Building partnerships for our collective resilience

**Gordon Morrison** 00:04

Okay, folks, good afternoon. Good afternoon, everyone. We'll get started with this session. My name is Gordon Morrison. I'll do a physical description first, I am a middle aged man with a I used to see graying hair. It's full on grey hair that I have nowadays. I have a glorious dad bod, and I am wearing a fake tweed jacket. It's not real everyone. It's from Primark. There we go. So, before we start with the details of the session, we will be using Slido today. Has anybody used it already today? There might be a good understanding of what this is, if you haven't used it so far, you can scan the QR code, you'll be asked to enter the code. And when you're using Slido, you'll be able to input questions that we will then be able to put to our wonderful expert panel. At the end of the session today, we're probably only going to have a couple of questions, because we'll be tight for time, but we'll do our best to get through as much as we can. So what is our session today, our session is financial resilience and collaboration. I would argue this is probably the most prescient session of the day, of course, I would see that, I'm chairing it. But however, given the current backdrop of challenges to core funding, and ever rising costs, it is more important than ever, that museums, galleries and cultural organisations are financially resilient. So in this session, we're going to look at how museums can adopt and indeed have adopted enterprising approaches to maximise their income and their commercial returns. Just very quickly, though, I thought it'd be worth me just sharing with you why I am chairing the panel. So who I am and why I'm chairing the panel. So as I mentioned, I'm the Chief Exec of the Association for Cultural Enterprises. Some of you will have heard of us, but not all of you will have heard of us. I, I've been the CEO now for just over five months. So I don't I don't mind saying this. I think we've been a wee bit English focused in the past. But you may detect a hint of an Ayrshire accent from me. And I'm determined the association which is a UK wide association will be far more present in Scotland going forward. So what do we do and who are we? So we are a charity, as well as the trade association that has been around for a long time founded in 1979. We have over 450 organisations within our membership, but that represents more than 1,850 venues across all corners of the UK and we are growing ovall the time in Scotland, as I mentioned. We essentially we exist to support cultural organisations to make money. It's as blunt as that that is why we exist. So we're a very practical trade association. We do a lot of education and training for the sector. And just very quickly, what we have our crown jewel is probably our online and on demand cultural enterprises Academy, which provides more than 40 units of online learning, CPD accredited learning. And it's completely free to our members and each so if you undertake each of your staff undertake, the online learning is worth about two grand per staff member. Our membership starts at 150 quid so you can see the value there, folks. But we also should see as a charity, we also offer a lot of our services completely for free for everyone in the sector. We also run an education and training programme live education and training programme, a conference and trade show. We host awards, we have a job service. And you may have heard of the Museum Shop Sunday as well. We are the organisation behind museum shop Sunday, which is kind of the antithesis to Black Friday, really. And we also have a Seeds of Change prize fund new prize fund to encourage greater sustainability within the sector as well. So that's a quick synopsis of who we are at the Association of culrural enterprises. You will then understand why I've been asked to chair a panel on financial resilience considering that is essentially what we are all about at the association. We have a brilliant expert panel with us today. Who are each going to come on to stage and introduce themselves but just very quickly I will just point them out to you just know we've got Lauren Rhodes, the commercial development manager at the behemoth that is Glasgow life. And we know of course know that the new culture minister's favourite Museum is Kelvingrove. So that's very interesting. We have we have Thania Flores, who is the heritage environment Resources Officer at the fabulous Trimontium museum, if you've not been there before is a wonderful museum. And we have Melanie Farrow, the CEO at the less behemoth like I would say, Maryhill Burgh Trust. Again, if you've not been please go. It's a great panel we've got today, expert panel I just said, and each panellist has been picked because they have all got stories to tell about being enterprising. So before we delve into our questions, each panellist in turn will come up and tell us a wee bit more about their organisations. I think First up, is Melanie.

