

EVALUATION SUMMARY

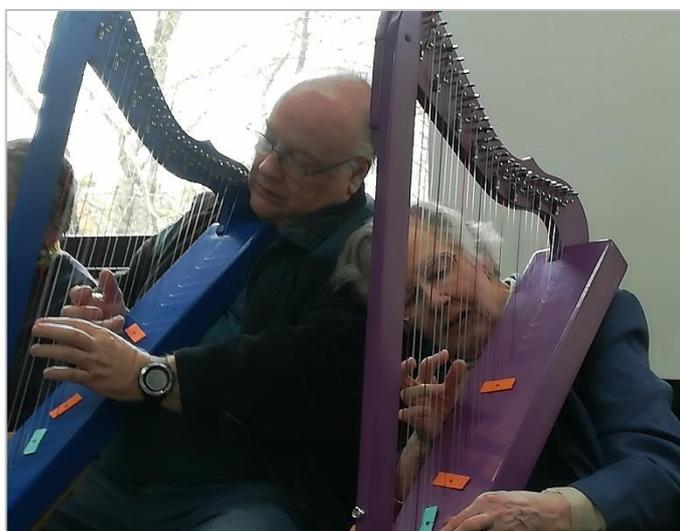


ABOUT CELEBRATING AGE WILTSHIRE

Celebrating Age Wiltshire (CAW) is a 3-year partnership project (2017-2020) which aims to increase older people's inclusion and access to arts, heritage, cultural and creative activities. CAW presents free monthly events in 6 community areas of Wiltshire: Trowbridge, Calne, Royal Wootton Bassett, Corsham, Amesbury and Salisbury using local and accessible community venues and public spaces, such as libraries, church halls and community centres. The events are specifically curated for older people (with their input) and include music performances, theatre, art and craft workshops, heritage and reminiscence events, storytelling, reading groups and dance workshops.

CAW is led by a steering group of professionals from cultural and community partner organisations and financially supported by the Celebrating Age Programme, a partnership between Arts Council England (ACE) and the Baring Foundation, and Wiltshire Community Area Boards' Health and Wellbeing Project Grants.

The project is co-ordinated by a part-time Project Development Worker (PDW) with the support of Wiltshire Music Centre staff, steering group partner organisations, project volunteers and local partners such as: GP Care Co-ordinators, social housing providers, Older People's Champions, day centres, residential care homes, and older people's and carers' support groups such as Alzheimer's Support and Age UK. The project is open to all older people, although aims to reach vulnerable and isolated older people.



Over 25 months of project activities
(Sept 2017 to Sept 2019), CAW involved:

4,145

attendances / episodes of participation
by older people

140

creative and cultural events

56

different community venues used for events

60

volunteers (also older people)

10

partner organisations supporting CAW

40

older people's support group leaders involved

70

people taking part in professional development

EVALUATION OF CAW

The steering group commissioned an evaluator to collate and analyse data collected by the PDW, gather further data from people involved in the project, and write an evaluation report. This short document summarises the findings of the report.

The evaluation approach which guided the process combined an *outcomes framework* with *illuminative evaluation*, to gauge the achievement of intended outcomes for older people, yet also understand what people valued about the project. Data collection included written feedback comments, informal interviews, questionnaires, observation notes, monitoring data and attendance records. The evaluation addressed 5 evaluation questions – the summarised findings are:

1. To what extent have the project aims and outcomes been achieved?

The over-arching aims and objectives of Celebrating Age Wiltshire are being achieved. There is a wealth of evidence that the project has addressed barriers to older people's access to arts and cultural activities, by offering daytime activities which are tailored to their interests. CAW is reaching significant numbers of people across the 6 community areas, including many who are considered vulnerable due to advanced age, dementia and social isolation. People recognise the effect on their wellbeing of taking part in creative and cultural events. There is strong evidence that the outcomes for older people are being achieved.

