

FRIENDS OF ROMANO LAV ANNUAL REPORT

2016 – 2017



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Welcome to Friends of Romano Lav

Message from the Trustees

We would like to warmly welcome you to Friends of Romano Lav's Annual Report for 2016-17. Please take a few moments to read through this report and reflect with us on what has been another very busy and productive year for the organisation. From International Roma Day to photography workshops and exhibitions, camping and safari trips to human rights consultations - not to mention the many arts, music, and dance performances throughout! – our programme has been packed with a huge variety of events and activities. None of these activities would have been possible without the generous support of our funders, as acknowledged in this report, as well as the hard work of the Friends of Romano Lav team. 2016-17 has also been a year of change for our team; we were sad to say goodbye to Juliana Da Penha in February 2017 and excited to welcome on board Miroslav Cuba, who took over as our new Project Coordinator. We are indebted to both for their enormous contributions to the project's development over this last year. We wish to thank Marcela Adamova for her continuous support and, of course, thank our team of young sessional workers whose dedication and enthusiasm ensures our events are a success. As Trustees, we would like to extend our thanks to everyone involved with Friends of Romano Lav and we look forward to an equally active and successful 2017-18.

Opre Roma!

Lorraine Barrie

Joshua Brown

Colin Clark

George Gorman



About Friends of Romano Lav

Context

Roma have been historically one of the most systematically oppressed and marginalised populations in Europe, subject to violence, persecution and discrimination. Despite often fleeing racist persecution, Roma continue to experience this legacy of oppression today, with discrimination and destitution exacerbating the everyday struggle to survive. Roma are Europe's largest minority and have been identified as its most vulnerable ethnic group. The extraordinary levels of poverty, discrimination, and inequalities in both opportunities and outcomes in employment, education, health and housing that Roma continue to face led to the establishment of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in 2005 (2005-2015), which aimed 'to close the gap' between Roma and non-Roma within ten years. Whilst this initiative raised the profile of the issues that Roma face, increased expertise, and made some incremental (if uneven) progress on particular outcomes, the efforts were insufficient to achieve the structural changes necessary to have a substantial impact on Romani lives.



Roma Voice

Friends of Romano Lav (SC044474) was established in 2013 and has worked as an independent SCIO since 2014 to challenge the racism, discrimination and disadvantage experienced by migrant Roma communities in Glasgow. The words '*Romano Lav*' mean 'Roma voice', which reflects the key founding principle of our organisation and the continuing objective that underpins all of our work: to ensure that Romani people, especially youth, are involved as active agents in all decisions that affect their lives. Friends of Romano Lav exists then, not to speak *for* Roma, but to work *with* our local Roma communities to ensure that Romani voices are heard in all relevant local social, political, and cultural domains and that we are led by their concerns. We use community development as a tool to achieve the advancement of citizenship of Roma communities by involving them in decision-making processes, creating a sense of ownership, and increasing participation in community activities.

Where We Work: Govanhill

Friends of Romano Lav is based in Govanhill in Glasgow, where approximately 3500 of Scotland's total estimated 4000-5000 Roma reside (SM Gateway, 2013). The majority of Glasgow's Roma live in Govanhill, which is a neighbourhood in the South of Glasgow with a population estimate of 14,716, although this is thought to be an underestimate (Govanhill Regeneration Group, 2017). Govanhill has historically been a destination for new migrants, who have tended to form communities and settle. Whilst Glasgow's population is three times as diverse as the national level (with 12% of its residents identifying within minority categories, compared to 4% at the national level), Govanhill is ten times as diverse, with over one third (40%) of its residents from ethnic minority groups (Scottish Census 2011). Govanhill experiences a complex range of social and economic challenges and is considered one of the most deprived zones in Scotland. For example:

- Approximately 2,272 households in the Govanhill area are overcrowded, which is 24% of all households in the area. This increases to 34% for households with children, which is 88% above the Glasgow average (Govanhill Regeneration Group, 2017).
- Housing density, increasing population through migration, overcrowding and high levels of occupancy define Govanhill as one of the most densely populated areas in Glasgow (Crosshill and Govanhill Community Council, 2015).
- The population in Govanhill classified as income deprived is 24.5%, which is 14% above the Glasgow average, and 23% employment deprived, which is 16% above the Glasgow average (Understanding Glasgow, 2015). This rises to 42% in some areas (Clark, 2017). There is evidence of increasing income deprivation, with average weekly household incomes decreasing from £334 in 2011 to £283 in 2015 (IBP Strategy and Research for the Govanhill Community Development Trust, 2015). This is likely to be partly driven by welfare reform.
- Around a quarter of Govanhill's residents are living in poverty and the child poverty rate is 30% (Govanhill Regeneration Group, 2017).

The outcomes of these problems of poverty, overcrowding, and subsequent environmental issues are reinforced and exacerbated by consistently negative media coverage of the area and its 'community tensions'. This perpetuates divisions and a culture of blame. As the largest ethnic minority in the area and a 'new' migrant population, having largely come from Slovakia and Romania from EU enlargement in 2004 onwards, Roma are often at the sharp end of poor housing, labour market precariousness, and exploitation. Specific challenges for Roma in this context include literacy and language barriers, which mean that any employment opportunities tend to be low-skilled and low-waged. Roma who are working are often engaged in casual labour in chicken factories, food processing plants, supermarket warehouses, car washes, and in the agricultural and hospitality industries. For Roma women, disproportionate levels of child caring responsibilities make finding employment or accessing education more difficult, although the recent establishment of Modern Apprenticeships for bilingual *Romanes*-speaking Teaching Assistants in local schools is cause for optimism.

Why Friends of Romano Lav Exists

To combat these problems and improve the quality of life for Roma in Glasgow, we have initiated a range of projects that aim to integrate Roma communities in society through creating opportunities for capacity building and voluntary work, promotion of intercultural dialogue, and challenging discrimination. From our experience working with young Romani people, we believe that it is important to start this work from an early age. There are many negative perceptions and stereotypes regarding Roma people that need to be challenged and dismantled. Roma must be welcome, present, and visible in the public sphere and their contribution to our communities and



to society must be valued. Investing in young Romani people's capacities and in their prospects now is a critical factor in changing their future. We believe that taking steps towards overcoming these structural disadvantages and improving opportunities for representation and participation could contribute, in a small way, towards breaking the centuries-long cycle of poverty and discrimination they face and for future generations of Roma to come.

Our objectives:

- to prevent and to relieve poverty among members of Roma communities living in Glasgow;
- to advance arts and culture, and in particular to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of Roma culture among all local communities;
- to provide recreational activities, with the object of improving the quality of life for the local community as a whole and with particular reference to encouraging members of the Glasgow Roma communities to participate;
- to advance education, in particular supporting training and work experience and improving employability especially for Romani young people; and
- to promote racial harmony, equality and diversity, with a view to addressing the social exclusion suffered by members of Glasgow Roma communities.

2016 at a Glance: From April onwards

April 2016: International Roma Day festivities



In 2016, we celebrated International Roma Day with our most ambitious programme to date: comprising of a whole month of activities building up to the procession itself! This cultural programme included a music concert, film screening, community placard making workshops, a mini International Roma Day at Annette Street Primary School and the launch of our photography exhibition, which was attended by local MSP and First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon.





2016 Glasgow International Roma Day



International Roma Day (8th April) is celebrated every year internationally. This was established in 1990 by the World Romani Congress of the International Romani Union as a day dedicated to celebrating Roma culture and raising awareness about issues faced by Roma.



