



# **CELEBRATING AGE WILTSHIRE**

## **EVALUATION REPORT**

**NELL FARRALLY (Evaluation Consultant)**

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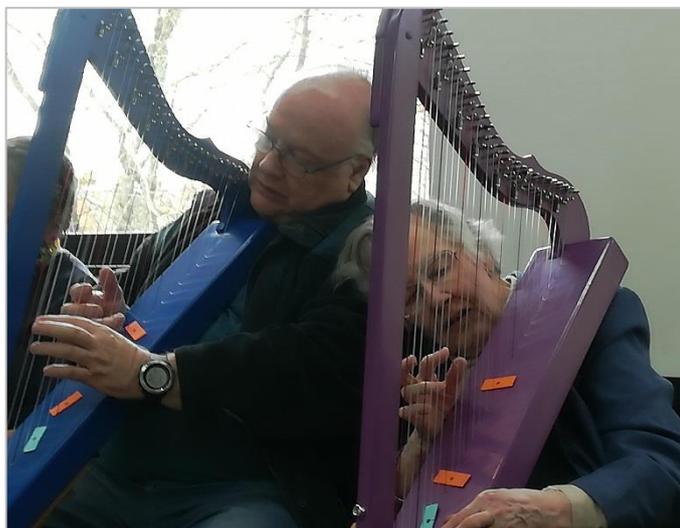
# CELEBRATING AGE WILTSHIRE EVALUATION REPORT

## ABOUT CELEBRATING AGE WILTSHIRE

Celebrating Age Wiltshire (CAW) is a 3-year partnership project 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 a partnership between 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, and the Building Better Opportunities programme led by Community First. A Steering Group of professionals from the partner organisations oversee the project. CAW is 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.



## ABOUT THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Celebrating Age Wiltshire's monitoring and evaluation activities are summarised as 3 categories:

- Most Significant Change stories
- Attendance / participation records and monitoring data for ACE reporting
- External evaluation commission.

Arts Council England commissioned a national evaluation of the Celebrating Age Programme which uses the Most Significant Change (MSC) approach (Davies & Dart, 2005). Throughout CAW, the Project Development Worker (PDW) has collected stories of change, facilitated a MSC process amongst partners, and contributed to the national evaluation through bi-annual peer learning network meetings.

Quantitative data regarding number of attendances and episodes of participation in CAW events have been kept. Monitoring data from a sample of participants has been collected twice a year, in the format required for ACE reporting.

In early 2019, the steering group commissioned an external evaluation from Evaluation Consultant, Nell Farrally. This Evaluation Report summarises the external evaluation process co-ordinated by Nell between April and September 2019. Evaluation feedback collected by the PDW before April 2019, the MSC stories and attendance/participation/monitoring data have been collated and analysed for the external evaluation. In addition, the Evaluator used different methods to gather data between April and July, including:

- Informal interviews with older people and families/carers (involving 53 people)
- Informal interviews with group leaders and professionals who support older people (7 people)
- Questionnaire for steering group partners (8 people)
- Questionnaire for other partners (22 responses)
- Questionnaire for Artist Development Day participants (12 responses)
- Observation notes made at CAW events.

Due to the timing of the external evaluation (2 years into a 3 year project) and the outcomes for older people expressed in the original ACE funding application, the external evaluation design combined 2 approaches – an *outcomes framework* (Daykin & Gray, n.d.) with *illuminative evaluation* – an exploratory approach which seeks not to foreground intended outcomes, but rather, “an inductive analysis of open-ended, detailed, descriptive data gathered through direct interactions... with the program and its participants” (Patton, 2015, p.207).

The Evaluation Plan and Framework adapted text from existing project planning and funding documents, to articulate the aims, objectives and outcomes below, with the input of the steering group.

### **Project aims**

#### **(the overall effect of what the project hopes to achieve)**

1. To reduce barriers to older people’s participation in arts and heritage by creating performance and participation opportunities in local community spaces.
2. To increase access to arts and heritage activities for older people who are considered vulnerable due to age, social or rural isolation, disability, dementia or life-limiting illness.
3. To have a positive influence on older people’s wellbeing through access to, and participation in, arts and heritage.

