

Scottish Poetry Library

BUSINESS PLAN 2022-25

OUR VISION

The Scottish Poetry Library is a charitable organisation committed to collecting and presenting Scotland's poetic works. In other words, we are the nation's bookshelf for poetry: a unique, inclusive place that inspires creativity, nurtures talent, supports learning and literacy, and fosters and promotes well-being.

OUR MISSION

We bring people and poems together through lending books, developing creative writing practice, facilitating shared reading experiences and showcasing poets. We celebrate and share poetry by engaging diverse audiences in our building and across Scotland through a programme of activities, commissions and partnership projects. We recognize that Scotland is home to a plurality of cultures, languages and communities, and that we and the poetry sector make an important contribution not only to how the country sees itself but also to how others see us.

OUR VALUES

- We are **enthusiastic** about poetry and creating possibilities for connecting people with poetry in all its forms.
- The SPL is for everybody; we are **positive and welcoming**, and committed to promoting underrepresented voices.
- We seek out creative connections, **actively listen and learn**, and encourage exchange between different communities.
- We are **forward looking, dynamic, and imaginative** about better ways to do things. We value our unique resources and always look for how best to deploy them.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC DRIVERS

- a) Scottish Libraries & Information Council - [Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy, 2021-2025](#)
- b) The Scottish Government - [A Culture Strategy for Scotland, 2020](#)
- c) Strategic Review of Irish-Scottish Relations – [Bilateral Review 2020](#)
- d) Creative Scotland - [10-Year Plan 2014-2024: Unlocking Potential Embracing Ambition](#)
- e) Creative Carbon Scotland - [Developing Your Environmental Policy, 2020](#)
- f) Wellbeing Information Framework (NHS Scotland & SLIC) – [Health on the Shelf](#)

CITY/REGION STRATEGIC DRIVERS

- a) City of Edinburgh Council Literature Consortium - [Third Party Cultural Grants Funding Review](#)

OUR FOCUS

We have identified three key pillars of work where we will focus our energy over the lifespan of this business plan. We will invest in and develop the SPL as:

- I. **A sanctuary for well-being**, working with public library and health sector partners to support creative words for well-being activity and health literacy resources. Much of this work will support the national recovery from the pandemic.
- II. **An inspiring place for people of from all walks of life**, working with our ambassadors, city makers, festivals and arts organisations to help grow our reach and showcase talent.

- III. **The lead organisation in Scotland for creating pathways to poetry**, working in partnership with learning providers, youth groups and community organisations to commission poets and engage in creative programmes.

These pillars are interlinked, and much of the work will flow from one to another. Projects will not be developed in isolation, but will complement and enhance each other, with clear development and progression.

OUR KEY PRIORITIES

1. We are unique resource of excellence in poetry.
2. We nurture creative language and language skills (into areas of wellbeing).
3. We widen access and mainstream diversity and equalities across the SPL.
4. We engage with national and international partners and audiences.
5. We are a strong and resilient organisation.

OPERATING PLAN 2022-2025

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITY	TARGETS/OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
PRIORITY 1: WE ARE A UNIQUE RESOURCE OF EXCELLENCE IN POETRY			
1. To build and sustain Scotland's poetry resources, reflecting our collections policy and digital strategy	a) Strengthen partnership with network of poetry libraries.	Facilitate/attend three meetings a year to review best practice and develop services reflecting each library's unique resources. (2022-25).	The combined offer of the network adds a wider range of services and resources for customers.
	b) Review design and functionality of the website.	Redesign of website implemented (3Q to 4Q 2022). Qualitative feedback from users is positive.	Users have a better experience of online engagement with the SPL.
2. To be an authoritative provider of poetry services.	Review and streamline the shortlisting and selection process for Best Scottish Poems online anthology.	Revised project-planning model for Best Scottish Poems rolled out in 2023.	Through BSP, the SPL is valued as a dependable voice on good writing.
3. To make our collections accessible through a variety of platforms and channels.	Promote engagement with new archive of historic recordings that were digitized from tapes and reels.	Minimum of 1K unique users per year access the sound archive (2022-25).	Audiences acquire better understanding & appreciation of the poetry of Scotland's past
PRIORITY 2: WE NURTURE CREATIVITY & LANGUAGE SKILLS ACTIVITY			
4. To engage with schools to enable teachers, school librarians and young	Develop a pilot children's programme with Royal Mile Primary	4 class activities in the library or school per year (2022-25).	Children feel more confident in engaging with poetry.