In Glasgow, International Roma Day has been celebrated since 2013 with a large public procession and a related series of events celebrating Roma history, traditions and the cultural contribution of Roma people. It is organised by Friends of Romano Lav, community members, and partner organisations. As a relatively new community in Glasgow, Roma are faced with some of the discrimination that they have been subject to historically, so International Roma day also raises awareness about the issues that Roma still face. International Roma Day provides a crucial space for Roma and their neighbours to interact and to celebrate Roma pride - tackling social exclusion whilst instilling a sense of empowerment and support from the local community.

The 3rd annual Glasgow International Roma Day public procession was held on 11th April and attended by approximately 300 Roma and non-Roma Glasgow residents. We started off with speeches in Govanhill Park, including from Alison Thewliss MP (Glasgow Central), Romany poet Gillian Green, and our very own founder Marcela Adamova. Roma from Slovakia, Romania, the Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgaria, Scotland and England marched through Govanhill's streets together with their families and with the wider community to the sound of Romane Cerhenia, traditional Roma musicians and dancers from Poland, and E Karika Djal, a music group formed by Roma and non-Roma musicians.



We closed our day by offering traditional food from Poland, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia at a small reception at the Govanhill Baths. International Roma Day events shows the power of community initiatives and is a result of team work and collective action. Govanhill streets were filled with colourful placards offering many messages of hope, unity, and solidarity. It shows that together we can overcome barriers and build community cohesion. **Opre Roma!**

‘From the horse’s mouth...’: Learning the History and Traditions of Roma Communities - June 2016

Friends of Romano Lav participated within SIGOHA’s culture festival, with Trustee George Gorman speaking as part of a panel hosted by then Project Development worker Juliana Da Penha at the Pipe Factory.



The audience was comprised of attendees of the wider ‘Glasgow Anew’ exhibition who had very little knowledge of Roma culture and history, which made for a fascinating set of exchanges in the discussion. Following George’s talk, a short film screening, and a panel discussion, the event closed with some very moving poetry performed by Roma poets.

Summer Programme: July – August 2016

To ensure that Roma children had activities during summer, we held a series of creative workshops at Govanhill Library that culminated in an exhibition. During July and August, around 20 children attended our Summer Programme which featured arts & crafts workshops, carnival dance classes and costume making workshops.



To conclude this project, we organized a final celebration that took place in Govanhill Library in September 2017, where children performed what they learned during the dance classes, using the costumes they created. The amazing art pieces they created during the workshops were showcased around the Library. Thank you for the partner West of Scotland Regional Equality Council, the tutors Ashanti and Pearl, our sessional workers and volunteers, Govanhill Library staff support and Govanhill Baths.



The kids were extremely enthusiastic about the programme (and, of course, the final celebration!) and we hope to make it part of our regular calendar.

July: Camping Trip on the Isle of Kerrera

Friends of Romano Lav organized a summer trip for a group of 7 young people with the support of our sessional worker Erik Gazi to Oban. The group spent 4 days (26th June to 30th June) in the Ardentrive Farm, on the Isle of Kerrera, Argyll on the West Coast of Scotland. They were mentored by Lisa Helen Craig who organised a set of outdoor activities, including pitching tents, fishing, outdoors cooking, wood collection, fire building techniques, boat trips, sheep shearing, and a twelve-mile walk.



Playing and spending time outdoors is an important part of healthy development for kids. In doing so, they are also encouraged to be creative, engage in teamwork, and learn new skills that can be transferable in school and work. It was a great opportunity for them to get away from the city and to discover Scotland's wild landscape, participate in sport and outdoor activities, deepen existing bonds, and build new friendships.



August: Roma Holocaust Remembrance Event

In August 2016, we held our first Roma Holocaust Remembrance event in memory of the hundreds of thousands of Roma who were murdered during the Holocaust (or *Porrajmos*, the Great Devouring). We held a small service, which was followed by recitals of the poetry of Gillian Green and Thurzie Penfold O'Neill.



This is a painful history, but one that must not be forgotten, and we endeavour to build on this with a future programme of events. Steps towards recovering this history and educating the wider community about this genocide have already taken place, with a bigger Roma Holocaust Memorial event taking place in August 2017 and a Roma Holocaust documentary to be screened at the CCA in January 2018; both of which will feature in next year's report.

