



The Old Changing Rooms Volunteer Work Party

Case Studies | March 2024



South Seeds is working with residents to transform the Old Changing Rooms: a derelict building on Queen's Park recreation ground. It is going to become a net zero community hub.

To create more space for low-carbon community-based projects and activities such as the tool library, practical workshops and food growing opportunities, South Seeds has led the process of bringing the Old Changing Rooms on Queen's Park recreation ground back into community use.

In 2023, South Seeds secured a 25-year lease from Glasgow City Council for the Old Changing Rooms, which had been vacant for over 20 years.

South Seeds encouraged residents to become involved in the transformation of the building by creating a volunteer work party led by a coordinator with construction site safety experience. From June 2023 to February 2024, 18 work party events took place and engaged 88 locals in the building's transformation.

Volunteers tackled various tasks, such as cutting grass, landscaping, removing fixtures and fittings, clearing gutters, and setting up rainwater collection systems. During the process, skills were shared, and experience gained.

The case studies inside this booklet detail just a handful of stories from some of the local volunteers. Thanks to Julien, James, Christine, and Jo for sharing their stories.

New to the area but not new to practical work



Local engineer finds helping to put a vacant building back in to community use very satisfying.

Julien moved to Glasgow with his partner just over a year ago after arriving in the UK from Vancouver and Brussels. They knew they wanted to settle in Glasgow for work connections.

Living near Queen's Park station, Julien had passed by the site of the Old Changing Rooms many times and had noticed, "it looked colourful, but derelict". He got involved after seeing the volunteering opportunity advertised by South Seeds, and thought it would be a great way to balance his work life.



"I'm an engineer. I like making a change but at work, change takes time. On this project I can see the difference immediately."

Julien has become part of the Old Changing Rooms volunteer work party. His favourite task so far has been removing the old hardwood benches that were attached to the walls and floor of each cubicle.

"It took four to five people with crowbars to pull out a single bench – very rewarding work to see a completely empty cubicle."

Julien has enjoyed seeing his local landscape change and being part of that change. He's excited to continue to be involved and see this project through to the end.

Volunteer work party dates are advertised on South Seeds Facebook and Instagram, as well as in the windows on Victoria Road and on the fence near the site.

Email OCR@southseeds.org for more information.



Old Changing Rooms volunteer work party:

Gaining on the job experience

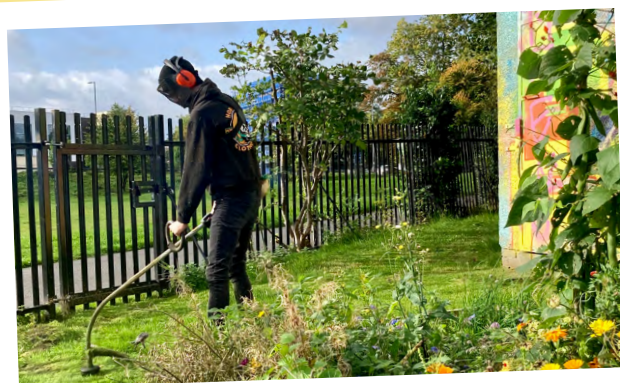
James has used the work party to learn new practical skills, and position himself for a new career.

James has lived in Govanhill for three years and not far away in Shawlands before that. At the start of the Old Changing Rooms project, he was already aware of South Seeds – as a member of the Southside Tool Library, he often borrowed woodworking tools for projects during lockdown.

James showed up at the very first volunteer work party at the Old Changing Rooms.

"I was in a period of my life where I wasn't working and I was looking for social interactions... it was a good way to meet people – like me interested in: horticulture and restoration."

Since this first work party, James has used the experience gained at the Old Changing Rooms work party to develop his grass cutting skills. He had already used an electric trimmer but was keen to find out how petrol trimmers worked. Petrol trimmers can be operated without a plug in lead and so are better for larger commercial jobs.



"It was great learning about the petrol motor and having the opportunity to use it repeatedly really boosted my confidence. It gave me the opportunity to practice strimming and get feedback. I have always maintained my own lawns, however this experience has enabled me to consider making money out of my skill."

He has become the principal grass trimmer at the Old Changing Rooms – volunteering at times outside of the work parties.

"Making this corner of nature nice and presentable for everyone – that's what keeps me coming back."

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Old Changing Rooms volunteer work party:

Getting to know new people and learning how to use new tools.

Christine enjoyed practising with tools and went on to learn about preserving parts of the building.

Christine lives around the corner from South Seeds and borrows from the Southside Tool Library from time to time. That was where she found out about the opportunity to join the Old Changing Rooms volunteer work party.

Christine participated in several volunteer work parties at the Old Changing Rooms during which she was introduced to and learnt how to use a range of new tools. She enjoyed the work parties because they were well attended and it was an opportunity to meet other local people. The work parties were a place where she could try out using tools and watch how others used tools.

Christine told Sam, the volunteer work party Coordinator:

"I've enjoyed learning how to use different tools and practising (with them). It's meant I've been able to learn without putting a hole in my house. And, just getting some guidance has been really handy to understand that little bit more; I guess I've got more confidence in what I do."



Inspired by the transformation, Christine even took it upon herself to take away a pair of tarnished brass doorknobs from cubicle doors and see if they could be polished back to their former glory. This is one of several examples of the volunteer work party enabling materials to be salvaged from this vacant building, so they can be put back into use when it is transformed.

