

Evaluation of a community art,  
active ageing, volunteer  
development project, engaging  
frailer, older, vulnerable people  
in ceramic painting and mural  
making, delivered by  
Espression Arts CIC and  
Kent Arts and Wellbeing  
with project partners  
Age UK Canterbury and  
Age UK Herne Bay & Whitstable



## Our Work of Art 2018

PROJECT EVALUATION

Fay Blair

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SEPTEMBER 2019

## Foreword

The 'Our Work of Art' project volunteers have been the life blood of this project who have brought great fun and joy to the older people they supported and camaraderie within the creative volunteer network. This has helped tackle some of the loneliness and isolation that many older and vulnerable people may experience.

This innovative work led by Kent Arts and Wellbeing supporting Expression Arts CIC is challenging and rewarding. It has empowered the 'active ageing' volunteers (aged over 50) to flourish with new friendships and a renewed sense of purpose, helping in the community. It extends the outreach and impact of our local Age UK charities in Canterbury and in Herne Bay & Whitstable and fosters closer collaborative links with local people.

With our respective trustees, we are immensely grateful and wish to thank and congratulate everyone involved. Including the project Steering Group members, the project team, the funders, sponsors and supporters and, of course, all the volunteers.

**Dr Neil Brown, Chief Officer, Age UK Canterbury, September 2019**

## Acknowledgements

### The beneficiary project partners

*Dr Neil Brown*, Chief Officer, Age UK Canterbury; *Sue Cliffe*, Chief Officer, Age UK Herne Bay & Whitstable

### The project delivery team

*Catherine Arnell*, Expression Arts CIC (Lead Creative and trainer);  
*Fay Blair*, Kent Arts and Wellbeing (Strategic Project Manager, Trainer & Evaluator)  
*Gerry Atkinson*, Kent Arts and Wellbeing ( Social Care Mentor. Photographer and Trainer);  
*Ken Scott*, Kent Arts and Wellbeing (Trainer, Project Financial Monitoring & Admin);  
*Dr Pat Chung*, Canterbury Christ Church University, Senior Lecture in Occupational Therapy (Project Advisor & Mentor);  
*Gayle Shearwood*, Expression Arts Café Manager (Glazing & firing of all ceramic work)

### 'Our Work of Art – With these Hands' Exhibition & Showcasing events: March 2019

Exhibition of the ceramic murals and overall exhibition and celebratory workshop led by Catherine Arnell, Expression Arts CIC Co-ordination of photo-book production with volunteers and photography exhibition ['With these Hands'](#) led by Gerry Atkinson, Kent Arts and Wellbeing

The digital project record and story: website design by 'Beamtwenty3' website copy, *Ken Scott*, *Gerry Atkinson*, *Fay Blair*

**Evaluation report** Thank you to all the Our Work of Art project Team, especially *Catherine Arnell*, *Ken Scott* and *Gerry Atkinson* for their input and to volunteers *Jill Fell* and her daughter *Jasmine Fell* for helping with some of the graphics design.

## 'Our Work of Art' main project sponsors



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
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*Supported by*



**With local sponsorship for the exhibition and photobook from:**

Clague Architects | Harrier Lodge care home - Care UK | Canterbury BID

## Our Work of Art Project Partners



[www.ageukcanterbury.org.uk](http://www.ageukcanterbury.org.uk)



[www.ageuk.org.uk/hernebayandwhitstable](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/hernebayandwhitstable)



[www.espression.co.uk](http://www.espression.co.uk)

Kent Arts & Wellbeing



[www.kentartsandwellbeing.org.uk](http://www.kentartsandwellbeing.org.uk)

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### **Separate Documents:**

***Appendix 1: Those involved in the project***

***Appendix 2: Delivery timetable of group sessions***

***Appendix 3: Methods - Creative Confidence Process***

***Appendix 4: Mentoring Approach***

***Appendix 5: Volunteer Case Studies***

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## Executive Summary

'Our Work of Art' was an innovative and ambitious partnership, 'community art', focused project. It was led by the charity Age UK Canterbury with Age UK Herne Bay & Whitstable, delivered by Espression Arts CIC with Kent Arts and Wellbeing. The project's aims were about "extending the volunteer base in 'arts for wellbeing', to upskill older people (aged 50-75 years), to find a new and rewarding purpose, through engaging and supporting older, frailer, vulnerable people (55-100 years), as participants, in a professionally mentored, creative arts and vibrant, ceramic mural-making programme." (*Appendix 1: The Project Team & Steering Group partners*).

The core project funders were Canterbury City Council (CCC), the Big Lottery (Awards for All), Arts Council England, Kent Community Foundation (KCF) - Pargiter Trust, Lawson Endowment for Kent - and Kent County Council. Local business sponsors also contributed towards the celebratory exhibition and associated events and helped to promote the project's achievements via a special feature in Canterbury Index Magazine (March 2019) and via social media. Canterbury City Council and 'Awards for All' funded activities started in April and May 2018. The KCF funded project period covered activities from June 2018 to May 2019. The Arts Council funding covered activities from to July 2018 to September 2019.

1,603 volunteer hours were recorded, but the overall number of dedicated volunteer hours is estimated to be nearer 1,700. The project included: volunteer recruitment; creative training; volunteer-supported delivery of creative workshops with older people; professional pottery studio practice for volunteers and separate mentoring for Espression Arts, celebratory events, and a two-week exhibition with ceramic murals, photographs and publication of a photobook.

The bespoke, 3-part, 'arts and wellbeing' training delivered by the project team to 41 recruited volunteers (in two cohorts in July and September 2018) was well-received. This grounding in social care policy, how to effectively engage with older people (including those who live with dementia), with occupational therapy and creative practice skills (from the start), was empowering for the volunteers. The volunteer mentoring by the project team, was holistic, building self-esteem and as well as creative technical skills. The monthly, peer-support and skills sharing 'network' sessions proved to be highly effective in team building and forming friendships.

Meeting the needs and expectations of the 218 total project beneficiaries, both of the 49 volunteers who were involved and the 169 (unique) older people participants they supported, were priorities. Volunteers engaged in 70 creative workshops, held at 9 community/day centre settings in Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable (June 2018 and February 2019). *See the summary headline statistics diagrams pp: 12-13*. The volunteer feedback (pp: 16-19; 24-25) is positive and compelling. They found

the project “inspiring, ground-breaking, challenging, fulfilling and worthwhile”. They felt “proud, joyful and happy” as did most of the participants. It created a trusted, welcoming series of ‘communities’ through which people made friends, were stimulated and felt comfortable to ‘have a go’ at something creative and different; all working to a common goal, to produce the murals. For some volunteers, the project impact was transformative. It uplifted their wellbeing. It gave them a new lease of life, boosting their self-confidence, providing a rewarding sense of purpose. It helped to overcome the loneliness, isolation, depression, anxiety, that some experience.

The Creative Quality Progression Matrix (developed by Fay Blair and Catherine Arnell *Appendix 9*) proved an important tool to open up discussions about creative quality and what it means to develop creative confidence. It provided a clear marker for people, especially the volunteers, to affirm and celebrate their journey, efforts and achievements and appreciate the learning journeys of the people they supported.

The extra creative opportunity, or ‘perk’, for 12 volunteers to be professionally pottery mentored (by Gillian Farrell) over 6 studio practice sessions at Espression Arts Café (*Appendix 7*), formed a part of the project’s volunteer ‘reward system’. This enhanced their technical and creative confidence and motivation. It gave them a chance to explore their creativity in a relaxing, mindful way, and to bond with each other. It empowered them to better support the participants, in the creative workshops. The studio practice mentoring for the Espression Arts Team (by Imogen Taylor-Noble *Appendix 8*) facilitated trialling of new pottery / ceramics techniques. This stimulated useful business ideas on creative quality and future new creative ceramics offerings for Espression Arts.