**Melanie Farrow** 05:43

Hi, I'm Melanie Farrow, I'm the CEO of Maryhill Burgh Trust, I'll just give a bit of a quick visual description of myself. I am a short, white female, with shoulder length, blonde hair, and this kind of lilacy sort of tint, we had a discussion about that earlier. And I'm wearing our black, pink and white patterned dress. And before I get started, I just like to thank Museums Galleries Scotland, for inviting us as the trust along today because we've kind of infiltrated we're not an accredited museum. So so I just thought I'd get that out of the way before we started. So I'm just going into the presentation now, the history of the trust, we were set up in 2004 as a charity to take the B listed Victorian building in the northwest of Glasgow, back into community use just a bit give a bit of context, and the northwest of Glasgow has the same size of population, as Dundee. And we have saved the building. And we have very kindly thanks to Glasgow life, got back that original stained glass 10 or 11 panels of the original stained glass into our building. And just to say I've got different things on the screen from what I'm saying. So I'll try not put them through too quickly. We have also got 10 New stained glass panels based on what the community would like to see represented in Maryhill Burgh Halls, we do have a very, very small museum. We have that's our beautiful Main Hall, we have started that back in 2018, we've got a very small collection as well. And we put on a number of different types of exhibitions. So the rotating exhibitions we also put on. So the last last exhibition we had was a contemporary art exhibition. But we also use community generated exhibitions as well. One of our that's some of our stained glass windows. One of our biggest projects was the Maryhill flag. So we're the first urban area in Scotland to have its own flag. This was community generated as well. And that's just something that's the museum Sorry, I'm a bit behind on the slides. And so the flag was community generated, and from the design, so we went out to the community, and we had people of all ages, propose designs, we then put that out to public votes as to what design they wanted to take forward. And then this was then put forward to the court of the Lord Lyon to be put into proper flags to be voted on. And finally, the next one you can see at the very top is the final flag that we've got, we're getting that handed over, I shouldn't actually say this, we're getting hands are officially on May the 6th. Pre pandemic, oh sorry that's some of our exhibitions, some of our exhibitions that we've had throughout the years post pandemic, we worked with a local local artist, Joe Sunshine, who's blind. And so going into the crux of what we're talking about today, income generation pre pandemic we generated 85% of our income, that 32% of that disappeared overnight, thanks to the pandemic, we worked a social enterprise model so we're all income that we generate we invest in either our programmes or the building itself. Thanks to the pandemic, we were able to I was able to take time out and actually be involved in a number of Museums Galleries Scotland programmes including the business support programme, the steps to sustainability where we started working our a development of our shop, both online store retail, online and on site. And also a number of digital programmes. We are aware I should say at this point. We are a very, very small team. There is three main members of staff and two in our cafe. So we do not have a huge staff team. We have a number of volunteers. We got about 20 volunteers and that's one of our employability programmes that we run. So we work with the local schools, colleges and university to provide work placements. And we provide internships paid and unpaid through various universities. And we also are part of No One Left Behind. So we've employed through that Kickstart, and also paid work placements. In fact, one of our kickstart employees is here today, Arora, she's up there. And this has been invaluable to us really through this this time. As I said, we started off our community consultation through the flag process but after post pandemic, one of the two areas that we went into, as for income generation was the cafe, and also our shop. So the cafe, we again went out to community consultation to find what the name they wanted. That's the name that was we got a number of options put forward that were voted on. And then the Nollie was the one that's chosen. For those that don't know, the Nollie. Or sorry, Nollie is a term that affairs to the canal. So we're close to the canal at Maryhill. And that's what the Nollie refers to. We've just recently completed last year, our community consultation, which will facilitate our business plan that we will be producing over this year for the next three years. And finally, this has got to be the jewel in our crown. This is the most recent exhibition that we have put together. And this is thanks to Arora out there who met who was contacted by the son of George Ward Richard, and he said, I've got a few pictures my dad has. And then as things went on, he said, I've actually got a bit a few pieces that he's collected. So we've now got an exhibition with his cameras, his cine camera, we've got cine film. And this has just been a huge community engagement tool that has, I don't know, our foot fall has increased probably about 10 times our income and our donations have probably increased doubled or in some instances tripled. And our new coffee has had a huge increase in generation of income generation as well. So I would like to think that the engagement that we get from this and the community buy in which is what we're about, we are a community led, and a community driven organisation, that this is the start of things to come. But maybe when I start speaking about the other things later on, it might be just not so positive.

