

An illustration of two hands shaking over a large yellow circle. The hands are rendered in shades of peach and brown. Two teal, four-pointed starburst shapes are positioned on the yellow circle, one in the upper left and one in the lower right. The background is white with a diagonal brown stripe running from the top right towards the center.

SUSTAINING A VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION IN AN EVOLVING COMMUNITY

**MARIA C.
BORG**

VOLUNTARY/CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS ARE SPACES OF

Social trust

**Civic
Participation**

**Care and
Solidarity**

Belonging

**Democratic
culture**



TODAY WE ASK:

What is changing in communities and society?

What pressures/opportunities does this create for voluntary organisations?

How can organisations respond sustainably through the 5Cs framework?



THE EVOLVING COMMUNITY

SOME TRENDS



Individualisation

Digital transformation and AI

A changing understanding of what is a community

Burnout and sustainability of people

Declining trust in institutions (rising desire for authenticity)

Demographic and cultural shifts

WHY EVOLUTION MATTERS

**Organisations are
living systems in
changing
communities**

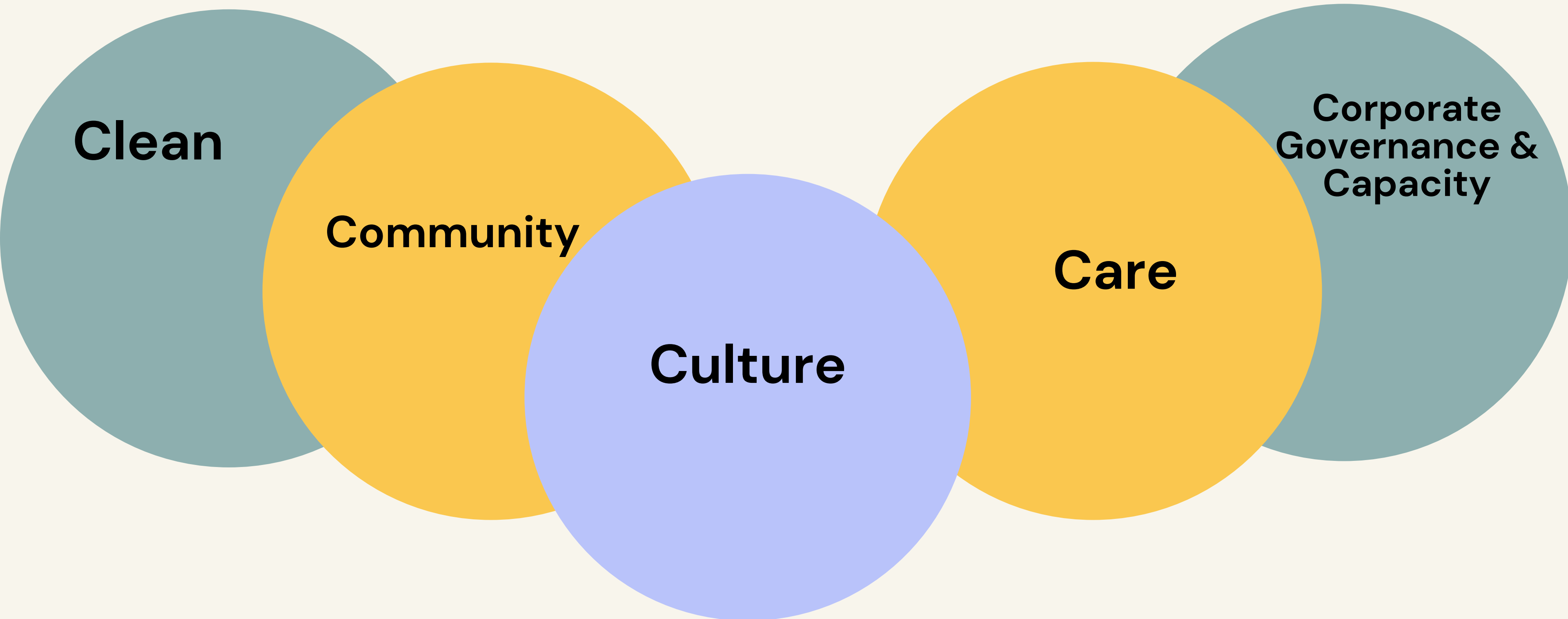
key challenge:

**Relevance, not
survival**

The requirement:

**Evolve, without
losing identity**

THE 5CS OF SUSTAINABILITY: A FRAMEWORK FOR ADAPTABILITY



Clean

Community

Culture

Care

**Corporate
Governance &
Capacity**



#1 CLEAN



**How sustainable
are our
practices?**

**What values do
we model?**

**How do we
contribute to
sustainable
communities?**

#2 COMMUNITY

SUSTAINABILITY STARTS WITH
REMAINING CONNECTED TO
REAL COMMUNITY NEEDS.