Public showcasing of the work was at a two-week exhibition from 18-31 March 2019 in the Garage Coffee café in Canterbury. At the celebratory events volunteers presented personal accounts of their ‘lived experience’ of the project, highlighting the profound positive impact it had on their wellbeing and on the participants. Seven volunteer case studies (*Appendix 5*) and the project story is charted online and was promoted via a volunteer-supported social media campaign #OurWorkOfArt2018 and #OurWorkOfArt2019. Photo galleries were created online (*Appendix 6*).

The murals, made of individually hand-painted tiles, were curated (by Catherine Arnell) into eight vibrantly-coloured murals, regarded as ‘wonderful’, ‘stunning’ and ‘interesting’ by those who saw them. The fascinating and often quirky details, icons from the local towns and City, were widely appreciated. These collective, community art-pieces featured alongside wall-mounted photographs explaining the project story. These were highly evocative. The photo-book, co-produced with volunteers (led by Gerry Atkinson), was published and on view at the exhibition. Copies were gifted to all those involved which generated great pride and a sense of belonging.

Over 500 people viewed the exhibition. 316 exhibition visitor feedback forms were gathered in by the volunteer teams who invigilated and engaged with the visitors each day, sharing their experiences of the project. The visitor feedback showed how moved and inspired people were; surprised by what the older people and the volunteers had achieved. Many visitors felt that this project approach is inspiring and effective and they felt it was important for it to be more widely adopted. People felt strongly that the efforts to be inclusive, to give vulnerable people the opportunity to be creative, was important.

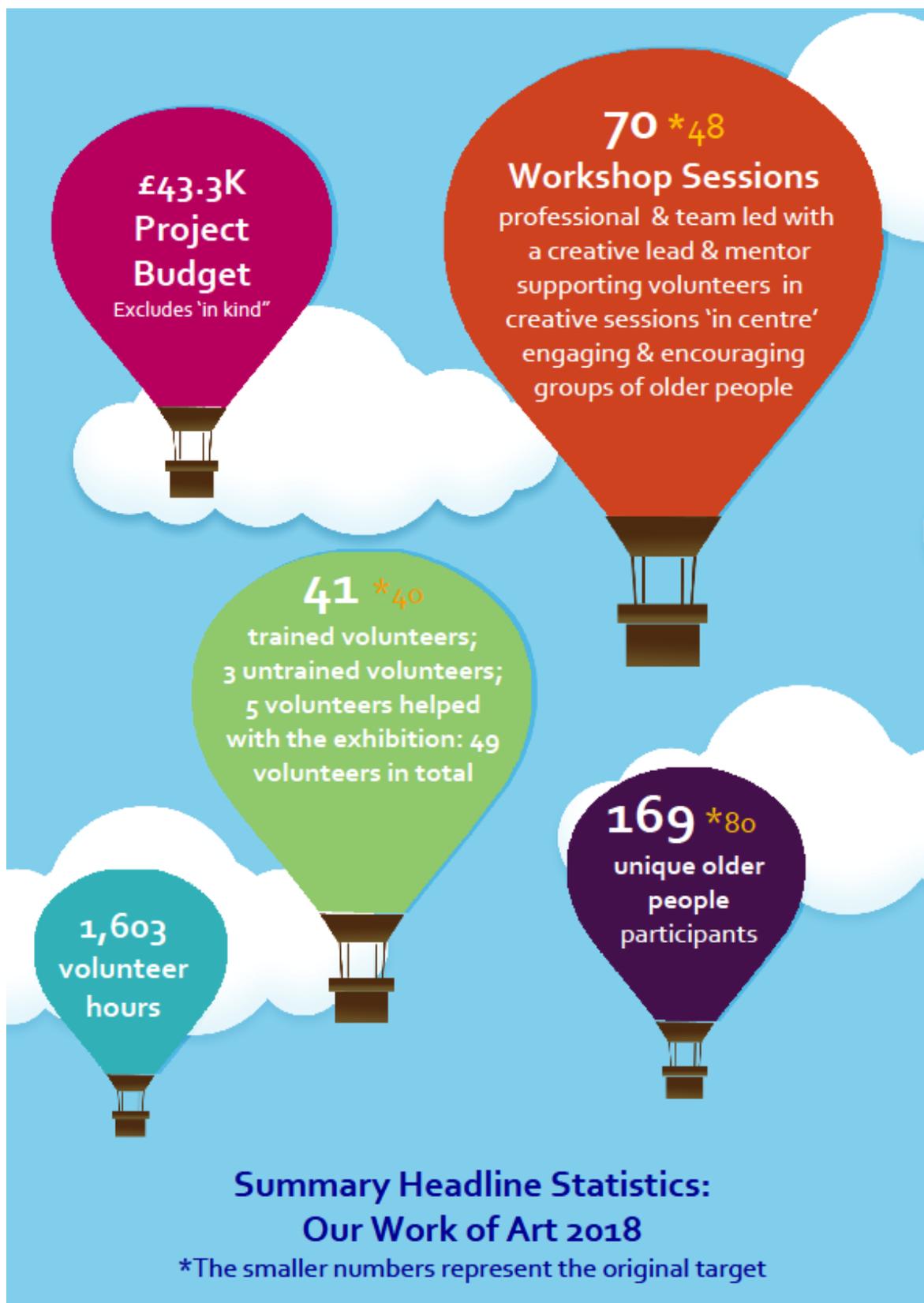
The project legacy is impressive. 26 volunteers committed to continue beyond April 2019. They wanted to draw in others, to strengthen and keep their peer network meetings going, so they can extend their outreach and engage with more, older, vulnerable people, through creativity.

The project team secured funding from Canterbury City Council in April 2019, and from the National Lottery Community Fund, to evolve the project further, to take out into more rural areas in community halls in the Canterbury District. Further volunteer recruitment with training programmed (for October 2019) is included with Expression Arts CIC and Kent Arts and Wellbeing. This will increase the capacity to deliver arts and wellbeing and develop the skills and roles of the 2018 trained volunteers further. It means that more diverse creative programmes can be facilitated and supported in the Age UK and other community centres into 2020.

