

2023 - 2024



brag

Enterprising People, Sustaining Communities

# ANNUAL REPORT



[BRAG.CO.UK](http://BRAG.CO.UK)

# CHAIRS REPORT

BRAG is now 35 years old. Who would have foreseen this all those years ago, from humble beginnings when it was established to help the people of the Benarty area in Central Fife that it would now be the organisation that has grown into a major provider of help and support to several local communities in the fields of regeneration and employment support. With our commitment to helping disadvantaged communities become more prosperous we are a leading proponent of developing a better future for all in our nation.

The skills development along with the incredible amount of support we provide for small business and entrepreneurs around the region is recognised by many as being the way forward in these economically troubled times, I can see that the problems we are addressing in the Fife region are replicated around the country and I personally promote and relay our business model to other regions who are also experiencing hardship and closures along with cutbacks in public services.

The BRAG team are not just developing the way forward for local people in Fife but are in fact trailblazing a concept that can and will develop other regions along similar lines.

To my fellow Trustees and to the BRAG team I can only give my best wishes to you all for the sterling work you carry out for the benefit of those less fortunate than ourselves.

**David Piper**  
Chairman



# MANAGING DIRECTORS REPORT

It's hard to believe that the charity has now been in operation for over 35 years. From its early beginnings in Benarty when it was seen as a pathfinder that led to a brand-new approach referred to as 'social enterprise' to today where we continue to innovate and have expanded to help more and more impoverished people and the communities they live in.

Throughout the years it has definitely had its highs and lows but the organisation has continued to play a critical role in supporting local communities and none more so than now during this extended cost of living crisis. The impact of Brexit and the war in Ukraine have been cited by government as the causes of this, although National Government policy may not have helped. Regardless of the reasons, the effects have clearly put huge pressures on the people we support. We see the depressing impact of this on a daily basis and I take pride in the fact that yet again we have managed to provide the level of support we have, whilst also dealing with our own limited resources and standstill budgets. We have seen huge increases in our own operational costs and it's a credit to the team for stepping up and making the most of what limited resources we have then had to hand. I give thanks to our staff and stakeholders but also credit my fellow Trustees for their continued diligence and support.

The recent evaluation by Social Value Lab summarised in this report was a joy to read as it clearly evidences the impact we make in the communities we support and really goes to show what good work we are doing, day in and day out. Well done Team BRAG!

**Brian Robertson-Fern**  
Managing Director



# 2023-24 IMPACT



## ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE EMPLOYABILITY & TRAINING

Our employability provision is still our largest workload and core business and we continue to have a huge impact across Fife working closely with our Fife-ETC partners where it's appropriate.

Over the year BRAG delivered our No One Left Behind (NOLB) Spring Forward (Adult) and Bright Futures (19-24) provision as part of our joint offer that is Fife wide and that covers all the strands of the employability pathway. The funding is both No One Left Behind (NOLB) and the UK Government's Shared Prosperity albeit both are commissioned via Opportunities Fife Partnership.

### OUTCOMES 2023-24 (BRAG ONLY FIGURES)

<b>No One Left Behind</b>	209 registrations
	85 into work
	361 PILs (Personal Involvement Logs)
<b>Shared Prosperity</b>	126 registrations
	65 into work
	215 PILs

As in previous years, BRAG continued to provide ongoing support to both the clients we registered and those who would benefit from our wide, varied and innovative employability and personal growth, interventions.

During the 2023-2024 year, we continued to deliver our support in person and online, as 1-2-1 sessions and in groups. We also focused on a new and very popular self-employment workshop in partnership with our Fife-ETC partners, Kingdom Works.





# ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

## EMPLOYABILITY & TRAINING

### SELF-EMPLOYMENT CASE STUDY MAY 2024

#### BG – OUTDOOR INSTALLATIONS

*BG self-referred himself to our No-One Left Behind Spring Forward programme regarding specialist self-employment support. At the point he referred himself, BG, 42, was living in homeless accommodation in Glenrothes called The Arch, and he was struggling financially on Universal Credit and picking up shifts here and there with friends building outdoor installations.*

