

# LAPWING

Live Art Practice  
Wellbeing Inspired  
Network Group

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Fay Blair

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JULY 2017



## Foreword

We have been inspired and our members 'in later life' uplifted, by the talent and commitment of the creatives and artists and partners involved in [LAPWING – the Live Art Practice Wellbeing Inspired Network Group](#). This is the start of an on-going journey to build the confidence, capability and capacity of Kent's professional artists and volunteers to make our communities more 'dementia-friendly' and 'mental health-alert'. Overcoming isolation, loneliness and stigma are issues for many.

It has been a privilege to lead and support this innovative partnership through AgeUK Canterbury. By ensuring our arts and wellbeing facilitators and activities meet certain standards ('standards-based approach') we are better placed to assure that those who engage in our programmes, have the best experience possible. Well-planned, managed and evaluated social activities, with support provided to our creative facilitators, is important for everyone's benefit; enjoyment, learning and development.

May I thank everyone, sponsors, my staff at AgeUK Canterbury, *Christopher Stibbards*, Performance & Impact Manager, particularly for the digital/website work, and the project volunteers, notably *Heather Roblin*, - who helped us make the most of this opportunity. Engaging in the arts, creativity and culture is important to keep us socially connected, contented to help maintain our health and wellbeing.

**Dr Neil Brown, Chief Officer, AgeUK Canterbury, July 2017**

## Acknowledgements

**The inter-generational work of LAPWING 'Talking Trees' enrichment programme:** Assistant Head Teacher, *Hannah Blaskett-Foord* and *Melissa Challis* with 30 Simon Langton Girls' Grammar students, supported by *Anna Bell & Lauren Baker*, Westgate Parks and LAPWING artist *Sue Toft*.

**The project partner hosts for the live art practice residencies** who ran the creative sessions were: *Elaine Bashford*, Activities Co-ordinator, and *Mr & Mrs Gilmour*, Barton Court Care Home, Sheppey  
*Sue Neill*, Scheme Manager, Cranmer House, East Kent Housing  
AgeUK Faversham & the Alexander Centre CIC and AgeUK Canterbury Day Centre, Canterbury

**The project facilitation & training team:** *Fay Blair* (LAPWING Programme Manager & Evaluator)  
*Dr Trish Vella-Burrows*, Sidney de Haan Research Centre for Arts & Health, (Lead Trainer);  
*Gerry Atkinson*, Social Worker & Photojournalist (Support Trainer & Mentor & Photographer);  
*Tracie Peisley*, Art Therapist & Artist (Support Trainer & \*Live Practice Artist);  
*Dr Pat Chung*, Canterbury Christ Church University (Programme Advisor & Mentor);  
*Ken Scott*, (Programme Advisor & Developer)

**The digital work:** *Nathalie Banaigs*, Kent Creative Arts CIC for the early set-up and promotional work;  
*Christopher Stibbards*, for the web pages; *Jasper Bouverie*, Funder Films CIC, for the artist videos.

**The Artists/Creatives who led the funded Live Art Practice residency programmes:**

[Catherine Arnell](#)

[Julie Bradshaw](#)

[Julie Davies](#)

[Jo Eden](#)

[Tracie Peisley](#)

[Chris Reed](#)

[Nicky Thompson](#)

[Sue Toft](#)

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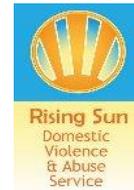
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**PLANNING FOR LATER LIFE**

**A LAPWING Soaring**

The name 'lapwing' comes from old English words meaning 'leaping with a wink' – an appropriate suggestion of joy for a project that is brightening the lives of elderly people in Kent

It is well documented that we are living longer. No one wants to languish in a chair with nothing to do, so how can we ensure that our added years are satisfying?

LAPWING (Live Art Practice Wellbeing Inspired Network Group) is an innovative project in East Kent that has been encouraging older people, including those with dementia, to use their creative abilities.