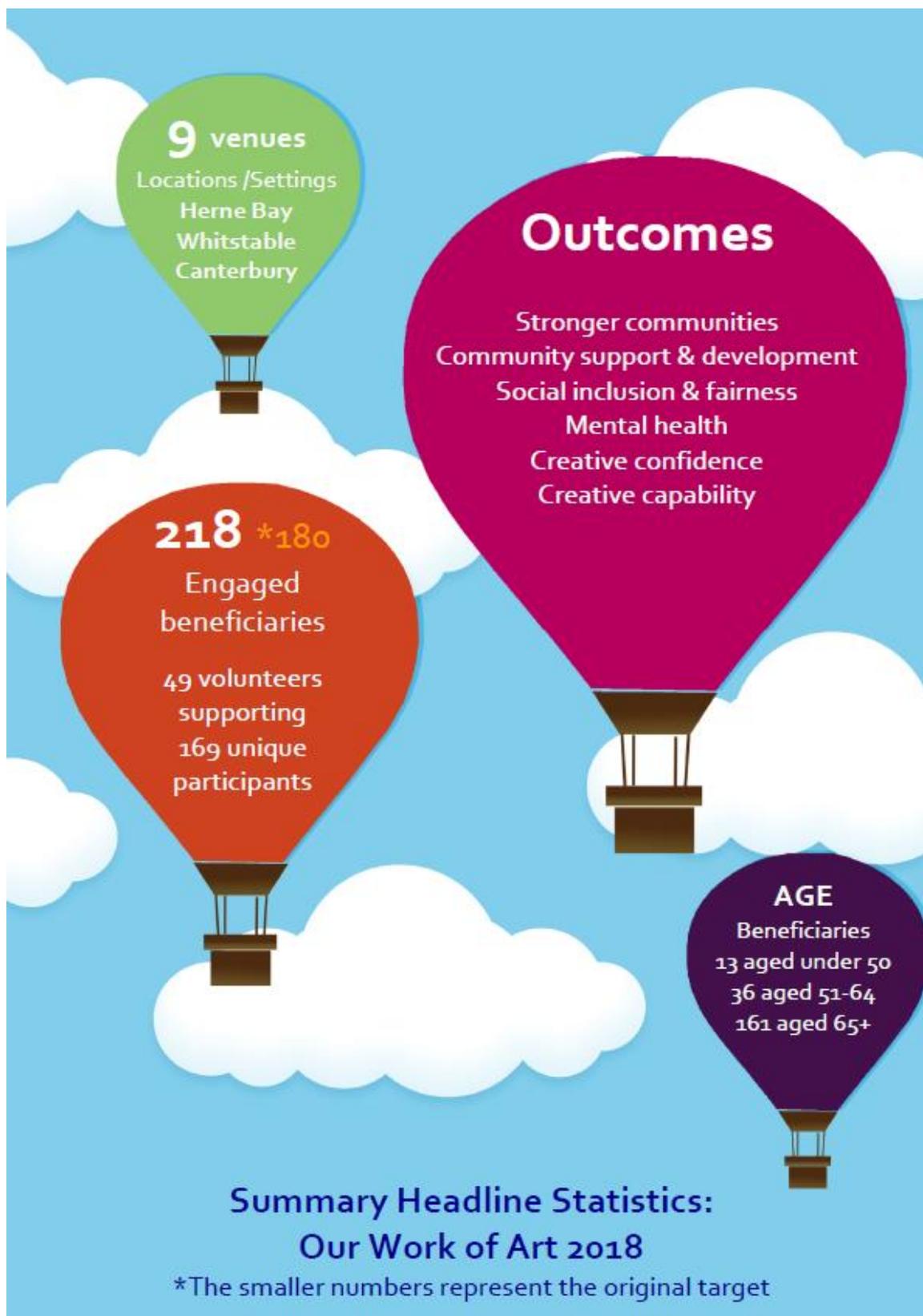
At the end of March 2019 Kent Arts and Wellbeing initiated work to develop a Kent strategic partnership, a network of partners, as commissioners, who are interested to collaborate on a more strategic arts and wellbeing programme. The 'Our Work of Art' model was showcased with Expression Arts CIC at this meeting; sharing the learning and criteria for success, with the network.

This strategic network, with a Kent-wide focus, met again in June 2019. With Expression Arts CIC, as a strategic team champion led by Kent Arts and Wellbeing, with Age UK Canterbury, Age UK Herne Bay and Whitstable, the group aims to collaboratively programme different cultural and creative genres, with bespoke training, to foster more volunteer creatives.

The practical experience and insights gained through the Our Work of Art team – the project team and empowered volunteers - is powerful. Looking now to develop a five year 'arts and wellbeing' strategy, the team is working up an exciting arts/festival programme with strategic network partners. The intention is to foster intergenerational work. This will involve young people and families, engaging creatively with older people, in a diverse, mixed media programme (visual arts, making, performance, such as singing, dance, spoken word, etc.) for communities in Canterbury, Herne Bay, east Kent and beyond.



**NOTE:** there are a range of targets (the \*asterisked orange numbers) covering different funders and their respective funding periods



Diagrams created by Our Work of Art volunteers Jill & Yasmine Fell

## The project achievements and outcomes

Our Work of Art delivered many things against the project brief, as listed below it:

- Increased the opportunity for older people to reconnect/ revive past creative skills/ hobbies; for others, it was an opportunity to explore new facilitation methods and creative media (ceramics) that they had not done previously. These interventions also increased participants' motivation, confidence, and contributed to their life-long learning and wellbeing.
- Developed the core life skills through our volunteer training/mentoring that upskilled/empowered existing Age UK volunteers, and attracted in some new 'active ageing' volunteers.
- Developed and tested out a 'Creative Quality Progression Matrix' as a tool for volunteers to chart their own creative journey and to help volunteers reflect on the creative experiences of older people they supported in group activities.
- Engendered fun/enjoyment in those taking part in creative wellbeing programme whilst maintaining and improving mental well-being stimulated through painting and drawing.
- Increased a sense of ownership, pride, empowerment, overcoming stigma, through participation and group purpose.
- Increased the sense of usefulness in the active older population through volunteering and helping others in Age UK settings.
- Generated and enhanced pride and respect through meaningful, purposeful and rewarding opportunities that are valued by others.
- Increased public awareness through a celebration, through learning/sharing events, exhibitions and workshops.
- Generated positive interest and support among commissioning organisations through sharing learning with other local organisations, inspired through our case studies.
- Developed the framework for a resource pack to encourage the application of creative activities to promote better health and wellbeing (to be disseminated later via the Kent Age UK Consortium, Kent-Dementia Action Alliance and other national and local organisations, Alzheimer's Society, etc).

- Captured photographic records, to capture the process and the ceramic outputs made in the sessions.
- Increased public awareness of the project through regular posting on social media #OurWorkOfArt2018 Facebook Private Group 'Talking Trees - Arts & Wellbeing'.

**001 PLANNING FOR LATER LIFE**

# Our Work of Art

Inspiring creative initiative brings volunteers and local older people together as well as helping to tackle loneliness and isolation in our community

social sessions is clear. It has brought older people together in a focused, friendly way enabling them to 'have a go' at something different. Having creativity has been possible for many whilst others, less creatively confident, have surprised themselves in beautiful mark-making designs. The common goal has been creating a collective piece, a ceramic mural featuring current icons, inspired by memories of their town and neighbourhood."

Catherine Amell commented: "It's not just about the cheeriness, and 'can-do' nature of local people who volunteer, but to do with making them – as volunteers – feel appreciated and valued too; providing an opportunity for them to socialise, make new friends and do something creative."

**Vital volunteers**

To date volunteers have dedicated countless hours to this project. Around 20 volunteers meet up monthly – facilitated by Expression Arts CIC – at the interactive coffee shop and ceramic studio, acting as a hub, to share insights and experiences.

The networking is something volunteers felt they never got the chance to do while busy volunteering. It gives them a sense of agency, maintains their motivation and momentum and provides friendly peer support. It is attracting others too who want to help.

Making and taking time to engage with our older members of the community also helps to overcome the effects of stigma associated with fragility and forgetfulness. A sense of self-worth, community and belonging is what Our Work of Art has achieved.

A new rural outreach programme is planned for May to June this year, offering creative 'taster' sessions in community halls.

**Celebrating & showcasing success**

From 18th-31st March at Garage Coffee in Frutwicks at 1-2 Jewry Lane (just buses off Canterbury's High Street), the public can visit and see the fabulous tile murals and creative endeavours. Aptly named 'With These Hands', the tile exhibition and photobook have been co-curated and edited with the volunteers, and brings a fresh and exhilarating nod to what can be achieved in later life.

**With thanks to...**

This year's Work of Art project funders and exhibition sponsors include:

- Canterbury City Council
- Arts Council England
- National Lottery Community Fund
- Kent Community Foundation
- Lawson Endowment for Kent
- Pargell Trust
- Kent County Council
- Clague Architects
- Care UK
- ProDesign & The Studio (Heme Bay)
- For more details, visit [expression.co.uk](http://expression.co.uk) & [kentartsandwellbeing.org.uk](http://kentartsandwellbeing.org.uk)

**Canterbury ageUK**  
Kent Arts & Wellbeing  
**espression**  
Kent Arts & Wellbeing

Source: Magazine Feature, March 2019 @ [Canterbury Index](#)\*

- Increased practitioner awareness and knowledge at the end of project event, presenting gathered feedback on 'Our work of Art' and reporting on the project learning and celebration of the finished murals.
- Relevant data report extracts from the Age UK Kent Impact Model were not used. Timewise, it was not feasible for the Age UK consultants to do this.

