

THE COMMUNITY VAULTS

PROJECT
REPORT

2021-2022





REMARKS FROM THE PRESIDENT FOR BETTER BALLYMUN DAY

"I WISH TO COMMEND, IF I MAY, AN EXEMPLARY LOCAL PROJECT KNOWN AS THE COMMUNITY VAULT WHICH IS LED BY AXIS. THIS COMMUNITY ARTS PROGRAMME IS MAKING A UNIQUE ARCHIVE, A MEMORY BANK AS TO HOW THE PLACES IN WHICH WE LIVE HAVE CHANGED OVER THE LAST FIFTY YEARS, INCLUDING HOW NATURE AND PEOPLE HAVE GROWN TOGETHER, OR APART, HOW WE MAY HAVE MOVED FROM ACTIVE TO PASSIVE IN SO MANY ASPECTS OF LIFE. I AM DELIGHTED THAT IT CONTINUES TO REPORT GREAT SUCCESS, ATTRACTING LOCALS AND VISITORS ALIKE"





REFLECTION FROM
NIAMH NI
CHONCHUBHAIR
AXIS DIRECTOR

"COMMUNITY VAULTS AS A PROJECT WAS A MOMENT OF GRADUAL YET SEISMIC TRANSFORMATION FOR AXIS - AS AN ORGANIZATION AND AS A TEAM. IT TOOK MORE EFFORT, TIME AND THINKING THAN WE INITIALLY THOUGHT, BUT IT CONNECTED US CREATIVELY, AS A COMMUNITY AND AS INDIVIDUALS, WITH BALLYMUN AS A PLACE OF WONDER; OF WEEDS AND TREES AND NOT ENOUGH TREES, AS A PLACE OF PEOPLE, WHO CARE ABOUT THEIR COMMUNITY AND THEIR CLIMATE. THE LEGACY OF THIS PROJECT ON INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNAL LEVELS CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED."





SUMMARY

The Community Vaults project has had a number of different designs both within and beyond the Cultural Adaptations Project. The themes of the Dublin City Climate Action Plan informed the ideas at work in this final version.

This Community Vault had a specific focus on:

- Intergenerational engagement in climate conversations.
- Creating an audit of the hopes of the community in respect to the future of their environment.
- Engagement with artists and designers involved in direct climate action using creative approaches to broach difficult subjects such as biodiversity loss and flood risk.

This work culminated in a programme that spanned three specific processes including an eight week engagement with a core group of participants (2 Elders, 2 Middle age people and 2 students); five days of interviews across the wider Ballymun Community; and an interactive exhibition which ran from 1st February to 17 March.





THE CORE PROGRAMME

15th Oct - Introduction Session (Zoom)

22nd Oct - Anthotype printing with Kasia Kaminska

Nov 5th - The New Biodiversity Plan for Ballymun discussed with a local expert, examining old maps and making new ones.

Nov 12th - Creating your own Rain Garden with Kaethe Burt O'Dea

Nov 19th - Planning for what you'd like to include in the vault. Deciding what memory, place or idea is worth capturing for the archive.

Nov 26th - Making the Vault filming with core group.

December 5th - 9th Filming in the community

"I LOVE THAT THE VAULT
IS A LIVING THING THAT
WE CAN ACCESS AND
RETURN TO"

NIAMH NI
CHONCHUBHAIR
AXIS DIRECTOR



THE DOCUMENTARY

Filmed by award-winning documentary filmmaker Alex Gill and Directed by Maeve Stone.

Nov 26th - Making the Vault and filming with core group.

December 5th - 9th Filming in the community:

- Boules Club at Poppintree Community Centre
- Trinity Comprehensive School
- Axis artists and staff
- The Mens Shed
- Muck and Magic
- The GAP gardens and team
- Setanta GAA
- Singing Group

The final running time for the film is 32 minutes.

"WATCHING THE FILM
ON THE SCREEN IN THE
THEATRE WAS A VERY
MOVING AND
IMPORTANT MOMENT
FOR ME. THE FILM
DELIVERED ON ITS
ROLE AS A COMMUNITY
VAULT"