#### **Objectives (how the project aims are to be achieved)**

1. To provide regular high-quality performances and cultural participation activities in local community settings such as libraries, community centres, outdoor public spaces, and residential / social care settings in 6 community areas in Wiltshire.
2. To develop partnership working between the arts and heritage sector and organisations who can support older people’s participation.
3. To utilise the existing Wiltshire arts and heritage infrastructure and workforce to support activities (eg. Rural Touring Network, local artists).
4. To consult and involve older people in the selection of arts and heritage activities, to ensure that activities are relevant to them.
5. To create a welcoming environment which makes arts and heritage accessible to all.

### **Outcomes for older people**

#### **(changes which a project hopes to affect)**

1. More opportunities to experience arts performances and take part in creative activities in places which are local to where they live, and which are accessible to them.
2. Increased support to take part in arts and heritage in the way that they need, for example: local and accessible venues, provision of transport, appropriate information about activities, and social support to attend.
3. Reduced social isolation or loneliness due to opportunities for social interaction and meeting new people.
4. Increased confidence to attend performances and participation activities, either increasing or maintaining the level of arts and heritage in their lives.
5. A sense of wellbeing gained from CAW events due to, for example: fun and enjoyment, social interaction, learning new skills, creative or intellectual stimulation.

No intended outcomes regarding the arts workforce or partner organisations were evident in the original project documentation, therefore they are to be considered through the illuminative evaluation. 5 evaluation questions provide a focus of inquiry for the external evaluation:

1. To what extent have the project aims and outcomes been achieved?
2. What factors have influenced the achievement of aims and outcomes?
3. What is most valuable or important about CAW to those involved: primary and secondary beneficiaries, arts and heritage workforce, organisations, the partnership?
4. How could the CAW partnership improve, or develop further, older people’s involvement in arts and heritage activities?
5. What is the potential for developing or sustaining CAW activities beyond the current 3-year project period and how can this be achieved?

Qualitative data are analysed using Template Analysis (King, 2004), a system of open thematic coding which uses pre-defined themes (such as from project aims and outcomes) in combination with themes which become evident from the data. This is key to combining an outcomes framework with an illuminative approach.

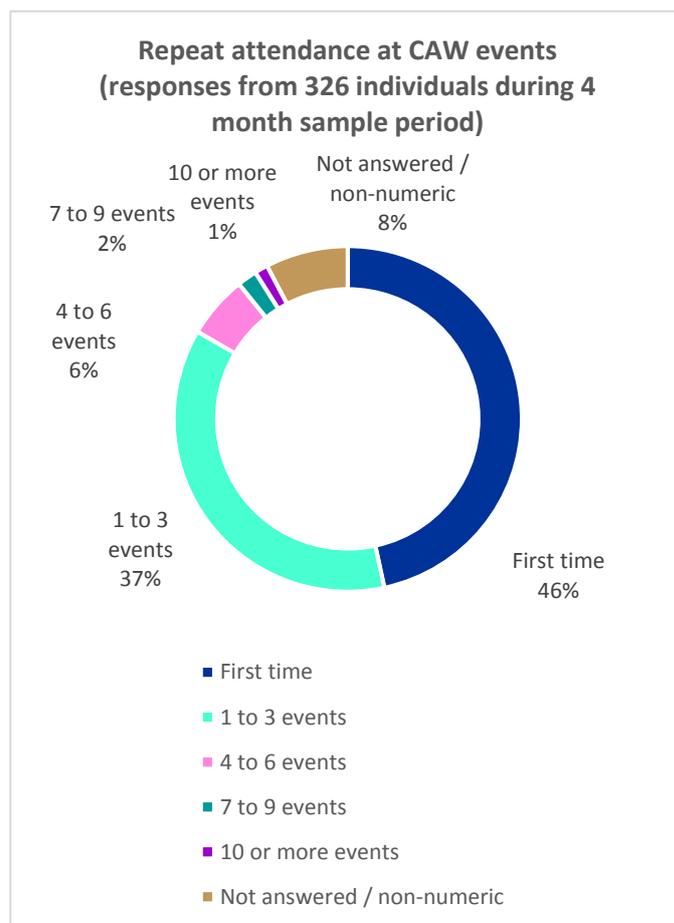
## SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

Following the initial consultation and project planning stage, the delivery phase of CAW commenced in September 2017 and will run until March 2020. Quantitative data in this report encompasses 25 months of project activities (Sept 2017 to Sept 2019).