### Extra deliverables and outcomes (beyond the project brief)

The project team empowered and supported volunteers to:

- Secure sponsors for the publishing the photobook and helping to secure advertisers to fund the 4-page feature in Canterbury Index Magazine (above);

- Act as critical friends to second year Canterbury Christ Church University Occupational Therapy students in testing out their 'memory book project;
- Set up a private *facebook* group for the project to share information, research, advice and learning which is actively used and supported (by 44 members);
- Contribute actively to the #OurWorkOfArt2018 social #OurWorkOfArt2019 media feeds charting the whole project (*twitter, facebook, Instagram*);
- Meet socially via the 5 monthly network meetings, to help each other and contribute to other voluntary activities such as the Canterbury and Ashford Dementia Action Alliance, seminars, and other activities led by Expression Arts that support the community.

**"I believe art and creativity are important for the wellbeing of everyone and for the elderly especially. It showed that with just a smallest amount of effort, you can connect with people and fuel their hidden creativity.**

**Despite having no experience I wanted to 'have a go' and I learnt a lot in making the photo book".**

**"It has boosted my confidence it has been amazing, would love to do more!! A wonderful session and lovely pieces produced. Loved it!"**

**(Our Work of Art Volunteer)**

# PHOTO GALLERY



**Our Work of Art creative sessions and the creative team of studio practice volunteers**

## Highlights: What the volunteers said

**"I would recommend this project experience to other people who are thinking of becoming a volunteer as I think they would be surprised by the diversity amongst volunteers and participants. They would enjoy the development of, or the use of their creative skills to bring joy to them."**

**"My general wellbeing improved a lot and my self-esteem has soared. I am no longer withdrawn and depressed."**

**"Every session was hugely rewarding and satisfying for everyone involved."**

**"Given I am not on email or on facebook, the volunteer network meetings at Espression Arts have been fantastic for keeping me in the loop, and catching up with the team for a chat."**

**"I definitely saw a huge change in the people who participated in this project."**

**"Certainly in comparison to my experience volunteering with other organisations this far outweighed my expectations; to feel appreciated, competent, trained and supported throughout."**

**"Since becoming a creative volunteer, the main difference is that I am more confident, more positive and willing to take part. I feel energised and inspired."**

## Highlights: What the participants said

"Did I do this? .....If my children see it they would all have a fight over who can have it!"

"Thank you! I didn't know I had it in me – it only took 75 years to find out"  
Thanington Resource Centre  
Dementia Café Participant

"I enjoyed it (art), I used to do it a lot, I might take it back up!"  
Herne Bay and  
Whitstable Cogs  
Participant

"Really nice! When people come for a cup of tea, I can say I painted it!"

"It's better than I thought! I enjoyed doing it! I haven't painted for a long time".

"Oh that's lovely" Yes I am very pleased with it! ...when you've done something lovely it gives you a boost!  
(Age UK day centre participants, 2018)

## Project phases, approach and methods

The project phases of the 'Our Work of Art' project included:

- **Volunteer recruitment** for the project's bespoke 'arts and wellbeing' training (April – June 2018 via talks, social media, posters);
- **Volunteer creative training** (2, 3-part, programmes at Age UK Herne Bay & Whitstable in July & at Age UK Canterbury in September 2018);
- **Creative workshops with older people** with 70, 2-hourly sessions July 2018 to March 2019 at 9 day centre/community venue settings; Age UK Canterbury COGS & Canterbury Day Centre, Thanington, Northgate at All Saints; Age UK Herne Bay & Whitstable Day Centre Thursday, Wednesday, Swalecliffe COGS, Wednesday and Friday COGS;
- **Mentoring and support for the volunteers** (throughout and via phone/messenger, face-to-face, the monthly Creative Volunteer Network sessions, starting in September 2018, at Expression Arts);
- **Pottery Studio practice** for volunteers (6 sessions for 12 volunteers led by Gillian Farrell ) and for the Expression Arts team (6 sessions for 2, led by Imogen Taylor-Noble);
- **The project photobook story:** co-produced with the volunteers and published and gifted as a memento to all those involved (March 2019);
- **The celebratory project exhibition** ( two weeks, 8th-31st March 2019) organised with volunteers at Garage Coffee Café, Jewry Lane, Canterbury
- **Showcasing events** (Private View on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, Age UK project participant guided visits on 19<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> March; Seminar 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019 sharing the team's and volunteers' reflective project experiences at Garage Coffee.

**A project steering group** was set up and met (4 times) to give advice and guide the project's development and delivery and was hosted by Age UK Canterbury. This group included the Age UK Chief Officers, plus day centre managers, the delivery team, plus an Occupational Therapist and experienced dementia clinical practitioner and senior lecturer from Canterbury Christ Church University (*See Appendix 1*).

**The project approach** adopted across all phases of the project was in line with the funders' principles that embraced:

- User-led service design and effective engagement that promotes involvement at a grass roots level;
- Prevention based activities that address issues before they develop in scale and scope;
- Developing the core life skills of people;
- Financially sustainable projects and services;
- Sharing the learning with other local organisations.

## METHODS & DELIVERY

- **'Our Work of Art' Summary Programme of Creative Workshops April 2018-March 2019** (*detailed in Appendix 2*).
- **Methods: Creative Confidence Process for decorative ceramic mural-making**  
Catherine Arnell's documented process is set out with a specific case study (*Appendix 3*).
- **The mentoring approach** evolved by the project team was bespoke and unique to this project delivered mainly by Catherine Arnell and Gerry Atkinson (*Appendix 4*).
- **The studio practice - mentoring of volunteers** by Gillian Farrell (*Appendix 7*).
- **The studio practice - mentoring of Expression Arts Team** by Imogen Taylor-Noble (*Appendix 8*).

## Gathering feedback

A range of methods were used to gather evidence and inform the formative and summative evaluation of the project. Stakeholders (the volunteers, older people participants, the project partners and the exhibition/event audiences) responded to:

- **Structured questionnaires and feedback forms** that were devised by the evaluator to gather: information about the volunteers, their experience and their motivations for wanting to take part in the project, their feedback on the training and creative volunteering. A 'Creative Quality Progression Matrix' (*Appendix 9*) was devised to help elicit creative outcomes.
- **Check-in/check-out** feedback for both volunteers and participants giving a 'one word' and self-assessed wellbeing score (1-10, where '1' is feeling miserable and '10' is very happy) gathered verbally and recorded, (also during the training sessions) and from the participants and volunteers at the start and end of the creative sessions and network meetings.
- **One-to-one interviews** with stakeholders were included all along the project phases; structured feedback questions were devised for participants (on presenting them back with their glazed painted and fired mugs); feedback was also gathered in via the volunteer who took notes and attended briefings and debriefings with the lead creative (Catherine); and, at the end of project, individual review interviews with project partners and the lead creative were led by the evaluator.

## **The beneficiaries: Volunteers & Participants**

### **The 'Our Work of Art' Volunteers**

Of the 41 volunteers who were trained:

- 40 were female; 1 male;
- 12 (26%) were aged under 50;
- 14 (37%) were aged 50-64;
- 15 (37%) were aged 65+ [74% were over the age of 50].

Of the younger, 'active ageing' volunteers, several were mature Occupational Therapy students. The typical age profile of volunteers at the Age UKs in Canterbury and Herne Bay & Whitstable, is older; approximately 45% of the overall total Age UK volunteers, are aged over 70.

The recruited volunteers through 'Our Work Of Art' have a younger profile. Only two volunteers had been, or were, current Age UK volunteers. The project therefore generated (39) 'new recruits', adding social capital. The majority went on to support the Age UKs members/clients.

- 23 were from Canterbury or live in areas/wards nearby;
- 8 from Whitstable or nearby;
- 4 from Herne Bay or nearby;
- 6 from outside of the Canterbury City Council District, mainly East Kent (Sandwich, Faversham, Ramsgate (2), Hythe and Chartham).