*BG knew that if he was able to get his own tools and equipment, instead of relying on his friends, he would be able to undertake the work he had been doing on his own on a self-employed basis, and he would be able to bring in his own work by advertising himself. Through our programme, we helped BG get fully set up and to make a discretionary fund application to help him get the tools and equipment required. He has now got up and running himself and is working Monday – Friday all round central and east Scotland, and he has also moved into permanent accommodation. He is self-sustainable, and just a month after starting he received no Universal Credit due to his earnings from self-employment.*

*BG is looking to help others in the medium/ longer term by employing them to help with bigger jobs he undertakes, and he already has someone who regularly works on jobs with him.*

We also delivered pre recruitment retail drives for Tesco and Marks and Spencer's whilst also continuing to provide confidence building, early engagement sessions through Art Therapy, pottery, cycling and walk and talk groups. We supplied travel tickets and travel training across all groups and supported those with low mood and anxiety. When ready we completed interview preparation for work ready clients.

We continued to provide advice and guidance to those with an offending background, completing letters of disclosure and support with job searching, ensuring that the field of employment chosen is appropriate to the background and that unachievable goals aren't encouraged.

Our achievements against our targets continuing to be at the highest end of delivery for our funders at Opportunities Fife and our ongoing funded provision is an example of the excellent work the teams have achieved.



# STEM ACTIVITIES

F24 at Auchmuty High School - This project with Auchmuty High School is now coming to an end for the current school year and it's been a very busy year, final preparations are taking place ahead of the teams race event at East Fortune on 9 May 2024. We have been lucky enough to partner with Leviton who have provided invaluable support in the form of engineers on site working with the young people as well as much needed funding and an insight into the STEM industry through workplace visits and opportunities for work placements and apprenticeships once the programme is complete. All the pupils involved have relished this opportunity as an alternative learning program, and have demonstrated initiative, practical skills, problem solving and team working, throughout the project. The team have been supported to develop the kit car from design to fabrication and then testing, as well as this, they also had to produce a portfolio of their work. The team have also been involved in other STEM activities enabling them to achieve a Youth Achievement Award. Youth 1st have supported this element throughout the programme.

## IMPACT STATEMENTS

*"This initiative is aimed at pupil's that weren't engaging in education and furthest from achieving, to provide them with a sense of purpose and motivation. All the pupils involved have relished this opportunity as an alternative learning program, and have demonstrated initiative, practical skills, problem solving and team working, throughout the project."*

**Derek O'Brien**

**PT - Developing the Young Workforce, Teacher of Craft Design and Technology, Auchmuty High School**

*"F24 offers an opportunity to young people that are not engaging in 'conventional' education by introducing them into how science, technology and engineering can be applied in a practical and tangible way. As well as this, it affords opportunities to have 'toolbox talks' about the impact of offending on the victims, communities as well as themselves. This culminates in an experience that provides opportunities to enhance life skills such as; communication, team working, resilience, creative thinking/curiosity and builds on their motor skills."*

*The positive impact of this has been noticed, with Auchmuty High running two groups after a successful experience last year. This has also been noticed from other schools with Glenrothes High also running a group this year and other schools also expressing an interest."*

**Graeme Donaldson**  
**Youth Justice Officer**

*"I really wanted to be part of this as I like taking things apart and building things better than writing, I'm not good in class, I loved the racing part the best"*

*"I wanted to be part of a team, I know this will help me communicate better and follow instructions"*

*"this helped me learn how to use tools and I would never have done that if I hadn't been part of this project cos I didn't think I'd ever get a chance"*

**MICHAEL BEVERIDGE**

EQUIPMENT RELIABILITY ENGINEER,  
LEVITON NETWORK SOLUTIONS EUROPE





# SQUARE START FAMILIES

Our families project was funded by NOLB and was set up to support households in Dunfermline and West Fife Villages along with the North East Fife area.

This year we focussed on establishing a new base in the North East Fife area which historically was under supported by delivery of services like this. Low internet access and lack of employment opportunities combined with the rural location, meant a need for robust welfare interventions. From our base at Cupar YMCA we worked closely with Waid Academy and now have a group of parents actively participating in our Square Start programme.

During the 2023-2024 year, we continued to deliver our support in person, both 1-2-1 and in groups, as well as maintaining a heavy online presence for those family members who were unable to participate in person. Once again, we provided weekly family nights, themed learning sessions, activity days, art classes and cooking sessions. Thanks to the support of both Asda customers and the community champion, along with financial support from Technip FMC in Dunfermline we were able to hold two Christmas parties and ensure all Square Start families children had a lovely gift for Christmas day.