Due to the events being free to attend, and the informal nature of participation for some events, attendance records which tracked individual older people's participation throughout the project were not kept. Project staff and partners reported repeat attendance and sustained participation in the project by older people. Quantitative data to verify this was sought by the Evaluator for a sample time period of 4 months (April to July). At every event during the 4-month period, older people were asked how many CAW events they had previously attended. 355 responses to this request were given during the 4 months, representing 326 individual older people. 48% stated they were attending a CAW event for the first time and 52% had been to at least one event previously. The following chart shows the proportions of specific answers people gave. It should be noted that there

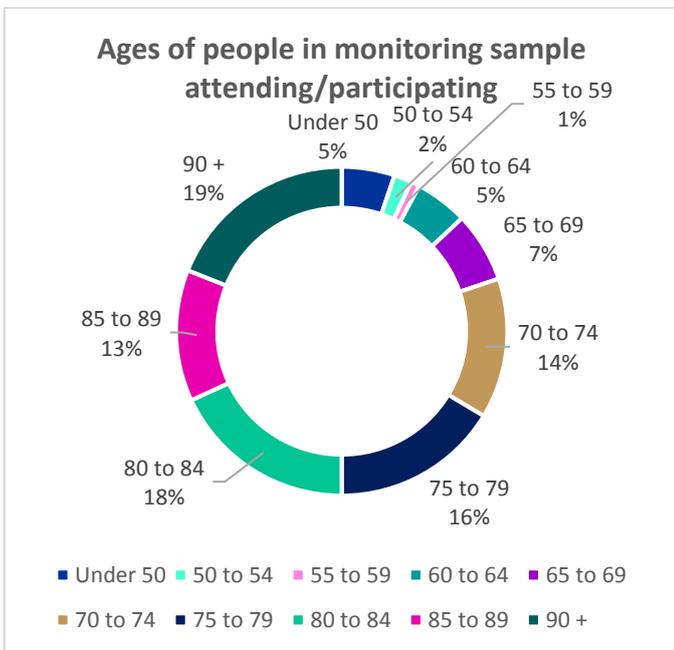
are discrepancies between the numeric data people gave and their Yes/No responses when asked if they were attending for the first time.



This numeric data does not support a conclusion that CAW had high levels of sustained attendance throughout the project (only 9% attended more than 3 times), however, we know that this is partial data with limited accuracy, for example, the non-numeric responses all indicated high levels of repeated attendance, for example, "several", "all but one", and "loads!" but they are not reflected in the chart above. This highlights a challenge that CAW has faced – the administrative workload of keeping detailed attendance records for all events within the staffing resources of the project.

Whilst the partnership did not set specific targets for attendance and participation numbers, the project partnership and staff have reported being extremely satisfied with over 4,000 attendances during 25 months of activity.

Monitoring data for a small sample of participants were collected by direct questioning at events. 78% of the sample were female and 22% male. 66% were aged over 75 – a more detailed breakdown of age is shown in the following chart.



96% of people gave their ethnic group as White British, with 2 people “White Other”, one person “Black or Black British” and 2 people preferring not to say.

60% of the sample said their day to day activities were limited due to a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months (for 22% their activities were limited, “Yes, a lot” and 38% “Yes, a little”). 24% of people said they needed assistance to attend the events.

The monitoring questions, which were designed to collect data for ACE reporting requirements, also included questions about whether people had required assistance to attend, how they travelled to the event, what other cultural activities had they done in the last 12 months, and how they found out about the event. This data has been used by the PDW in project planning.



## QUALITATIVE EVALUATION EVIDENCE

This section of the report summarises key points in the different sources of qualitative data, with selected illustrative examples.

### Written feedback comments collected by CAW PDW

Prior to commissioning the external evaluation, written feedback from older people had been captured by the Project Development Worker at events in each of the 6 community areas. The comments responded to 2 questions: *What type of arts events would you like to attend in the future?* And *How has today's event made you feel?*

The first question received 341 responses. Many comments asked for “more of the same” or similar activities to the event people were attending. There were lots of requests for more music and dance activities. Many people gave specific styles of music they would like, for example: “pre-war sing-songs”, “60’s music”, folk, jazz, rock and roll. There was a huge diversity in the suggestions, which showed the range and interest older people have in creative and cultural activities.