*(Appendix 1 features the list of volunteer names who took part in the project.)*

### **What volunteers wanted from the project**

It was clear from the volunteer application forms, during recruitment that they had diverse reasons and ambitions for wanting to 'sign up' for the creative volunteer training and volunteering. About a third had creative experience and practice skills and competences, with a strong passion, for being creative. Another third had caring and or health care background experience and a passion to want to help people.

Many had some kind of previous volunteering experience as a volunteer, or in supporting volunteers. The collective calibre, capability and diversity of skills was impressive. The majority expressed a strong sense of mission and 'wanted to give something back' and 'make a positive difference'. Irrespective of their creative skills, they wanted 'to do' or to 'have a go' at something creative (for the first time), or to revive and expand skills, to share with and support others in a social, meaningful way.

## The Participants

38% were male; 62% were female. 2% were aged under 50; 13% aged 50-64; 85% aged 65 plus. A high proportion of the 65+ grouping, from the day centres, were in their 80's but the age profile of the 'COGS' (dementia support groups) was much lower). Also a greater proportion of men attended the 'COGS' groups.

Summary of Our Work of Art 2018 project older people participation profile								
1	Delivery Venue & Group	Number of older people		Gender		Age		
		Number in the group	Unique older people	Male	Female	Under 50	50-64	65+
2	Canterbury Age UK COGS* (*dementia support) Group (Tuesday)	9	9	6	3	0	0	9
3	Canterbury Age UK Day Centre (Tuesday)	39	28	19	20	0	5	34
4	Herne Bay and Whitstable COGS Group* (Thursday)	16	14	7	9	0	3	13
5	Herne Bay & Whitstable Age UK Day Centre (Thursday)	39	25	7	32	0	1	38
6	Thanington Neighbourhood Resource Centre: Dementia Café (Monday)	17	14	7	10	0	3	14
7	Herne Bay and Whitstable Age UK COGS Group* (Friday)	16	15	5	11	0	5	11
8	Herne Bay and Whitstable Age UK at Swalecliffe COGS Group* (Wednesday)	20	17	11	9	0	4	16
9	Northgate All Saints Church (Community Group (Wednesday)	11	11	2	9	4	3	4
10	Herne Bay & Whitstable Age UK Day Centre (Wednesday)	16	12	4	12	0	0	16
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>155</b>

## Results & feedback highlights

Specific targets as originally set in the funder proposals are detailed below (in bold) with statistical highlights provided on what the project achieved. This is based on the evidence provided in the feedback from the various questionnaires/ forms.

**“Target: Increased sense of achievement connectedness and sense of purpose**

**50% say they have learnt new skills and practical insights they have applied through the older people programme delivery”**

- All volunteers reported a positive shift increase in ‘creative confidence and/or creative technical ability’.
- 83% (24 out of 29 respondent) volunteers said what they gained in skills and confidence overall was either 'a lot' or 'excellent').
- Of the 30 volunteer end of project feedback forms, the vast majority of volunteers reported a very positive project experience many remarking it was “inspiring, uplifting, fulling, rewarding, nurturing, caring, empowering, inclusive” and a “happy, wonderful, interesting, amazing and joyful experience.”
- 92% (24 out of 26 respondent) volunteers feel that the creative volunteer network meetings are 'significant/ valuable/ important'. The number of volunteers attending the network meetings (up to 31st March 2019) were: 5th Sept 2018:17 volunteers; 3rd Oct 2018:18 volunteers; 7th Nov 2018: 24 volunteers; 5th Dec 2018: 15 volunteers; 13th March 2019; 19 volunteers.
- Example of qualitative volunteer feedback:  
“The network builds a feeling of community, info sharing and that the project has direction.”

**“Target: Increased mood lift. Decreased sense of loneliness and isolation.**

**Increased sense of belonging and optimism about the future. 50% of participants enjoy the sessions, feel they have been motivated and achieved something worthwhile and inspiring.”**

- 90% (26 out of 29) said what they gained in relationships and friendships was either 'OK', 'a lot' or 'excellent'.
- 89% (25 out of 28) volunteers felt the older people participants *enjoyed* the sessions either 'a lot' or felt it was 'excellent'.

- 97% ( 26 out of 27 respondent ) volunteers felt what the older people participants *gained in self-confidence and/or wellbeing through taking part the project* was 'reasonable, a lot or excellent'.
- The individual participant feedback scores at the end of each creative session delivered showed a general, consistent mood uplift: comparing their start and end of session, self- assessed and verbally articulated scores.
- On seeing their painted, fired mugs, after glazing, and their tiles in the framed murals, they all showed a great sense of pride and achievement.

Example of a volunteer's most compelling moment: "Seeing their faces when opening parcels containing their mugs and finished murals". See the *Our Work of Art – With these hands' photobook* and reactions when they visited the exhibition.

**"Target: Increased sense of achievement connectedness and purpose. 50% of participating volunteers feel motivated, inspired. 10% plan to continue beyond."**

- **93%** (27 out of 29 respondent) volunteers said they enjoyed 'a lot' being part of the project. 38% of these said it was 'excellent'.
- 87% (26 out of 30 respondent) volunteers reported they are committed to continue with the work beyond this project ('somewhat' or 'highly').

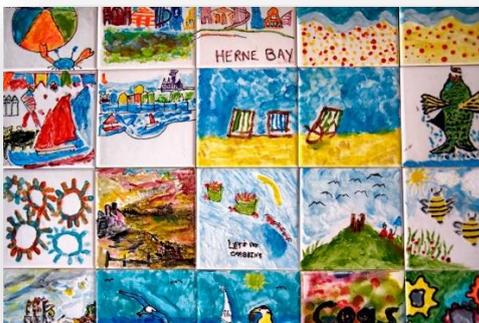
**"Target: Increased sense of usefulness, self-worth, local pride and belonging. 50% of visitors enjoy the exhibition. 75% increase feelings of usefulness/ sense of purpose in older people participants and volunteers."**

- 83% (259 out of the 316 respondent) visitors who completed the exhibition feedback form said they enjoyed the exhibition 'a lot'.
- 63 visitors commented positively on the project idea, the concept and process and approach;
- 53 commented on the colourfulness and vibrancy;
- 51 commented on the fact it was inclusive for vulnerable people, and a community activity;
- 39 remarked on the sense of pride and or achievement of the project; (many of these took part in the project);
- 27 remarked on the link of the project to place, heritage and memories.
- 66% (194 respondent) visitors said seeing the exhibition "changed their perceptions about what older people, especially vulnerable people, and what volunteering, can achieve (the positive benefits) in later life'.



**The Our Work of Art 2018 Project Exhibition 18-31 March 2019 At Garage Coffee, Fruitworks Co-working, Jewry Lane, Canterbury**

# Our Work of Art 2018 Murals





**Our Work of Art 2018 ceramic mug painting and tile painting**

## Findings and considerations

### Overall summary findings

The overall impact and the project learning from 'Our Work of Art' was significant in a number of ways. Celebrating the successes and achievements, as well as analysing and understanding better how to manage the challenges, will be important for the future. These are highlighted below along with a range of suggested critical success factors which are relevant and transferable to other arts and wellbeing projects.

### The positive benefits and outcomes

What the project delivered and what it meant for the volunteers and the older people they supported at the day/community centres and in the 'Cogs' dementia support groups, was immense and diverse. The quantitative and qualitative results and analysis affirm that the project was both highly successful in meeting its aims and in delivering against the specific activity objectives and the project's (target) outcomes.

The Our Work of Art sessions helped to lift the mood of the older people during the sessions. Overall the project gave many of them an appetite to engage and explore other creative activities. This is also true for the volunteers. They want to draw in others, to strengthen and keep their peer network meetings going, so they can extend their outreach and engage with more, older, vulnerable people, through creativity.

