

Bicester Festival Age Friendly Creative Pop Up evaluation report – November 2019

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What we did

Inspired by the success of Age Friendly Banbury Pop Up shops, Banbury Age of Creativity Festival and associated Pop Up shop we explored options with colleagues from Cherwell District Council (CDC) /Healthy Bicester to develop an age friendly pop up model that could be delivered alongside Bicester Festival and complement the Festivals aims. With generous funding from Cherwell District Councils Spark Fund and fantastic support from our partners and colleagues we delivered a 2 day Bicester Festival Age Friendly Creative (BFAFC) Pop Up in Bicester Library on the 2 days preceding Bicester Festival and we delivered a Pop Up Information Stand in the heart of the Festival (Sheep Street market) on Saturday 21st September 2019.

10 taster workshops and talks were delivered including a Dementia Friends awareness raising session, a talk on the Creating with Care project (Creativity in hospital settings), a talk from North Oxfordshire Volunteer Driver Service, 2 musical performances from Bicester 50+ Band the Rusty Musicians, a Knit and Natter session, a Generation Games seated strength and balance class to music, a reminiscence session, a seated Dance to Health workshop and a Dementia friendly singalong with the Notables Band.

Throughout the BFAFC Pop Up there were creative craft activities to take part in, refreshments were provided and 22 students from Bicester Studio School supported the event. 7 local agencies who support older people locally set up information stands in the Library throughout the BFAFC Pop up. On the Saturday 21st September we delivered an information stall in Sheep St in the heart of Bicester Festival which enabled us to engage with 34 local people and provide a range of age friendly creative information.

We created a poster for the event which we shared on Social Media and in Bicester venues. We visited Hanover Gardens Sheltered Housing scheme, the Memory Café at the Pop in and the Forget Me Nots group to explain the project and invite people to come. We also issued a press release and with support from the marketing team at CDC the project was featured on the front page of the Bicester Advertiser.

Why we did it

The aim of the BFAFC Pop Up was to promote existing age friendly creative groups, to support older people to participate in creativity, highlight any gaps in provision and to develop a Age Friendly Bicester Festival Fringe event that can be replicated in future years to ensure that Bicester Festival is age friendly and includes all sections of the community.

We chose Bicester Library as the location for the BFAFC Pop Up as it is a trusted safe space in Bicester and we wanted to highlight the services that it offers to BFAFC Pop Up participants. Staff at the Library were extremely generous hosts and gave great support to

the project. The adjacent Franklins Meeting Room (operated by CDC), is a useful space for other activities and to serve refreshments.

We attended Bicester Festival steering group meeting and spoke to local artists and partners who expressed enthusiasm and a desire to recruit more participants to their local groups/projects using the BFAFC Pop Up as a way to engage with new audiences.



What were the outcomes?

We set the following targets for engagement with the BFAFC Pop Up

Beneficiaries	Aim	Achieved	Current problems faced
Older People	75	110	Older people who live in Bicester especially those who have barriers to participation and are at risk of social isolation (number of people who participated in taster workshops over 2 days).
Students	5+	22	Younger people from Bicester Colleague who support the BFAFC Pop Up who may be at risk of isolation and feel disconnected from the local community.

Bicester residents of all ages	100	144	Members of the public who gain an increased awareness off the cultural offer for older people and some of the issues that alder people face (number of people who participated in taster workshops and engaged with the Pop Up Information Stand over 3 days)
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We exceeded our targets for audience engagement. Thursday was a quieter day than Friday which is market day in Bicester which may account for the higher numbers.

We sought to support the following Spark Fund priorities (as set out in the funding application)

Spark Fund Priority	How we aim to respond and actual outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the town centre as the socially, culturally and economically vibrant heart of Bicester 	<p>The BFAFC Pop Up will take place in Bicester Library which is located in the town centre. We plan to invite targeted groups of older people to the BFAFC Pop Up and create a cultural hub in the Library, placing the town centre at the heart of the activity. We will also be delivering an Age of Creativity information stand in Bicester Market Square on 21st September as part of the Bicester Festival programme.</p> <p>This was achieved, we invited older people from Hanover Gardens Sheltered Housing scheme, the Memory Café at the Pop In and members of the Forget me Not group. Representatives from all groups attended alongside other older people.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving connections within and between Bicester's communities 	<p>The BFAFC Pop Up will bring older people from different parts of Bicester together for a common purpose, to learn more about and participate in the Age Friendly Cultural offer in Bicester. The involvement of students to support the BFAFC Pop Up will strengthen intergenerational connections and build trust and understanding between young and old as well as provide valuable</p>

