

Connecting With You

Membership Survey
2019

Image Credit: Cosmic Collisions, Colin Tennant

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Connecting with You



Image Credit: Enclosure, Robbie Coleman



Membership Survey 2019

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Qualitative Responses

Image Credit: Wigtown Book Festival, Colin Tennant

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Our Thanks To...

- ★ **Our members** for taking part in DGU's Membership Survey. We truly appreciate the many demands on your time and value your commitment and support.

<https://www.dgunlimited.com/membership.html>

- ★ **Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival**, who generously provided tickets to Morna Young's play *Lost at Sea*, presented by Perth Theatre at Horsecross and performed at Easterbrook Hall; well done to Julian Watson, our survey prize draw lucky winner.

<https://www.dgartsfestival.org.uk>

- ★ **Dumfries & Galloway Council**; for its continuing support of our organisation and DG Unlimited's arts funding awards.

<https://www.dumgal.gov.uk>

- ★ **The 'veritable army' who contribute throughout the year** and are passionate about the arts, about making, about their community and about their culture – **creative practitioners; socially engaged practitioners; those involved professionally in supporting and promoting the arts and creative sector; community activists; volunteers and participants.**

Our Organisation

With a growing membership of over 400 creative practitioners and supporters, DG Unlimited (DGU) represents the collective strengths of Dumfries and Galloway's creative sector and other key stakeholders.

DGU's independence and neutrality within the region's creative sector gives it the credibility to work with individual practitioners and all our arts organisations to define sector needs; broker partnerships; meet specific community and artistic needs; exploit areas of mutual interest for public benefit and the creative sector itself.

Membership of DGU is free and open to anyone with an interest in the arts; our services are available to non-members and we find that people often become members once they've engaged in one of our services.

Committed to providing the best advice we can and to champion our region's arts and culture, we draw strength from our members. Individual and collective voices are vitally important to us - they underpin our approach and our plans for the future.



DGU Conference 2019 : CREATIVE ROUTES

"The best thing for me was being able to meet more professionals in the cultural and creative sector and hear how they got to where they are and what they are going to do next"

Image credit: Cate Ross

Our Survey

This, our first survey, was conducted online via Survey Monkey with a direct link on DGU's website membership page. The opportunity to take part was also promoted through our social media platforms; direct communication with our membership; and secondary promotion through other arts organisations.

Divided into 2 sections, **About You** and **About Us**, as with surveys in general there are some anomalies which emerge; we can put this down to the survey being designed and completed by humans! From our learning this year, our next survey will have less open ended questions with an opportunity at the end of the survey to make any additional comments.

We are delighted to share the results of our inaugural membership survey with you all – and encourage you not to wait until next year's survey but to contribute your ideas and feedback on a regular basis.



"I need to work full-time which makes it challenging to develop my writing and storytelling. In my paid employment the main challenge is finding the funding to continue projects and making them sustainable."

Image credit: The Stove, Colin Tennant

"Very grateful DGU exists - it's my main source of arts info in D&G".

Key Findings

Dumfries and Galloway is a region of outstanding natural beauty, attracting people to relocate because of its rurality, inspirational natural environment and breadth of arts activities. Despite additional challenges for our rural area in terms of access and visibility, the region's diverse, dynamic arts sector is acknowledged as playing an important role in its communities and economy.

However, as highlighted in DGU's survey, there remain underlying challenges for practitioners and arts organisations; these also reflect the wider picture for the arts in Scotland. Creative practitioners and professionals are juggling time constraints and financial pressures which in turn impinge on their time to research and develop new work or support practitioners and the wider creative sector.

Our Members

*We had an encouraging response rate of **22%** (92 members) to our first survey; we will improve on this in subsequent years, aiming to achieve above the average response rate for internal surveys (**30 – 40%**).*

72%** of respondents were either **practitioners** or **professionally involved in the arts**; of those, **15%** were **emerging** and **73%** were either **mid-career** or **established with over 20 years practice

***Creative practice and employment in creative industries** is the main source of income for **55%** of responses.*

Of those who described themselves as **creative practitioners**, **18%** were working **part-time** and **9%** working **full-time** in the **Creative Industries** in order to sustain their practice.