*Listening to poetry – I know it's a bit old fashioned but I like it.*

*Similar to today, but jazz, either Benny Goodman style or trad jazz – Kenny Ball etc.*

*Piano recitals, choirs, another string trio!*

*I think the seated exercise dances seemed most popular. Movement and music are always a good combination.*

*Dance is good. Would painting be possible?*

*Some kind of drama – performance of short play or amusing sketches.*

*Flower arrangement. Music. Pottery. Painting.*

*Opera / West End musical.*

*Craft, especially lace, crochet.*

*Irish dancing or disco.*

*Talk on The Bloomsbury group. Any other musical event. History.*

Many people gave feedback beyond the question they were asked, which showed some common themes:

- A wish for more and an intention to take part again
- The social aspect of meeting and spending time with others
- A valuing of participation and joining in group/communal activities
- A willingness to try new things
- Recognition and appreciation of the high quality of performances
- Appreciation of *cultural* activities.

A few illustrative examples are shown below.

***I enjoy music so this is just right for me. People are sitting round the table, eating, enjoying music - it's just right. We meet and greet people we haven't seen for weeks! I've never seen a band who play so many instruments between them. They're excellent!***

***Shame I'll miss the May offering – its half term and a lot of us oldies visit grandchildren of school age!***

***The programme so far has been great.***

***Surprise me! Enjoyed today.***

***The same lady again please. She is excellent.***

***This has been an inspiration! I'll keep coming!***

***I think the social aspect is very important and using the library is a good use of local resources.***

***Mix of participation and listening is excellent.***

***We enjoyed singing when everyone joins in. To be honest any form of entertainment is enjoyable.***

The second question, *How has today's event made you feel?*, prompted 421 comments. As with the first question, people used the opportunity to give a wider range of feedback than just direct responses to the question. These 421 comments were added to older people's responses to the Evaluator's informal interview questions. This wealth of qualitative data was analysed by developing a coding "template", a common approach to qualitative thematic analysis, which categorised the range of older people's feedback on the project, rather than focussing on evidence for intended outcomes. These themes from the written feedback and interview data are discussed in the next section of the report, alongside selected examples.

## **Informal interviews with older people and families/carers**

The Evaluator visited 7 CAW events between May and July 2019 to get direct feedback from older people and their families/carers. The interviews were short and informal, taking place before, after or during the interval of performances and workshops. The Evaluator invited some people to be interviewed at random, whilst some were invited to contribute at the suggestion of the PDW, usually because they were people who had attended many CAW events. Some interviews were with individuals, some with pairs of people (acquaintances or family members), and some in groups of up to 4 people – whatever was most natural in the context of the occasion. In total, 53 people were involved in these interviews, which lasted between 2 minutes and 20 minutes.

The style of questioning was intentionally broad and open-ended. Everyone was asked 3 questions:

- Have you been to other Celebrating Age events apart from today?
- Generally, what do you think of the events?
- What has been the most important thing about the Celebrating Age events to you?

In addition, people who were happier to talk for longer were asked:

- Are there other places around here where you could do similar things – concerts, performances, taking part in arts and heritage activities?
- Have you always enjoyed these kind of events, or is it something new to you?
- Have you met any new people at these events?
- The organisers have tried hard to tailor these events to what older people want – how well do you think they have done that?
- Is there anything which hasn't been quite right, or could have been better?

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The following table shows the large range of themes which were evident in people's responses in the interviews and the written comments.



**Table 1.**

**Thematic analysis of written feedback and interviews**

<b>Wellbeing</b>
Positive Emotions (eg. happiness, enjoyment)
Feelings which contribute to wellbeing (eg. relaxation)
Helping with specific difficulties
Awareness of mental wellbeing and being “on your own”
Memories, reminiscence, nostalgia (positive or happy)
Memories, reminiscence, nostalgia (sad or emotional)
Physical exercise
<b>Social impact</b>
"Getting out of the house" – explicit or underlying sense of social isolation
Community and bringing people together (valuing the collective experience)
Meeting others, social interaction (at a more individual level)
<b>Inclusion and accessibility</b>
Enabling or continuing access to cultural activities (access diminished due to aging)
Atmosphere – welcoming, friendly
Daytime activities
<b>Appreciation</b>
Unspecific appreciation or thanks
Appreciation that it's happening or of the people organising
Call for more
Quality
<b>About the art and heritage activity</b>
Entertaining or particular appreciation of the <i>artistic</i> activity
Participation, engagement, joining in, taking part
Variety and new experiences
Embodied responses to music
Valuing the live experience
Preference for different activities / genre
Acknowledging the value in just having activity
<b>Feeling involved, consulted</b>
Constructive suggestions and feedback
<b>Pragmatic elements</b>
Marketing and information
Money and cost of events
<b>Negative experiences</b>