- AIFRIC NÍ RUAIRC
AXIS STAFF

WATCH IT
HERE

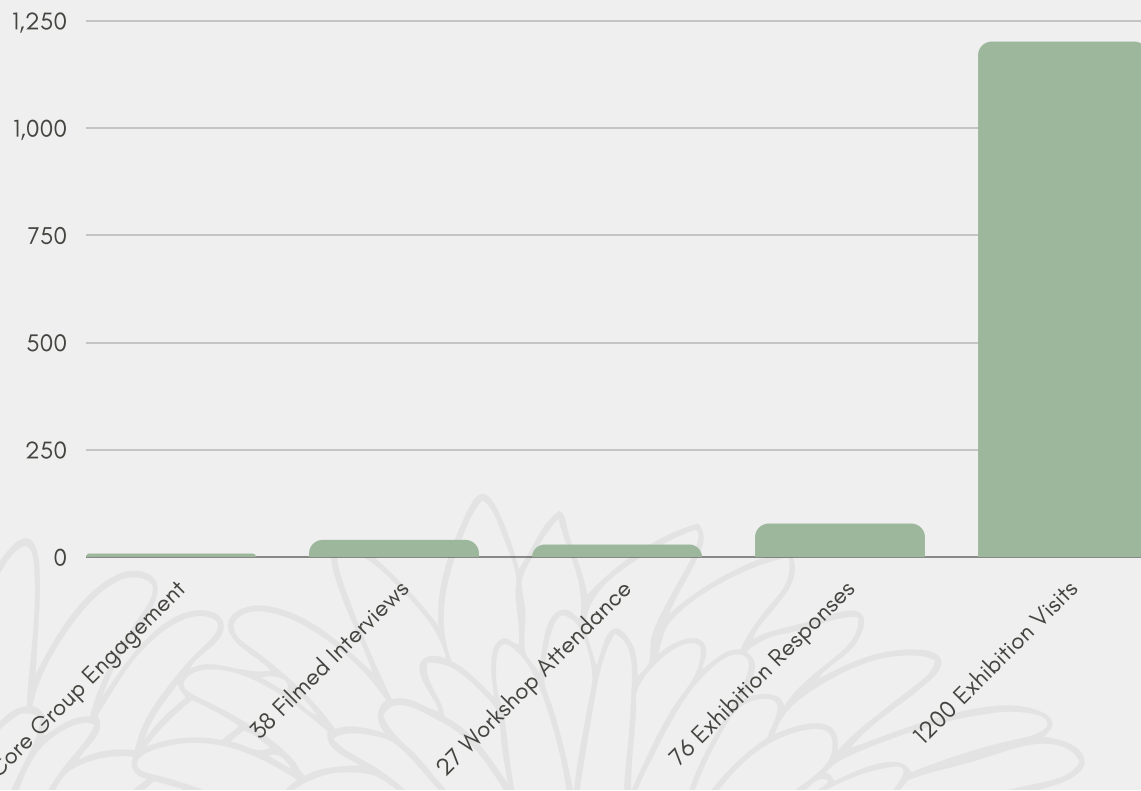


THE EXHIBITION AND WORKSHOPS

The Community Vaults Exhibition ran from 1st February - 17th March 2022 and included:

- Introductory posters to explain the origins of Community Vaults and credit the funders and stakeholders.
- Anthotypes and photographs by participants
- Local Wild Weeds collected and displayed by Kasia Kaminska
- A map of what the community would like Ballymun to be based on interview answers created by Maeve Stone
- A projection of filmed interviews with a wide cross-section of the community created by Alex Gill and Maeve Stone
- An interactive station to encourage contributions to the map, nominations for local heroes and story collection for memory of the local space.
- An in person Anthotype workshop with Kasia Kaminska and short foraging videos with Feebee Foran.
- The launch included a Bridget's Cross making workshop with live music and tea and scones.





ENGAGEMENT

The key learnings around engagement include:

1. Buy in from the community takes a huge amount of preparatory work to establish relationships and investment. Working in a creative capacity can peak interest for groups that aren't already connected or invested in environmental issues.
2. Community Engagement has an advantage if the facilitators of a project meet the community in its own space first.
 - a. In person connection and pitching by Clodagh Duggan at Trinity Comprehensive was vital for the successful subscription of the young people involved in the project.
 - b. A project of this nature relies heavily on the discreet networks which are created and maintained by the organisation. In this instance the local knowledge of Aifric O'Rourke was invaluable.
3. Zoom is a challenging format for intergenerational work as young people are instructed to remain unseen and muted when interacting with unfamiliar adults.
 - a. Covid adaptations have some advantages - the zoom engagements were well attended but the transfer to real life attendance did not materialise.
 - b. Using complimentary software like Padlet or Miro can help to structure an engaged creative conversation when using zoom in a larger group.



LEARNINGS

- A positive and active approach to climate conversation is more effective.
- Art as a medium or frame through which to view harder topics like biodiversity loss makes it easier to open up the conversation for people.
 - The weed wander which precipitated the anothotype workshop reframed the wild spaces that exist in Ballymun for participants and also provided an opportunity to learn the names, value and function of weeds outside of the dominant gardening paradigms Their value as a part of an interdependent local ecosystem was something that fostered curiosity and conversation in this week and also again in the biodiversity week. As a result several of the participants have planted local wildflower seeds at their own homes.
 - Kaethe-Burt O'Dea led a workshop on the value and function of rain planters before leading the group on a discovery walk to establish where such mitigation approaches might have a positive impact. The site that was identified was the plaza at the Garda station and this has seeded a future project where we will work with the group and the Garda station to install a rain planter on site. This direct action has emerged from their engagement and all participants were eager to remain involved in this evolution.