Through LAPWING, a body of artists was drawn together to consider how they could make a difference to the lives of vulnerable people in the county, including the elderly. A partnership was born – led by AgeUK Canterbury (with local partners) and supported by Kent Creative Arts CIC, core funding was secured from Arts Council England, Canterbury City Council, NHS Canterbury & Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group and Kent County Council. Before long, 30 artists and creatives took part in an innovative training programme about working with vulnerable groups.

From this cohort, eight artists were funded and mentored to run sessions at AgeUK Canterbury's day centre, Cranmer House Sheltered Housing Scheme, AgeUK Faversham, the Alexander Centre and Barton Court Care Home

on the site of Sheppey. Soon elderly people were enjoying creative projects including ceramics, sewing, crafts, painting, flower arranging and poetry.

**Inter-generation**

Fay Blain, Project Manager of LAPWING, notes that one of its most exciting elements has been the mixing of generations. Last year, 30 pupils from Simon Langton Girls' Grammar School (SLGS), worked on talking trees – a project with programmed visits to AgeUK Canterbury and Cranmer House.

"The experience changed many students' perceptions," explains Fay. "They noticed how much the older people appreciated getting to know them, and how their faces lit up during the students' visits. They developed a respect and greater empathy – with some students creating their commitment after the project."

Hannah Blain-Ford, Assistant Head Teacher at SLGS, saw how much the out-of-school experience had enhanced and developed a range of new skills: "It is helping to prepare a generation for life's challenges ahead in an ageing population," she said, adding "and giving them a valuable volunteering and befriending opportunity. I am thrilled that some of our girls still keep in touch, maintaining some of these friendships."

LAPWING continues to soar. It is recruiting a new group of students, with Fay supporting AgeUK Canterbury's work in a new project, led by LAPWING artist Nicky Thompson, from Pebble Poetry. Nicky will work with Co-Ed Sixth Formers from the Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys, who will engage in similar work at AgeUK Canterbury. The project, entitled Postcards from Precious Places, is funded mainly through an innovation award from KCC's Kent Dementia Action Alliance. Interestingly, the two grammar schools will also work together.

Training sessions about dementia begin in late spring, and will include social, creative writing and crafting sessions. Students will engage and support their older audiences over a series of three Saturday afternoon tea-time sessions, to be held at AgeUK Canterbury's day centre.

- To raise awareness and to promote the free sessions, students will be supporting creative activities at this year's Westgate Parks Tree Trail day on Sunday 21st May, near Canterbury's Westgate Towers. The whole project has strengthened links with other elements of the community, too, with Westgate Parks Development officer Anna Bell and Lauren Baker and park volunteers playing an important part

**AgeUK Canterbury**

Neil Brown is Chief Officer at AgeUK Canterbury. He believes that there is value in providing creative opportunities for people in later life – and that projects can help create 'dementia friendly' communities.

In addition, arts activities can help with short-term memory loss, or those who lack confidence or have low self-esteem – all of which help maintain good cognitive function.

"Being socially connected enhances our mood and sense of wellbeing," says Neil. "Happier people tend to be healthier, which often reduces the need for costly clinical intervention. Involving young people – such as the project with Simon Langton Girls' Grammar School too – has also had a powerfully positive effect."

Now AgeUK Canterbury's day centre, in Castle Row, is offering volunteering opportunities for people of all ages who want to support this type of professionally managed work. The roles are taken very seriously indeed, to ensure a high quality experience, with properly trained and managed artists and evaluators at sessions. It is adopting a standards-based approach to arts facilitation as developed through LAPWING.

Source: Feature article about LAPWING in May 2017 © [The Canterbury Index](#) Magazine

## Executive Summary

The LAPWING – Live Art Practice Wellbeing Inspired Network Group – project was a twelve month programme which ran from March 2016, led by the charity [AgeUK Canterbury](#). The project's main aim was "to build 'the confidence, capability and capacity of Kent's professional artists to facilitate more effectively, to achieve arts-inspired, 'dementia-friendly' and 'mental health-alert' communities."

