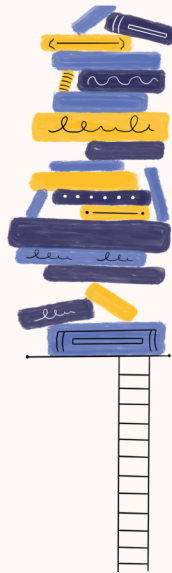


OUR STORY SO FAR



OUR VISION & MISSION

We believe in the power of the written and spoken word to transform lives. It is everyone's right to express themselves through creativity and imagination. Great ideas can and do come from anyone and anywhere.

Our mission is to support writers in Cornwall at every stage of their journey. We enable emerging writers, children & young people and the Cornish community to value their voice, tell their stories and be widely heard.

OUR STRANDS

We deliver our Vision and Mission through the following themes:

- Excellence in access to culture and writing for children, young people and communities
- Writers and performers as society's storytellers and voices for change
- Developing voice and giving platform to under-heard communities
- Celebrating and sustaining Cornwall's unique culture

Cross-cutting themes are environmental responsibility and sense of place.

OUR APPROACH

Story, voice, writing and sharing help people understand themselves, connect with others and imagine change. We create inspiring, immersive and welcoming spaces where people feel safe to be playful, curious and creative, guided by professional writers who help unlock skills and imagination.

We create characters from shoes, find stories in postcards, build worlds with objects. We observe and we listen – exploring nature in its tiniest detail, inventing dialogue from people watching and using soundscapes to generate atmosphere.

Sharing is central to our work, whether through small acts or public platforms, in film or publishing, with live audiences or online, because telling stories builds empathy, opens up different perspectives and ensures under-heard voices are heard.

OUTCOMES



Outputs

- 44** children & young people's workshops
- 42** schools workshops
- 66** adult & community workshops
- 23** performances & events
- 25** productions of new work in print, performance, film & audio

Engagement

- 1198** children & young people
- 646** adults
- 161** from under-represented communities
- 1348** live audiences



Economy

- 43** freelance writers, artists & creatives
- 259** days of paid employment
- 16** emerging creatives received paid development opportunities

Levered **£127,000** in grant funding and **£31,245** in earned income



IMPACT



96% of attendees rated their workshop experience as exceptional, good or very good.

96% of emerging writers said that a Writers Room had a positive impact on their skills, network & confidence.

68% said the opportunity led to further paid work or commissions.

96% of emerging performers & writers stated their experience increased confidence as a creative practitioner.

Case Study

Keira first joined The Writers' Block aged 11, becoming part of our Young Writers programme in 2018 and quickly finding a creative home where her love of writing could grow. Weekly workshops sparked a habit of writing constantly, while the move online during Covid provided vital connection and encouragement at a time of isolation. Through masterclasses she discovered a passion for poetry, and with support from the team she won second prize in the Morrab Library writing competition.

In 2022, joining the Young Writers Mentoring Programme marked a key shift, helping her take her writing seriously and developing her novel with one-to-one support. Since then, her journey has continued through winning a Cornwall Young & Talented Award, volunteering with younger writers, attending adult workshops, and now beginning the journey as a trustee of The Writers' Block. For Keira, The Writers' Block has been a constant, a welcoming community that has helped her build confidence, belonging and a lasting writing identity.

COMMUNITIES IMAGINE



The Imagine project captured & celebrated the untold stories of 12 Global Majority community members in Cornwall. Sparked by a conversation between CocoBean Cornwall and The Writers' Block, it responded to the under-representation of these narratives in story collecting projects and in local archives. We worked with 8 writers and artists, 12 global majority community members, 3 schools and 120 school children.

Through audio interviews, photography, and creative writing, children and adults came together to explore belonging, identity, and resilience. The result was a vibrant exhibition in three venues, celebration events with over 150 audience and a permanent archive of oral history at Kresen Kernow.

**“It is important to be using my perspective to tell my story...
it was emotional in a positive way.”**

Children connected with personal histories, building empathy and creative confidence.

**“It helped pupils who aren't of Cornish heritage to recognise that
Cornwall is their home too.”**

Community members shared powerful stories, fostering pride and recognition.

**“Being given a voice...History was written by white men, and
retrospectively. This is my contemporary story now.”**

Images: Steve Tanner



EMERGING WRITERS & PERFORMERS



Writers Rooms

We worked closely with 14 emerging writers through three Writers Rooms, providing paid opportunities to develop their skills and work. The first Writers Room led by John Wedgwood Clarke focussed on climate poetry and took place in Bude. In partnership with The Minack Theatre we ran an intensive on writing for commission with script editor Jane Pugh, which resulted in four writers receiving script commissions. Finally, Annamaria Murphy led a Writers Room sharing the unique practice of Bill Mitchell (1951-2017) using artefacts and ephemera Bill collected and which is now exhibited in Bill's Attic.