September: Safari park trip

September proved to be a busy month! In addition to our Summer programme's final celebration Exhibition at the Govanhill Library, we also organised a safari park trip for those who participated in the programme.



The children and young people who attended the activities went to Blair Drummond Safari Park in Stirling for a Saturday day trip. It was a lovely sunny day, where they had more contact with the nature, got some respite from the city, and had fun. Our sessional worker, David, said it was one of the best trips he has ever experienced, that it was relaxing as well as really fun, and he would love to visit again. We will try to make this trip available again.



October: Say Hello to Roma event and the commencement of the Annette St Primary School project workshops (October 2016 – January 2017)

Soul Food Sisters and Friends of Romano Lav worked in collaboration to organize a fun and welcoming community evening. A variety of people came together to 'say hello to Roma communities' in Govanhill. Delicious traditional Romanian food was served, as well as a Romani art & crafts workshop that taught participants how to make paper flowers, and a music gig with E karika Djal created an amazing community event. Pictures made by our lovely Govanhill children :)



This event was very successful in creating intercultural dialogue and breaking down barriers as people came together via the language of food, music, and creativity!



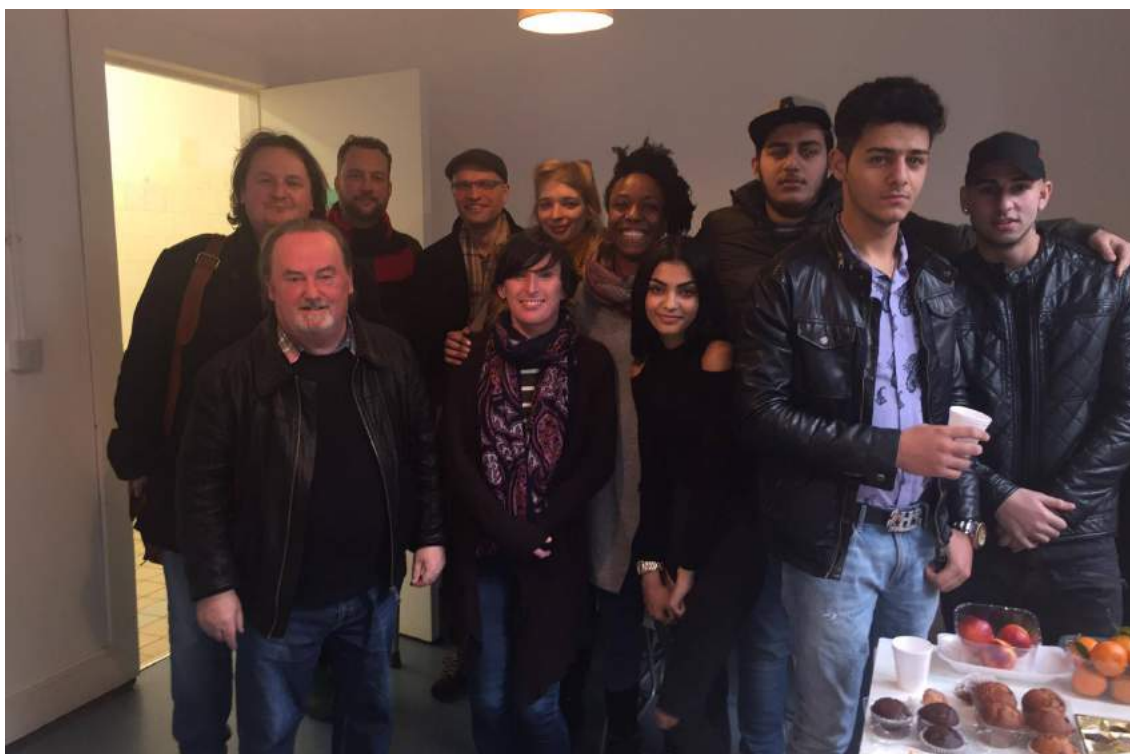
We also started working together with Annette Street Primary School in October to develop a series of workshops around the topic of "Travelling". Children explored this topic through a variety of means, techniques, interpretations, and discussions. In these workshops, they are preparing material on this theme to develop using screen-printing techniques.