**Gordon Morrison** 12:35

Thanks very much indeed Melanie, and Thania is gonna introduce herself

**Thania M. Flores** 12:46

Hello, everyone. It's a pleasure to be here with you. My name is Thania Melissa Flores, and I'm a Hispanic woman with brown long hair in braids. Wearing a black sweater with a big button. And my pronouns are she her. I work at the Trimontium Museum in the Scottish Borders as a heritage environment Resources Officer. The Trimontium museum if you don't know about it, it's it's a wee tiny Museum. Well, we call it tiny but mighty. We just been called a wee gem in the Scottish Borders. We are an independent trust, a charity. And we are a museum that takes care and looks after the Roman fort of trimontium in the nearby Newstead Village. We are dedicated to Roman and Iron Age Scotland. And part of our mission is obviously to educate and engage with the very fascinating history of Roman Scotland. Volunteers are at the heart of our organisation. And it has been like that since the beginning of trimontium. Today we're gonna be talking as we with with this panel and resilience and collaboration. So that's the museum as it was for 30 years from 1989 to 2019. It was a community museum, it still is a community museum. But it was in very big need of a change and an uplift, we didn't have any staff members for all those 30 years, it was always run solely by volunteers until 2020. When we had our first staff member, then we grew to three then to five and now we are eight in between part time and full time staff. And this is the redevelopment that we undertook in from 2019 to 2021. We opened in 2021. And yes, that was in the middle of the pandemic just two months delay which I think it was not too bad all things considered. And the main in involved a major redesign of the gallery loans from National Museum Scotland and others agreed of the officials to support the collection and a shop which to now it brings about 40% of our income. We didn't have a shop before. We kept our walks, we expanded our events, and we increased the ticket prices which For all those 30 years, it has been two pounds, there was a drama in the trustees when they try to raise it to two pounds to two pounds 25. But now, we have it at six pounds for those last two years, and we just raised to seven pounds this year. How to keep it going after that honeymoon phase of just reopening, and the development. Well, that was just the beginning phase for us, we always wanted to have a space for location space for groups for tourists groups for for school groups, and a space for our staff to work as well. Because before that we didn't have any of the spaces. So we had last year. I mean, you're building of extension for the museum, which is this and open last year, and we're still working on this for for this year. Our goals and objectives for that development and everything has been obviously to have long term sustainability, to be less dependent on grants, we're working on it, to have support for other projects with more outreach and education, and to become famous, which we're working on. Foster community in the locality, strengthen the localities, strengthen that offer that the Scottish Borders in general Melrose in particular, and the south of Scotland, have for tourists, and for people, expand our reach, and strengthen our team and always have our mission and vision at the foundation of whatever thing that we do. We also were part of the step to sustainability programme. And in this case, we have some highlights from the programme, which was always to stay true on mission on our vision for, for why we do for the community have that growth mindset, which is very much at the heart also of what we do, engaging with other organisations and the importance of creating partnerships, not only with other museums and other cultural organisations, but also with local businesses and with a local community. And we also got tools and techniques from that programme that we really helped us to, to plan for the future. I'm just going to show you here too I'm not going to go obviously over all of that. That's the path process, which is a planning tool that looks about looks to short term long term goals as well as dreams and what we have what we don't have, what skills we have, what can we use what we need to develop, as well as the purpose for profit matrix, which is a balancing tool of looking at what are the offers of your museum or institution? And what what of those are bringing income, what are not bringing income, what are bringing income and are really close to your mission, what are just close to your mission, but not bring an income. But that's okay, because that's part of your mission, and what doesn't really fit to what you're doing. So those were very useful. We also focused on on planning. And on doing market research, we have been doing market research, with surveys with with our visitors, with conversations with our visitors and volunteers and testing the experiences that we're developing for this year, and testing and retesting and getting that feedback, and developing the skills in our volunteers and in our staff, and also utilising the skills that are already there that sometimes are hidden talents will no you never know who are who is around you and what the volunteers have to offer, which is always a lot. exploring the possibilities. That's a major thing for us, which is diversifying the types of engagement that we have diversifying, that will in turn opportunities that we offer so that we can reach more people finding inspiration everywhere that we look and also diversifying our marketing. Marketing was a focus for our steps to sustainability, project. And we did a soft launch last year with all of these things that we added or developed or push a little bit more like our social media, we started leaflet distribution, etc. We started a partnership with Melrose Abbey with ticketing. And we have a marketing mentors through the through the programme. And coming this spring, we're gonna be doing a bigger launch of our marketing for our Halo experiences which we are developing. We have again diversifying is kind of the topic of my of my talk, which is many different activities that we do for community engagement as well as for income generation with a lot of archaeological activities, which are free community events and outreach all that side is free. And we do talks and walks which we charge for. Workshops are new for us, and we are developing experiences for this year. So our key successes so far has been a thistle award from last year for the best visitor attraction in the south of Scotland, which we're very proud of. Major footfall increase and a major income increase as well. Great feedback for our workshops and the testing that we've been doing with volunteers and attendees. Raising awareness for the museum which is a big thing for us. A lot of people don't know about the museum. A lot of people don't know that the Romans even go to Scotland at all. And another thing that TripAdvisor we got to number one of 15 things to do. And we were number seven before. So we all of this have been a very big impact in our organisation, bring in a lot of confidence, pushing us to keep delivering on our programmes, delivering on the things that we do. And I think we're becoming more resilient and more sustainable. We haven't gotten there yet. But I think we are in the right track. And that's all for me. Thank you.

