



Local Heroes - Evaluation Report

Drum and Brass CIC

Supported by The National Lottery Community Fund – Awards for All

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Executive Summary

Local Heroes was established to build on the success of a previous, lottery-funded ‘Young Mentors’ project and was designed to develop the confidence, skills and capacity of local volunteers to become active leaders within their own communities through arts, music and other creative practice.

Originally conceived as a practical training programme covering safeguarding, inclusive practice, community delivery and event management, the project evolved into something much deeper and more significant. Over the course of twelve months, six participants were supported through a combination of formal training, mentoring, practical delivery opportunities and peer support.

Whilst the programme successfully achieved its original aims, the most significant outcomes were not those planned for at the outset.

Rather than simply developing a group of trained volunteers, Local Heroes revealed the extraordinary capacity which exists within individuals who often feel excluded from traditional volunteering and employment pathways. Many participants described living with significant anxiety and neurodivergence, and several were navigating complex personal circumstances. Yet through a flexible, supportive and creative environment they demonstrated leadership, innovation, empathy and resilience.

Perhaps one of the most significant findings was that the barriers to participation were often not the barriers to capability. Participants frequently doubted their own abilities and underestimated the value of their contributions, whilst actual observations showed them mentoring others, developing new initiatives, planning events, supporting young people and taking on leadership roles, and doing all of those things very well.

The project also highlighted wider structural issues around volunteering, anxiety and financial insecurity. Several participants receiving Universal Credit described feeling unable to claim

expenses or fully engage with opportunities because of uncertainty around the impact on their benefits. Whilst this report does not conclude that the benefits system directly prevented participation, nor does it intend to criticise said system, it does suggest that fear and confusion around those systems can create significant barriers for people who have valuable skills to contribute to their communities, and that this may then pose further barriers in terms of their return to employment or in feeling able to make meaningful contributions back into society.

Ultimately, Local Heroes successfully demonstrated that community arts can provide a powerful entry point into volunteering, leadership and social connection. By valuing people's existing strengths, embracing different ways of working and allowing confidence to develop gradually, the programme unlocked talent which would otherwise have remained hidden.

Project Background

Local Heroes was developed by Drum and Brass CIC in response to two connected needs identified through local community consultation.



Firstly, there was a clear and growing demand for accessible, high-quality creative activities for families and young people during school holidays. Secondly, local practitioners expressed a desire to share their own skills and experiences but lacked the confidence, training and practical opportunities to become involved in any community delivery.

The programme sought to bridge these gaps and solve both problems by creating a year-long supported volunteering pathway. Participants were offered training in safeguarding, inclusive practice, wellbeing, planning and delivery, alongside practical opportunities to work with children, families and wider community groups by organising and facilitating various activities.

The original ambition was simple:

‘To increase the number of people who feel confident to deliver community arts activities within their own communities’.

Project Manager, Julie Hoggarth, reflected:

‘I wanted to increase capacity when we're delivering work in the community. I felt that a small training programme covering the basics would give people confidence to set things up for themselves and increase the amount of things that could be offered.’ (See Appendix A, page 12 for Julie’s full interview).

Looking back on the project now, Julie has been able to conclude that these aims have been fully achieved.

The project was delivered within a modest budget of **£13,657.00**, representing excellent value for money. Whilst the funding supported a relatively small cohort of participants, the depth of engagement and the scale of personal development achieved were significant. The programme not only provided training and practical experience, but also created opportunities for individuals facing barriers related to anxiety, confidence and neurodivergence to contribute

meaningfully within their communities. The resulting growth in confidence, leadership, volunteering and community participation demonstrates how relatively small investments can unlock substantial social value when delivered through flexible, person-centred approaches.

Who took part?

Six participants joined the very first Local Heroes cohort.

Although they came from different backgrounds and experiences, a number of common themes emerged:

- The majority (5/6) identified as neurodivergent.
- Several described living with significant anxiety.
- Some had experienced long-term illness or periods away from employment.
- Three participants were receiving Universal Credit.
- All shared a passion for music, creativity and supporting others.



Rather than viewing any of these characteristics as barriers, the project sought to create an environment where participants could contribute in ways that worked for them and in which they felt safe and secure to do so.