A discussion of all these themes is not possible within this short evaluation report, however a selection are discussed below with examples from the written comments and interviews. The purpose of this kind of qualitative thematic analysis is not to quantify the prevalence of particular points of view, but to understand the range of perspectives older people have of CAW. However, the themes illustrated below were selected either due to the prevalence of the theme in the comments and interviews, the strength of feeling from older people, or due to a particular relevance to the project aims and outcomes.

The theme of wellbeing had several dimensions. Many people wrote about positive emotions the event created for them such as happiness and enjoyment.

***Uplifted.***

***Very happy and very warm feelings.***

***Came in feeling low and went out with a high.***

***Very exhilarating and forget all of the world's woes.***

***A joy to listen to such a good performance.***

***Elated, glad I came.***

***Happy. Life is still good even when you are old. This morning has been wonderful.***

Other comments were more directly related to feelings of wellbeing such as relaxation.

***Very relaxed and rested.***

***Very relaxed and nostalgic. I enjoyed it very much.***

In addition to a general sense of wellbeing, a small number of people made more specific comments about how the event had helped them with their difficulties.

***I am currently suffering stress and depression. Today has made me feel happy and energised – especially being able to join in and sing. Thank you.***

***I thoroughly enjoyed it. I didn't know whether to come as I wasn't feeling too bright, but I go home feeling better. I was a bit late getting here but I'm so glad I came.***

***I am struggling today but you have helped to get me 'into the day'. Thank you.***

Amongst the interviews there were many comments which showed people had an awareness of their mental wellbeing, particularly those who lived alone.

***I think it's a lovely thing to go out. To get together with people and it's just so good isn't it for the mind. Lovely, keep it up.***

***Go home feeling good. Better. You know, when you live on your own it's nice to come out and have company and listen to some nice music.***

***To get you out and see people. Because sometimes you stay at home too long don't you and you don't get out, but something like this gets you out.***

***It gets people together. And gives them something to look forward to.***

These comments illustrate that people have an awareness of what is important to maintaining their wellbeing. Closely linked to this is the social impact of CAW events, which also had several dimensions. It was notable that almost all the responses to the interview question, *What has been the most important thing about the Celebrating Age events to you?*, concerned “getting out of the house”, meeting others, and opportunities to socialise. For some people, this was a general feeling of the importance of keeping active in retirement.

***I think if you're able to get out and about you should – because you don't know what's over the hill do you?***

For others, although they did not use language referring to loneliness and social isolation, they spoke explicitly about attending CAW events as a way to meet and interact with others. They were conscious that they needed to take action to create or maintain social connections. One example was a gentleman who spoke of being widowed 4 months previously. He had recently been challenged by a friend to get out and not spend so much time at home on his own, therefore he had come to a CAW concert in his local library. He spoke about how much he had enjoyed the music and asked the Evaluator how he could find out about more concerts. The Case Study of Elsie (a pseudonym), not only illustrates her recognition of how CAW contributes to her wellbeing, but also adds some context of why older people can experience isolation.

These stories show *how* CAW addresses social isolation and has an impact on people's wellbeing. A seemingly everyday experience, such as attending a concert, acts as a catalyst for people to leave their homes and spend time with others.

## CASE STUDY: ELSIE

Elsie has regularly attended CAW events throughout the project. She lives independently on her own. She no longer drives but makes good use of her bus pass. Since her husband died, her only relative is her sister, who has dementia and lives in a care home in a neighbouring county – the journey to visit her involves 3 different buses, therefore visits are not frequent. She spoke about how she finds visiting her sister upsetting, due to her dementia.