Alongside this, the light touch and sociable activities were designed to support growth and a route out of social isolation. Once again, we delivered trauma informed parenting workshops, first aid training, fire safety advice, digital skills training, and travel training. We also supported with housing and benefit issues, delivered homework classes and cooking and shopping on a budget sessions.

## OUTCOMES 2023-24

No One Left Behind      72 Family Registrations  
89 PILs  
280 family members supported

## FAMILIES - CASE STUDY

### **Dad E who has narcolepsy and son H (age 7)**

Dad has learned to interact and play with his son in a safe environment at Family Night. He only has access once a week under the Grandmothers supervision (in case he falls asleep) and his son would only play with his switch. Dad and son now have the best time and take part fully in every activity whether art/crafts, football or memory games. They are both building friendships with the other Square Start families. Son H is working towards his Hi5 award with our partners Youth First.

### **Mum M and son B (age 6)**

Son has spina-bifida and is home schooled, son would not engage/play with anyone but his mum and would sit staring into space waiting on her. After coming to family night son interacts with lots of the younger children playing with the cars, supervised by his mum but giving her some breathing space to have a cup of tea and speak with other parents. Mum has since built up a network of friends and has games night and sleepovers at their house with 3 or 4 other children. Mum now receives Scottish child payment that mum hadn't applied for previously. Awaiting housing assessment/swap as a larger property will be needed for child B's equipment as he grows.

### **Mr & Mrs A and son (age 6) Asylum seekers from Iran**

Applied for free bus pass through mental health for mum so that she was able to attend college and she is now doing a business course at Carnegie College.

Helped dad to obtain his national insurance number and provided him with a laptop through Aberdeen Foyet Funding, this has enabled him to be involved in the community, he volunteers at the local pantry and helps coach a football team.

Dad is excited as he has recently accepted an unconditional offer for Dundee University to study Social Work.



# THE PANTRY AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Pantry@BRAG continues to provide our local community with access to local, affordable and healthy food options, whilst reducing food waste. Again, we see a regular increase in demand for Pantry membership and the team work tirelessly to ensure that everyone can access the Pantry whilst maintaining stock levels to ensure that there is enough food available. 'The Mary Pit' Stop Café has become the heart of the community on a Thursday during Pantry, members can meet for a tea/coffee, putting funds back into the Pantry and providing opportunities for social interaction, making new friends, creating support networks and increasing social and emotional wellbeing. The team also have a clothes rail stocked with new and used items and they can be themed depending on the time of year, back to school, Christmas etc. We continued to operate a delivery service to our more elderly and vulnerable members.

The Pantry team are always thinking of new ways to raise funds, everyone loves their Boombox Bingo, raffles and Bingo wingo with all funds raised put directly back into the Pantry to purchase food.

## IN THE LAST YEAR WE HAVE;

- Diverted 29,075KG of food from landfill and used it to feed our local community
- Provided food and supported 11,072 individuals (8,059 Adults and 3,013 Children)
- 15 Volunteers regularly involved in the Pantry over the last year
- Over 1,666 Volunteer hours involved in the delivery of the Pantry over the last year





As part of our ongoing poverty reduction measures, the Pantry also offered Energy Efficiency support thanks to funding we received from Centrica.

This resulted in over 30 Handy Service visits being carried out when the target was actually 15. We found that 75% of all participants preferred a face to face visit rather than over the phone communication as support was required with their utility bills and they often needed 1-2-1 support to speak to their suppliers, therefore, requiring an adviser being in the home with the individual. This also helped when developing family action plans around reducing energy bills and resources/equipment that would help with this, such as LED bulbs, thermal curtains etc.

We also delivered Pantry Information sessions during Pantry sessions. These sessions were very well attended with advisors providing basic energy efficiency advice, as well as giving away items such as thermal cups we were also organizing the more in-depth Handy Service visits to support individuals/families.

It was calculated that participants' gains amounted to £10,576.10, which highlights a significant social return on investment whilst making a real difference for families dealing with a cost of living crisis.