people to enjoy poetry.	School		
5. To provide informal learning opportunities at the SPL and online for people of all ages and abilities.	Further develop our in-person and online programme through commissions and co-delivery.	a) Commission 3 poet-practitioner writing/reading workshops for adults per year (2022-25). b) Continue to provide a welcoming space for in-person and online writing groups (The School of Poets, U3A)	Participants develop their skills through meaningful exchanges with poets.
6. To strengthen relationships with public health bodies.	Continue to support the roll-out of the provision of health literacy information.	Facilitate at least one training opportunity per year for librarians and Third-sector staff (2022-25)	The knowledge and understanding of the benefits of health literacy grows for professionals and service users.
PRIORITY 3: WE WIDEN ACCESS AND MAINSTREAM DIVERSITY			
7. To extend our reach across Scotland.	a) Work with our poetry ambassadors to develop new written/online commissions and activities in their locales. b) Establish a Next Generation Makars initiative, working with Edin City of Lit and city makars group.	20 new poems commissioned per year. (2022-25) NG Makars appointed for commissions in English, Scots, and Scottish Gaelic (annually)	Writers across Scotland feel better connected to the SPL. Young people's talent is developed, and their work is given a national platform.
8. To grow our Scottish Gaelic and Scots language audiences.	Work with key strategic partners, e.g., Gaelic Books Council, to recognise excellence in poetry writing.	a) Sponsor Gaelic and Scots language poetry book prizes. (annually) b) Celebrate Scots Leid through commissioning new resources, e.g., Burns Night	Scottish Gaelic and Scot language communities feel a closer affinity to the SPL. Giving voice to our national poet and Scots.
9. To create pathways into poetry for people from diverse backgrounds.	Build on new partnerships with Africa in Motion (BAME), Capability Scotland	Commission one new programme activity per year with partners. (2022-25)	The SPL's commitment to diversifying audiences and participation is

	(Disability), CILIPS (LGBT).		reinforced.
PRIORITY 4: WE ENGAGE WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS			
10. To support the programme of the national Makar.	Manage engagement requests and the Makar's external communications.	Quarterly Blog produced to update the public on the official Makar programme. (2022-25)	The public's understanding and appreciation of the work of the Makar is enhanced.
11. To be the partner of choice for national and international poetry-led projects.	Partner with Scottish Government Hubs for inclusion of poets in their cultural programmes.	At least one engagement per year with ScotGov Hubs. (2022-25)	Poetry continues to grow as a vehicle for cultural diplomacy.
12. To partner with professional unions and bodies to provide their members and graduates with poetry books.	Continue the Tools of the Trade sponsored publications for gifting to graduating professionals.	At least two new collections or editions in a series are published with the financial support of unions and professional bodies. (2022-25).	Graduating professionals and their representative bodies advocate for poetry as an art form that supports empathy and resilience.
PRIORITY 5: WE ARE A STRONG AND RESILIENT ORGANISATION			
13. To continue to be funded as a nationally significant cultural institution	Submission of RFO application (22/23). (Contingency plan for unsuccessful outcome.)	Continuation funding for core activity secured for 2023-26.	Poetry is recognised as a valued art form, with the SPL regarded as a key national agency.
14. To continue to generate income from commercial activity.	Manage a portfolio of ancillary activity e.g., retail, venue hire, Friends-scheme and programmes.	Generate additional core-funding revenue over the lifespan of the business plan. (2022-25)	Sustainable financial health for the SPL.
15. To nurture and support professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers.	In line with our People Strategy, seek our training and development opportunities managed/delivered by partner agencies.	Externally managed training/sabbatical opportunities are made available to staff (2022-25)	The SPL continues to be recognised as a good employer, and one that supports career development.
16. To build a strong organisation through good governance.	Update our governance documents to reflect good practice and latest legislation.	Commission a governance expert to lead on the review and make recommendations(22)	Our funders and members retain confidence that the organisation is on a sound footing.