LAPWING focused on preparing thirty artists and creatives, mainly visual artists, crafters and makers, with further mentoring of eight of these, to work with groups of vulnerable adults. This was in engaging mainly older people, 'in later life', some of whom live with dementia, at day centre and care home settings in Canterbury, Faversham and Minster, Isle of Sheppey. LAPWING also included work with [women in Canterbury](#), as a small art group, who had experienced domestic abuse.

The inter-generational element of LAPWING was a student enrichment programme called '[Talking Trees](#)'. Thirty Simon Langton Girls' Grammar School students were supported in creative socialisation visits to AgeUK Canterbury and Cranmer House Sheltered Housing Scheme. They worked with a LAPWING artist who also developed a tree trail for Westgate Parks, with their help, designed with older people 'in mind'.

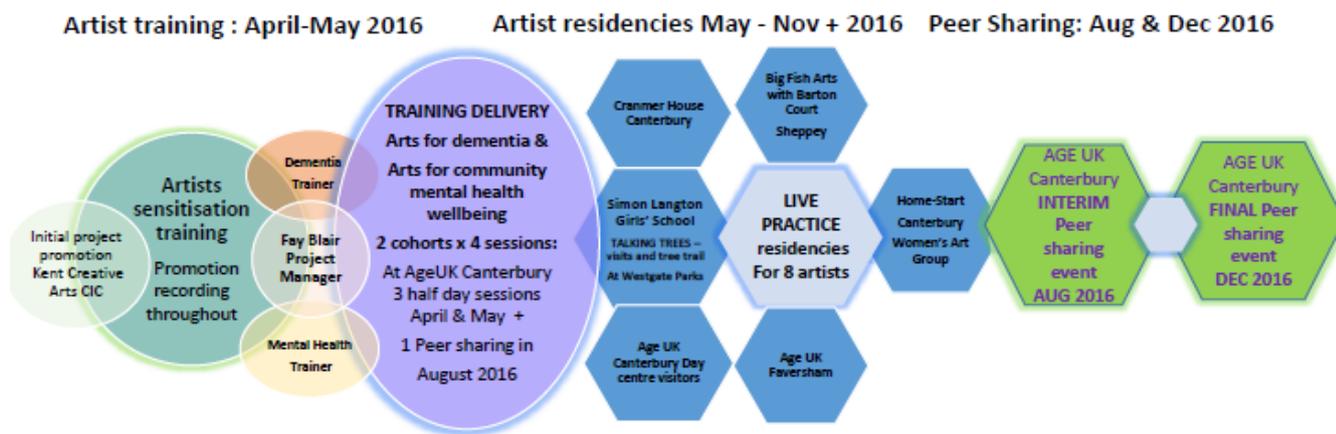
AgeUK Canterbury, as lead partner, with Fay Blair (arts & wellbeing project manager and evaluator) devised and piloted this challenging, ambitious programme which Kent Creative Arts CIC supported and helped to promote. The core funders were Arts Council England, Canterbury City Council and NHS Canterbury & Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group. The final project budget was £25,983. In addition, 'in kind' host partner, sponsor, advisor and volunteer contributions, amounted to £15,093.

The LAPWING [training programme](#) (4 half-day sessions) with peer sharing, mentoring and evaluation was held between April and August 2016 at AgeUK Canterbury, for two cohorts. It was developed with the LAPWING project manager, by an experienced [practitioner team](#), led by professionals from Canterbury Christ Church University, and the Sidney de Haan Centre for Research in Arts and Health. The team drew from their clinical experience, research and professional insights, into nursing, health and social care, occupational and art therapy and from the diverse backgrounds of all the LAPWING artists and creatives.

The [eight funded LAPWING artist residencies](#), following the LAPWING training, included further practice work, observation and mentoring. The artists' demonstrated their capability in practice, with preparatory session plans and personal reflective log writing through which they developed greater self-awareness. Some artists led and facilitated group work on their own but several worked in teams, of two or three,

particularly in the dementia care home setting on Sheppey. Each artist was involved in delivering six to eleven sessions. The LAPWING Sheppey work involved delivery of seventeen team sessions.