**Gordon Morrison** 20:33

Wow, wow. Follow that Lauren, and you go.

**Lauren Rhodes** 20:38

Hello, I'm Lauren Rhodes. And I am a white woman in my mid 30s. I'm wearing a burgundy dress with animals printed in it on it. And I have orange hair. I joined Glasgow life in December 2022. Heading up the commercial development team. Just to let you know, I'm a little bit of a nervous public speakers, I do have notes that do forgive me. So Glasgow life museums, who are we, we are part of Glasgow life, which is an arm's length organisation or ALEO of Glasgow City Council. And we were formed in 2012 as a charity, and we manage the arts, Culture, Sports and Tourism offer across Glasgow, through the independent charity. And we also have a community interest company trading arm. As a civic museums service. And a large portion of our funding comes from Glasgow City Council. So we are vulnerable to the local authority cuts that we hear we hear so much about. And this is an ongoing concern with cuts to staffing and operational budgets. And so for me and my team, doing a really good job is absolutely crucial, because we are raising much needed income to secure the future of these incredible museums that we are responsible for. And also, you know, for sort of civic museums, leaders, having a commercial mindset, really is sort of in our public duty as well. So these are the sort of seven incredible sites that that we operate in. So we've got goma, the Gallery of Modern Art, the Glasgow museums Resource Centre, which if you've not visited it, just outside of Glasgow City Centre, they do free tours of the stores, I'd really recommend it. It's an amazing experience. We've got Kelvingrove People's Palace, some Winter Gardens, which has just got money for our transformation projects, which is very exciting. And Riverside Museum, St. Mungo Museum, and the Art Fund museum of the year, the Burrell collection, so very proud of them all. Don't have a favourite. So what we do, so we are a small and mighty team in commercial development. I work alongside three colleagues. And our total headcount, including myself is 3.4 FTE. And we look after commercial development and income generation across all of the museums. And this is everything that we do, I have to point out that we do not do retail and we don't do catering. I have very amazing colleagues and other departments who manage retail and catering. So we do wet hire and dry hire. The difference is dry hire is literally just someone hire in your space. This is the Riverside electronic music festival. We just hired the event square to them. Although we do sit on their project management team. They look after everything at bringing their own staff their own teams. Wet hire is when you do things like your Gala dinners, conference dinners, fundraisers, and things like that. So we look after staff and we look after catering, and all that sort of AV needs as well. We look after filming and photography inquiries. We look after income generating public programme development. We've also developed the travel, trade and tourism products that we offer. And we also support the activities and plans of other departments. So I've been working on pricing strategies for exhibitions and supporting our membership and patron scheme and looking at how we can increase donations as well. And I've put anything else there because it really is quite random. What comes across your desk sometimes and some of the inquiries you have to deal with. In 2021 my team were responsible for this, which all the world leaders gathered in Kelvingrove Museum. They really pulled all the stops out. I wasn't there, but I'm still so proud of them. Because I know that making this event safe and secure. An incredible experience would have been a real, real challenge for them. And everyone looks kind of happy in that picture. Kind of. So how do we make it work? this financial year, we hosted 120 venue hires across all of our museums. So we welcomed 31,000 guests, to our to our museums this year through our events. We've worked really hard on internal relationships and communications, we make sure that we attend to the majority of meetings that we can. So all of the individual museums, programming and content meetings, we attend weekly management meetings. We communicate every month through our performance reports on what we're doing. And we are also starting to develop front of house staff training around events awareness and management. We focus on solutions. I think that's really key is trying to find answers and trying to resolve an issue, not just saying no, we lean into the quirky nature of our buildings, we've never changed one of our buildings for an event they are listed. So we really look after them. And we'd lean into what we've got. So for example, we've developed events for specific spaces, and you know, sell them as a unique experience. For example, the East Court in Kelvingrove, which is the bit with the heads if anyone's seen it. We now sell private dinners for that gallery. And we embrace the ethical considerations. So we consider all requests fairly. We make decisions based on a balance of what is best for the museum's, for the staff, and for the collections. One example of that is I had someone come to me recently, with a request to have a wedding in Kelvingrove on Hogmanay, which is when we're normally closed, they basically offered us an open ended budget, which you can imagine super tempting being an Events Manager but on the balance of it, we felt that it would be a real disservice to the museum and also to our staff. There were real safety and security reasons why we couldn't do that event so that was something that we did turn down. And that does happen. We annually review our costs and our rights. It was really nice to hear you mentioned price increases, because it's also something we're not shy about. Staffing, energy, cleaning, equipment hire, all of our costs are going up. So every year, we do increase our prices to protect our profit margins. And we aim for about a 60% profit margin. With all costs considered. I've mentioned that the show must go on by