Serving communities



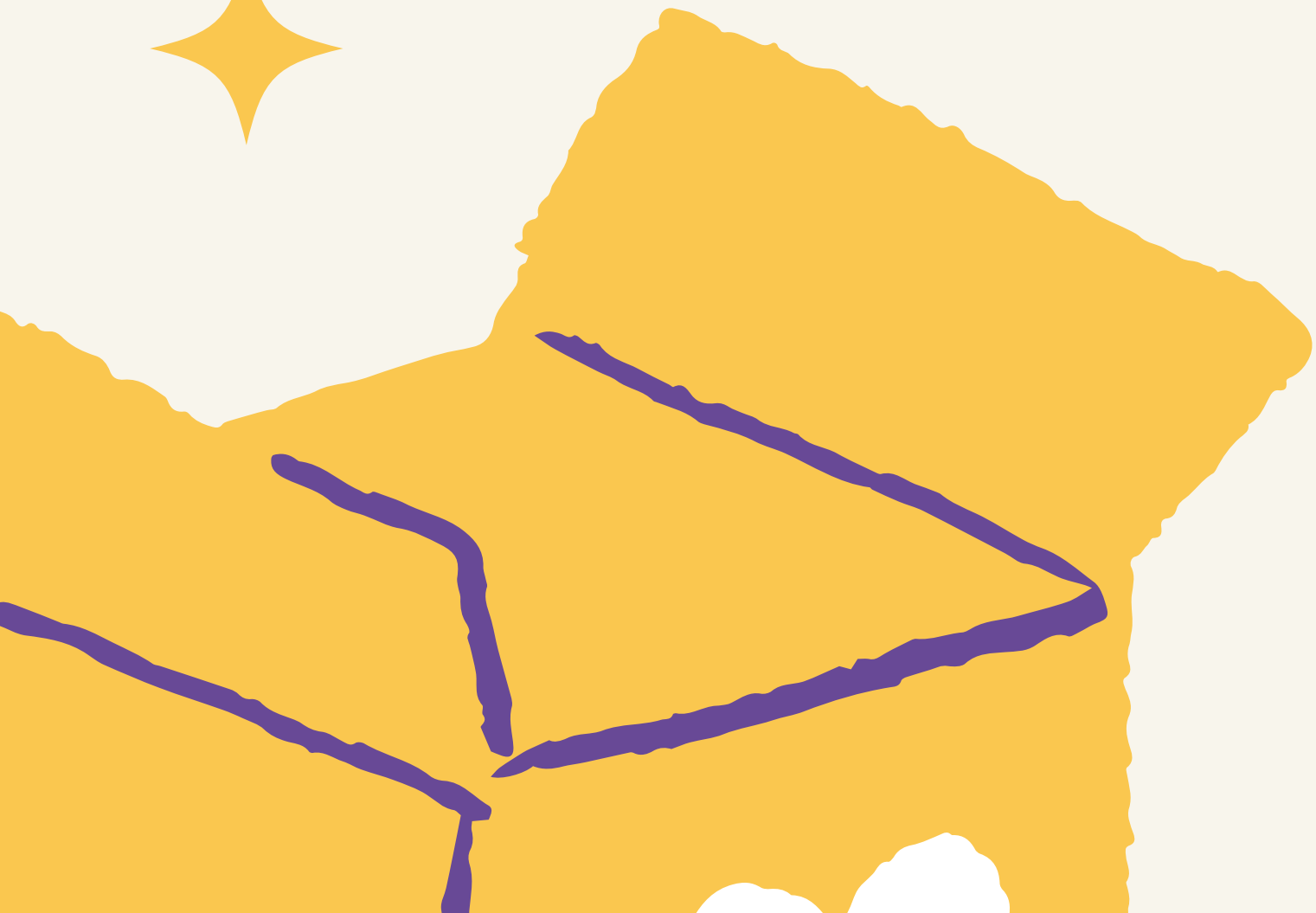
Co-creating with communities



#3 CULTURE

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND CULTURAL RELEVANCE

What story are we telling?



who belongs?

who is heard?

what values are lived?

**what traditions are
sustained?**

what future is imagined?

#4 CARE

SUSTAINING ORGANISATIONS MEANS SUSTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Tronto's Ethics of Care	Organisational Reflection
Caring About	Do we notice people's needs?
Taking Care Of	Who takes responsibility?
Care Giving	How do we support people in practice?
Care Receiving	Do people actually feel valued?
Caring With	How do we build solidarity and shared belonging?

#5 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND CAPACITY

A REINFORCING SYSTEM OF SUSTAINABILITY

Governance	Capacity
Direction & accountability	Ability to act & deliver
Trust & legitimacy	Skills & resources
Decision-making structures	People & systems
Transparency	Resilience
Continuity	Adaptability

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Sustainable organisations are those organisations that:



are conscious about and connected to the world they live in.



are flexible to adapt to different participation models and involve the community. Co-creation is key.



tell a meaningful story that resonates with the community.



practice ethical care.



that set up structures and policies that facilitate trust and ethical practice and invest to make them work.