What happened?

Over the course of the programme, participants engaged with a wide range of training and practical activities, including:

- Project launch and planning sessions.
- Mental Health Programme for Brass.
- BandSafe safeguarding training.
- Inclusive Practice workshops.
- Community 'Playcations' – practical sessions with children and young people.
- Event planning and management.
- Conducting workshops.
- Creative mask-making activities with children.
- Brass ensemble masterclasses.
- Community taster workshops.
- Digital resource development.



Alongside these structured activities, participants increasingly shaped the programme themselves, bringing forward their own ideas and taking ownership of projects which reflected their own interests and strengths.

What we learned

Key findings

Average usefulness score by activity

Average usefulness ratings for Local Heroes activities

Average participant ratings out of 5 from completed evaluation surveys.



Highest rated activities (5/5 average)

- Playcations
- Mask Making Preparation
- Primary School Mask Making Session
- Brass Ensemble Masterclass with Phil Goodwin

Tellingly, all of these activities had something in common – they were highly practical, hands-on and involved working directly with other people.

Strong performers (4.6 - 4.75 average)

- Kick Off Meeting
- Mental Health Programme for Brass

- Inclusive Practice Training
- Planning Sessions

These sessions appear to have provided valuable learning whilst also building relationships and confidence.

Lowest rated activities (still positive)

- Conducting Workshop (4.0)
- Brougham Hall Taster Workshops (4.0)



Interestingly, the lower scores seem linked less to the quality of the activity, and more to participant confidence. Several participants specifically mentioned not feeling confident enough to participate fully, which aligns with Julie's observation that anxiety was often the biggest barrier rather than capability.

One of the clearest patterns emerging from the data is that participants consistently rated practical, creative and collaborative activities higher than classroom-style or online learning.

(See Appendix B, page 17 for a collection of comments made by participants as part of the evaluation).

Hidden talent

Perhaps the strongest message to emerge from Local Heroes was that many people already possess the skills needed to become effective community leaders - they simply do not always recognise those skills in themselves and they often lack the confidence and opportunity to explore their skills in a way that feels safe for them.

Throughout the programme participants demonstrated:

- leadership
- empathy
- organisation
- mentoring
- creative thinking
- safeguarding awareness
- event planning
- community engagement



These strengths often emerged naturally through practical activity rather than formal training.

As Julie reflected:

‘It shone a light on the range of skills that are relevant to community arts but aren't normally flagged up and celebrated.’

Anxiety affects participation, not capability

A consistent theme across both participant feedback and project observations was the impact of anxiety.

Many participants described lacking confidence, feeling worried about being judged, or feeling unable to attend activities where they feared they would not be ‘good enough’.

However, once participants arrived and became involved, these anxieties rarely limited what they were able to actually achieve.

Julie summarised this nicely:

‘Attendance was affected by anxiety, but performance wasn't. Once people were there and got going and were in action, the anxiety went.’

This distinction is an important learning point for future community programmes. The greatest barrier was often getting through the door, not the participant's ability to contribute.

Hidden achievements

One of the most fascinating findings from the evaluation process has been the difference between how participants viewed themselves, and what they were actually observed to achieve.

Many of the evaluation forms focused on what participants had learned from others, with relatively little acknowledgement of their own contribution, for example, from one participant:

‘It was helpful to meet everyone involved, understand the aims of the project, and start building connections with other participants.’

‘This session really encouraged reflection around accessibility and inclusion.’

‘A great opportunity to gain hands-on experience delivering creative activities in a community setting.’

All of which are framed around what that individual gained from the experience, however it was noted in observation that this person:

- contributed to planning activities.
- helped to design digital resources.
- contributed to the mental health poster project.
- took sole responsibility for tasks when given a clear plan.
- demonstrated really strong organisational skills.

Julie noted in relation to this person: ‘They didn’t put down any of their own achievements, they are super reticent and just unable to recognise their own achievements or the value of their contributions’.

Project observations of other participants told a similar story:

Sandra

Sandra became deeply engaged with the project's wellbeing and inclusion work. She helped to develop a youth wellbeing resource and has since taken on the role of Project Manager for Cumbria Youth Brass Band.