### The impact on the Volunteers

Seven volunteer case studies (*Appendix 5*) were produced with the active co-operation of the volunteers. These offer rich and detailed insights on their personal contexts, on why they wanted to volunteer and narratives under the following headings: 'My biggest overall achievement', 'My most rewarding highlights', 'Changes I noticed: impact and outcomes' and 'How the project helped me: the legacy.'

The case studies all highlight their observed impact on the older people they supported and what difference the project made to them. The value of the support, the advice and mentoring that the project team provided, is also recognised.

- **Creative Volunteer training, mentoring & studio practice:** Overall there was great enjoyment for all volunteers, fulfilling a sense of purpose, fun and friendships, and skills development and enhancement of their creativity and confidence. The achievement of personal aspirations, overcoming personal

issues and challenges, as well as the creative and technical competences and capabilities they were able to demonstrate, was impressive and rewarding.

### **The impact on the group participants**

The ceramic painting, creative, making focus, helped to catalyse conversations and socialisation. It helped to build relationships and friendships that helped to overcome isolation and loneliness for many of participants and give them a confidence boost about what they could achieve with some gentle encouragement and support.

- **Creative workshops, volunteer-supported for older participants:** A wellbeing upward shift was observed during the course of each session, with overall enjoyment of the creative programme. This culminated in a sense of individual and collective achievement and fulfilment which was celebrated and shared with the public at the exhibition and events. The legacy is friendship and a sense of social belonging for many participants and their family and carers and for all the volunteers.
- **Celebratory events, project exhibition and showcasing:** The final artworks, their personal glazed mugs and the mounted ceramic tile murals, filled many participants with great pride, and joy. Their friends and relatives and those of the volunteers and the public exhibition visitors found this moving and interesting. The display and story, and what it showed about the importance and value of engaging creatively with older and vulnerable people, was powerful. Particularly those who live with dementia and who visited the exhibition were exhilarated and 'wow-ed!' It made them feel a 'somebody', both visible and connected to a broader community, and it helped to overcome feelings of isolation and loneliness, and low self-esteem.

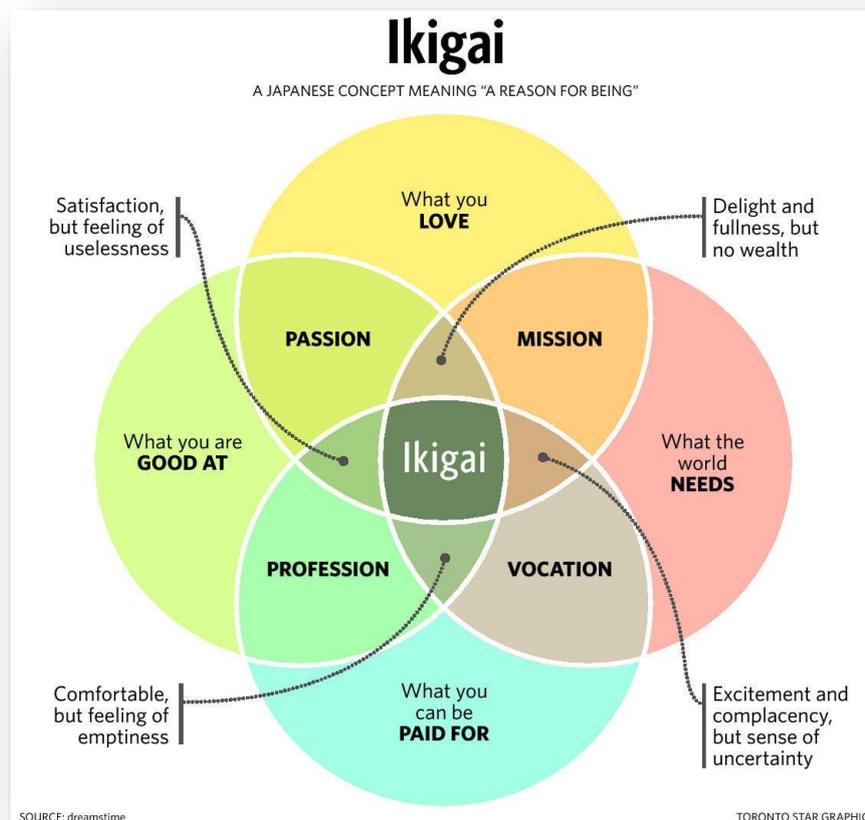
### **Project challenges**

The project was both demanding and challenging and exciting and rewarding for the project team. They dedicated many hours of time 'in kind' to deliver against the highly motivated volunteers' expectations. Some considerations reflecting on the project that will help inform onward 'Our Work of Art' project work, and are transferable to other projects cover:

- Volunteer development and what makes a good team;
- Key ingredients of an effective Our Work of Art volunteer;
- Managing Volunteers: Co-ordination and support;
- Critical success factors for 'Our Work of Art'.

## Volunteer development and what makes a good team

A useful framing for understanding volunteer motivation is the 'Ikigai' diagram (below). 'Ikigai' is a Japanese word whose meaning translates roughly to a reason for being, encompassing joy, a sense of purpose and meaning and a feeling of well-being. The word derives from 'iki', meaning life and kai, meaning the realisation of hopes and expectations. This framing is useful lens through which to describe, position and analyse what the 'Our Work of Art' volunteers hoped to get out of the project.



Volunteers, with their unique life circumstances and personal histories, have differing reasons and motivations for wanting to volunteer, at any given time of their life. In relation to the Our Work of Art volunteers, the relevance and weighting across a range of factors, identified as social engagement; emotional engagement and creative engagement, varied for each individual.

The diagram below provides another useful framing with suggested 'drivers' or motivational 'need' factors. The volunteer application and feedback form responses showed the degree to which volunteers were aware of their needs and priorities, such as, the desire to make new friends, have a new social outlet, to overcome their shyness, anxiety, depression (for some) or to build their personal self-confidence, or pursue and expand their creativity skills and share this and help others.



### **Our Work of Art 2018: Suggested Volunteer Motivations and drivers for taking part in the project (devised by Fay Blair and Catherine Arnell, May 2019)**

Three indicative, stereotypes, (A, B, and C) characterise and typify some of the Our Work of Art volunteer perspectives:

**(A) Social Engagement:** "I want to volunteer to make friends; I have just moved to the area. I have time and want to do something to help others; I want to become more confident, I want to challenge my social anxiety, depression."

**(B) Emotional Engagement:** "I want to volunteer because I care for people; I have a family member with dementia, I experience empathy with others; I used to work with people and have people skills I can offer."

**(C) Creative Engagement:** "I am skilled in creative arts/ pottery and want to help; I have been an artist/creative and have skills to offer others. This art project sounds amazing opportunity."

#### **Forming effective volunteer teams**

Combinations of different volunteers - with their unique skills set, life experiences and talents and needs - can influence the overall effectiveness of the team. This affected the selection and grouping of team members. It was important to ensure when working together, supporting a group of participants, that there was balance and sufficient volunteers across these factors (A, B, and C above).

What surprised the project team was that so many of the volunteers' expressed need for social engagement and emotional engagement appeared to be stronger than their drive for creative engagement. For the more 'professionally experienced creatives, it was more a case to expanding or sharing their genre of creative practice.

## **Key ingredients of an effective 'Our Work of Art Volunteer'**

The project team adopted the Kent Arts and Wellbeing 'standards-based approach'. This means consciously understanding, clearly articulating and managing training and empowerment support so that specific knowledge and understandings, aptitudes, skills and practice capabilities, are met to an appropriate level to fulfil the project needs.