December: Annual General Meeting and St Nicholas' Day Party

Throughout the year, our team of staff members and sessional workers meet on a weekly basis to plan our activities and to discuss new projects and initiatives. However, once per year, we enjoy getting everyone together who is involved with Friends of Romano Lav for our Annual General Meeting.





We held this year's meeting in December, where we reflected on our year and discussed future projects with our members and allies. It is important that our sessional workers are a key part of this process, to enable them to participate in decision making, to support their communities, and to shape the direction of our project as, ultimately, they are our future!



St Nicholas' Day Party (December 2016)

Our AGM was immediately followed the next day on the 17th December with our annual St Nicholas' Day Christmas Party. It was a very successful event and attended by around 150 people.



We were treated to delicious food cooked by Sonia Michalewicz and Jana Puskova, music by E Karika Djal and Romane Cierhenia, who beautifully performed with the group of dancers, including a dance troop of Roma children, and fantastic face painting by Jade Murphy from Sparkles Face and Body Art, with the help of Gabi from Milk Cafe. Santa Claus arrived at our party and gave gifts to around 100 children.





We had an amazing day thanks to our staff, especially JanusQa Ahmed and Dàvid D Kiñg, who introduced the party and volunteers. We want to say thank you for the support of Big Lottery under the fund "Celebrate", to the West of Scotland Regional Equality Council, and to individual donations; all of which made this lovely event possible. We would also like to thank Lisa Helen Craig for the amazing photographs (as always!).



2017 (January – April)

January: Scottish National Holocaust Memorial event; Participatory Action Research pilot; the Roma Guide – animated journalism project.

We had a very busy start to the year. We were invited to attend the Scottish National Holocaust Memorial event. Our sessional worker, David, participated on our behalf and on behalf of his community in lighting a candle for all of those Roma whose lives were taken. Such events are important in bringing diverse communities together, emphasising their connections, and forging solidarities.



Participatory Action Research (January – February 2017)

We also commenced our own pilot participatory action research project in the new year with our sessional workers to identify priority areas for development to inform our future funding applications. We had discussions and meetings throughout January and held two focus groups in collaboration with Marcela Adamova in February. Our young team of developed their skills as they worked in different steps of this project; learning about research methods, recruiting participants, organising the focus groups, and translating. Although this was a pilot, we learned a lot and used the data to inform our VAF funding application. We will also draw on the lessons we learnt about effective community engagement to inform future projects.

The Roma Guide

In January, Friends of Romano Lav also participated in producing 'the Roma Guide: 10 facts you should know about Roma'. This was an animated journalism project produced by Juliana Da Penha and Alexandre de Maio (cartoonist and journalist based in Brazil) in collaboration with some members of Roma communities from Eastern Europe (Romania, Slovak and Hungary) who are residents in the United Kingdom to show what they would like people to know about their people, culture, and lifestyle. Co-creators included Alexandra Anamaria Bahor, Ionut Cioarta, Marcela Adamova, and Orsolya Orsos.



The Roma guide is part of The World Profile project which investigates marginalized issues and the reality of individuals, groups, and minorities in all continents. It was produced by our participants under the shared view that journalism, Comics, animated Gifs and animation might be used as tools to stimulate a critical look to the present.





The aim is stimulating the deconstruction of stereotypes, creating a bridge for the intercultural dialogue. We think it is very effective, and we are certainly not alone in that view...