## IMPACT STATEMENTS

*"Being with other people the same as myself is so good. Having a wee blether and a cuppa and a filled roll. Saves me cooking as I am disabled and we even have a knitting club and a fun game of bingo."*

*"The Pantry doesn't feel like you're getting a free handout, it feels like you're giving something back by paying the small amount for my Pantry bag"*

*"You always get a smile and a blether from the Pantry staff and volunteers, it's been a lifeline for me and my family"*

## PANTRY MEMBER

## CASE STUDY

*"Miss B attends the BRAG Pantry every week to help reduce her food costs. She approached a staff member to ask for advice regarding changing her gas and electric account into her name. She was advised that she would need to call them and send the amended tenancy agreement to them. Miss B had some fuel debt so the advisor discussed options with her and showed her the Home Heating Support Fund application form. They discussed the answers and the evidence required. Information was also provided about the Warm Home Discount, Cost of Living Support Payment and her tariff. The advisor then went over simple energy efficiency advice such as using energy saving light bulbs, turning appliances and gadgets off at the wall, not charging things overnight, doing washing at a lower temperature, only filling the kettle up as much as needed and batch cooking using her slow cooker. They also discussed her use of the radiator thermostatic valves and thermostat. A Handy Service visit was arranged for thermal curtains, LED light bulbs and an electric blanket. Later she approached the team to ask for a fuel voucher as she was at risk of self-disconnecting and had no means to top up. Information was provided regarding crisis grants, friendly credit and the Community Support team. We applied for a fuel voucher for her. As a result of the support and information provided at the Pantry Miss B felt better informed and avoided being cut off."*

# INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES FUNDING

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT PROJECT

This Scottish Government Programme was designed to combat social isolation in Benarty and help move people to a more sustainable lifestyle. Over the year we worked with a total of 343 individuals.

Our Programme of activities has been very successful, often oversubscribed. In particular, the family cooking sessions, health & wellbeing activity sessions and the Energy Efficiency Support exceeded our initial targets and were really well received. We continued to work with participants through feedback and evaluations, to make changes to the programme, provide sessions that participants are looking for and to ensure the co-production approach remains part of our delivery. Being innovative around delivering tackling climate change activities within the local community has resulted in more engagement, we used arts & crafts (such as crochet/knitting, Easter Trees, Dream Catchers) and cooking sessions (cooking with left overs/Pantry shop cooking/meal kit bags) as a hook to engage with people and highlight the changes that people can make in their daily lives, all contributing to tackling climate change such as reusing, recycling, up cycling, reducing food waste etc.

The Health & Wellbeing activities were designed to reduce social isolation, support positive mental health & wellbeing and improving fitness has been a real draw for the community. Activities such as Chair Yoga, Line Dancing, Crocheting/Knitting, Flower Arranging, Arts & Crafts including mosaics, dream catchers, Easter Trees sessions, walk & talk sessions have had a real impact on the individuals involved and highlights the need and impact on the participants. The Family cooking sessions have also proved very popular and are really encouraging families to cook and eat together. Our most recent themed cooking session were around Easter and fun was had by all! We seen that the majority of families attend several sessions as they gain so much from coming along and have been involved in developing new sessions for the coming year. This is very much a community led project.

We have many sessions planned over the coming months, from candle making using bees wax which is environmentally friendly, pebble art, sauerkraut/breadmaking and many more. We also continue to work with Benarty Primary School which is having such a positive impact on the children.

## IMPACT STATEMENTS

"Nice, relaxed atmosphere, positive impact, good social occasions. I feel that these sessions are great for my positive mental health and wellbeing"

"I'm helping my mum cook at home; we try different things and I like eating it"

"We've had so much fun cooking together, the kids are now getting involved in cooking at home and they are encouraging me to do more cooking, we're wasting less food and we also love the baking"

"This allows me to socialise and meet people as I am disabled and suffer from anxiety, this has been a godsend to me and my mental health. The cooking sessions helps me with the cost of living"



# THE KETTLE'S ON@BRAG

The Kettle's on at the Pantry@BRAG was one of two warm welcome spaces that BRAG provided during the winter months. One was in Crosshill and the other one at the Hub in Leven. These valuable interventions provided their local communities with access to meaningful activity, supporting mental health & wellbeing, whilst also providing a social space for the community to come together, socialise together, reducing isolation, offering support and helping to reduce the impact of those affected by fuel and food poverty. The community can also access warm food (homemade soup, breakfast rolls) tea/coffee and biscuits. The sessions were run from our Pantry space at BRAG in Crosshill, every Friday between 12.30noon-2.30pm and Our Together Levenmouth Hub every Sunday.