Chloe

Initially lacking confidence, Chloe naturally began mentoring new players attending beginner sessions and has expressed a strong desire to continue volunteering with youth activities.

Cassie

Cassie focused her evaluation on practical learning experiences, yet throughout the project she developed the confidence to establish a new brass initiative of her own.

Raven

Although Raven was extremely modest about their achievements, they played an important role in planning activities, developing digital resources and contributing to the project's mental health awareness work.

Heather

Heather demonstrated exceptional awareness of safeguarding, health and wellbeing, and supporting young people, becoming an important source of stability and encouragement within the group.

Collectively, these stories clearly demonstrated that all of the participants were often far more capable than they believed themselves to be.

Community connection and creativity

The programme created opportunities for participants to work across different communities and generations.

Highlights included:

- supporting family 'Playcation' activities.
- working with children at Kirkby Stephen Primary School.
- community taster sessions at Brougham Hall.
- supporting activity at the Big Brass Weekend.
- collaborative planning and delivery across Cumbria.

Participants consistently described the value of working alongside others.

One participant reflected:

‘To see the joy on children's faces when they discover they can make music is priceless.’

Another commented:

‘It helped me grow in confidence, strengthened my understanding of inclusive practice, and reinforced how important community arts projects can be in bringing people together.’

Inclusion and Wellbeing

The Mental Health Programme for Brass and also Inclusive Practice training emerged as two of the most impactful elements of the project.

Participants described increased understanding of:

- mental health
- accessibility
- disability
- safeguarding
- equality and inclusion

Several participants specifically highlighted the Inclusive Practice ‘privilege walk’ activity as transformative, encouraging them to reflect on their own experiences and those of others.

The programme demonstrated that inclusion is not simply about physical access but about creating environments where people feel safe, valued and able to contribute.

Learning for policy and practice

Local Heroes also generated important learning around the relationship between volunteering, financial insecurity and the welfare system.

Three participants receiving Universal Credit described feeling unable to claim any expenses (for example for travel or for food during activity days) or fully engage with opportunities because they feared accidental consequences for their benefits.

The project cannot conclude that the benefits system itself prevented participation. However, it clearly found that uncertainty, bureaucracy and anxiety around the rules created an additional barrier for some individuals, and will be undoubtedly be creating similar barriers for recipients of benefits across the country in similar circumstances.

Participants described worrying that:

- claiming expenses might be interpreted as earnings.
- volunteering could affect their entitlement.
- accepting opportunities might trigger a reassessment.

This fear appeared to reduce participation and increased anxiety, despite repeated reassurance from project staff.

Future community volunteering programmes, not only in this area, but nationally, would benefit from clearer guidance and specialist support around volunteering and benefits, enabling people to contribute confidently without fear of disadvantaging themselves. It also has to be said that the process and what may or may not trigger reassessment was explained to staff, and sounded incredibly complex and convoluted.

New [‘Right to Try’ legislation](#) was introduced in April 2026, but it is unclear whether or not information has been shared with recipients in a way that is clear and easy to understand, and also whether or not people feel they are even able to ask questions about this through fear of their income being affected.

NCVO has reported that there is often contradictory advice and misunderstanding around volunteering and benefits. In evidence to Parliament, [NCVO highlighted examples of claimants being given inconsistent messages](#) about whether or not volunteering could affect their benefits.

This project was focussed in a small area of the country, but the findings in terms of benefits anxiety and volunteering do appear to reflect a national picture. It would be interesting to see whether there is consistency being applied, and whether or not people are aware of the new legislation and how it affects their ‘right to try’. It would certainly appear that none of the participants in this project were aware of it or how it might affect them, and we can say with certainty that they were all anxious about triggering a reassessment.

[Government guidance](#) explicitly states that volunteering can:

- build confidence
- develop skills
- provide experience
- help people prepare for paid employment

For Universal Credit claimants, volunteering can even count towards part of their work search requirements. This therefore makes these barriers to volunteering particularly significant because they may also become barriers to returning to employment or further education and training.

