



# ECO DRAMA FINAL REPORT 2025-2026



**We are delighted to share our latest evaluation report, charting Eco Drama's work during 2025-26.**

This year, we're grateful to have worked alongside 2,333 children and adults on vibrant, creative projects that inspire wonder, excitement and care for our natural world. We've continued to deliver our drama and storytelling-based outdoor learning programme 'Out to Play', supporting early years, primary and ASN settings to embed play-based pedagogy and nature connection into their teaching and learning practices. We've also continued our creative orchard project with residents of Greater Pollok (Glasgow), supporting local community organisations and volunteers to celebrate Pollok Community Orchard and nurture its fruit trees and bushes, encouraging bountiful harvests for many years to come!



## In 2025-26:

**175 residents of Pollok (Glasgow), volunteers and orchard enthusiasts from further afield**, celebrated Pollok's very own Community Orchard at events throughout the year, including a Summer Apple Picnic and Harvest Festival.  
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**155 pupils** from Cleeves Primary School in Pollok participated in orchard-themed creative engagement sessions in October-November and February.  
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**1,257 children & 184 staff** participated in Out to Play sessions across 5 early years settings, 10 primary schools & 1 Additional Support Needs (ASN) school.  
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**Eco Drama was a Scottish Charity Awards 'Climate Impact' finalist.**

**We were delighted to unveil our brand new, fully electric touring vehicle in August - continuing our mission to reduce our carbon footprint and champion sustainable theatre practice.**

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# Pollok Grows Together

## Celebrating Pollok Community Orchard



**'If you don't have community,  
you don't really have much -  
you're isolated. It's like fresh air,  
you have to have it.'**

Attendee, Pollok Harvest Festival



**'Great community fun  
& very welcoming ❤️'**

**'Family friendly +  
interactive for all ages.'**

Attendees, Pollok Harvest Festival

**'Apples are  
good for you  
and there is  
more than one.'**

Pupil, Cleaves PS

**'Wake up  
trees! I love  
your apples.'**

Attendee, Community  
Wassailing Event



**'We made apple cider  
vinegar – who would  
have thought it was  
so easy.'**

Attendee, Pollok Harvest Festival

# Pollok Grows Together

## Celebrating Pollok Community Orchard

As part of our 'Pollok Grows Together' initiative in 2025-26, we worked alongside residents of Greater Pollok (Glasgow), local community organisations, and volunteers to celebrate and care for Pollok Community Orchard - planted by Eco Drama and the community in November 2024.



**55 children and 45 adults attended Pollok Harvest Festival on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, to celebrate the first anniversary of the planting of Pollok Community Orchard.** Festival attendees participated in outdoor storytelling, apple tasting, apple juicing and apple cider vinegar making, arts and crafts and a community ceilidh. Cleeves Primary School pupils' performances 'Green Red and Pink', 'The Immortal Apple', and 'Apple TV' brought orchard magic to the day!



**'I learned how to express my imagination.'**

Pupil, Cleeves Primary School



**155 learners  
& 6 teachers**

**from Cleeves Primary School in Pollok participated in 9 'Our Orchard, Our Stories' sessions in October-November, and February.**

Supported by a professional Drama Artist and Visual Artist from Eco Drama, pupils used drama, storytelling and visual art to explore themes of food growing, folklore and place - creating 4 wonderful, apple-themed performance pieces. They shared their work with family members and community audiences at the Pollok Harvest Festival and Community Wassailing Event.

# Pollok Grows Together

## Celebrating Pollok Community Orchard



### 16 children & 20 adults

participated in a 'Community Wassailing Event' in February.

Together, we woke up the orchard's fruit trees from their winter slumber with a wonderful wassailing song and colourful wands – beautifully created by pupils from Pollok-based Cleeves Primary School.

🎵 We're mindful, we're grateful // To the apple trees // Remember, spring swaps snow for leaves // Wassail, wassail, wassail // Tree spirits so bright // Dark winter be gone! // Make way for the light 🎵

14 children & 25 adults joined us for a 'Summer Apple Picnic' in July. Participants made wildflower seed bombs and apple monsters, took part in drama and storytelling activities and planted blueberry bushes in the orchard.