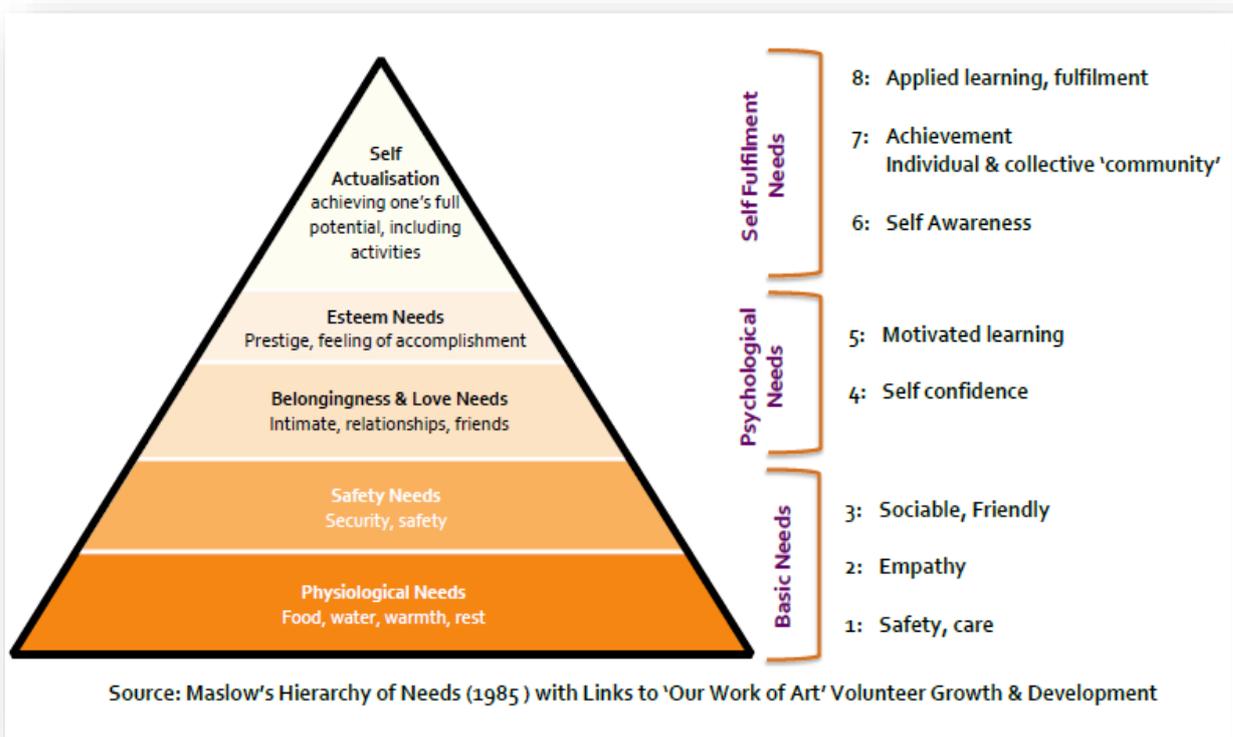
For Our Work of Art, that meant understanding what requirements, are important for delivering the project; the tasks, the creative group facilitation especially when engaging with older, frailer and vulnerable people including those that live with dementia.

As part of the end of project review discussions (between the creative lead and project evaluator) a model was devised, the diagram below, linking Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, A. H., 1943, 'A theory of human motivation') with a progression pathway relevant to the creative volunteers and their role in the project. Maslow's theory suggests that the most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire (or focus motivation upon) the secondary or higher level needs (the triangle).

From this it was possible to distil key criteria, which are important for volunteers to have at the point of recruitment and also considerations for fostering their growth and development. (See the diagram below, 'Volunteer Characteristics').

It was clear that all volunteers, at the recruitment stage, demonstrated that they met basic needs (requirements of the project) and were conscious of the importance of safety, care, and empathy, and were social and friendly people (1 to 3 below). The training programme and mentoring, much of it informal and between volunteers, was aimed at meeting 'psychological needs', to build self-confidence and motivate learning.

The reflective debriefing and evaluation feedback work was designed to elicit fulfilment needs; to heighten self-awareness (of themselves and how they work), to acknowledge and celebrate achievement (for themselves and the creative work and socialisation with the older participants in the workshops). It was also to elicit and celebrate the emotional and social engagement for them and the people they supported, developing friendships, a sense of community and social belonging.



### Volunteer Characteristics identified as important for 'Our Work of Art'

(Diagram adapted and devised by Fay Blair and Catherine Arnell, May 2019)

- (1) **Safety, Care:** consciously caring towards others; people who want to engage with others, who want to talk them, to build trust to encourage them to take (part in the project) and try something new;
- (2) **Empathy:** people who are compassionate and can put themselves in someone else's place. They have the ability to understand and share the feelings of another, but can also (learn to) control their feelings, to avoid emotional overload.
- (3) **Sociable, Friendly:** a likeable, affable, personality; an ability to get on with others (prepared to overcome shyness) and to reach out to vulnerable older people, build relationships with them, however difficult; an active listener;
- (4) **Self-confidence:** people who have sufficient self-belief and self-esteem that empowers them to grow, learn and try out new things; working beyond their comfort zone (building their technical and creative confidence too);
- (5) **Motivated learning:** an openness to change; a willingness to take risks, to make mistakes, to want to improve and learn from others; to embrace lifelong learning and helping others to learn;
- (6) **Self-Awareness:** prepared to look, listen reflect and refine; to take productive criticism and a willingness to adapt, and develop to become 'a better creative volunteer';

- (7) Achievement – individual and ‘collective community:** acknowledging and celebrating successes (however small the steps or moments in the case of those who live with dementia) in themselves and others (the people they support), and the power of group ‘community art’ and what this can evoke;
- (8) Applied learning, fulfilment:** learning and personal development is put into practice and evolves and becomes second nature; the ‘in the moment’ process enjoyment, for themselves and others, recognising their engagement and interventions are achievements and are ‘making a difference’.

## **Managing Volunteers: Co-ordination and Support**

### **The Creative Volunteer Network**

Although not originally planned, facilitating the face-to-face monthly creative volunteer network (‘network’) meetings proved invaluable. It provided a forum through which important tasks and logistical details could be shared and updated. Volunteers shared professional and creative skill insights – through mini presentations - and some arranged to meet up on a social basis outside of the meetings. The network became the social hub through which peer support and mentoring was facilitated.

At the meetings volunteers floated ideas for the project and its promotion and volunteer task groups were formed. This was very pertinent in terms of work towards designing and drafting the project photobook, planning, mounting and invigilating (front-of-house visitor greeting) at the exhibition venue, design work, planning publicity and in helping out at the associated celebratory events with the public and sponsors. All these activities required support, guidance, briefings and supervision of the volunteers.

The ‘network’ arose in direct response to volunteer demand. The team responded to their wish to set up a private facebook group, which was (and continues to be) actively engaged with 43 members. Posted are videos and snippets about training, new research and facts about dementia, creativity with older and vulnerable people, news about innovatory projects and inter-generational work. However, the volunteers wanted face-to-face meetings too. This was fuelled by a strong desire to meet, share skills and exchange insights, to help each other and to develop friendships.

For some volunteers, particularly those who were shy, and struggle with anxiety and self-confidence issues, the network provided a ‘safe’ and trusted, comfortable setting for them to socialise and to gradually develop more of a social life. This acted as a spring-board for them, boosting their self-esteem and self-belief and an opportunity for making friends.

## **Volunteer Co-ordination**

The time needed for volunteer co-ordination and management was far greater than anticipated by any of the project team. Responding to volunteers' high levels of motivation - what they wanted to do - was exciting but very challenging.

Management and co-ordination of the volunteers was led, largely by the project Creative Lead (Catherine Arnell) who had maximum contact time with them. Several of the team (Gerry Atkinson and Fay Blair) led and supported specific volunteer task groups, such as developing the photo-book, and gaining sponsors to fund the editorial feature in Canterbury index Magazine (published March 2019) and attracting in advertisers through making personal contact with businesses (for example, Harrier Lodge care home, Care UK), and a group to help with the social media campaign.

Given the intensive programme of creative workshop delivery, there was insufficient time to maintain frequent and regular contact with those volunteers who were not yet scheduled to help out. Meeting volunteers' diverse needs, matched against their preferences and desires, was recognised as important. However, at peak periods of project activity, it was not possible to keep them sufficiently busy. This resulted in frustration for some who felt their talents were not being fully appreciated or used.