Kate Frame. If you are interested in venue hire, or developing events at your museum or attraction, I'd really recommend googling that Kate Frame was the head of conservation at Historic Royal Palaces from 1998 to 2000. No 2020. She was one of the first people I worked with in events management, and she's really inspirational. It's just a really great guide, it's free on Google, I'd really recommend reading it, because I definitely still keep a lot of those values with me. And what we've done to change our approach. So we don't immediately say no to tricky requests, we work with colleagues share knowledge and experience to make informed decisions. And we've done that recently. This is the only image that isn't from Glasgow museums. This is from Birmingham. But we are having a silent disco at Kelvingrove museum this year for the first time ever. And it's because when we had that request, we spoke to colleagues about how we can make it happen. And we are also working with our colleagues more closely to work on feedback from events. So we've developed a post event report. So our front of house staff can feedback on how things are from their side and so that we can make changes to do better. And we're outwardly focused. So we are looking always at what other other people do other museums and other attractions, and also what people are interested in. Recently, there's been this huge increase in interest in immersive events, for example. So we're always looking at other organisations we're a member of MGS, the Museum Association, Alva, and ASVA, so engaging with our network and talking to other people about what they're doing and what their successes are, is really important to us. And we call it a competitor analysis. But I kind of feel like in this sector, it's, we don't really see each other as competition. So it's more like sharing ideas, which is really nice. Stealing with pride was a term that I adopted, I heard it at the National Trust down in London. And I think it's just really good to take an inspiration and ideas from others, but making sure that you share the successes and thanking acknowledged people for their work. And it's really important when they have inspired you. The proposal process is something we've developed to really kind of work on that communication between departments. So if we've got an unusual or a quirky or challenging request, I've worked up it's sort of a proposal template that that I share with colleagues. That's really because it gets everything on paper. Everyone can kind of see what is what the impact is going to be. Sustainable Growth and advocacy at the most senior levels are really important as well as talking about the importance of a commercial mindset, advocating for our teams, and the work and significance of the work that we do, is really important. Being sustainable and being able to generate your own income is something that, you know, I've been in the sector for about 10 years now. And when I first started, people were saying it's never been this difficult the funding landscape, and that was sort of 2013 2014. And it's even more difficult now. So it's not something that's going away. This is something I'm really proud of. So group experiences for the travel, trade, and tourism were introduced by my predecessor Michelle Woods just prior to the pandemic. We're now building on this. So we've developed travel, trade and tourism packages for the sort of the three biggest museums that we have Kelvingrove, Riverside and the Burrell collection. We worked with white stag tourism consultancy who are incredible to work with. And what we've done was, we've developed bespoke experiences for the tourist market. We've got competitive pricing that we've benchmarked against similar sized organisations and their offer. We've developed partnerships with other attractions like the Clydeside distillery, and EAC escape rooms. And we're working closely with Glasgow tourism and destination management, Visit Scotland and the Glasgow convention Bureau to really make sure that we're maximising all the opportunities that business in Glasgow presents. And we've also attended expos, as the Visit Scotland connect Expo has been really great to directly meet buyers in the tourism industry. And we've supported international fam trips as well. And looking to the future. So I kind of was going through this presentation, I was like, wow, this really sounds like we're on top of our game. But there's always so much more to do. But also, we have to be really realistic. I did obviously mentioned that my team has 3.4 FTE, it's really not very much working across all of those venues. So I have to make sure that you know when I'm planning for the future, that we've got sustainable growth built in. And as always, that advocacy with the senior levels of organisation is so important. Culture change and communication, and ensuring the whole museum services on board with what we're doing. This stuff can be quite scary. And particularly if you've not done it before, or if new things are being proposed. There was a picture a couple of slides ago of a big market that we had at the museums last year. So the T green markets, they were incredible for us, but people were so nervous about bringing them in, because they'd had a bad experience about 15 years prior with markets in the museums. So just making sure that everyone's on board and communicating the reasons why we're doing stuff is so important. And we are looking at a new marketing strategy. And I'm about to carry out from the advocacy that I've been doing over the last year, I've been asked to carry out a full review of venue hire, and our commercial filming offers offer across all of our Glasgow life venues, not just museums. So we're really looking at what we can do to generate income for our charity. And look for the opportunity and be brave. all ties into that sort of don't immediately say no thing, think about what you can do. Thank you. Any resources, templates I've mentioned, drop me a line, I can send them to you. I've also typed up my notes as well. And I'm more than happy to send them as well. Thanks.