### The LAPWING project – Live Arts Practice Wellbeing Inspired Networked Group



**PROJECT LEAD PARTNER:** Age UK Canterbury Project Director Dr Neil Brown: Chief Officer, Age UK Canterbury with Project Manager & Evaluator: Fay Blair

**DELIVERY PARTNERS:** Promotion/recording/profiles: Nathalie Baniags (Kent Creative Arts CIC), Gerry Atkinson, Jasper Bouverie (Funder Films) Training & Mentoring Team: Dr Trish Vella Burrows, Gerry Atkinson, Dr Pat Chung, Tracie Peisley

## The overall project learning and impact

The overall impact and the project learning was significant for artists, creatives students, and participants (beneficiary audiences) and also for the facilitation and the training team. Participant feedback was on-going, gathered mainly via forms and structured dialogue at the end of sessions. Peer sharing between the artists proved to be a major asset and project outcome. This was reinforced at the LAPWING [showcase events](#) at AgeUK Canterbury in December 2016 and at the Kent Country Council [Creative Care Expo](#) in January 2017. Digital, social media and press coverage has helped to extend the outreach. A private, [Arts & Wellbeing Facebook](#) group to share practitioner insights, opportunities, and experiences (set up in November 2015) has now grown to 85 members and doubled in size, with LAPWING creative and other broader practitioner interest.

**The impact on the artists** by the end of the programme, was marked. For many it was a moving and 'emotionally charged' journey. At the start many felt, 'challenged, anticipatory, anxious and nervous and overwhelmed'. By the end, most felt 'confident, happy, empathy, knowledgeable, collaborative, and pleased'.

The LAPWING training programme content was broad to meet the diverse range of participant backgrounds. The delivery was of high quality with interactive learning and comprehensive handouts which was well received overall. It built up artists' confidence and extended their understanding of dementia and mental health conditions. It filled knowledge gaps particularly in social care policy and on safeguarding. It developed the artists' practical know-how, enriching their own creative arts facilitation processes from occupational and art therapy perspectives.

The [training](#) was in many ways a sensitisation programme too. It helped some artists to decide if this type of work, with vulnerable groups, 'is really for them'. Several came to the conclusion it was not. Several had a specific focus in mind, of what they wanted to get out of the training, and felt the programme did not cover enough on addressing their needs (for example, on dance and performance or mental health issues). Others became aware of aspects where they need to build up more practical experience and confidence and took the opportunity to volunteer and support some of the residency programme artists. Most participants embraced the chance to share and learn from each other, even though it took them 'out of their comfort zones'.

The residency programme for eight artists provided challenging experiences in what to expect and how to cope with difficult behaviours and scenarios. This helped to strengthen their emotional resilience. Highlights of their learning are captured in the professionally produced [artist videos](#), where each artist talks about their journey with reflection on the diverse participant reactions during their residency work.

**The impact on the group participants** was that the arts-creative-making focus, with serving of tea and cake, helped to catalyse conversations and socialisation. It helped to build relationships and friendships that helped to overcome isolation and loneliness for some participants. For others, [the women's art group](#), it helped to build self-esteem, a sense of belonging, community connectedness, hope and fulfilment. The September 2016 'Beaney' [exhibition of the women's work](#) was a proud moment.

The evidence from the evaluation forms strongly suggests participants found the sessions enjoyable and fulfilling (93% of the older people said they enjoyed the sessions: 23% 'reasonably'; 42% 'very much'; 4% 'excellent'. Of the Women's art group, 98% said they enjoyed the sessions: 22% 'reasonably'; 31% 'very much'; 45% said 'it was excellent').

The sessions helped to lift the mood of the older people, to a degree (89% of the older people participant respondents said the sessions cheered them up: 27% reasonably; 45% a lot; 17% totally). Many participants were 'proud, happy, engaged, sociable and confident'. Some participants 'warmed up' to the creative opportunities over the programme. Often feelings of detachment and lack of interest in activities with artist encouragement, turned into positive engagement.