2. What factors have influenced the achievement of aims and outcomes?

The high quality of the events has been noted in different sources of evaluation data and has been a factor in people's positive experiences, their anticipation of events, their wish for more events, repeated attendance and enthusing about the project to others.

The work done by the PDW is widely acknowledged as excellent. This concerns many aspects, such as good organisation of events, but particularly her positive relationships with partner organisations and the rapport she has with older people.

The strong partnership working and cross-sector nature of the partnerships (arts, heritage, health, social care, housing) has enabled effective delivery of the project. The connections between professional organisations and small community-led support groups has been beneficial to both. It was recognised that the project could not have been delivered by one organisation.

A key factor in the achievement of aims is that the project's approach has aligned with an unmet need. The social isolation of older people in the county is a significant issue and the scale of CAW has enabled the project to have a wide-ranging impact which has been noted by the older people's support sector.



3. What is most valuable or important about CAW to those involved: primary and secondary beneficiaries, arts and heritage workforce, organisations, the partnership?

For older people and their family carers, CAW events provide opportunities for them to maintain and grow their social connections in their communities. They recognise that CAW gives them the impetus to "get out of the house" which they value – particularly people who live alone. The surprise and delight at the high quality of events – particularly performances – is very important to people.

The workforce development aspect of the project was appreciated by those who responded to the Artist Development Day questionnaire. The opportunity for networking, peer learning and reflection on practice was important to people.

Organisations really valued the quality of events and how, for some, it supported and invigorated their work with older people.

The steering group partners value the opportunity to support older people's wellbeing and to make a contribution to their community. The project has also provided a platform for them to enhance the role that cultural activities can have in improving individual and community wellbeing, and grow the profile of this work in the county.

4. How could the CAW partnership improve, or develop further, older people's involvement in arts and heritage activities?

It was a recurrent theme in different sources of evaluation data that marketing of events could have been more widespread. The PDW consulted with older people about how they find out about events and how they prefer to receive information. With such a high number of attendances, the diverse interests of older people and wide range of activities offered, and the capacity of the PDW role, it is unlikely that more could have been done without additional project staff.

5. What is the potential for developing or sustaining CAW activities beyond the current 3-year project period and how can this be achieved?

There was a strong call for more events and for CAW to continue – from older people, groups and professionals who support older people, and from steering group partners.

The CAW steering group and PDW are already responding to data and preliminary evaluation analysis and findings which have been shared throughout the external evaluation process. Plans to build on the success and learning from the Celebrating Age project are currently being developed. The partnership are approaching potential funders to secure support for a new project from April 2020, which would build on the current project and continue to improve or maintain older people's wellbeing through creative and cultural events.

The partners have a strong commitment to continuing to support older people, but recognise that the level of resources required to sustain the high-quality activities of CAW can only be met with significant project funding. The outcome of the steering group's work to develop a further project has yet to be finalised.

CONCLUSION

Celebrating Age Wiltshire is reaching significant numbers of older people in the county and making a contribution to the wellbeing of those who have taken part. The project's approach of delivering creative and cultural events in community venues is proving effective at meeting the aims and outcomes. There is a strong desire from older people, professionals and groups which support them, and the steering group partners, for CAW activities to continue beyond the current funding period.



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WILTSHIRE
CREATIVE

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CELEBRATING AGE WILTSHIRE PARTNERS

Steering Group Partners: Wiltshire Music Centre (lead partner), Pound Arts, Wiltshire Creative, Wiltshire Council's Library Service, Wiltshire Museum, Salisbury Museum, Age UK, Wiltshire Council's Community Engagement Managers, Community First.

Other Partners: Alzheimer's Support, Alzheimer's Society, Make A Friend Be A Friend, Selwood Housing, Green Square Housing, Barchester Care Homes, Florence Court Trowbridge, Safer & Supportive Salisbury, Cricklade Open Door, Trowbridge Town Hall Arts.

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