**Gordon Morrison** 33:33

Thank you very much indeed, Lauren. I could listen to that Glasgow accent all day long. Okay, I can see some questions already coming in, which is great. Thanks very much, guys. So the topic is financial resilience. So I'm going to start with a few questions of my own to each of you. The first question I'd like to put to all of you, in fact, a number of questions I'll put to all of you because you can see the variety that we have on stage here, different sizes, different shapes, different types of organisation. I don't like to be negative, but I'm going to start with a negative. Because well Lauren, you've already mentioned the difficult environment that we're in just now the funding environment, rising costs. So what are the key challenges that you have been facing? And indeed, you're still facing just now?

**Lauren Rhodes** 34:24

Yeah, um, so for us that yeah, the rising costs, and the sort of shrinking profit margins on things is is a challenge. At the moment, you know, we have increased our prices for the last three years on our venue, hire rates, and also our travel trade products. At the moment, we haven't met a huge amount of resistance, but we know obviously at some point that will come so we are constantly making sure that we're benchmarking and looking at what other venues in Glasgow doing but we know that our venues are unique. And also we know that Kelvingrove seats more people than any other venue in Glasgow so that's handy. But it's limiting what we're doing in terms of, you know, I'd really love to develop late night events, museum lates, but the cost of our staffing basically makes that either sort of, you know, just about breakeven, or possibly even lose money if we don't sell enough tickets. So there's a huge risk there. And then when you've got, I mean, one of the challenges as well from the cuts is that it's kind of like a sort of, you know, you sort of say it as a joke. And it's a bit like Stockholm Syndrome, like the end of that harm, doing free jobs kind of thing. But it really does sometimes feel like that. So, you know, you've got to look at what your capacity is to do as well. So that that's the biggest challenge, but civic museums, you know, it's a funding crisis in civic museums, and the next government really needs to address it. Yeah, absolutely. I mean, it's interesting, even for a large organisation yourself that overstretched resources is a real challenge. Melanie, I would imagine that's a significant challenge. For an organisation such as yours.