**The impact on students** through the [‘Talking Trees’ enrichment programme](#), was marked and profound for several, building positive perceptions of older people and a sense of agency, knowing how much simple, small actions can ‘brighten up their days’, for the older people. Young people by virtue of being young, present a fresh set of attitudes and perspectives which, in itself, can prompt older people to engage differently and positively. The [Westgate Gardens Tree Trail](#) and its formal [launch](#) in May 2017 was successful. Students who supported these milestone events felt proud.

The ‘Talking Trees’ activities provided a valuable, out-of-school experience for students to meet and engage with older people through volunteering in the community at AgeUK Canterbury day centre and at Cranmer House sheltered housing scheme. This challenged and helped to develop students’ social conversational skills, especially when engaging with the older people and those who live with dementia. For others it was a chance to develop their creative, team work and caring skills. It was also a chance to learn with and from older people; about their perspectives, older people’s rich life story experiences, prompted by the [memory and wisdom tree](#) creative activities facilitated by the professional artists.

All thirty students (100%) agreed, or strongly agreed, that ‘Volunteering work, related to any kind of social care, supporting and helping vulnerable people, especially older people is important’. At the start of the project just under half of the students (47%) agreed, or strongly agreed, that they ‘know about Dementia’ and ‘could explain the symptoms and signs & different types’. At the end of the project this increased to a majority of students (80% - an increase of 33%). Over half the students, (57%) felt that the Talking Trees project had changed or broadened their life perspective ‘a lot’ or ‘excellently’. A separate, detailed [‘Talking Trees’](#) report has been produced.

**The overall LAPWING programme** for the majority of creatives, was a supportive, challenging and interesting experience and it was an important opportunity for them. From the LAPWING residency work, particularly, there are aspects that creative facilitators need to pre-empt and be responsive to, which can influence participants’ engagement and enjoyment of group activity sessions. These include:

- *Safety and stability*: being in a secure and trusted environment, to overcome feelings of anxiety associated with frailty, physical and mental vulnerability.
- *Individual attention*: participants like being listened to but not to be overwhelmed by too many people or background noise.
- *Structure and patterning of processes*: being informed and organised; participants like to know what to expect, what others will be doing and how they might join in, in a practical way; facilitator instructions and invitations to

take part that are made repeatedly with active demonstration, visual examples, as reminders, are welcomed.

- *Variety and diversity*: offering a sufficient range of activities that will appeal to people's different preferences and moods; a varied programme of activity.
- *Respecting that non-engagement is acceptable*: understanding and accepting that participants' mood, manual dexterity and cognitive function, can vary day-to-day; and valuing passive (watching) as well as active engagement.
- *Friendliness and connectedness*: being part of a group social gathering offers a sense of community, belonging that many isolated and lonely people 'in later life' lack, especially if they cannot go out from their homes by themselves unassisted. The celebratory tea party focus also generated added interest.
- *A sense of satisfaction and achievement*: having a celebratory ending where people can feel uplifted, having something to celebrate, even if only completing a small task that contributed to a group effort: a performance, song, story or larger group artwork, such as a ceramic mural (at Barton Court).

### **The LAPWING project challenges**

Considerable learning was gained about what are essential ingredients that make an arts and wellbeing programme effective, from a management and delivery perspective. This includes:

- *Inter-operability of trainers, artists, and contracted partners*: providing contractual clarity on terms and conditions, agreed upfront to avoid confusion and disappointment, is vital to ensure quality in delivery for client organisations. Personal circumstances for several on the training and project delivery and residency team, meant re-jigging some roles/tasks and schedules.
- *Meeting mixed expectations*: at all levels, between project team members, artists and participants, and individual project partners, needs constant, careful negotiation. Most aspects were successfully reconciled, but not all.
- *Group and individual Mentoring*: proved to be one of the most useful aspects appreciated by the creatives, on the training and during the residencies. Much of this was about instilling confidence and providing assurance, and prompting with the admin and feedback aspects.
- *Peer sharing and learning*: both informal and formal really strengthened the project's experiential value and team working. This aspect was particularly highlighted in the trainers' summary reflections on the LAPWING training.
- *Evidenced feedback, for monitoring and evaluation* is a 'must have' for publicly funded and person-centred work. Developing reflective thinking skills; and being able to articulate this clearly in writing, takes time and practice. This was hard-won from many of the creatives but most saw the value and need for this by the end.