“I found the whole set up supportive & inspirational...It has been hugely beneficial in so many ways. I do feel this type of experience is pretty unique.” Writer Room Writer Participant

The Story Republic

The Story Republic are a team of 10 emerging performers who create pop up performances at events and festivals. This year they performed at 10 events including town festivals, heritage events and schools. Led by Artistic Director Connie Crosby the team have performed new repertoire, developed additional skills in crowd work and performing in different spaces and increased leadership skills.

“Adding sparkle to every corner of this special day with their pop up performances!”

Cornwall Heritage Trust Awenek! Festival

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



After School & Holiday Clubs

Our after-school and holiday clubs for ages 7-10 years are designed to inspire a love of writing and creativity by incorporating craft, drama, and games into storytelling. This year we ran 20 after school sessions and 5 holiday clubs, welcoming 60 children.

Young Writers

Led by Sarah Connors, Casey Bottono & Polly Roberts, we mentored 13 young writers aged 11-16 with a further 19 young people attending the programme comprising workshops, masterclasses and a sharing with an audience. We hosted a week-long work experience as part of Screen Cornwall's Get Creative programme for 7 students. We published their work in an anthology of all young people's work.

“I think this programme has significantly helped me move forwards with my ambitions as a writer, it has given me lots of knowledge and confidence in order to share my work and to keep writing.”

Young Writer Mentee

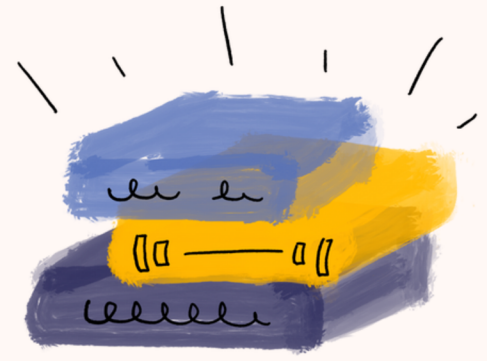
Carefree

Continuing our long partnership with Carefree, we ran a 10-week drama-based programme led by Tori Cannell working with 12 care-experienced young people. They explored different modes of storytelling before devising and performing their own short play to an invited audience and the script was published in our Anthology. Young people seeking asylum joined us for day workshops experimenting with print making and large scale painting. They created artworks to take home to decorate their living spaces.

“One young person last summer came in saying, ‘I hate writing. I’m not writing anything.’ But one of the facilitators just got him to say words out loud, wrote them down, and turned them into a poem. Later, he turned that into a song. He went from being completely disengaged to presenting his work to the group. That was a turning point for him. In every other group, he’d been on the fringe. But here, he was fully involved.”

Carefree Senior Youth Worker

SCHOOLS



Wadebridge - 6 week programme

Sarah Connors delivered a six-week creative writing programme for selected Year 6 pupils at Wadebridge Primary Academy, focusing on children identified as reluctant writers. Through targeted, supportive sessions, pupils developed greater confidence, engagement and enjoyment in writing. The programme was complemented by a CPD session.

“Often these particular children are reluctant writers; it was lovely to see them take ownership and simply be creative within their writing. Even a child with SEN who usually writes on a laptop took to these sessions and produced some wonderful pieces!” Primary School Teacher

Agatha Christie Festival

We delivered KS2 full-day creative writing workshops for the Agatha Christie Festival and Torre Abbey in the fifth year of our partnership. Pupils were invited to create their own mystery stories, drawing inspiration from the Abbey’s historic grounds, gardens, and intriguing symbols.

The workshops combined character development, creative writing exercises, and exploration of the Abbey’s grounds. Activities were designed to be accessible for all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, ensuring every child could participate and flourish. The sessions were led by writers Sarah Connors and Polly Roberts.

In total, 125 children participated, along with nine teachers.

“I really loved it because we didn’t have to worry about spelling and punctuation. It was all about our imagination.” King’s Ash pupil

PROGRAMME WORKSHOPS & EVENTS



We offer a year-round public programme at The Writers' Block in Redruth including writing masterclasses, community workshops, Young Writers, and out of school activity.

Our programming combines being responsive to participants' needs and requests, feedback from previous seasons, identifying areas for development, and taking advantage of opportunities such as visiting national writers. We aim to include activity to engage writers at all stages, from ideation and finding voice through to more in-depth skills and content development.

“It keeps me emotionally, creatively alive”

This year workshops have ranged from our popular writing for enjoyment course ‘Everybody Has A Story’ with Sarah Connors and Polly Roberts to masterclasses with writers such as Ella Frears and Sue Wallace-Shaddad. Tackling the hard bits of being a writer with ‘How to Finish’ with Wyl Menmuir and ‘Building Your Brand as a Writer’ with Katie Tregidden. Partnerships including Falmouth Poetry Group and Literature Works help us bring diverse writers to Cornwall including Anthony Joseph and Karen McCarthy Woolf.