**Melanie Farrow** 36:00

I actually have written down staff recruitment and retention. So, post pandemic, it's a struggle to keep people. We've got wonderful members of staff 2020, going into 2021, we didn't actually officially reopen until 2021. And the turnover as more jobs came available, more turnover and staff as they move on, and especially for a small team. So for a small team, it's the costs and small organisation. This was costs of recruitment and attention. And also the training up and the time that it takes was being the core person in the organisation is your time that's taken up with that. And certainly for us with a large Victorian building that was refurbished about 15 years ago, it's the now increasing costs of maintaining and looking after a large Victorian building with all its little quirks. And I think as well that everyone's speaking about funding cuts. And it's not just the funding cuts, it's that sort of increased competition, and that sort of Hunger Games. And so as we're all sort of going scrambling after the same pots of money, and everyone speaks about collaboration, partnership working, and and that becomes quite difficult when you're thinking what's going on over there who's going for that pot of money, I mean, we've just been told, we're not going through your funding this morning, just as I was sitting in here. So yeah, so there's that sort of thing as well. The time that it takes to mobilise projects, and an even repairs, so that sort of thing is taking even longer, which then impacts the organisation as well. And it's chasing workman and chasing this and doing that as a lot of things around buildings, buildings for us. And boards recruitment as well boards recruitment and retention. I'm not sure how other organisations have found it, but it's actually keeping really, really good good board members are finding the skills within your board members. And again, people are finding, just as you're seeing people are finding more demands on their own time with their own own role, they then can't give the time that a board within that board, and I'm trying to see if there's anything else. And for us, as I say it's repairs so it's major infrastructure repair. So we've just had to put a new boiler into a building, which then tie starts tying into your net zero on your your, if you're wanting to move I think someone mentioned earlier on today, one of the sessions was that is that large buildings, old Victorian buildings that are maybe wanting to move to net zero, or it's that initial outlay and although there's, there's again, it's that chasing the funding there's funding there, but it's still not enough to help you do those things. I did say I was gonna get a bit depressing later on. And just as you're saying about the events, so we as one of our income generation tools, you do event hire, so events are not returning to the same stage and level as pre pandemic. So we would have a lot of conference and training events, a lot of training is still being done online. So again, that's still having an impact on us. And the other area that we have as income generation is we have a lot a large number of office spaces. And of course, everyone has started to downsize and maybe do more hybrid working and working from home. So we have a large housing association, which had a long long lets and unfortunately this year we thought they're gonna go but they've just downsized thankfully, I'm saying just downsized it's at least they're still in the building. So yeah, there's there's all sorts of things where you are looking at your income generation that's that's been impacted, but your cost sizes are going up as well. Sorry to be depressed.

**Gordon Morrison** 39:34

Absolutely. No, I think everyone will be empathising with what you're talking about, to be honest with you. I promise. My next question is gonna be more upbeat guys we'll get more positive, but Thania just anything else to add from from your side?

**Thania M. Flores** 39:45

In the south of Scotland, we have a problem of awareness of the south of Scotland in general that I think SSDA and other organisations are working towards bringing the south of Scotland more to the forefront of the visitors. Especially the international visitor which tends to go to Edinburgh, Glasgow, the highlands, and then south borders basically don't exist. So that's one of the problems that we face. And even though those that get to Melrose, they tend to go in buses very fast to Melrose Abbey, go have lunch and go away. So there are no time for them to even explore the vicinity. We also still depend on grants, we want to get away from that, but we still depend on grant. So we're working towards that. But we still depend on grants, and we don't always get the grant. And that's a problem that I think both of you have been talking about. Capacity, that we have are very small staff with very big dreams. So we have all these projects and all these ideas and all these things like who is gonna do there's only 24 hours in the day. So that's that's basically the three main problems that we have.

**Gordon Morrison** 39:45

I think everyone in the room will recognise those challenges. overstretched resources is something that we've we've all experienced throughout our careers, but it's only getting more challenging. And so those interests you're talking about there, Melanie, in relation to recruitment, retention, and senior recruitment as well, it is a challenging situation out there. Okay, let's try and get a wee bit more positive, shall we? Because I think you've all given presentations here that show some real successes within each of your organisations. So what have been the ones that you've had, that you're most proud of the things that you're happy to share with the group here, where you've been effective at either making money or saving money or good collaborations? Melanie, I'll come to you first on that one.