THE COMICS JOURNALISM ARTICLE “THE ROMA GUIDE: 10 FACTS
PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ROMA” WON THE
24 INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL “AMICO ROM” IN ITALY



...In October 2017, Friends of Romano Lav's project 'The Roma Guide: 10 facts people should know about Roma' was awarded First Place at the 24th International Arts Festival 'Amico Rom' (Roma Friend), held in Castel Frentano Italy. Since 1994, this festival is organised by Roma artists and activists in Italy to recognise the work of Roma and non-Roma artists and activists around the world. Well done to everyone involved!



February: Roma Human Rights in Scotland consultation event (Equality and Human Rights Commission – Scotland)

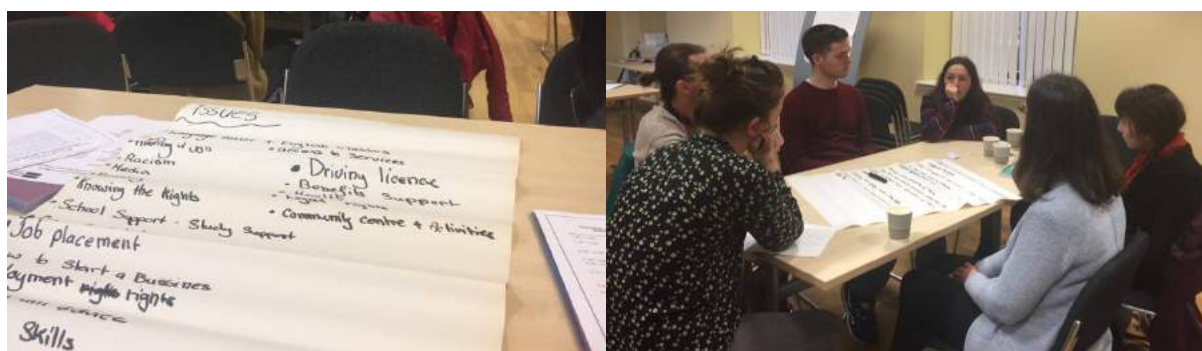
In February, Friends of Romano Lav was invited to participate and take a key role in an Equality and Human Rights Commission (Scotland) event held at the Govanhill Housing Association. The event was driven by two core questions:

1. What are the main issues facing Roma people in Scotland?
2. What should government/authorities do?

Following an introduction from our Trustee Lorraine Barrie, who explained the work of the EHRC, the event opened with a presentation by Marcela Adamova (who joined us from Budapest for the occasion) and Juliana Da Penha. They provided an overview of the issues that Roma experience in Scotland and a history of Friends of Romano Lav.



The highlight of the day was the feedback sessions. Our sessional workers took a lead role in identifying the issues from their perspectives and advocating on behalf of their communities.



Our young people certainly gave the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Scotland) much food for thought and identified a wide range of important issues.



Amongst many issues raised, they discussed:

- literacy (and barriers to learning English and attending classes);
- poverty (and Roma being forced to beg due to restrictions on benefits, labour market exclusion and lack of support for self-employment and apprenticeships);
- trafficking and economic exploitation;
- educational attainment barriers (and lack of classroom interpreting support as well as lack of careers advice);
- housing (poor conditions, insecure tenancies, landlord exploitation and lack of appropriate housing for larger families);
- difficulties and discrimination in accessing services;
- racism and stereotyping (and the underreporting of hate crime, the role of the media in perpetuating myths about Roma, and the absence of positive Romani history in educational curriculums);
- funding decisions and the lack of Roma involvement (which means funds are not targeted where needed most);
- the lack of community centres and activities for Romani young people.



In addition to these issues, they also identified possible solutions, which was very useful as attendees included community development workers, academics, school teachers, housing association representatives, funding officers, and the local MP Alison Thewliss. It was incredibly powerful for attendees of the event to hear their direct testimonies based on their own experiences.



We were so proud of how Friends of Romano Lav's young Roma sessional workers articulated their views, advocated on behalf of and in the interests of their communities, and demonstrated how we build Roma ownership, what active Roma participation in decision making processes should look like, and how we should approach community development.