"THE POINT OF TRANSFORMATION FOR ME WAS WITNESSING PEOPLE VISIT THE EXHIBITION AND SEEING THEIR EYES LIGHT UP TO SEE AND FEEL VOICES AND IDEAS FROM THE COMMUNITY LEAP FROM THE WALL. CONSTRUCTIVE AND WITH A SENSE OF PRIDE."

- NIAMH NI
CHONCHUBHAIR



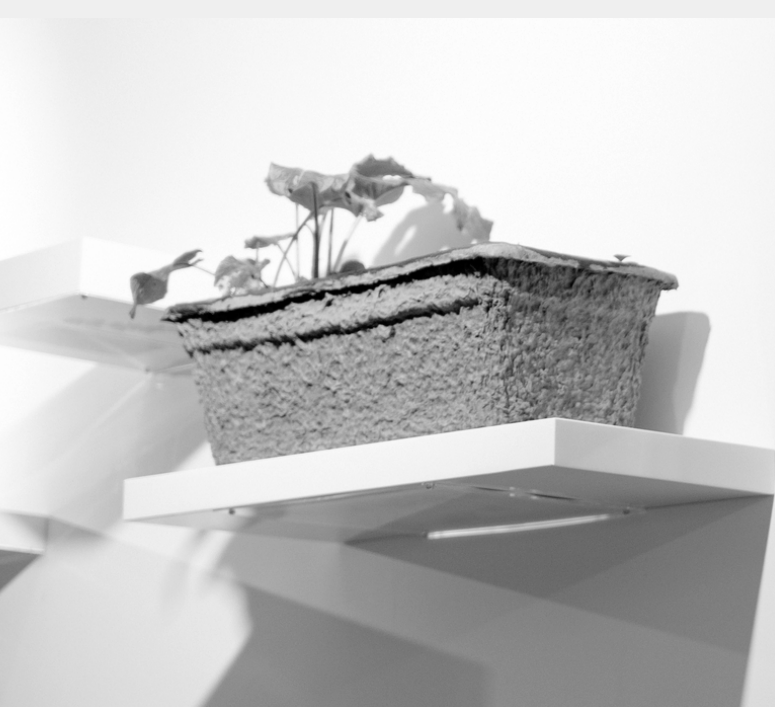
CONNECTIONS

Organisational connections were created over the course of Community Vaults between:

- Axis and GAP
- Axis, Maeve Stone and Trinity Comprehensive; a conversation which has precipitated further plans for work this year.
- Kaethe Burt-O’Dea and the Garda Station Water Planter. An application for support to design and deliver these planters in collaboration with the local men’s shed and Trinity Comprehensive.
- Connecting the Vault to Better Ballymun Day could have strong potential going forward.
- The value exchange between generations and the critical need for reconnecting the past with the present in order to establish a safe future.
- The biodiversity survey for Ballymun has established that a network of hedges in the ‘M50 lands’ which are located between Ikea/Decathlon and the M50 slip roads are hundreds of years old and likely the hedges from which Ballymun gets its name as “Baile na Muine” or Town of the Shrubland. The memory within a living generation or the space as farmland (Albert Farm) was a way that those currently involved in projects like Muck and Magic and the GAP gardens could see their own work in the context of a living history.

"THERE IS A MIX OF FEAR AND HOPE IN THE COMMUNITY FOR THE FUTURE AND FOR NATURE. AND I THINK LETTING IT BE ACCESSED GENTLY AND THROUGH CHATS, AND WORKSHOPS WAS THE PERFECT WAY TO BEGIN THE CONVERSATION"

CLODAGH DUGGAN
AXIS STAFF



CHALLENGES

- Defining the project in simple terms that are easily and quickly understood.
- Reaching enough people with the initial callout .
- Limited access to local networks as artists coming in from other contexts
- Covid hesitancy
- Engagement with young people; the timing of the workshops on a Friday evening may have been less appealing to young people.

"THERE IS A HUGE INTEREST IN THE ISSUES AND TOPICS COVERED WITHIN THE PROJECT - FROM BIODIVERSITY, HISTORY, POLITICAL LANDSCAPE, LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER AND IMPROVING COMMUNITY WELL BEING - THIS PROJECT COULD BE SCALED UP WITH THE DESERVED INTEREST WITH THE ABOVE KNOWLEDGE AND FEEDBACK APPLIED."

- KATE O'NEILL,
AXIS STAFF

NEXT STEPS

- Digitally archiving submissions to the vault and map.
- Designing Community Vault 2023 built on from the pilot project.