Elsie used to be a very active volunteer for many different organisations – volunteering supporting people attending court, as a volunteer guide at local visitor attractions, and at the local hospice, hospital and care homes. She spoke about her motivations for her volunteering work. ***Well, when you're left on your own you've got to get away, otherwise you'd go completely bonkers!***

Elsie has recently reduced her volunteering activities due to osteoarthritis. ***I'm supposed to start in another home... but it's osteoarthritis – I can't... it's difficult...***

She spoke about Celebrating Age events and her love of music. ***Personally, I think they've been absolutely fantastic – especially when it's got anything to do with music. That I love! ...we were brought up with singing around us. My mother had a lovely soprano voice. We sang, my sister and I, in all the Eisteddfods.***

Elsie felt that there were a lot of arts venues and activities in her local area, but evening activities were not accessible to her. ***The thing that I'd like to [do] is singing – but it's in the evening and I'm not going out at night.***

Elsie was very aware of her own mental wellbeing, of how isolated she felt at times, and why CAW was important to her. ***I do get very upset because I've got the most gorgeous flat – there's 96 flats there – and it's like a ghost town. You do not see a soul.... I find that coming to see these [events] is like a new lease of life – it's like, you know... to see people, because I make sure that I go down to [name of town] every day – even if it's only to talk to the dogs! I've got to talk to somebody every single day because otherwise I would have a nervous breakdown.***

Elsie was very appreciative of CAW events and the Project Development Worker. ***[CAW] venues are absolutely fascinating and she's [PDW] doing exactly the right thing. I don't think she can improve on anything really ...means an awful lot to me because through her we've been to see so many things.***

The other aspects of social impact concerned the collective experience and the value of bringing people together in a community.

*It's getting people together and hearing them sing together – they're a unit – together.*

*Music, yeah. Enjoyment. Being part of it. Being part of the afternoon. You could listen to music in your own 4 walls but it's not the same is it? No.*

People also valued the opportunity to meet people on an individual level.

*We met a lady and she doesn't go out! We ended up taking her home – well out of our way, but, she was so interesting. What she'd done in her life! She was telling us... so you meet different people.*

*It's meeting other people. The lady who was sitting next to us, we hadn't met her before. She was very interesting, very friendly. She'd been abroad teaching in Tanzania – quite a history. She was lovely. You get to know people.*

There were different aspects of people feeling included and that CAW events made cultural activities more accessible to them. The first quote below came from a gentleman who was a full-time carer for his wife, who had dementia. CAW events have enabled them to continue enjoying live music together.

*We listen to a lot of classical music usually... and jazz. We used to go to Brecon Jazz Festival but, we've had to stop that... It's difficult finding accommodation there... would be very difficult in the condition my wife is in.*

*Absolutely wonderful. I went to all the operas when I was younger, it was fantastic to have them up close.*

There were several comments about the warm, welcoming and supportive atmosphere at CAW events. This was particularly important to family carers – to be in a supportive and non-judgemental environment.

*Excellent day. We all felt so welcome and everyone is so friendly here.*

Having daytime activities was important to many as they did not go out in the evenings.

*A wonderful morning. Loved it. There's not much on for us old folk in the daytime like this.*

*We don't come into [name of town] on an evening.*

People were incredibly appreciative of the project and expressed thanks to those involved.

*I love it. I think the whole concept is brilliant and I'm very appreciative of it. I know that people I know are as well.*

*Thank you for these Celebrating Age events, I'm loving them and I'm sure many other people are too. Looking forward to many more.*

*Moved to tears, it was glorious – filling my heart and I feel really joyful and happy. Thank you so much.*

There was a very strong call for more and for the project to continue.

*Uplifting performance by such a talented couple. Could have listened ALL DAY. Come again soon.*

*It has made us happy and exhilarated. This has been an excellent idea and we look forward to more.*

*Just like to stress – things like this are important – if they, the powers that be with the money, if they can realise how important it can be to people, perhaps they can dig a bit deeper in the purse.*

*Best afternoon. When is the next one?*

There were many comments about the quality of activities, and particularly of performers.

*It was truly excellent – a young lady with a very fine voice with an accomplished pianist to enhance the music.*

*Uplifted to see such superb talent singing to us in an intimate location.*

*Impressed with the quality and standard of players – they were so very good.*

It was evident in the interviews and written comments that people were confident to give constructive feedback. The main area which people thought could be improved was marketing. Lots of people had received leaflets or seen posters at the library, but there were many comments that Celebrating Age Wiltshire was not widely known about in the community or featured in local papers. People acknowledged that their suggestions for activities were sought and valued.