"I really enjoyed taking the doorknobs away to get polished and figure out what they were made of - there's some good stuff still here that can still be used in the future."

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Old Changing Rooms volunteer work party:



From local volunteering to hopes for the future.

What started out as a wish to offer some time, has resulted in making new pals and shaping a local project.

Jo moved to Glasgow two years ago. Settling in Glasgow's Southside, she had spotted South Seeds' shop front when visiting the high street. From the outset, she was interested in finding out if there were any volunteering opportunities.

"I knew about South Seeds because of the prominent corner unit on Victoria Road... I had recently moved to the area, and I wanted to offer my free time. I saw on social media an event for the work party at the weekend, so I went along to it."



Regularly participating in the volunteer work parties, she enjoyed meeting others and working outside. From gardening to bashing holes in walls, the tasks were varied and involved working in small teams, so Jo was able to meet and work with other work party participants.

"The work parties are really sociable, meeting people from the local area. I enjoyed being given tasks, completing them and understanding how my effort contributed to the overall project. I also enjoyed spending time outside – it's cool see up close how trees and shrubs change over time."

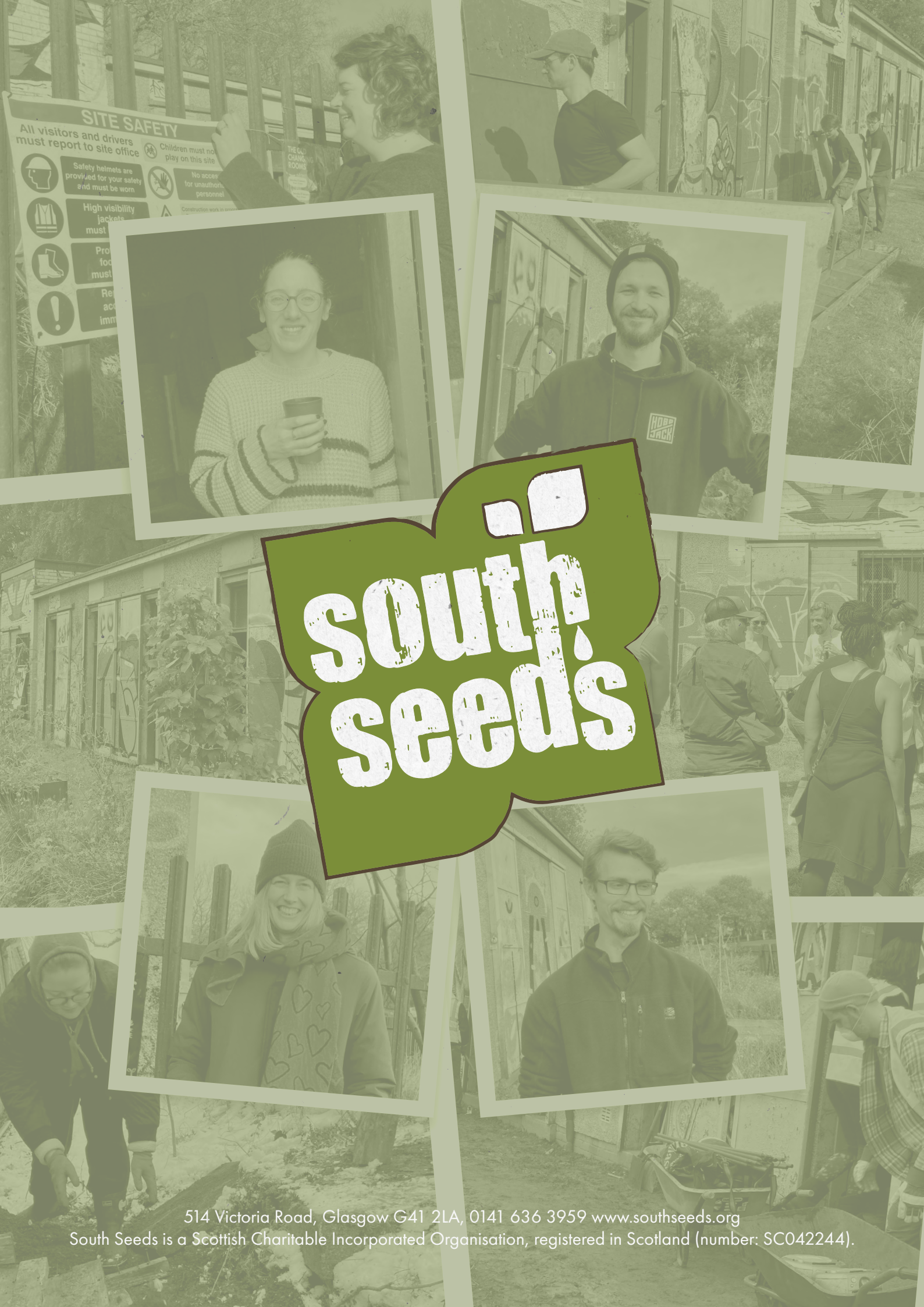
After the main sign for the Old Changing Rooms was graffitied, Jo volunteered her skills as a local artist and painter to produce a new sign for the site. So far, Jo's artwork has been left unblemished. Jo is starting to think about the future of the project, and how she can continue to be involved.

"I hope the space we are helping to create will be used for some interesting community events, and I would still like to be involved. I like the idea of being involved in a project that has longevity, and will enable more residents to get to know each other... I believe it's good for the community and area."

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