During the winter period we supported more than 340 individuals and additional support was offered to more than 60 of those individuals in relation to accessing our Pantry provision and our Energy Efficiency support, which enabled people to get access to LED light bulbs, fuel vouchers, electric blankets and support to apply for warm home discounts. Some participants also went on to take part in other provision being delivered at BRAG such as our adult and family cooking sessions.

As a result of the Warm Welcome and bringing people together in Crosshill the crochet/knitting group has really taken off and is now being fully led by the community and the participants attending, they have also created some amazing pieces of work such as crochet poppy wreaths for Armistice Day which were donated to Benore Care Home and the War Memorial in Lochore. They are also working with St Kenneths Primary/Nursery School to create educational toys to encourage outdoor play, such as how a caterpillar turns into a butterfly. This has all come from ideas from the group themselves.

## IMPACT STATEMENTS

"Homestart recommended this to me and said it would be good for me, it's been so friendly and welcoming and it's something I now look forward to every week"

"I was lonely at home and heard about the Friday sessions at BRAG so decided to try and meet new people. I enjoy meeting new people and having something to eat, I also learn new things from staff and other people. If I couldn't come along any more it would affect both my mental and physical health as I would be stuck at home not speaking to or seeing anyone. I suffer from depression and feel anxious about this group not being here anymore. The staff are super helpful and work so hard keeping everyone feel included"

"Being with other people the same as myself is so good. Having a wee blether and a cuppa and a filled roll. Saves me cooking as I am disabled and we even have a knitting club and a fun game of bingo."

"I have made many friends and have taken part in many of the craft activities. I have also encouraged my mum to come along to get out of the house, she loves and we get to spend time together. We really look forward to our Friday's"

"I attend primarily to have the company and make new friends as I was becoming a recluse after lockdown. It has greatly improved my mental health and given me something to look forward to, I can have a snack a blether and I really enjoy it"

"I don't go out much but I heard about this from a friend about coming along and getting a hot cuppa and a chat with other people, I now love coming along and chat to other people that comes too. The staff at the Kettles always on are so supportive and nothing is a problem for them"

# TOGETHER LEVENMOUTH HUB & EVENTS SPACE

The Together Levenmouth Hub finally reopened after the devastating fire in the neighbouring property that had happened back in November 2022. Since the reopening in October 2023 It has been a busy year for the team with month on month increases in trading income.

The last year also seen some changes in the management of the project in that we had some internal promotions with Lauren MacDonald taking on the role of Assistant Manager of Events and Skye Fairlie taking on the role as Assistant Hub Manager of the Hub. Under Lauren Crichton's leadership they have been working hard to ensure that everything was running smoothly and were always on hand to oversee and assist the team.

Events - We created a new pop-up events space which has hosted events such as kids' birthday parties, stakeholder meetings, pumpkin and Easter egg decorating competitions along with sit down meals for bigger groups. Our café still seems to be the main attraction to people and we run at capacity most days. This is in part to new promotional campaigns like our new loyalty card system, or our ongoing offers which we run every day.

As our commercial income has grown, we have also worked hard to make the Hub very much part of BRAG assisting in the delivery of broader community interventions. We have received continuous support from our local community, who supported us throughout the closure period and are continuing to do so now. We are involved in local tourism-related activities as well as other community-based initiatives. The Together Levenmouth Hub and Events space wouldn't be the project it is today without the help of the local community although we have done our share of giving back. The team have been busy throughout the year hosting Warm Spaces sessions, and we also seen the return of Bingo Buddies which averages around 15-20 people per session, per week supporting people who are socially isolated. We also ran a community grotto at Christmas time for the children of Levenmouth. This was a free event, and each child received a present from Santa to take home with them and we gave gifts to over 150 children over a 2 day period. During December we also took part in the very successful High Street light switch on which encouraged a lot of new customers into the Hub, and we saw our hot chocolate sales skyrocket that day. Another highlight has been our role in supporting the railway opening where we had a countdown clock in the window

We have welcomed many new faces and the Hub has a real buzz about it which shows that as a community we are still providing for those in need whilst simultaneously helping bring a vibrant visitor destination to the town centre. Renovations to the basement have started with the hope that we can secure funding to open our Innovative tech hub later this year.