	<p>experience for the younger people and develop their skills and understanding of the issues affecting older people.</p> <p>This was achieved and the target was exceeded, 22 young people from Bicester Studio School supported the BFAFC Pop in at various times alongside 110 older people who participated in workshops.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing opportunities for participation and reducing social isolation 	<p>The BFAFC Pop Up will enable older people to find out more about age friendly creative and cultural opportunities in Bicester and the wider age friendly opportunities in the area. It is hoped that armed with that knowledge they will become future participants in the activities and that this will support them to form new relationships and experience a sense of belonging to their chosen class or group and increase the opportunity for belonging to groups thus reducing isolation and increasing a sense of being part of the community.</p> <p>144 older people engaged with the event and we have had anecdotal evidence that some of these people have joined creative groups and activities in Bicester. The scope of this evaluation does not allow us to investigate this in more depth.</p>
Improved health and wellbeing for residents	<p>It is anticipated that participation will support increased wellbeing, for example participation in a dance class will lead to increased fitness and reduce the risk of falls and participation in an artistic activity will support mental wellbeing and relaxation.</p> <p>110 older people participated in taster sessions at the BFAFC Pop Up and we have anecdotal evidence that some have gone on to join regular activities.</p>

We set the following targets for the project

Objective	Outcome	Measurable Target	Actual Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce isolation amongst older people in Bicester and surrounding area 	More older people will be engaged with age friendly creative groups and activities in Bicester	Number of people who attend the BFAFC Pop Up and Age of Creativity stall. Light touch follow up and evaluation	144 people engaged with the BFAFC Pop Up project over the 3 days of project delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a wider know of creative opportunities in Bicester 	More older people will be aware of age friendly creative opportunities in Bicester	Number of people who attend the BFAFC Pop Up and Age of Creativity stall.	144 people engaged with the BFAFC Pop Up project over the 3 days of project delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share other relevant information about issues that affect older people 	More older people will have access to information from wider Age UK Oxfordshire services (for example Carers Oxfordshire) and other relevant organisations	Feedback from colleagues who participate in the BFAFC Pop Up	7 partner organisations participated in the BFAFC Pop Up (see partner feedback)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase knowledge of local age friendly creative opportunities to share with organisations working with older people in Bicester including AUKO. 	Colleagues working in Bicester will have increased options for signposting older people to age friendly creative opportunities	Feedback from colleagues working in Bicester following on from the BFAFC Pop Up	Colleagues working in Bicester have told us that they have observed increased participation in creative groups

What our partners and participants told us

Some of our partners and session and talk leaders gave us feedback the event

Agency working with carers who had an information stand at the BFAFC Pop Up

It was great meeting other professionals. I haven't had any referrals but have linked with Blue bird Care for info days etc. They are hopefully attending a loneliness event that CIN are holding.

Agency working with older people in Bicester who had an info stand at the BFAFC Pop Up

You are welcome and it was really good to be part of the Bicester Festive Age Creative pop-up. You did very well to distribute all the xxx leaflets and I can confirm that we have had more interest in some of our groups through this event. One of the ladies at the xxx Lunch this week said she had come along to the Library on Friday and she spoke very positively about the event. She said that she would have come into the taster groups in the room at the side but when she saw a lot of people sat around the table she hadn't realised it was open to anyone. She is however going to go to two groups that she hadn't known about now as a result. We also have had more enquires about the xxx group and those respondents also said they got the information from the event at the library. There is also an additional four people coming along to the xxx class as a result who also attended on Friday so this is a really positive response and one that we have benefitted from.