What could be done differently

The project highlighted several areas for future development:

A shorter, more modular programme

A year-long commitment felt overwhelming for some participants, and also challenging for project staff to keep participants engaged for such a lengthy period of time. Smaller milestones and shorter delivery blocks could really help to maintain engagement and confidence. However, one of the participants commented that ‘it takes time for me to build up my confidence’, and therefore it would be a fine balancing act to try and get the most out of the participants in the

right amount of time without it feeling too long, but still being long enough for people to start to feel comfortable enough to truly express themselves.

More one-to-one support

A 'band buddy' or a designated mentor or key-worker model could help participants to overcome initial barriers and to navigate challenges in a way that feels safe for them.

Recognised accreditation

Participants would benefit from a simple community arts facilitation qualification that acknowledges their skills and achievements, and allows them to pursue further opportunities or to assist them in seeking employment.

More practical learning

Participants consistently preferred and engaged more fully with hands-on activity rather than classroom-style training and so more practical learning opportunities could be incorporated to improve engagement and results.

Lasting impact

The impact of Local Heroes did not end with the project coming to a close. The programme has already created ongoing volunteering and leadership opportunities, including:

- new community music initiatives.
- increased volunteering within youth brass activities.
- project management roles.
- mentoring of beginner players.
- the development of a neurodivergent-friendly daytime brass band.

Perhaps most importantly, it has created a small but closely connected network of people who now see themselves as important contributors to their local communities.

Final reflections

As this project developed, it became clear that Local Heroes was never just about 'training some volunteers'. It was about creating space for people to discover strengths they didn't know they had. It demonstrated that creativity, music and community participation can provide an accessible route into confidence, leadership and belonging for people who may not fit traditional models of volunteering, training or even employment.

The project showed that when barriers are reduced, expectations are flexible and people are trusted, brilliant things can happen.

As Julie said: 'I don't think you can do a neat and simple version of community arts. It is messy and glorious, and embracing the messiness is really important.' Local Heroes undoubtedly embraced that messiness! And in doing so, uncovered a remarkable group of people whose

contributions will continue to strengthen their communities long after the project itself has ended.

The resounding success of Local Heroes also reflects Drum and Brass CIC's longstanding commitment to inclusive, grassroots community arts practice. Throughout the programme, participants were met with patience, flexibility and genuine respect for their individual circumstances, rather than being expected to fit a predetermined model for volunteering or participation. This approach created an environment in which people felt able to contribute at their own pace, explore new opportunities and develop confidence without fear of judgement.

The project demonstrates the value of community arts organisations that are willing to invest time in relationships, recognise strengths that may otherwise go unnoticed, and create meaningful opportunities for participation. By combining high-quality music-making and creative activities with a strong commitment to inclusion, wellbeing and community development, Drum and Brass CIC has once again shown how grassroots arts projects can strengthen communities, foster belonging and unlock potential in people who might otherwise remain on the periphery.

Local Heroes stands as a powerful example of how creativity, music and community action can work together to improve confidence, reduce isolation, build connections and create pathways into volunteering, leadership and lifelong participation.

Ultimately, Local Heroes demonstrates what can be achieved when people are trusted, supported and given the opportunity to contribute in ways that work for them. The programme uncovered hidden talents, developed new leaders, strengthened community connections and challenged assumptions about who can fully participate in community life. It leaves behind not only a network of more confident volunteers, but also a compelling case for the role that inclusive, community-led arts organisations can play in creating healthier, more connected and more resilient communities. Drum and Brass CIC should be proud of what has been achieved through this pilot programme and the lasting impact it continues to have on the individuals and communities involved. As always, it's been a pleasure to work with the team at Drum and Brass in evaluating this project, and I am excited to see what they decide to do next.

Appendix A: Interview with Julie Hoggarth, Project Manager.

Local Heroes – Project Manager Evaluation Questionnaire

What was your role within the Local Heroes programme?

Project Manager

What were the original aims and ambitions of the project?

I wanted to increase capacity when we're delivering work in the community, there's a lack of capacity of people who can do that and feel confident to do that. And I felt that a small training programme covering the basics: safeguarding, inclusive practice and some delivery, like group management skills, planning and delivery, would give people confidence to set things up for themselves in their communities and it would increase the amount of things that could be offered.

To what extent do you feel the project achieved these aims?

