#); [Bolting Doors, Mending Fences](#)

In due course the following additional information will accompany the films on the website: transcripts; optional subtitles; context / background information; links to the themes/indicators and asset based case studies already on the UG website; and quotes from the films

A brief introductory film to the series will also be available shortly on the UG website: www.understandingglasgow.com

Appendix – List of participants

Name		Role	Organisation
Diane	Booth	Family Support Worker	Our Place Our Families
Lauren	Cameron	Education Services	Glasgow City Council
Fiona	Campbell	Senior Planner, DRS	Glasgow City Council
Peter	Campbell	Film Participant	Working Men
Jennie	Coyle	Communications Manager	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Joe	Crossland	Publishing/Editor Comms Officer	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Olivia	Diamond	Film Participant	Young Mums
Gillian	Dick	Principal, Development Planning	DRS, Glasgow City Council
Keiran	Dodds	Photographer	Independent
Erin	Donnelly	Community Development Officer	CVS Inverclyde
Jasmin	Duff	Film Participant	Young Mums
Sheena	Fletcher	e-Comms Officer	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Carol	Frame	Events Administrator	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Fiona	Garven	Director	Scottish Community Development Centre
Suzanne	Glennie	Health Improvement Manager	Glasgow West CHP
Leanne	Graham	Child Development Officer	Young Parents Support Base
Helen	Hayes	Digital Learning Adviser	Glasgow Caledonian University
Max	Hislop	Programme Manager	Glasgow & Clyde Valley Green Network
Marion	Kelt	Senior Librarian, Digital Development	Glasgow Caledonian University
Alex	Kenmore	Film Participant	Bolting Doors, Mending Fences
Louise	Lindsay	Education Services	Glasgow City Council
Alison	Linyard	Project Manager – IFF	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Mark	Livingston	Research Fellow – Urban Studies	University of Glasgow
Andrew	Lyon	Director	International Futures Forum
Fiona	MacDonald	Health Improvement Development Officer	East Renfrewshire Council
Bob	Marshall	Executive Director	Community Renewal
Mike	McCarron	Board Member	GalGael
Alice	McCaughey	Film Participant	Sense of Place
Amy	McDonald	Film Participant	Young Mums
Barry	McGivern	Modern Studies Teacher	St Paul's RC High School
Jennifer	McLean	Public Health Programme Manager	Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Chris	Mooney	Senior Performance & Information Manager	Glasgow Community & Safety Services Ltd
George	Morris	Project Adviser	Good Places Better Health
Simon	Parsons	Director	Fire By The River
Margaret	Ramsey	Project Worker	Barnardos CHIP Project
Derek	Rankine	Events & Communications Manager	SURF
Emma	Scott	Events & Communications Manager	SURF
Cheryl	Vernel	Project Worker	Barnardos CHIP Project
Bruce	Whyte	Public Health Programme Manager	Glasgow Centre for Population Health