## IMPACT STATEMENTS

Graham

– “I work for the foodbank where the staff volunteered through their closure. I have never met a more friendly bunch of young adults. They always go that extra mile and make sure they provide the best service to everyone who walks in the doors, the bingo buddies that they run is a great place to socialise and catch up with friends and great for community involvement”

Agnes

– “I love coming into the Hub, all staff are just the best and im made to feel welcomed and really at home here. I suffer with many mental health issues, but no one treats me differently or makes me feel unwanted. The staff go above and beyond for all their customers, which is so refreshing to see. The food is great, the company is great, I won't go anywhere else on the High Street other than the Hub. Keep up the good work team”

## METHIL AND CROSSHILL ENTERPRISE CENTRES

Our enterprises centres have continued to provide affordable business space for small local businesses in each area as well as providing good quality accommodation to our staff and volunteers. Crosshill still requires ongoing improvements as we tackle years of under investment as we attempt to bring the structure up to modern days standards Both building has also benefited from ongoing repairs and improvements which has helped us achieve 100% occupancy.



# QUALITY AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

As you will have read, It has been a busy year for BRAG with new projects being developed, existing project parameters changing along with new staff being hired with staff also moving on to pastures new. To make it even harder for ourselves we also decided to overhaul all of our HR procedures which, in turn, has brought new processes into force. Recent changes in legislation have also meant new Terms and Conditions are now being distributed to all members of staff and job descriptions are being reviewed to ensure they accurately reflect the nature of individual new roles.

**Staff Survey** The organisation now carries out a bi-annual staff survey to measure the mood in the organisation. The feedback from the last 2 years staff surveys were analysed earlier this year, and several measures have since been introduced with more to follow over the coming months.

- Training development needs were identified and requested by staff and additional training resources have been identified, developed and utilised allowing staff to upskill within their own roles and for their continued professional development. This is an ongoing exercise and the addition of protected time for reflection as well as individual personal development plans will be rolled out over the coming months.
- A new support and review system has been introduced to ensure all staff receive dedicated time for 1-2-1 support and feedback. This allows staff to keep track of their own development needs and chart their own progress within their role.
- Additional lines of responsibility were created within the teams to allow for job advancement for staff and give the organisation an additional level of succession planning.
- Hybrid working has been introduced to allow for a better work/life balance for staff who wish to use that system and the TOIL system has been introduced to teams that did not have that facility previously.
- In response to feedback regarding equipment, there is a rolling programme of upgrades and renewals for all staff laptops and an overhaul of our communications system has led to a reduction in the use of landline based desktop phones and staff being allocated mobile phones for work purposes.
- The development of a BRAG newsletter has proved to be a welcome addition as an aid for communication between the different buildings and the various teams.
- A wellbeing group is now in place, managed by staff themselves where they are able to identify initiatives and activities which focus on their needs and helps us to embed wellbeing as part of a healthier and more inclusive culture.
- A new values framework has been developed with input and suggestions from staff, management, and board members. This collaborative approach for the vision for the work culture we want to see develop within BRAG proved so successful that other working groups have started for areas where staff have identified such an approach would be helpful.
- BRAG's core values of honesty and integrity are demonstrated across all that we do. We maintain a responsive approach where we are both innovative and courageous in those responses. Our approach is inclusive of all and representative of all those we have contact with and critically, we remain person centred.
- Achievement of Leader Status in the DWP Disability Confident Scheme



**DISABILITY LEADER** – We were proud to announce that in December, we achieved Leader status in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Disability Confident Scheme. This recognition places us among an elite group of only 14 organisations within our region, which spans from Aberdeen through Dundee, Perth, Angus, and Fife. This diverse area includes employers ranging from sole traders to large organisations such as local Councils and the NHS.

The Disability Confident Scheme encourages employers to think differently about disability and take proactive steps to improve how they recruit, retain, and develop disabled people. The scheme also emphasises effectively managing employees with disabilities or health conditions.

**HEALTH & SAFETY** -The implementation of a management system has brought a more robust monitoring of processes. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and a strong training programme for all staff has brought a new awareness to staff around the need for good practice. A new in-house induction stresses the value of health & safety and the importance of reporting.