100% achieved those aims, every person who enrolled ended up doing something which for them was ambitious and that they wouldn't have done otherwise in community arts.

What aspects of the project were most successful?

The earlier bits, because it's hard to maintain momentum, it's very hard after the first 3 months. Initial training, the Tabby Kerwin mental health went down really well, the inclusive practice sessions were really good and then the individual participant's own initiatives when each came up to us at some point in the year and said we'd like to do this and then we did them.

Participant Development & Outcomes

What changes or development did you observe in participants over the course of the programme?

I would say on the face of it, it showed a level of anxiety in the people who went on the programme that I hadn't realised, this was over the entire programme, and I understood more, the change for me was that I understood more how having a disability or a perceived disability is extremely problematic and is holding back very capable people from participating. That was my change and my realisation and then for individuals, I saw one move from frustration that there wasn't a band that could accommodate her to actually starting her own with our help. A band for people with neurodivergence. One player who has had a very difficult experience as an adult with illness and so on has gone from playing second cornet to soprano cornet (hidden to exposed) so whilst she has expressed extreme anxiety about lots of other things, she has managed to do that. One person has taken over the project management of one of the projects and lost two stones, she has a newfound interest, she has returned to something she used to love doing. She used to be a national gymnast, had an ankle injury, put on weight and has now started to lose weight since coming to work with us, working more with brass which is something else she used to love. Weight loss has happened with 2 or 3 people in our groups where they've started to lose weight since working with us. We're thinking it's because they're felt able to get out and about more, but it's an interesting study which could be carried out separately – brass banding for weight loss!

Were there any participants whose growth surprised you?

Yes I was surprised at all of them, the person I was most surprised at was the girl who started being just so negative about every band and her own capabilities but then just took things into her own hands and formed her own, like I think we could start this and it will be in the daytime and let's do it like this and it is carrying her through a very difficult time where she has elsewhere in her life had a serious breakdown which landed her in hospital, but yet she hasn't missed a single Thursday. These are people who wouldn't be figuring in the main stats, they are the ones that are just above the threshold for serious issues and being counted for those issues. They don't want to feel that they are in charge or responsible for something but having a voice for them is how they should be and it's something that they've been able to do without feeling like they're taking on a huge responsibility so it is a way in to reemployment, even whilst it's slow and their neurodivergence means it takes time to process things. At least 5 of the participants are neurodiverse.

Did participants demonstrate increased:

- **confidence?**
- **leadership?**
- **communication skills?**
- **creativity?**
- **community engagement?**
- **understanding of inclusion/accessibility?**
- **safeguarding awareness?** One of them hasn't managed to do this but we're going to do it together.
- **wellbeing awareness?**

They have all been involved in planning events so we've discussed all of these things, safeguarding, event management, confidence etc.

Were there examples of participants contributing in ways they may not have recognised themselves within their own evaluations?

Surprised Cassie didn't do the 'me and my band' little project where we got a group of people and talked about brass bands and mental health in a group and recorded the results and then we made a poster to share which is on the website and then Sandra produced a hand out for the youth band about me and my band and ensuring wellbeing for the young people in the group. Sandra was very struck by the inclusive practice. She suggested that we should all do a privilege walk in our bands. Surprised that Chloe started to mentor a few players coming into the beginner sessions and helping out there and she is very keen to do it, but hasn't done safeguarding so obviously she has to do that before she does any further and then she'll be a very valuable assistant. Raven didn't put down any of their achievements, super reticent, unable to recognise their own achievements. They needed a lot of support to take part in things.

Were there participants who particularly thrived in practical or creative environments rather than formal training settings?

I think all of them were happier doing in a more informal environment, rather than sitting and writing and reflecting.

What strengths or talents emerged through the programme?

Everyone came up with different talents – it was much more subtle, Sandra was an organiser, Heather was very much a thinking about health and safety and wellbeing person, Kath is all about young people and how they are supported, Raven needs a plan but when she has one she sticks to it, she does it and that's the plan. Super organised. It shone a light on the range of skills that are relevant to community arts but aren't normally flagged up and celebrated really. They can all play brass really well.

Anxiety, Access & Structural Barriers

Did any participants experience barriers to participation during the project?