“I really enjoyed and benefitted from the whole experience, and it opened up a whole raft of learning, challenges to write and re-found enthusiasm thanks to the structure and to the facilitators encouragement, exercises and insightful feedback. And thanks to the team who was always welcoming, organised and encouraging too.”

BRAND, SPACE DEVELOPMENT

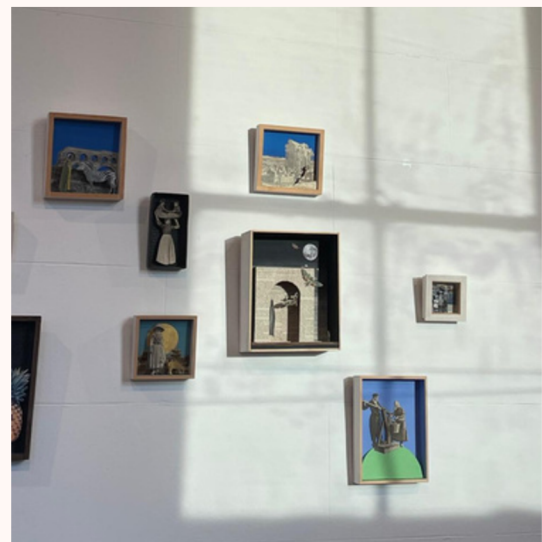
To strengthen our identity as Cornwall's Creative Writing Centre, we refreshed our brand and created a new, more accessible website.



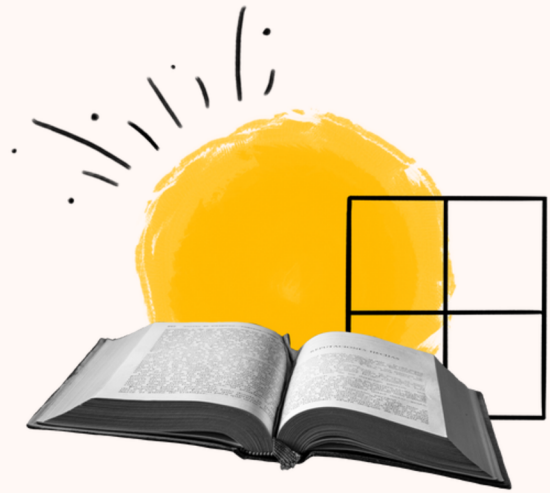
Following a temporary move to allow for building works, we returned to The Ladder and reimagined our home with themes of welcome and imagination at the core, collaborating with artist Helen Trevaskis and carpenter Dan Sutcliffe to craft cabinets of curiosity and cloud-filled skies.

Throughout the year, we've challenged ourselves to think more strategically, forging new partnerships and laying the groundwork to expand our development team resulting in two new Creative Lead positions. We won a place of the Cornwall Create Growth programme and as part of the National Story Venues cohort, we visited like-minded organisations in Manchester, Rotherham and London and are a partner in a 2026 national bid for activity around the National Year of Reading.

We have spent time articulating our pedagogy and what makes us unique, as well as marketing to increase visibility and show process. We have trialled a new evaluation methodology designed to gather the story of an individual's participation and journey with the organisation. Participants involved spoke to shared themes of inclusion, writing identity and bespoke support.



THANK YOU OUR TEAM



All of this work is made possible by our dedicated team including our Associate Writers and Artists and our board of trustees:

Core team

Helen Reynolds - Development Director

Grace Davies-Wiggins - Venue & Programme Manager

Connie Crosby - Artistic Director of The Story Republic

Lucy Beckley - Creative Lead Emerging Writers & Communities

Olivia Lowry - Creative Lead Young People

Associate Writers & Artists

Casey Bottono, Tony Crosby, Amanda Harris, Jo Lumber, Wyl Menmuir, Anna Maria Murphy, Jane Pugh, Polly Roberts, Sarah Connors, Keith Sparrow and Tori Cannell.

The Story Republic

Berry Cruse, Tom Hayle, Nina Hills, James Hoswell, Marc Jenyon, Jo Lumber, Pema Wainwright and Zoe Waters.

Trustees

Lindsey Hall (Chair), Ian Abrahams (Treasurer), Clare Alvarez-Howard, Keira Money, Jane Pugh and Sravya Raju.

Images in this report by: Steve Tanner, Ian Kingsnorth, James Kitto and the team.

THANK YOU

FUNDERS & PARTNERS



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



amazon *literary*
partnership 



Agatha Christie Festival, Carefree Cornwall, CocoBean Cornwall, Creative Kernow, Creative UK, Falmouth Poetry Group, Falmouth University, Kresen Kernow, The Ladder, Literature Works, The Minack Theatre, National Story Venues Cohort, Paper Nations, Penryn Creativity Collaboratives Partnership, Screen Cornwall, Sue Hill.

The Writers' Block is an operating name of Kernow Education Arts Partnership. Company Limited by Guarantee No. 4253902 and a Registered Charity No. 1095166. Registered office: The Villa, Scorrier, Redruth TR16 5AU.

www.thewritersblock.org.uk