**Pollok Community Orchard's first apple!**

**We were delighted to promote Pollok Community Orchard through creative, apple-themed activities at a variety of events hosted by community partner organisations, including:**

- The Village Storytelling Centre's '**Pollok Kite Festival**' (May, 80 participants)
- The Village Storytelling Centre's '**Brockburn Festival**' (July, 40 participants)
- Glasgow Community Food Network's '**Harvest Festival**' (October, 20 participants)
- Friends of Crookston Castle's '**Crafts & Fun Day**' (January, 30 participants)



# Pollok Grows Together

## Caring for Pollok Community Orchard



### 14 wonderful volunteers

supported Pollok Community Orchard in 2025-26 by:

- Attending 8 meet-ups to support orchard care - including weeding, watering during warm days, and litter picking.
- Contributing ideas and feedback to improve the orchard's design and community use.
- Supporting community events, such as the Pollok Harvest Festival.

**'I'd love [...] for it to grow into a proper community, where we can help and serve one another.'**

Volunteer, Pollok Community Orchard

**We were thrilled to unveil specially commissioned orchard signage in June, making the Pollok site a more accessible, informative and welcoming green space for the community:**

A large, lectern-style map stands at the foot of the orchard, featuring details about the different fruit trees planted in it and where to find them, how they taste, and when the fruits are ready to harvest.

A smaller notice at the main entrance to Pollok Community Centre signposts visitors to the orchard, and celebrates the Discovery apple tree that is planted there.



Orchard expert Lynsey Payne from Appletreeman nursery **led 2 practical fruit tree pruning workshops at Townhead and Pollok Community Orchards in February and March.** 11 volunteers and 2 teachers whose Glasow-based schools planted orchards in their school grounds as part of Eco Drama's The Forgotten Orchard project in 2025, removed some of the trees' shoots and branches to establish a balanced branch system and encourage a bountiful harvest in autumn!

# Out to Play

## For Primary Schools

'[Out to Play] has made me plant a tree in my back garden.'

P5 Pupil



'It has made me more aware of nature.'

P4-7 Pupil

'We were learning but having fun at the same time.'

P5 Pupil

'[Out to Play] has helped us improve our focus, encourage creativity and strengthen social skills.'

P2 Pupils/Primary School Teacher



'The Out to Play project helps create safe, fun spaces where everyone can enjoy being active and included.'

Parent/Guardian

# Out to Play

## For Primary Schools

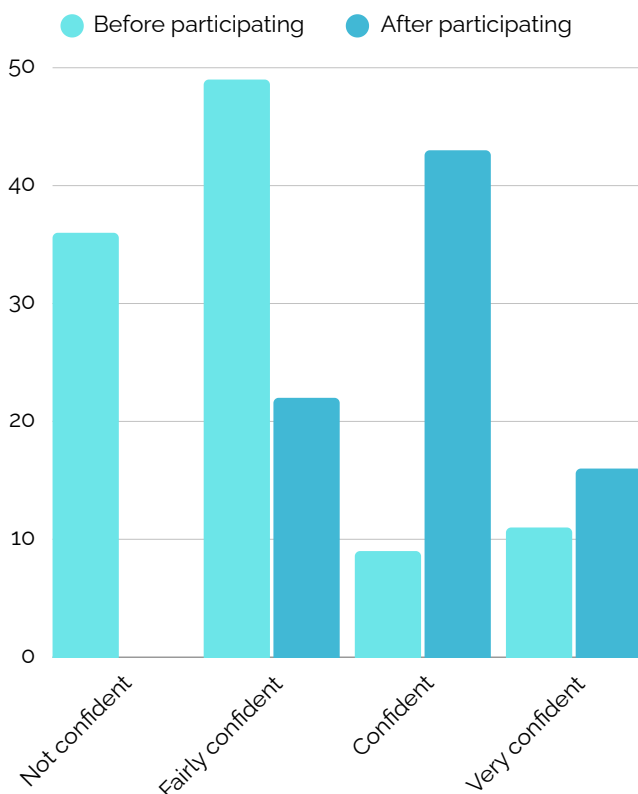
Our award-winning Out to Play creative outdoor learning programme brings together professional Drama Artists with partner primary schools, early years settings and Additional Support Needs (ASN) schools to explore and promote the role of drama, storytelling and creativity in outdoor learning and Learning for Sustainability.



### '[Being outside] makes me feel alive.'

P6 Pupil

Teachers were asked how they would rate their confidence levels in utilising Outdoor Learning, Drama and Storytelling within their teaching practice before and after participating in an Out to Play residency:



**1,232 learners  
& 96 teachers**

**participated in 10 five-week  
Out to Play residencies & 1  
external CPD session across 10  
primary schools & 1 Additional  
Support Needs (ASN) school.**



**'[Out to Play] made me think  
about the choices I make.'**

P6 Pupil

**'It's transformational in terms  
of pedagogy, building  
relationships and embracing  
new creative opportunities.'**

Primary School Teacher



# Out to Play

## For Early Years



The Early Learning & Childcare department at Glasgow City Council commissioned Out to Play for a fifth year in 2025-26, ensuring the provision of quality, creative outdoor learning and play opportunities for early years settings across Glasgow city.