Disciplines

Visual Arts/Sculpture - 55%; **Written / Spoken Word** - 42%;
Performance 41% - (**Theatre** 19%; **Music** 16%; **Dance** 6%);
The Creative Industries including Crafts - 45%

Image credit: Eden Festival, Allan Wright

It was difficult to determine how many practitioners worked across more than one discipline as there was no specific category within the survey for cross-art form, which will be added within next year's survey, but the multiple responses indicate there is a significant number of practitioners working in this way.

The region's rurality, low population density within a large geographic area and poor public transport infrastructure create additional challenges for those living and creating in a rural area. Given this, when asked what barriers were faced, it was surprising only **15%** of responses related to **geographical barriers**.



Geographical challenges

- *D & G marginalised by the more mainstream central belt funders.*
- *Difficulty finding long-term work in a rural environment.*
- *Isolation of living in the region.*

Finance ranked highly, selected by **50%** of respondents. Issues included **an overall culture in which the arts and artistic practice were undervalued**, difficulty making a living, finding long-term contracts in the arts or properly funded contracts/commissions. **Skills** and **Time** were also given as concerns by **20%** and **17%** respectively.

More Skills - marketing, promotion and social media

More Time - juggling the other elements required to be a creative practitioner or arts professional



Image credit: Morag MacPherson, Textiles by Kim Ayres Photography

The ‘**in-kind**’ support given across the region’s festivals, exhibitions, events, community and cultural/partner organisations was reflected in the responses of **20%**, who classed themselves as **supporters** of the arts. Many were engaged across various activities and organisations, with **participation** (66%) and **volunteering** (62%) featuring strongly.

Our Performance

Understanding what’s important to practitioners, supporters and service providers of the arts and communicating our purpose remain vital elements in informing DGU’s organisational activities.

Most members approached DGU as a result of **direct contact**; word of mouth, a DGU team member or a friend or colleague featured most strongly in how members had first heard of us.

Survey respondents displayed a **good knowledge of DGU's role**, with overwhelmingly positive responses and comments in relation to its performance. Overall 87% were either **satisfied** (61%) or **very happy** (26%) with what we do; however, further improvement in this area will be given high priority over the coming year.



DGU's Main Role

Advocacy (74%); representation of the creative sector, being an arts network, providing sectoral guidance and advice (between 45% & 52%).

Image credit: Cample Line hosted DGU 'Connecting with You' surgery, Maggie Broadley

Accessibility and **communication** were the **most liked** aspects of DGU (40%); however, conversely **poor communication** was listed as **the least liked** aspect followed by **lack of clarity** and **lack of capacity** by around 30% of respondents. Despite this, there was a level of awareness of our events, particularly our bi-annual conference and content of **our online communications** was rated as either **informative** or **very informative** by the majority of respondents.

"I think you do a great job with limited financial resources - I find your staff helpful".

There was good engagement with respondents in the **'how could we improve'** question with positive, supportive suggestions. A large percentage opted for **Networking events** (71%) closely followed by **Training/CPD** (70%). **Talks/Seminars** (60.27%), **Members' Social Events** (49%) and **Conferences** (41%).

Our Promise

DGU will remain focussed on being open, inclusive and responsive to the needs and views of our members, partner organisations and the wider creative community.

Enable - we will work with the creative sector, building on its collective voice to raise the profile and help the arts flourish. **Influence** - we will champion the arts and creative practitioners vital role within communities, communicating their value to local and national decision-makers.

In response to our members' feedback, this year we will:

- ★ **Improve communication** with our members and supporters; regularly update on our strategic and operational plans and increase our use and the content of our social media presence and website, including broader regional news, opportunities, events listings and workshops across a breadth of art forms.
- ★ **Provide more opportunities** for members and anyone interested in the arts and culture to come together, socialise, share information and be inspired; via regular '**Connecting with You**' drop in events and a quarterly informal '**the Circuit**' event, themed with contributors and areas of interest based on feedback and ongoing discussions with our members/ partners.
- ★ **Increase access to creative and skills development** that is relevant to the arts and creative industries; we will highlight existing support from regional and national organisations whilst creating an online resource with creative and commercial advice.

Facts and Figures



The majority of respondents were either **practitioners** or **professionally involved in the arts** (72%) with the remainder either **supporters** or **other** (28%)

- 44 creative practitioners (49.5% of responses)
- 20 arts professional/technician (22.5% of responses)
- 25 Supporters/Other (28% of responses)

Those respondents who were practitioners, art professionals or technicians were asked to describe where they sat in terms of career development.