**Melanie Farrow** 41:34

so I think, for us, a huge a huge win for us, has certainly been the recent exhibition. So that's, that's really about been engaging with our community. I mean, it's only taken us 15 years since we've reopened to to get that sort of engagement and that footfall. But another I suppose this doesn't really, and this is where you can't put a financial price on this. But we are very much the same with as far as using volunteer, having volunteer a lot of volunteers, and the programmes that we've put people through and the support that we give people. And it's about, we're just talking about staff, or team retention and recruitment. We've got two members of our volunteering team that have have come through from work placement programmes through colleges. And one has then stayed with us volunteering did an apprenticeship and has now been moved into a paid position with Kelvingrove. So it's the post that as I like to see that as a positive within the the environment is seeing that progression, and the other other person speaking about has started as one of our cafe assistants. So it's that thing of going into paid employment and it would be so lovely to be able to do more of that with some of the more maybe official employability programmes. And that's maybe something that we need to look at further down the line. But I think, for us, it's about with the exhibition, we've got at the moment we will start to explore things that we probably don't do at the moment, which is online donations, just being a bit more proactive with doesn't need a lot of staff resource that we can maybe start and then and then move that on. And things like we're just in the health and well being session. So we've we've had a bit of funding around that on on doing health and a lot more sort of health and well being so reaching out to the networks so we can. I was talking about collaboration in partnership. So making use of the networks that we've got and the collaborations and partnerships that we were doing. And then I hate to say it, but they're really boring things of looking at doing things differently with our property management and facilities management and repairs and all the boring stuff that was just talking about

**Gordon Morrison** 43:55

Thania, you've got so much going on just now. What are you seeing as the big wins?

**Thania M. Flores** 43:59

Yeah, well, I talked about that raising the prices from two pounds to six pounds and think that was a big win, especially with a board that was very reticent to do that for so many years. Our local community engagement and buy in from the community I think is a big win, especially in the building of our volunteer base we have over 60 volunteers plus volunteers overseas that will help us with our social media and stuff so we have been having really good effect and impact there and our unprecedented marketing investment as well which was also a very big deal to to convince the board to put more money into marketing to develop a marketing strategy to be proactive, not reactive. So those are the three things The raising ticket prices, the shop as well. Shop was a big thing and our shop manager is always trying to get more stuff and new stuff and budget people are like no no, it's that's too much. But then the show brings us 40% of our income and 60% in December.

**Gordon Morrison** 44:59

Great Great. And Lauren.

**Lauren Rhodes** 45:01

Yeah,I think what we're most proud of is definitely the work we've done on the travel, trade and tourism offer. So in the last year, we've done 128 experiences. And we've already got 76 booked for the upcoming financial year. And I think that kind of goes from strength to strength. The tourism market in Scotland is booming at the moment. So yeah, we're really excited that we can offer people something you know, and make some good money for the museums off of that. Some of the experiences that we offer cost very little. So for example, you know, all of our travel, trade and tourism brochures with all the products are available on our websites, please do have a look at them if you're interested. But just one example, our highlights tour with a curator, we charge 45 pound a head for and we get we regularly book those groups out. So it's really generating some good income for us. Visit Scotland are also a great support on that as well. So do sort of talk to your regional Visit Scotland person about how they can support you with that, and also the Tea Green Market. So if you haven't heard of tea green events, they do pop up markets at cultural venues around Scotland. And they're an incredible team of people who really want to showcase the best of Scottish makers and artisans. Like I said, people were really nervous about this proposal bringing a market to Kelvingrove Museum and to the Burrell collection. Because an market had been attempted before the licence hadn't been granted and all had to be cancelled at the last minute. So you can imagine that must have been horrendous to be, you know, on the frontline for so I can see why everyone was really scared to do it again. So we just made sure that we presented it in a really clear way we communicate with our colleagues really effectively where they had any concerns if they had concerns that we could act on like things like we wouldn't have a supplier who was stocked in the shop of that museum for that day. We did it and the Burrell collection had its busiest weekend ever so the crowds on the day that we have the Tea Green Market at the Burrell collection even beat the reopening crowds so we you know, and so many people saying I haven't been to the Burrell collection for I haven't come since it's been redone. It's like That's good. You know, it's tapping into an audience that might not have visited a subway. So that's what we're quite proud of.

**Gordon Morrison** 47:14

That's great. That's really really great.