After participating in Out to Play In a Day in February 2025, 20 staff and 25 children at Cowcaddens Day Nursery took part in a 3-day Out to Play Mini-Residency in August-September - further exploring the Out to Play approach and embedding it in outdoor learning and play practices across the setting.

**‘Great opportunity that has definitely built my confidence in outdoor drama.’**

Practitioner, Cowcaddens Day Nursery

**‘[The Drama Artist] was full of great ideas and lots of fun.’**

Practitioner, Cowcaddens Day Nursery

68 staff from across Acredyke, Bellrock, Elmcroft and Molendinar Nurseries took part in an Out to Play CPD session in February. The workshop offered participants a toolkit of imaginative approaches to outdoor learning and play in early years settings.

Participants were asked how relevant the Out to Play CPD session was to them:



● Very relevant: 51%

● Relevant: 49%

**‘Probably one of the best CPD I have done since being a CDO.’**

Practitioner, Acredyke Nursery

Participants were asked which elements of Out to Play they plan to use in their setting going forward:

- Using props to engage the children (28 staff)
- The new stories that are in the resource pack (27 staff)
- Hiding objects in the outdoor space for the children to discover (27 staff)
- Using the children's ideas in stories (25 staff)

# Out to Play

## Out & About

102 school-aged children participated in 8 outdoor drama and storytelling sessions in April and July, as part of Southside Housing Association's holiday programme. Supported by a Drama Artist from Eco Drama, participating children explored themes of water, land and the importance of nature through adventurous, imaginative play.

We loved being back for the third time at the wonderful Bonhill Primary School (Greater Glasgow) in June. As part of the school's yearly Outdoor Day, 145 pupils participated in nature themed storytelling and drama activities, exploring themes of eco action and biodiversity.

We were delighted to bring 'Harvest Stories' to Cycle Arts Renfrewshire's fabulous Cycle Arts Festival in September. Participants explored all things orchard and home-grown food, through magical storytelling and exciting drama games - they were invited to taste heritage apples, too!

## Eco Drama

### Sustainable Theatre Practice

After 16 years on the road, we said goodbye to our much-loved touring vehicle, affectionately known as the 'Magic Van'. Running on 100% recycled vegetable oil (biodiesel), the Magic Van braved rain and sunshine, carrying our performers, sets and stories across Scotland and beyond. In August, we were delighted to unveil its successor: a brand new, fully electric van - continuing our mission to reduce our carbon footprint and champion sustainable theatre practice.





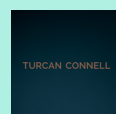
# To conclude

**We're proud to have worked in-depth with 2,333 beneficiaries throughout 2025-26.** Highlights this year have included a record number of 11 Out to Play residencies at early years, primary and ASN schools across Glasgow, plus branching out into neighbouring Councils. Our Pollok Grows Together initiative continued to cultivate nature connection, community resilience, orchard skills, creativity and confidence through volunteer meet-ups, creative engagement and a range of wonderful community events, including a Summer Apple Picnic, Pollok Harvest Festival and a Community Wassailing Event.

**In October, the Eco Drama team, including board members, core staff and freelancers came together to reflect, reconnect and look ahead.** Working in the third sector, and as creative climate and education activists, much of our energy goes into advocating for a fairer, more sustainable future. It's important to pause and reconnect, so we can carry out this work with care, clarity and renewed energy. As well as our core staff team and Trustees, we have been grateful to work with 8 talented freelance workers to deliver the 2025-26 projects, including 1 Volunteer & Community Events Coordinator, 5 Drama Artists, 1 Visual Artist and 1 Horticulturist, plus occasional freelance staff. We're also extremely grateful to the volunteers in Townhead and Pollok, who continue to give their time to care for their local orchards.

**Looking ahead to 2026-27,** we'll continue working with volunteers to care for the Pollok and Townhead orchards, whilst delivering events that foster nature connection, creativity and community spirit. We'll continue to support educational settings to embed arts-based outdoor learning into their daily practices, continuing our mission to engage, inspire and connect people with our amazing natural world.

## With thanks to our 2025-26 funders:



James T Howat Charitable Trust  
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