- The majority were either **mid-career** or **established with over 20 years practice** (73%).
- Those who were classed as **emerging** (recent graduate/career change/new professional) made up 15% of responses.

As there was no direct question as to age of respondents, it is difficult to say if this reflects an ageing demographic and drain of young people from the region. The relatively small number of non-professionals involved in the survey might also suggest that DGU is seen as an organisation whose activities are geared towards professional artists, arts professionals and technicians.



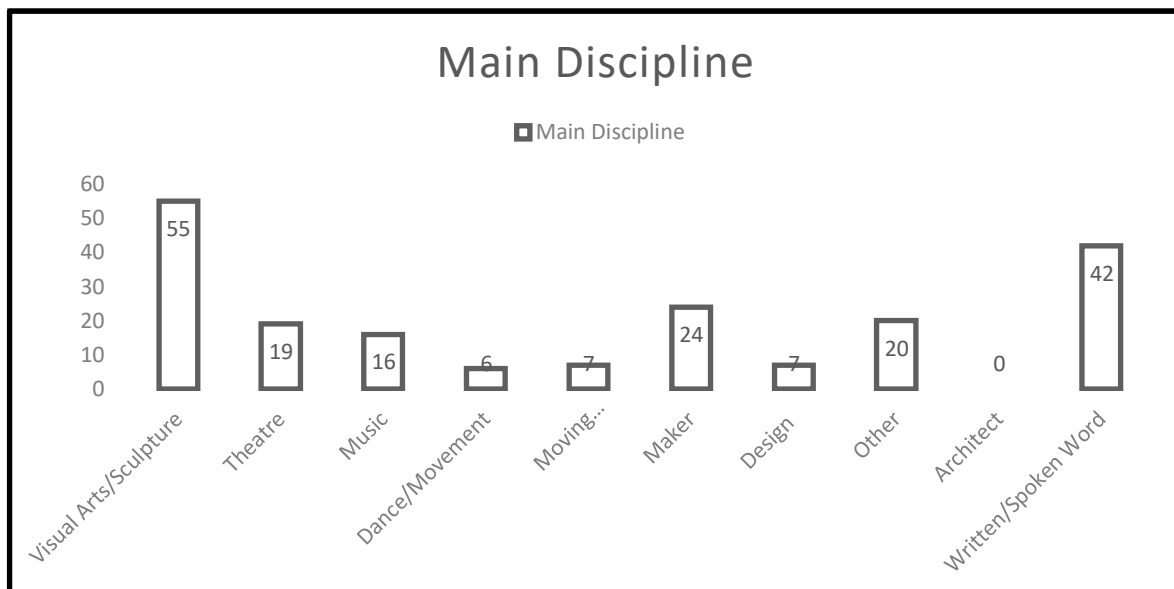
Although only 18 respondents classed themselves as **Supporters** in Question 1, there was a total of 77 responses given in Question 11.

This indicates that **many supporters of the arts are engaged across various activities.**

- 66% of responses were in the **Participants** category.
- 62% of responses were in the **Volunteer** category, which ties in with the high level of in-kind support given across the region's festivals, exhibitions, events, community and cultural/partner organisations.
- 27% were **Board members** or **Trustees**.
- **Funders** and **sponsors** accounted for 18% of responses but no indication of value was attached to their contribution in the survey.
- Drilling down into the qualitative data from 19 responses in the **Other** category, by far the largest group was in the **Social Enterprise** category (58%), followed by **Audience / Visitor** categories (26%).

Questions 1-11: What we know about our members' practice

It was difficult to determine how many practitioners worked across more than one discipline as there was no specific category within the survey for cross-art form.



- **Visual Arts/Sculpture** had most responses (55%) followed by **Written/Spoken Word** (42%).
- However, when taken collectively, the region's performance related art forms (**Theatre** – 19%, **Music** – 16%, **Dance/Movement** – 6%) represent 41% of responses.
- Architecture, Design, Moving image /Film/Animation and Makers/Craft, collectively known as the **Creative Industries**, represent 45% of responses.



Creative practice and **employment in creative industries** is the main source of income for 55% of responses.

Of those who described themselves as **creative practitioners**, the vast majority described themselves as **self-funded** (73%) with 18% working **part-time** and 9% working **full-time** in the **Creative Industries** in order to sustain their practice.

