

Banbury Age of Creativity Festival 2019 evaluation report

What we did

We worked with partners in Banbury to develop a printed and online brochure of 18 age friendly local creative opportunities to coincide with the national Age of Creativity Festival which took place during May 2019. The broad theme of the national festival was intergenerational activity . The Banbury Age of Creativity Festival (BAOCF) brochure included existing activities including dance classes, cinema clubs and art making groups and supported the development of new activities including a musical performance at the Horton Hospital, an Arts for Dementia good practice sharing event at Banbury Museum and a week-long Creative Pop Up shop residency in Castle Quay Shopping Centre. The Banbury Age of Creativity Festival Pop Up shop (BAOCF Pop Up) was designed to offer passers by a taster of the age friendly creative offer in Banbury and encourage them to try out new activities and join in based on the “If they can then so can I” principle (a great suggestion that came from BAOCF planning meeting). The brochure included information about North Oxfordshire Volunteer Driver Service to support access to the events and the whole project was inspired by and underpinned by the Age Friendly Banbury project concept. Oxfordshire Age Friendly Cultural Network (OAFCN) (part of Age UK Oxfordshire) and Cherwell District Council worked in partnership to deliver the BAOCF Pop Up shop which was jointly funded with fantastic support from the Age UK Oxfordshire Inspiration Volunteers, Castle Quay Shopping Centre, The Royal Voluntary Service Cornhill Centre, The Mill Arts Centre, North Oxon and South Northants Volunteer Connect (Citizens Advice) and other partners.



With a relatively short lead in time a wide range of events and activities were programmed and Age UK Oxfordshire funded a designer to work on the brochure and cover printing costs. 1500 brochures were distributed at cultural venues and places where older people might meet in Banbury. The online version of the brochure was shared with the OAFCN members.

Why we did it

In January 2019 the OAFCN delivered a partnership event at the Mill Arts Centre to explore ways in which the arts could contribute to the Age Friendly Banbury project and specifically the “Getting Connected” strand of the project which sought to support activities to tackle isolation. One great idea that emerged from this meeting was the BAOCF and a series of

planning meetings were held with potential partners to programme and plan the Festival. The BAOCF also chimed beautifully with the aims of the OAFCN, and specifically the aim of increasing the level of cultural participation by older people, and to support vulnerable older people to participate in cultural activity, including those experiencing isolation, physical and mental ill-health, memory loss, and those with caring responsibilities.



What were the outcomes?

- 11 established and 6 new creative and cultural activities formed the BAOCF programme and were delivered across Banbury throughout May 2019.
- 1500+ people participated in BAOCF activities (based on data from 11 of the 17 events)
- The OAFCN gained 20+ new members
- The OAFCN Twitter account gained 20+ new followers
- An article about the BAOCF was featured on the Banbury Guardian website [here](#)
- 360+ engaged with BAOCF Pop Up shop with 156 people participating in the 13 creative classes and activities that relocated to the BAOC Pop Up
- According to feedback from our evaluation 66.5% of our partners found their involvement in the BAOC Pop Up to be very useful and 33.5% found it to be useful
- Colleagues from Dementia Oxfordshire, Carers Oxfordshire, Age UK Oxfordshire's Community Information Team, and Banbury Library attended the BAOC Pop Up shop to share information about their services.
- Visitors to the BAOC Pop Up were able to access information about cultural opportunities which led to conversations about other support needs which were signposted to our partner organisations.
- An article about one of the events (Relaxed Music Performance at the Horton Hospital) was featured in the Banbury Guardian [here](#) and the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Horton Hospital News webpage [here](#)

What lessons were learned?

- We would have liked a longer lead in time to enable us to support partnerships between creative partners and age friendly organisations to develop and pilot new creative activities and events

- A longer lead in time would have enabled us to deliver a comprehensive publicity campaign to ensure that we reached the widest possible audience
- Relocating age friendly creative activities to a shopping centre is a great way to attract interest and new participants.
- A printed brochure for the BAOCF Pop Up Shop would have helped us to signpost participants to activities had resources been available for this.
- A buddy system to support people to attend events could have increased participation
- The intergenerational theme was challenging to achieve for partners who had not delivered this type of activity before and would have benefited from a longer lead in time and expert support.
- A flexible approach is needed for the Pop Up shop model which can be subject to last minute changes of location.

What our partners and participants told us

About the overall BAOCF programme;

“It brought many threads of the community together”

“I do feel that we have managed to make the public more aware of the services available and where to go to be involved”

“Variety of activities, good promotion, high energy, friendliness of participants/organisers”

About the BAOC Pop Up shop;

“The opportunity for different groups to meet in a common space/purpose and interact with the general public. Great showcase for ongoing activities”

“Opportunity to share what groups do and promote to others in a non-threatening environment that encourages walk in interest. Encouraging others to take part. A really effective promotion project.”

“Having a presence in a public place and raising awareness of the range of activities that are available to help older people get/stay active. Good that it was so visible and accessible, Castle Quay was a brilliant location. It’s good to bring such resources and opportunities into the open so that people are aware, even if the activities are not for them. It shows what’s possible and where to go for support”

Evaluation methodologies

Feedback was sought from participants and partners in person (during the Pop Up shop) and by email and using the online questionnaire program Survey Monkey (Survey 1- Banbury Age of Creativity Festival programme, Survey 2- Banbury Age of Creativity Festival Pop Up shop)

Helen Fountain - Friendly Cultural Co-ordinator, Age UK Oxfordshire.

22/07/2019