March: Pre-Activities for 2017 Glasgow International Roma Day

In March, preparations were fully underway for the 4th annual International Roma Day celebrations. We hosted many planning meetings with our sessional workers, who did streetwork to advertise the event, and assisted in all preparations including catering plans. You will have to wait until next year's report to see our beautiful celebration, but in the meantime, here is a teaser of our placard making workshops!





OPRE ROMA!



Funders



Staff/Volunteers

Marcela Adamova

Senior Consultant



Miroslav Cuba

Project Coordinator



Ashli Mullen

Volunteer



Sessional Workers

Jana



Nikolka



Rahela



David



Erik



Isac



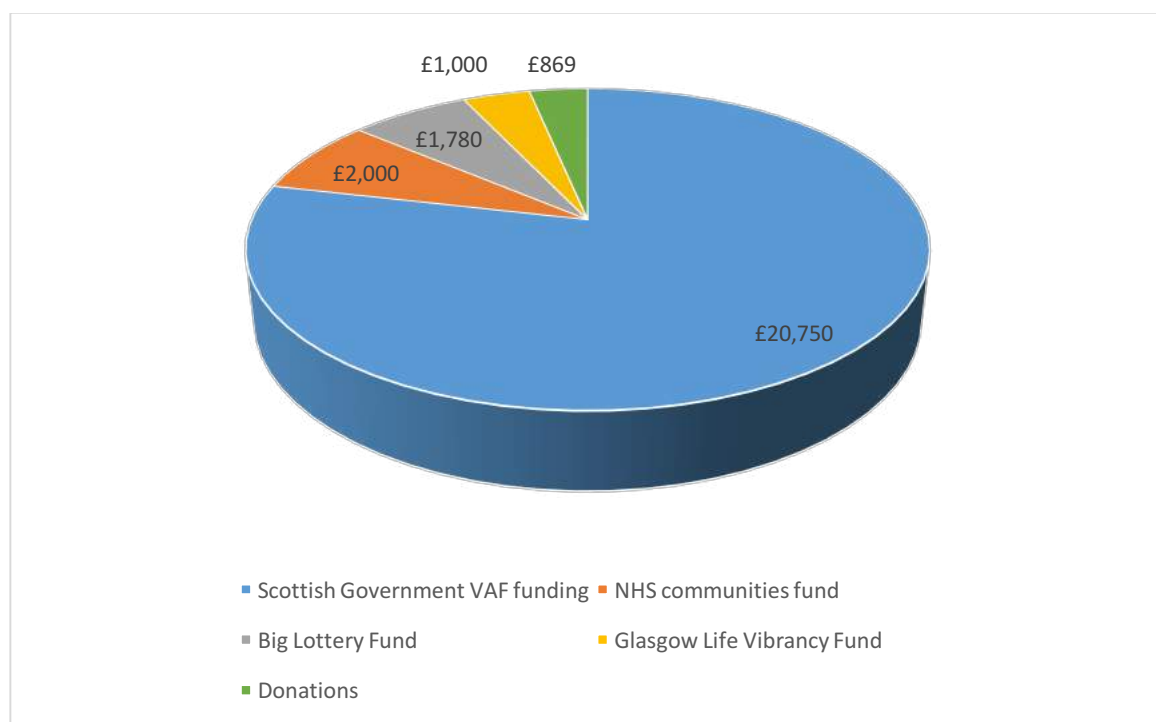
Financial Statement

Summarised statement of financial activities for the financial year 2016 – 2017 (1st of April 2016 to 31st of March 2017)

Balance from previous year	£17.269
Income from Grants and Donations	£26.399
TOTAL Income	£43.668

Expenditure for Charitable Activities	£27.805
TOTAL Expenditure	£27.805

Financial Resources Structure



Contact Us:



Address: 99 Calder Street G42 7RA

Phone: +44 7470145628

Email: romano_lav@hotmail.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/friends.of.romano.lav/