## The LAPWING project legacy

The legacy of LAPWING is positive. It has resulted in on-going work and other collaborations. The training, as a pilot, provides a rich basis for further development. It could be adapted to help mentor and empower volunteers in creative arts facilitation. This suggests that LAPWING is fulfilling both a need and an opportunity. The LAPWING project story, with outcomes and achievements, with the artists' reflective learning journey videos, can be viewed on the [AgeUK Canterbury website](#).

**The LAPWING group creative sessions were as much about the process, 'being in the moment', socialisation and celebrating everyone's contribution, no matter how varied or small, valuing passive and active engagement.**



LAPWING – Live Art Practice Wellbeing Inspired Network Group



## **The LAPWING Learning Headlines**

- L** Legacy of learning: artist and volunteer commitments that make a difference for more ‘dementia-friendly’ and ‘mental health alert’ communities; leading by example through the use of arts/creative projects
- A** Adaptive and heightened self-awareness: of how to support others through emotional resilience; safeguarding responsibilities and reporting back on progress and problems
- P** Partnerships and peer learning: development of professional practice with perseverance, patience and open mind for on-going learning, enriches our lives and those of others
- W** Wellbeing and a willingness to try: collaboration with keen organisations and individuals, to constantly make a difference
- I** Inspiring and innovatory approaches with reflective learning, sharing about what works and what doesn’t
- N** Noticing and negotiating how best to maintain group interest embracing every individual’s needs and wellbeing; reflexive approach ‘on the ground’
- G** Growing in confidence and outreach: giving back to the community, connecting as citizens to people as neighbours, friends, casually and through befriending, is important

## Session feedback highlights: what participants liked best

*"Being with people, always someone here"*

*"Everyone's conversation and feeling the warmth; Companionship"*

*"Meeting up with the artists and chatting, lovely to chat to other people"*

*"Socialising; Mixing with people; Given time to chat, the company"*

*"Nice getting outside company; Just watched what everyone was doing"*

*"Having things explained to me; Something different, different people"*

*"This was my first time today so felt a bit out, but will be better next time"*

*"I feel I did better; quite enjoyable today than any other as completed a design"*

*"Getting gluey! Getting messy; Being outside in the garden chatting"*

*"Listening to what other people are saying - everybody has different ideas"*

*"Laugh, made you think; Daffodils poem it reminded me of a school"*

*"The friendliness and reading of poems; Mary's poetry and mistletoe poem"*

*"The friendliness and meeting one or two different people"*

*"Hearing the stories read out and the nice food and cuppa tea"*

*"I always enjoy the company of our group and having a cup of tea with them"*

*"Having time/space to play without having to produce anything 'good'"*

*"Being with familiar faces; Socialising and experimenting"*

*"The painting taking my mind off things"*

*"Having a chance to play and let out pent up emotions"*

*Being able to let my emotion run within my artwork*



Some of the Barton Court Care home artist residency engagement in Minster, Isle of Sheppey included diverse, individual and group, artwork pieces such as a ceramic (tile) mural led by LAPWING artist Catherine Arnell. The activities co-ordinator at Barton Court Care, Elaine Bashford, actively participated in both the LAPWING training and actively engaged in all the creative programme sessions. She recruited volunteers, residents' family, friends and students to also support the sessions with the artists. These visitors joined in the Barton Court celebratory tea party event, helping to create stronger community links with the residents.

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# LAPWING

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