Agency working with people living with Dementia who had an info stand at the BFAFC Pop Up

I gave out my card and info to 2 people one a family member who had just been diagnosed. A few stopped just to chat

Agency providing volunteer transport service who gave a short talk at the BFAFC Pop Up

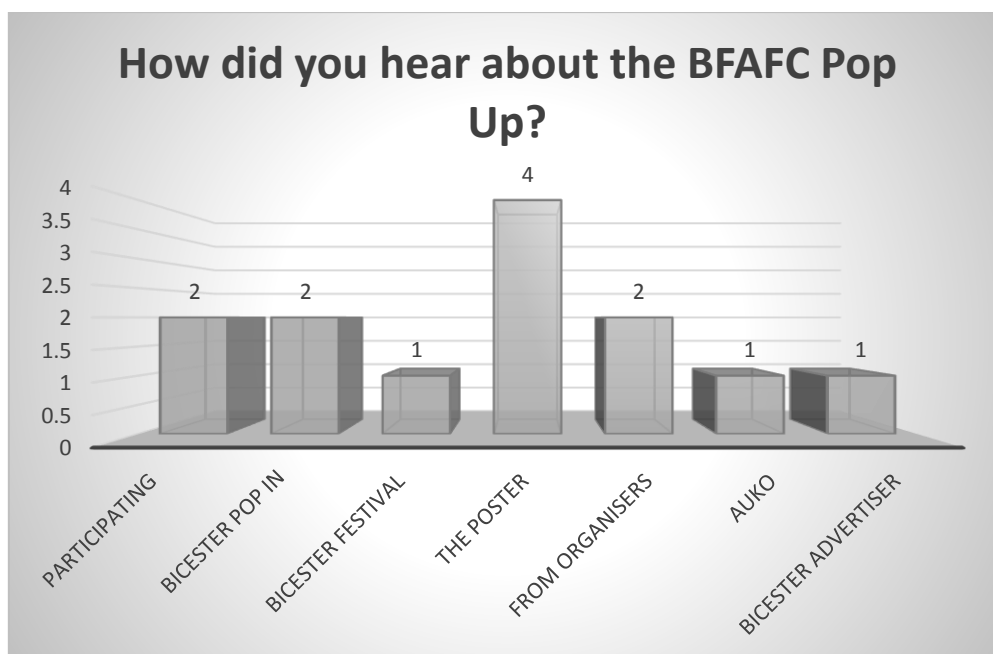
I loved it, thank you

Individual who gave a short talk at the BFAFC Pop Up

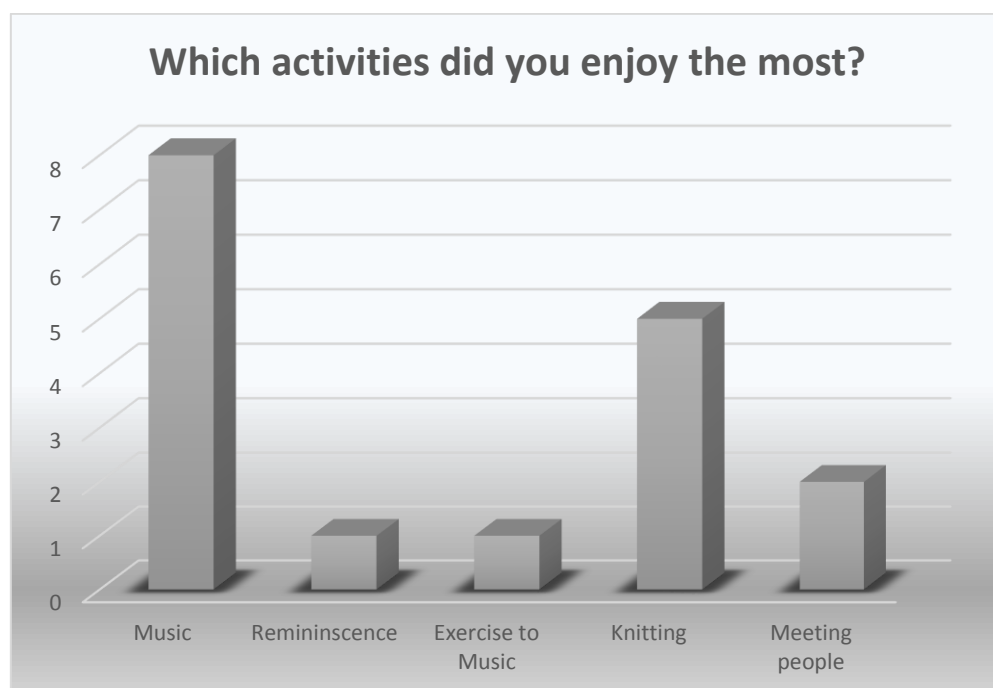
Thank you for the photos and your kind words, it was totally my pleasure to do the talk,and any time you need me just call, again thanks for the opportunity.