However, when asked about **applying for funding**, 61% of **practitioners** and **arts professionals** have applied for funding to **support their practice or organisation**.



Financial 50%

- Difficulties in being able to make a living
- Falling income
- Finding contracts/properly funded arts commissions
- Short-term contracts in the arts
- Funding
- Sustainability

Lack of Formal Skills Development Opportunities 20%

- Marketing, promotion and social media
- Pricing work and growing sales
- Rapidly developing IT
- Identifying funding
- Writing of funding applications

Time 17%

- Juggling the other elements required to be a creative practitioner or arts professional which in turn
- Reduced time available to respectively research and make new work/develop and support practitioners/the wider creative sector.
- The requirement to work either part-time or full-time in order to sustain professional practice.

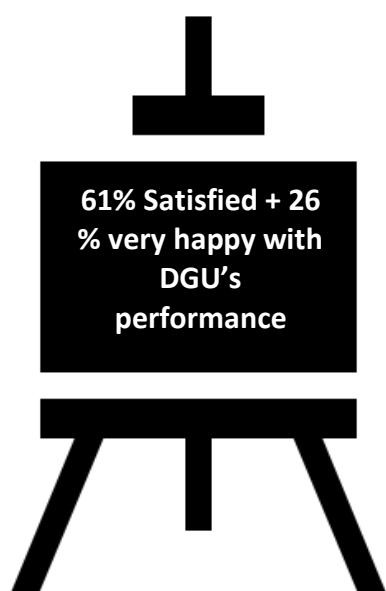
Cultural Barriers 27%,

It was difficult to gauge from the qualitative answers provided what the specifics of these were; this was further compounded by a lack of a specific Equality and Diversity section within the survey, something to include in the future. Some of the responses seem to relate to an **overall culture in which the arts and artistic practice was undervalued** and a **lack of venues/outlets**.

Geographical Barriers 15%

Given the rural location and barriers in terms of transport and communication, it was surprising that only 15% of responses related to geographical barriers. **Having said this, several qualitative answers did stress D & G being marginalised by the more mainstream central belt funders, issues finding long-term work in a rural environment and the isolation of living in the region.**

Questions 12 - 30: What members think about us.



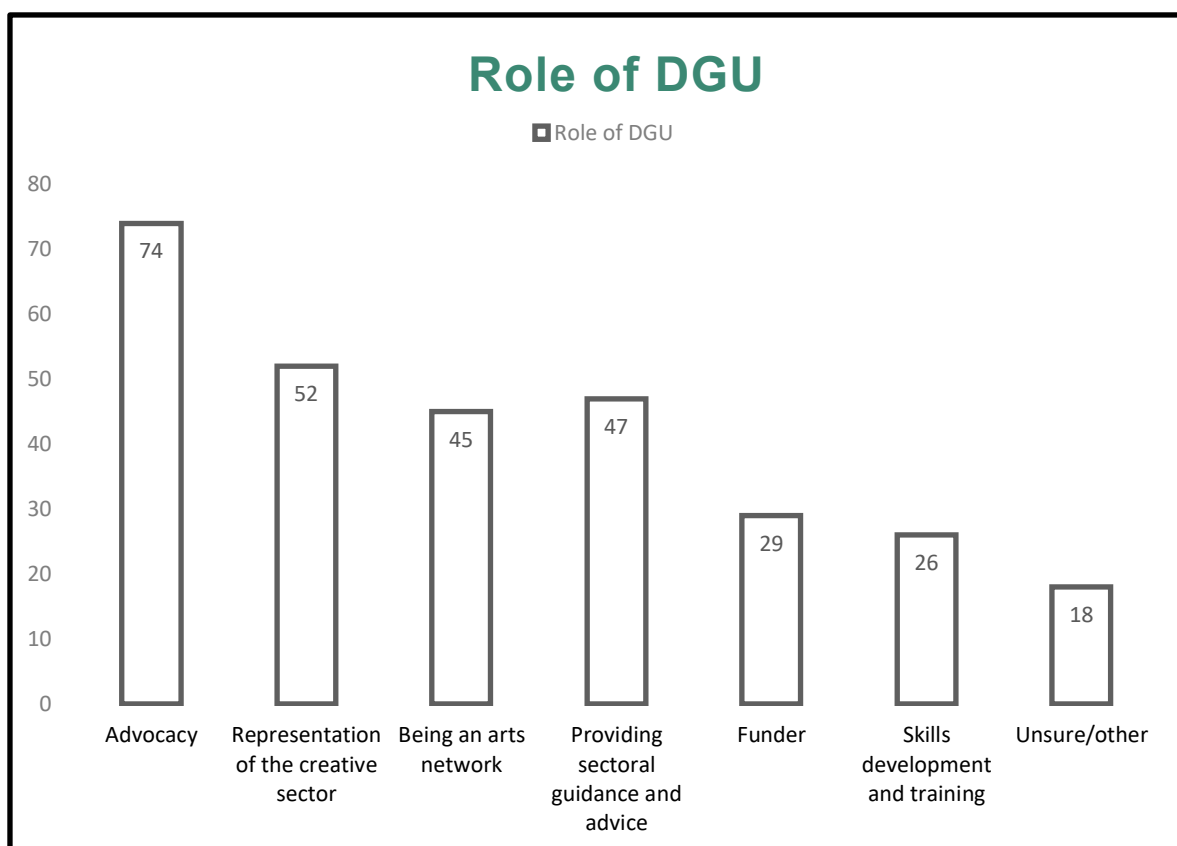
‘One-to-one’ direct contact was the way most members heard of us, via unspecified **word of mouth** (37%); a **DGU team member** (33%); a **friend or colleague** (24%).