Negative feedback comments from older people were few and did not fit into any particular themes. Someone commented that the music was too loud for them. Another example concerned a craft activity:

*Thank you for your efforts today. Disappointing I found the approach of people condescending. I am a 70 year old very capable person.*

### **Informal interviews with group leaders and professionals who support older people**

During the visits to events, the Evaluator also interviewed professionals and group leaders – totalling 7 people at 7 different events. These included memory group leaders, Old People’s Champions, Community Engagement Managers and Sheltered Housing Managers. Overall, people were very appreciative of CAW events and felt that the project enhanced the services they offered to older people.

The manager of a shelter housing scheme who hosted a concert in the residents’ lounge, spoke about how CAW benefited their residents. Many residents did not venture from their own flats to use the communal facilities or take part in activities in the community. A CAW concert in the lounge provided an occasion which drew people from their flats – enabling them to interact with other residents and people from the wider community. She commented that to be eligible for sheltered social housing, people must have lived in the neighbourhood, yet many did not maintain their social connections with people living independently nearby once they entered sheltered housing.

The manager also spoke about how it was beneficial for people in the nearby community to become familiar with their services – as some may need sheltered housing accommodation in the future. She gave a specific example of a gentleman who, through coming to a CAW concert, discovered that, although not a resident, he could visit to have a hot lunch and use the laundry facilities – which he was now doing.

In another interview, an Older People’s Champion commented that there was an assumption that people in sheltered housing

were getting the support they needed – which was not always the case, as many were socially isolated.

### **Questionnaire for steering group partners**

To consider the perspective of the steering group partners, the Evaluator asked for completion of an online questionnaire, which received 8 responses.

Partners were asked how CAW helped them to address any organisational priorities, strategy or outcomes. CAW made a strong contribution to priorities of most partners – particularly the library service and Community Engagement Managers.

*Celebrating Age has been fundamental to the area boards’ progress in tackling: (i) older people’s isolation and loneliness, (ii) in making our communities more dementia friendly, (iii) strengthening support for carers, (iv) involving volunteers in project delivery, (v) enriching the local infrastructure of older people’s clubs and activities.*

*The project has significantly helped deliver the health and wellbeing strand of the library service Operational Service Plan.*

Arts organisation partners felt that CAW had helped with objectives to work across the county and to prioritise work with vulnerable older people. Whilst the heritage partners were pleased to have been involved in CAW, they felt that the project did not align particularly well with new Key Performance Indicators in their business plan.

Partners were asked what was most important to them about the project. Making a contribution to improving the lives of older was a common theme. The partnership working was valued by several people. The following quotes summarise the general feeling of the group.



*It has demonstrated that a very simple model of 1) a great cultural experience; with 2) tea and cake; and 3) warmth, affection and support; can make a real difference to our lonely and isolated older population. The strong partnership model, steered by the lead partner, has been of high importance.*

*The region-wide joined up approach is a real strength. This project has run during a period in which the organisations in the County have had fewer formal reasons to sit in a room together and talk/strategise.... The championing of the project by the LA is very gratifying.... I would like to think that we have had a genuine impact on isolated older people and made their lives better through the events.*

The contribution and quality of the work done by of the PDW was noted and appreciated. There were many more comments which acknowledged the impact of the project on volunteers and grass-roots community groups who support older people.

### Questionnaire for other partners

Partner organisations, other than the steering group, were asked to complete a shorter online questionnaire – which received 22 responses.

The first question asked, *Generally, please tell us what you think of the Celebrating Age Wiltshire project.* All responses were extremely positive, for example:

*I think it is outstanding. It has brought so much joy to so many people and brought communities together. The quality and appropriateness of the activities with which I have been involved have been tremendous.*

*Excellent with variety of events which stimulate and entertain. They are organised by a very good leader who relates well with everyone. For people with memory problems they can enjoy the moment. For others it may be a rare occasion when they actually get out of the house and if living alone meet other people.*

*A fantastic project, providing a varied and diverse range of cultural events in rural communities in the daytime. I cannot praise it enough.*

Many others commented on the variety and quality of the events, the excellent organisation and relationships built by the PDW, and of the beneficial impact on older people.