## **Prioritisation and Time Management**

Team efforts were stretched, arguably 'a bit too thin', at times. This compressed time available to complete other project tasks and commitments. The 'just in time' delivery scenario created pressure across the team and was understood as not a sustainable way of working moving forward.

The advantages of having a dedicated volunteer co-ordinator role, as proposed by some of the volunteers, at the end of the project, were recognised as a sustainable solution worth exploring. This would free up time, for the team, especially the creative lead. It would enable greater prioritisation and allow for more advance planning, with greater delegation of tasks to volunteers to match and meet their interests and talents.

Participant case studies are offered by Catherine Arnell (*Appendix 3*) and in all the seven volunteer cases studies (*Appendix 5*) they make references to the participants, providing insightful anecdotes about their project experiences. These are very 'real', moving, and profound.

## **Overall critical success factors of 'Our Work of Art'**

At the arts and wellbeing networking and showcasing seminar event (28<sup>th</sup> March 2019) for partners and commissioners, four key factors were presented (by the project evaluator) as critical success factors in the light of the project experience. These were a:

- strong visionary partnership and delivery team;
- benefits and reward system for volunteers and beneficiaries;
- sustainable and entrepreneurial approach;
- lead creative/artist with high organisational capability and integrity.

### **A strong visionary partnership and delivery team**

**Factors for success: *insight, vision, experience, resilience, adaptability, capability, team inter-operability (ability to cover for each other); high task responsibility and accountability***

Trust and commitment underpins any strong partnership. This takes time to evolve. All the Our Work of Art team had worked together previously and were involved in the earlier LAPWING project led by Age UK Canterbury.

As client, Age UK Canterbury identified the 'arts and wellbeing' need and the opportunity for their members/clients. They championed the project partnership contributing to the project steering group. Dr Pat Chung, Senior Lecturer in Occupational Therapy from Canterbury Christ Church University provided overall project mentoring.

As lead creative, Catherine Arnell, Expression Arts CIC designed, developed and implemented the work, personalising the approach when working with the older people, co-ordinating and leading the volunteers. The lead creative also contributed to and supported the monitoring, feedback gathering, project evaluation, impact measurement and assessment.

As project 'integrator and enabler', Kent Arts and Wellbeing made the project happen: delivering the complex funding strategy; supported bid proposal writing; managed the overall monitoring and financial accountability; provided project management mentoring across the team and support for the volunteers; and, delivered the project impact assessment and evaluation.

## **A benefits and reward system for volunteers and beneficiaries**

**Factors for success: *a safe and enabling environment; co-production; mentoring; one-to-one personalised support; empowerment; a social community for forming friendships; a skills and peer-sharing network; creative studio practice with skills mentoring (pottery)***

A clear and compelling range of benefits mean that people, the volunteers and the participants, as beneficiaries (service-users), are motivated and are likely to be more committed to the project and see it through, and beyond.

The starting point for any engagement work is a safe and enabling environment where people feel comfortable. They are then open and confident enough to be encouraged and are and 'brave' enough to 'have a go' at doing something new and different, working outside of their comfort zone.

Co-production is important. During the arts and wellbeing training, harnessing the volunteers' ideas about what would best help them, shaped a programme that worked for them.

The high level of support and mentoring, albeit informal, meant that the volunteers, especially those with personal issues (such as anxiety or depression) felt cared for and that they matter. The monthly peer support network meetings were a way of volunteers being able to reconnect again without feeling under pressure. It offered a 'support blanket' that helped build their self-confidence and enabled them to take a step back at points, but it prevented them dropping out of the project altogether.

In addition the notion of providing an extra 'treat', something pleasurable and enjoyable, was important. The pottery studio practice, just for 12 volunteers, allowed them to explore and develop their creativity, individually, for themselves. This 'treat' was highly prized and valued by many. It enhanced their skills and knowledge and was a calming setting for promoting wellbeing. It was welcomed as a personal growth and development opportunity.



**Caption: Catherine Arnell. Expression Arts CIC, Lead Creative (second from the right) briefing the volunteer team at the start of the creative workshops at Age UK Herne Bay & Whitstable day centre, July 2018**

### **A sustainable and entrepreneurial approach**

***Factors for success: developing social capital; outward facing communications and outreach; promotional work and fundraising; securing local business buy-in and support; developing sponsor relationships; delivering value for money; avoiding personal 'burn out'***

Many arts and wellbeing creative interventions can often raise expectations and people can be disappointed if they suddenly stop and are not continued. Having the resource, the social capital – trained and confident teams - of volunteers who want to build and maintain relationships, is a real asset.

Training volunteers to be increasingly capable of working in teams, independently, matters. This is so that eventually they are competent and comfortable leading group creative sessions, with minimal and remote supervision. This reduces the programme costs and makes it more affordable for the commissioning organisation(s).

Maintaining the support for volunteers is important for their growth and motivation. Empowering them to 'sing their song', to inspire and attract in local business sponsors, to fund the activities and promotional events, has multiple benefits. Local sponsors - Clague Architects and Harrier Lodge care home, Care UK - for Our Work

of Art 2018, were impressed with the project and keen to help and put something back into the community.

'Burn out' is always a risk that needs to be managed and prevented. People, either on the paid project team, or among the volunteers, can over-commit, do too much, and then have to withdraw because of physical or mental exhaustion. Having a paid resource to monitor and manage the work, reduces this risk. It is important for the wellbeing of all concerned and the sustainability of the project work.

Organising and funding show-casing events, to spread the word about the great individual and community benefits that 'creative' volunteering can achieve, is important. This is to generate wider support and recognition and to ensure there are sufficient funds to keep the programme of activities going.

### **A Lead Creative/Artist with high organisational capability and integrity**

**Factors for success: *high organisational and reflective capability; willingness to learn and adapt; creative spark; sense of fun; empathy; strategic thinker and effective co-ordinator.***

Organisational 'acumen' of the lead creative, whether working on their own or with a team of other creatives, is vital. Many creatives and artists have a desire to engage in community facilitation and help vulnerable people but do not all have the desire, or capacity, to do what it takes, organisationally or administratively.

Client partners, such as the Age UK's in the case of Our Work of Art, need to be fully confident that the team - and that their clients - are in 'a safe pair of hands'. Compliance with important policy requirements (for Health & Safety, Safeguarding Photo consents, etc) is essential.

Ensuring that important project records are kept, including photographs and that monitoring data are accurately gathered and recorded and shared, is vital for funding providers and project sponsors.

Not all creative/artists are prepared to learn and adapt their creative processes to accommodate their ways of working, to meet a project's diverse needs. Some struggle with the task of integrating the creative processes with practical, occupational therapy aspects and in completing the administrative requirements to 'time and task'.

The creative lead in Our Work of Art, (Catherine Arnell) was exceptional. She had all these qualities with a drive and a determination to learn and adapt quickly to the

challenges. She was a strategic thinker who understood and contributed to the complex process of writing funding bids, helping to fit the funding 'jigsaw pieces' together. She was able to plan and get the very best out of the organisational venue host settings, to make the creative activities, a high quality social experience for the participants.

In addition the creative lead needs to be highly personable, with excellent soft skills able to inspire and befriend people. Empathy is essential. An ability to help people through difficult and frustrating times and tasks with patience, matters, to make the experience fun and rewarding. It is significant that In all the volunteer case studies (Appendix 5), the volunteers recognised, praised and revered these qualities, talents and attributes, as did the project team and partners.

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Report by Fay Blair, Kent Arts and Wellbeing

[fay@kentartsandwellbeing.org.uk](mailto:fay@kentartsandwellbeing.org.uk) Mobile: 07786 307 664

[www.kentartsandwellbeing.org.uk](http://www.kentartsandwellbeing.org.uk)