Lots of them. Transport is one. So if it was outside, two people don't drive so if you don't have a car that makes things hard, one person lived a long way away but we did manage it. Distance was an issue. A huge amount of fear of being judged, so in terms of the conducting course and Phil Goodwin's free all day session for example, 3 of the participants didn't go because they felt they weren't good enough.

What types of barriers emerged most frequently?

Anxiety – it was frustrating because it was tempting to take it personally and as the leader of things I felt like I was failing them in not managing to convey sufficiently or making them feel safe enough for them to participate. I was working hard to try and make it feel safe for them. But then I guess outside the thing because that was putting them under pressure, maybe they took a seed away and it helped them outside of the group.

Several participants were receiving Universal Credit. Did concerns around benefits or claiming expenses appear to affect participation? If so, how?

3 participants are claiming UC. This did affect participation because there were things, there were events where there would be a meeting and we'd say 'we'll get lunch' but they felt that that would be expensive, even though we said it's part of the course, but they felt that it was too complicated for them to claim money back and how difficult it is to go in and say I've earned a little extra this week, or it's expenses and how everything would then stop and you would have to claim. Or make an application to earn some extra money and the confusion around what is or what isn't allowed might have stopped people from doing an activity through fear that it might be seen as work, whether they are getting paid or not.

Did anxiety appear to influence:

- **attendance?** Yes it definitely impacted attendance, but didn't impact performance. Once people were there and got going and were in action, the anxiety went. It was the motivation and anxiety stopping them getting there.
- **confidence?** For 3 it definitely did work to improve confidence overall. And for the other three it was an improvement in confidence in small areas. If you had another year, or

maybe even a shorter project for them might have been more beneficial in terms of maintaining motivation. Smaller milestones, more modular. A whole year was a lot for them.

- **willingness to claim expenses?** Definitely.

Did you observe situations where participants underestimated their own contribution or capability?

Definitely. They're all women. All except one not working full time. For various reasons and all downplaying their achievements.

How do you think future programmes could better support people experiencing anxiety or financial insecurity?

Frightened around being seen as fit for work through volunteering. We need people who can do that and be paid for the preparation and recovery time of short bursts of work. The system doesn't support it. A lot of emphasis on getting people into full time work which isn't a solution for everyone. And the modular approach would help, much smaller less intense and challenging. More face to face time. To do it properly the person would almost need to be visiting each person they'd have like a key worker to visit them and support them or a 'band buddy'. Or is it small AQA qualifications to give people confidence in their own ability and their skills. It would be good to have some kind of small delivery qualification. There is no accounting for people who can work part time, even if you take a couple of hours of paid work it doesn't add up. So you have to earn £1,000 a month to get £700 a month. You have to earn more than you would get in benefits before you can earn that top up. Definite fear surrounding this of even saying that on the evaluations. And this is a very low key thing, it's a small pilot project but these are people who when you think of that it's just holding people back.

Is there anything you would like policymakers or local representatives to better understand about these barriers?

They need to know that the UC system, as it is, is preventing people from work. People who are able to work, who have important skills, but the system won't let them work or ease back into work. There's no option for that it's either full time or nothing. There is too much bureaucracy required to be able to do part time work. You lost more UC than you can earn in wages. So unless you actually earn more, a considerable amount more, you don't get UC. If you work part time then you lose. But it's just not viable for everyone and it's keeping people out of work. People who would be healthier and happier being allowed to work rather than trying to navigate the system.

Creativity & Community Impact

Were there any moments during the project that felt especially meaningful or impactful?

Lovely going into the primary school with Chloe and Heather and seeing them work with young people. And the satisfaction that that brought. That was great.

How did the project contribute to community connection or inclusion?

I think as per usual we engaged with people with neurodivergence who have not been invited to the table before. We formed a group which connected, and those connections are across the county so it's enabled things to happen county-wide that would not have happened otherwise. It

enabled them to work at the Big Brass Weekend and meet face to face and work with the wider community there. Enabled them to go to Barrow and work with the community there. Those taster sessions at Barrow were a standout moment, being on the bandstand and having all those kids playing instruments was great, and our little mental health poster which is great.

