

Agnes, Grassmarket Community Project

Agnes had always worked, but things started to get on top of her when she was diagnosed with cancer.

She said: "I worked non-stop for 32 years. I was always on the go but then everything stopped when I became ill.

"I stopped working when I was diagnosed with cancer and that diagnosis, and the chemotherapy that followed, knocked me for six and depression set in.

"I started sleeping all day, drinking a lot and couldn't get myself out of bed in the morning. My hygiene was all to pot as well but I wasn't really aware of how bad things were getting – I think because I was having mental health problems I just got trapped in my own wee world.

"My family were very worried about me. Social Work stepped in and carers came to visit me three times a day, mainly to make sure I was eating. I really didn't want that though – that was the work I had done before I was ill."

A Positive Path

As an alternative, Agnes' social worker suggested a visit to the Grassmarket Community Project and the visit put Agnes back on a positive path. She quickly found a welcoming place in the project's tartan textiles group.



Grassmarket Tartans is a social enterprise launched in 2014. The in-house volunteers receive training in textile skills to produce a range of beautiful tartan products. Agnes is proud to be playing her part in creating goods that raise funds to support the project.

She said: "I wasn't sure how it would go at first as I last used a sewing machine about forty years ago, but I picked it up again really quickly.

"Five years on, I now volunteer and run the group on a Tuesday and I really enjoy it. I teach volunteers how to use the sewing machines.

"This place is very special and it's been really good for me. We're all different and we come from all walks of life but we are friends. There are people with vulnerabilities, folk with health problems but we all get on. It's like a big family."



Life Changing

That visit five years ago transformed Agnes' life. Indeed, she's convinced she owes her life to the Grassmarket Project.

"It's fair to say that coming here saved my life. I think that, if I had continued the way I was going, the drink would have killed me. I would have been dead. I've no doubt about that."