We asked a small sample of our visitors and participants to complete a short evaluation sheet with 4 questions

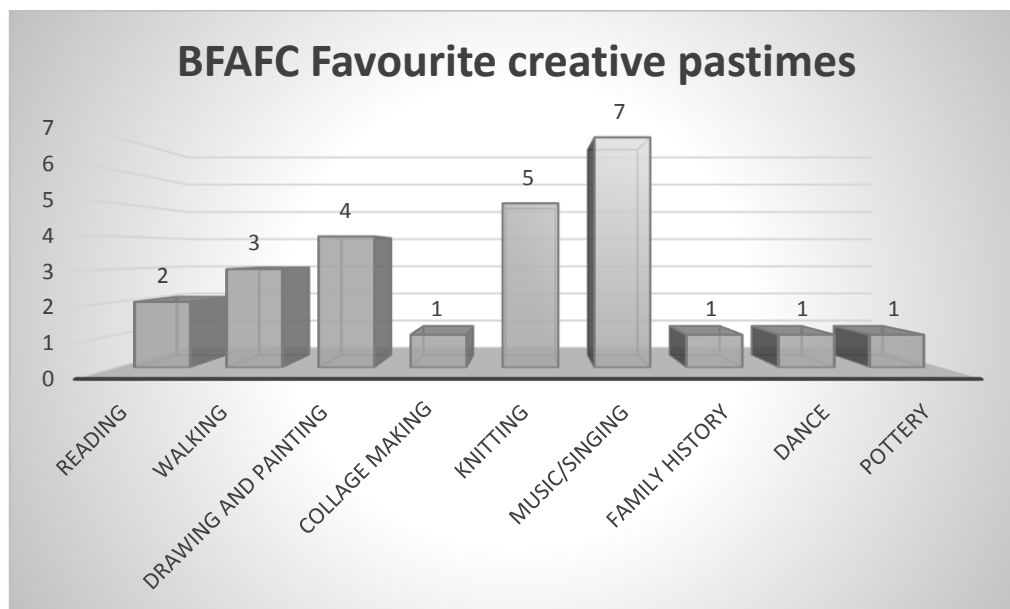
Question 1 – How did you hear about the BFAFC Pop Up?



Question 2-Which activities did you enjoy the most?



Question 3-Which creative activities would you most like to see happening regularly in Bicester?



Question 4 – Please share any other thoughts

Lovely and welcoming, music cheers and is a mood enhancer

A great showcase of things to do for older people in Bicester

Library setting excellent but difficult finding somewhere to park

Nice to meet people who care about the old

Could there be a voucher scheme for people who can't afford activities

Could there be a buddy scheme for people who are worried about going on their own

Like the intergeneration aspect

Enjoyed the company

A lot of over 50s live in retirement flats and supported housing in the Town Centre. It is difficult for them to get to the Kingsmere estate

I like the new library, very light, airy and accessible and room for activities

Well organised with helpful staff



What lessons were learned?

- Talking to groups beforehand worked very well in getting older people to come along, but we might have encouraged more if we had more time to allocate to this aspect of the project alongside buddying or lift system and more time to promote transport options. This might encourage more people from sheltered housing schemes to attend.

- The intergenerational benefits of involving students was extremely rewarding, particularly during the Knit and Natter session and reminiscence session. 3 young people were taught basic knitting by one of the regular Knit and Natter participants.
- The Library proved to be a good location for the event which was both safe and comfortable. The addition of the Franklin Room gave excellent additional space which was very useful for taster workshops and for serving refreshments.
- The event enabled partnerships to form and lead to further opportunities for age friendly engagement. For example Dementia Oxfordshire are liaising with Bicester Library to facilitate a Dementia Information event.
- With the theme of “Fire” established early – for similar future events it would be good to work with some older people in advance of the pop-up to create some art to showcase during the pop-up event. This will fit in with the plan for The Bicester Festival to invest in various fringe events in the week before the weekend main event.

What are the next steps?

There is a robust supporting evidence to support the development of this event in future years taking on board the lessons learned and working in partnership with CDC, Bicester Festival and Bicester Library. We will meet with colleagues from CDC to explore options. The Age Friendly Creative Pop Up model is proving to be a successful method of auditing and showcasing local age friendly creative activity and promoting it to new audiences. Options are being explored to deliver similar events in other Oxfordshire localities.