Direct contact also featured strongly in the 18% of responses in the **other** category:

- Grassroots involvement
- Professional engagement
- Participation at a DGU event
- Signpost from other organisations
- DGU pARTners Group

Responses indicate further work is required on promoting DGU via our online platforms and the media, with **Social Media** at 18%, our **website** at 16% and **press coverage** at 5%.

Responses indicated a good knowledge of DGU's role.



- **87%** were either '**satisfied**' (61%) or '**very happy**' with our performance (26%) but 13% were either '**not satisfied**' or '**very unsatisfied**'; again, there is room to improve the percentage of members '**very happy**' and reduce those '**not satisfied**'.
- **33%** of respondents have already '**recommended membership**' of DGU to others; **60%** respondents would either be '**very likely**' (35%) or would '**maybe**' recommend membership (25%).

What we did well and where we can improve.



Accessibility and **communication** were both seen as the most positive aspects of DGU (**40%**), with **helpfulness, events and advice** and **broad creative remit** all achieving 16% of responses. Surprisingly, with finance high on members' list of concerns, only 8% selected **funding provider**.

Poor communication was listed as the **least liked** aspect of DGU (35%), followed by **lack of clarity** (33%) then

lack of capacity (30%). Qualitative comments also mentioned the perception that much activity was **Dumfries centred** and that there was **a lack of insight, relevancy, and inclusivity**.

Having said communication was an issue, there was still a high level of overall awareness of **DGU's events** (76%) , with its **conference** scoring 51% and its **Connecting with You Surgeries** and **AGM** scoring 11% and 10% respectively.

When asked to **rate the content of DGU's bi-weekly E-bulletin**, there was an overwhelmingly positive view of its content.

- No responses noted in the **No relevance** or **Little informative content**
- **Some good** (31%), **Informative** (45%) or **Very informative content** (24%).



Similarly, when rating DGU's **website** responses to its content were positive.

- **Some good content** (27%) and being either **informative** (43%) or **very informative** (16%).
- There were responses in the **no relevance** and **little relevance**, but these were still low, with a combined percentage of 6%.

E-bulletin - whilst 23% of responses considered it to be 'good as it is', most responses felt it could be improved by including more information overall (49%) with requests for:

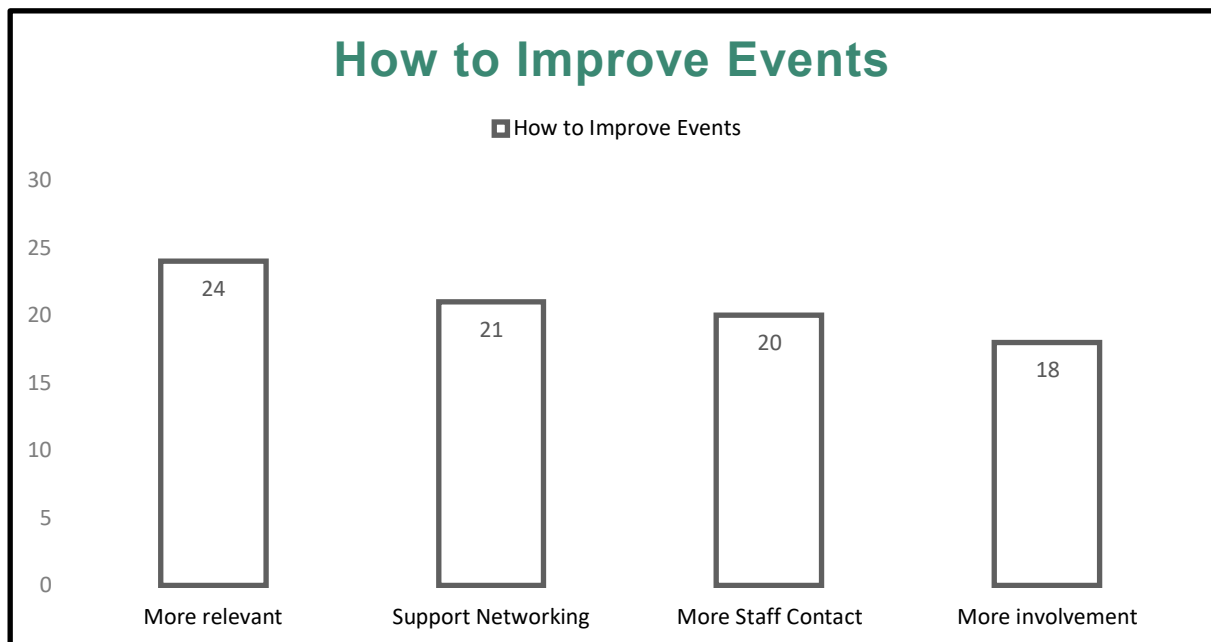


- **Broader regional news** (26%)
- **More information on exhibitions and workshops** as well as **DGU news feedback** (23% each)
- **Funding opportunities** and **more grassroots** each scored 21%
- **Guest blogger** and **creative map** each attracted the lowest percentages at 6% and 2% respectively.

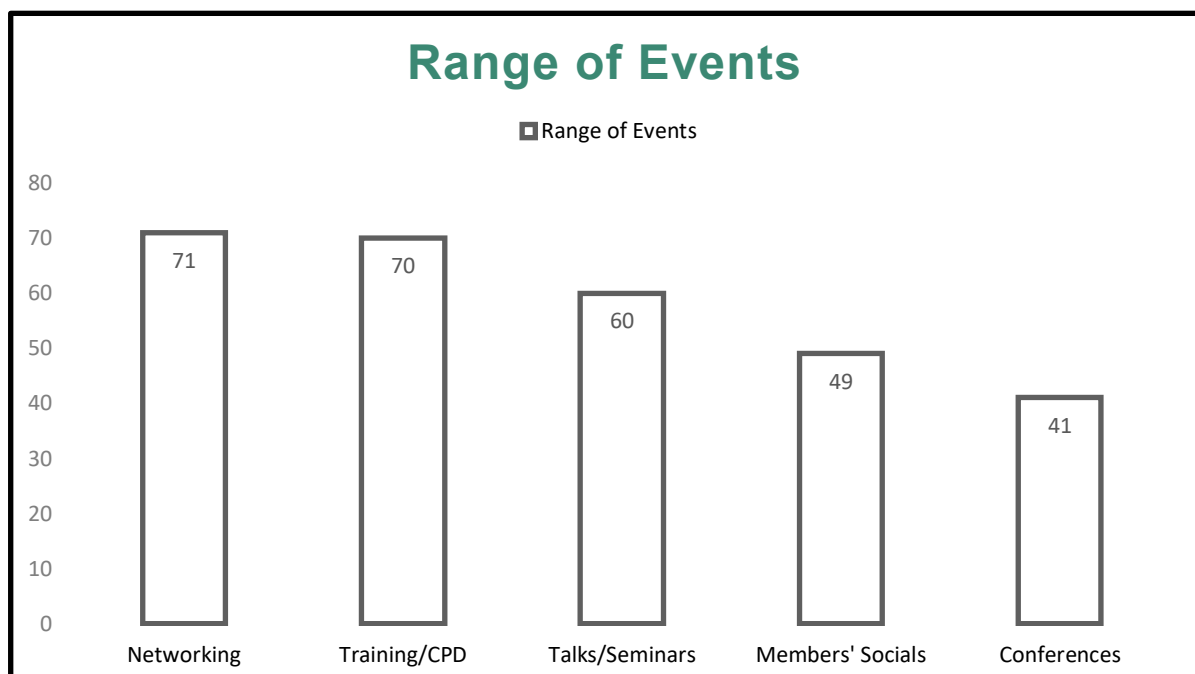
Website - 10% felt it was **fine as it is** whilst a significant percentage **not sure how to improve it** (52%). Suggested improvements were:

- Make it **more relevant** (26%) with **connected links** (19%).
- **Re-make it** (5%) and include **videos** (2.38%).

Social Media – 75% of responses wanted more posts relating to **events, exhibitions and festivals**, 52% suggested more **volunteering opportunities** and 71% suggested **Arts related news**. 21% selected **other**; analysis of the qualitative data showed the majority favoured more posts relating to **workshops** (40%), **multi-discipline opportunities** (27%) and **Member's news** (20%).



Events – for those aware of our events (37%), the most cited improvements were to have them be **More relevant** (24%), with **Support networking** (21%), **More staff contact** (20%) and **More involvement** (18%).



When asked what type of events would they like to see in the future, a large percentage opted for **Networking events** (71%) closely followed by **Training/CPD** (70%). **Talks/Seminars** (60.27%), **Members' Social Events** (49%) and **Conferences** (41%) were also popular choices.

Our final question asked **if there was anything else they wanted to say?**.

- *Thank you for the work you do.*
 - *Been involved since early years and overall feel disconnected beyond our very good local DGU person.*
 - *Board member of Moniaive and District Arts Association and Classic Summer Music, based in Moniaive and 5 years ago was founder of the Glencairn Quilting Group which has participated in exhibitions and also raises substantial funds for charity.*
 - *Is your work shared with other Authorities? What are they doing in South Lanarkshire which we could do in D&G for example?*
 - *If you would like to talk to me about this survey, or my skill set. Please feel free to email me.*
 - *It's time to wind DGU down.*
 - *Very grateful DGU exists - it's my main source of arts info in D&G.*
 - *Great work!*
 - *It's good to know you're there.*
 - *Only that I'm very glad you exist, and that I will try and make more use of you.*
 - *Thank you.*
 - *It would help if smaller theatres could cooperate to book live events from outside the area to give the performers the chance of a mini tour in D&G.*
 - *Keep up the good work.*
 - *Please, some new faces on the board.*
 - *I think you do a great job with limited financial resources - I find your staff helpful.*
 - *No, keep up the good work.*
-

Connecting with You



WELCOME TO SANCTUARY 2014

EXPLORING THE UNSEEN AND INBETWEEN

THE DARK OUTSIDE FM HQ
A 24-hour radio station. Tune into the heart of artwork sound. Tune into the heart of the crowd at the broadcast of the 2014 Murrey's Monument, and see a view.

THE ROSSER BENCHES
A series of benches, each with a different story. The benches are made of wood and metal, and are located in a park. The benches are made of wood and metal, and are located in a park. The benches are made of wood and metal, and are located in a park.

THE DARK STAR LOUNGE
All day. Listen to The Dark Outside FM HQ. The Dark Outside FM HQ. The Dark Outside FM HQ.

THE SCREEN
A 24-hour radio station. Tune into the heart of artwork sound. Tune into the heart of the crowd at the broadcast of the 2014 Murrey's Monument, and see a view.

DUAL SCREENS
A 24-hour radio station. Tune into the heart of artwork sound. Tune into the heart of the crowd at the broadcast of the 2014 Murrey's Monument, and see a view.

THE FIELD
A 24-hour radio station. Tune into the heart of artwork sound. Tune into the heart of the crowd at the broadcast of the 2014 Murrey's Monument, and see a view.

ENCLOSURE
A 24-hour radio station. Tune into the heart of artwork sound. Tune into the heart of the crowd at the broadcast of the 2014 Murrey's Monument, and see a view.

A full programme with details of all artists & events is available in The Dark Star Lounge & at The Dark Outside HQ. For latest news on '2014' please see blackboard.

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Image Credit: Sanctuary

Connecting with You



Image Credit: Enclosure, Robbie Coleman

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