Delivery & Learning

What did you learn as a Project Manager through delivering this programme?

I learned that you have to let people, listen really carefully to what people are and are not able to do. I don't think you can do a neat and simple version of community arts. It is messy and glorious and embracing the messiness is really important, even though my natural tendency is to want to put everything in boxes and want to quantify it, actually you can't do that and you shouldn't be able to do that and there's probably a huge amount of potential work in learning how to evaluate things in a much more creative way.

If the programme were repeated, what would you change?

Shorter lifespan – a year is a big commitment. I would like it to be an official recognition as a qualification, a community arts facilitation programme.

Sustainability & Future Development

Has the project created any ongoing volunteering, leadership or community opportunities?

Yes – Sandra has taken over as a project manager for the Cumbria youth brass band, Cassie has started New Brass, Chloe is going to volunteer with the youth band when she has done the safeguarding. Heather is a serial volunteer anyway but has expressed interest in helping out at the schools. All of them.

Do you feel this model could be replicated or expanded?

I would like to offer it out. Yes I would like to do it again.

What support would help sustain or grow this work in future?

More money and more people. I can't do the whole thing again myself. I could support other people doing it, but I would love to do it again, I feel like that is what I should be doing more of really rather than delivery.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I think it's an achievable entry point for people who are interested in the sort of side issues around community arts, if you're interested in doing a little bit more than 'just the thing itself'. I really think we are going to need community arts, it's going to be what saves us or helps us through the Armageddon!

Appendix B: Participant comments

Confidence & personal growth

"It helped me grow in confidence, strengthened my understanding of inclusive practice, and reinforced how important community arts projects can be in bringing people together."

"This session really helped me to gain confidence in playing in a small group of players rather than a full brass band – and to just give it a go, mistakes and all."

"An enjoyable and confidence-building workshop that gave useful insight into conducting techniques and leadership within ensemble settings."

"I found the Local Heroes programme incredibly valuable both personally and professionally."

"It gave me the opportunity to build confidence in community arts delivery, develop practical skills, and connect with a wide range of people."

Community & connection

"It was helpful to meet everyone involved, understand the aims of the project, and start building connections with other participants."

"The Local Heroes programme introduced me to a team of other heroes without whom the programme may not have been as fruitful."

"Meeting with other participants."

"Working together to plan the day as a team."

"A really positive introduction to the programme."

Inclusion & accessibility

"This session really helped me to understand the notion of inclusion."

"We all have our difficulties and beliefs. These should be recognised."

"I am very keen that all the groups I am in are inclusive and include all abilities."

"It really encouraged reflection around accessibility and inclusion."

"I didn't really consider how privileged I was until this exercise."

Mental health & wellbeing

"The Mental Health Programme for Brass was extremely useful and relevant."

"It encouraged important conversations around wellbeing in music spaces."

"Music is such an important part of life."

"It gave me insight into how mental health can affect everyone differently."

"Reading the statistics on suicide has made me realise more needs to be put in place to allow people to speak up in a safe environment."

Working with children & young people

"To see the joy on children's faces when they discover they can make music is priceless."

"I really enjoyed encouraging and engaging the students in making their own animal mask."

"I enjoyed being creative with the children. They can teach us so much."

"The hands-on experiences working with children, families and community groups were some of the most rewarding parts of the programme."

Learning new skills

"It made me think about different aspects of my work and hopefully improved my skills."

"Putting all that had been learned over the year into practice to run successful workshops."

"Very informative and important training."

"An inspiring session with excellent musical guidance."

"I came away with practical ideas to improve both my own playing and teaching approaches."

Creativity

"It has been quite an experience learning to embrace more my creative side."

"This was a fun time preparing masks for the children."

"It was great to gain hands-on experience delivering creative activities in a community setting."

Barriers & challenges

"My anxiety."

"It takes time for me to build up my confidence."

"Balancing the programme alongside existing work and volunteering commitments was sometimes challenging."

"It was a shame that remuneration became a barrier for some of our other Heroes."

"I personally struggle with not knowing these bits of information as I cannot adequately prepare."

"Such a long online course wasn't helpful for me."

"I didn't really have the confidence to try this."