*The impact has been massive. Clients have been able to come together in a pleasant venue with refreshments, support and care. The activities have engaged and entertained as much as bringing friendship and a sense of togetherness. The clients have always left with a twinkle in the eyes and wanting to have more – looking forward to the next event.*

Respondents gave varied examples of how CAW had complemented, supported or enhanced their work. Some people commented that marketing of events could be improved, to reach even more older people, although they recognised there were limitations in the PDW's capacity to market events. There was an overwhelming appreciation of the project and wish for it to continue beyond the current funding period.



### Artist Development Day

In June 2019, the lead partner, Wiltshire Music Centre, hosted an Artist Development Day – a one-day professional development event for artists (not just CAW artists) and other professionals working with older people in Wiltshire, attended by 52 people. The day was a mix of presentations, discussions, workshops and networking. An evaluation and consultation questionnaire was completed by 12 people. 11 of the 12 respondents felt that the day had been relevant to their work with a number of examples given – networking, making new contacts, gaining new ideas, sharing approaches, experiencing being a participant in a workshop. One respondent felt that the day was not relevant to her work as an Elderly Care Facilitator. She suggested that future events include sessions for activities co-ordinators and people in similar roles to herself.

Participants were asked to state up to 3 things which were most important to them about the event: making new contacts and networking featured several times; sharing and peer learning were important to some; and, for several people, the opportunity for reflection was important.

*1) Consolidating some learning from my time with CAW eg. arts for all vs arts as an elite activity, 2) Consideration of having "difficult" conversations eg. death and the best way to manage/facilitate/ approach these.*

*1) Facilitation ideas from museum and collections, 2) more mindful of participants anxieties, 3) group dynamics introductions.*

*1) Contacts – definitely! 2) Deeper reflection of what we do and can we do it in different ways? 3) Seeing how art activities can bind us together – over a lump of clay!*

*1) Interesting to see others practice and what happens in other events. 2) Enjoying talking to other people during the day, see what a mix of disciplines / practitioners are doing. 3) Get an idea of the scale of Celebrating Age.*

58% (n=7) of respondents said they had not previously taken part in a professional development event like the CAW Artist Development Day before. Responses to "Would you come to an event like the Artist Development Day again?" were almost all positive. 9 people selected "Yes, definitely", 3 people selected "Yes, maybe", with no one selecting "No".

Consultation questions about what further development was needed by the arts and older people sector in Wiltshire received a range of constructive suggestions which have been shared with the PDW and steering group.



## REVIEWING THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The external evaluation has purposely created a short report without detailed analysis, discussion or extensive examples of data. Evaluation data and analysis documents have been shared with project staff and partners, should they wish to examine them in more detail and understand how evaluation findings have been reached. A summary of the conclusions regarding each of the evaluation questions follows.

## 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 (see page 3) are being achieved.

### How CAW could develop further

For any future projects, CAW could develop methods of recording monitoring data which are more rigorous and comprehensive. More detailed attendance records could be kept which track individual older people's participation throughout the project.

Whilst the Most Significant Change approach and qualitative thematic analysis are extremely valuable techniques for evaluating a project such as CAW, communicating the impact of the project could be strengthened by having quantitative data which supports the qualitative data. Systematic approaches to recording quantitative data need to be in place right from the start of a project, with adequate administrative resources to support the process.

## 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.

### **How CAW could develop further**

CAW aligns more easily with the organisational priorities of some steering group partners more than others. To cement organisational commitments to involvement in future projects, the steering group could give greater focus to how CAW helps all partners to meet their strategic aims.

### **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 to 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.

### **How CAW could develop further**

If future projects have more staffing resources for marketing events, then the potential to reach more people could be greater. However, the balance between reaching more people and providing events with a supportive environment for vulnerable older people, needs to be carefully considered.

### **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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## 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.

### For inquiries about this report please contact:

James Slater (Artistic Director, Wiltshire Music Centre) [james.slater@wiltshiremusic.org.uk](mailto:james.slater@wiltshiremusic.org.uk)

Rebecca Seymour (Project Development Worker, Celebrating Age Wiltshire) [rebecca.seymour@wiltshiremusic.org.uk](mailto:rebecca.seymour@wiltshiremusic.org.uk)  
[www.wiltshiremusic.org.uk/learn-take-part/celebrating-age](http://www.wiltshiremusic.org.uk/learn-take-part/celebrating-age)

### Report authored by:

Nell Farrally (Evaluation Consultant)  
[www.nellfarrally.co.uk](http://www.nellfarrally.co.uk)