The Health & Safety group meet monthly. This allows for the reps to be fully briefed on any issues that have arisen and to have an element of informal training on any new processes and policies which affect their role. Every month there is a focus on a particular component of their role.

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT** - Our Quality Manual has four levels, Corporate, Staffing, Health & Safety and Local. Across those four levels there are currently in excess of 50 policies and procedures. There is an ongoing system of reviewing, developing, approving, and implementation of all those policies, the introduction of new policies, and any associated paperwork.

Sitting alongside all policies is the development of guidance and training for managers and staff to ensure successful understanding and implementation.

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & STAFF PARTICIPATION** - Staff have adapted well to the adjustments that have been made as part of our test of change. We will continue to review all policies and all processes across all sites, we will continue to monitor the implementation to ensure they are being carried out correctly and we will continually evaluate performance across all areas by providing the knowledge, tools and guidance to help everyone play their part to build engaged teams, increase efficiency, and increase stakeholder satisfaction. Staff are now represented at Board level and have a voice in all decision making.

BRAG remains as a real living wage employer and have a staff welfare group as we recognise that our team is our biggest asset and deserve our full support.

# EXTERNAL EVALUATION

In 2023 BRAG commissioned an independent evaluation be carried out by recognised evaluator Social Value Lab. The aim was to recognise the impact of BRAG services as we prepared to celebrate our 35 years of existence.

The evaluation was undertaken in late 2023 and early 2024 and covered the previous 3 years providing valuable insights into the impact of services offered across the communities of Fife where we currently operate. The evaluation was conducted to assess the effectiveness of BRAG in achieving its objectives and to gather feedback from service users, tenants, and key stakeholders alike where it gathered data on its core services namely:

- Employability & Training
- Affordable Enterprise Space.
- Community Support (Families and poverty reduction)

The evaluation highlighted several key findings. Firstly, excluding its partner performance BRAG have been successful in getting people into work, with 520 individuals finding employment over the previous three years. Additionally, 431 individuals have successfully become self-employed all with the support of BRAG's Employability Services. This demonstrates the effectiveness of BRAG in helping unemployed individuals gain employment and develop the necessary skills and confidence for their future success.

The evaluation also emphasised the positive impact of BRAG as a landlord for small businesses. Tenants appreciate the value for money offered by BRAG, as well as the support and sense of community they experienced. Being part of the BRAG community was reported to have a positive effect on their business, with tenants benefiting from networking opportunities and referrals from other businesses within the BRAG centres.

BRAG's Community Services had been effective in addressing social isolation and loneliness, building confidence, improving physical and mental health, and increasing financial well-being. Service users reported feeling less isolated and more connected to their community as a result of attending BRAG services. They also experienced increased confidence, improved mental well-being, and better physical health. The BRAG Food Pantry, in particular, has been praised for its affordability, reducing the stigma of poverty, and providing access to affordable food.

Key stakeholders and funders recognize the pivotal role that BRAG plays in the community, acting as an "honest broker" between the community and other service providers. BRAG's partnership working approach as the lead partner of Fife-ETC and its ability to bring together various organisations and support providers have been highly valued. Additionally, BRAG is seen as a trusted partner and representative of the third sector in Fife.

However, the evaluation also identified areas for improvement. Suggestions include the need for extended opening hours and the provision of more services for young people. The report also highlighted the historic and entrenched issues of unemployment, poverty, and limited opportunities in the communities that BRAG serves. The lack of training, employment, and resources in the areas BRAG operate within makes it difficult for individuals to escape poverty and find sustainable employment. The report emphasized the need for targeted interventions that address the specific cultural and historic issues faced by people living in poverty in Fife.

In conclusion, the evaluation demonstrated the effectiveness of BRAG Enterprises in achieving its objectives and making a positive impact on the community of Fife. The findings highlight the success of BRAG in getting people into work, supporting self-employment, addressing social isolation, improving well-being, and acting as a valuable partner in the community.

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

## 2022-23

Income	£1,931,691
Expenditure	£1,963,318
Year end	(£31, 427)

Balance sheet value                      £2,174,752

## 2023-24

Income	£2,421,062
Expenditure	£2,439,792
Year end	(£18,730)

Balance sheet value                      £2,487,686







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Enterprising People, Sustaining Communities