

## **Arts Council England funding for Age of Creativity Festival**

- **£100,000 funding will help to establish England's festival for creative ageing over 18 months**
- **Celebrating Age fund announces second round of funding from Arts Council England through the National Lottery and the Baring Foundation**
- **Partnership between Voluntary Arts, Age UK and Age UK Oxfordshire to build local networks and expertise to enable creative participation**

Arts Council England today announced the recipients of the second round of funding from the Celebrating Age fund which is jointly funded by ACE and the Baring Foundation. The programme supports cultural spaces and other organisations working collaboratively, to be open, positive and welcoming places for older people and to take arts and culture into places where older people will find it easier to engage. Voluntary Arts, Age UK and Age UK Oxfordshire have developed a partnership project to expand on the work already done to establish the Age of Creativity Festival in 2017 and build a month-long national festival for creativity in later life in May 2019.

Age UK's Index of Wellbeing in Later Life, published in early 2017, surveyed 15,000 people aged 65 and over, and revealed that 'Creative and Cultural Participation' came out as the number one influencing factor on wellbeing, ranked against 39 other determinants. Age UK has subsequently commissioned further research into 'Creative and Cultural participation' and the relationship to increased wellbeing in later life, the results of which will be published shortly. Age UK have been working in partnership with Age UK Oxfordshire since April 2017 on the role of 'Creative and Cultural Participation' and this new project will strengthen this work and provide a sustainable way forward.

Voluntary Arts have been champions of everyday creative participation since 1991 and bring a wealth of experience in building festivals and partnerships, developing training and sharing best practice guidance. Having instigated the first Voluntary Arts Week in 2011 and subsequently helping to establish the Get Creative campaign and festival, the organisation brings extensive knowledge of building community-led creative festivals across the UK. Existing links with festivals such as Gwanwyn in Wales, Luminare in Scotland and Bealtaine in Ireland will help to bring in-depth learning from the other nations to this new venture in England.

The Age of Creativity provides leadership, profile, advocacy and infrastructure development for everyone who believes in the value of creativity for older people. Managed by Age UK Oxfordshire, the network comprises of more than 1000 professionals working in arts, health, culture, social care, academia, voluntary and community sectors to enable more older people to take part creative activities and enjoy improved health, wellbeing and quality of life. The inaugural Age of Creativity Festival took place in 2017, providing a platform for organisations and groups across the country to showcase local creative and cultural activities in a national programme. Celebrating Age funds will inject further resource into this programme and support more Age Friendly best practice to flourish and more older people to take part across England.

Robin Simpson, Chief Executive of Voluntary Arts, said: "Voluntary Arts believes in the importance and transformative power of creative participation at every stage of our lives. Recent years have seen an increasing number of studies and reports pointing to the many health benefits of regularly taking part in creative activities. The potential for creativity to help older people maintain good health, wellbeing and social links

are huge. This project funding will allow us to use our connections and expertise alongside the UK's leading charity for older people to build a sustainable festival for creativity in later life across England."

Penny Thewlis, Chief Executive of Age UK Oxfordshire, said

"Age UK research shows that creative and cultural participation has a significant impact on the wellbeing of older people and we believe that everyone should have access to high quality opportunities. We are absolutely thrilled to have been awarded this funding, in partnership with Voluntary Arts, to upscale and extend the work we have been doing in partnership with Age UK. This investment will build on the success of last year's Age of Creativity Festival, providing more opportunities for cross-sector partnership working and enable more older people to participate. Very exciting!"

For more information on the Age of Creativity Festival and to see highlights of the inaugural fortnight festival in 2017, please visit the website at [www.ageofcreativity.co.uk/festival](http://www.ageofcreativity.co.uk/festival)

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## **Notes for Editors**

### **Voluntary Arts**

Voluntary Arts is the national development agency for the voluntary arts sector, working to promote and increase active participation in creative cultural activities across the UK and Republic of Ireland. Voluntary Arts works with policy makers, funders and politicians to improve the environment for everyone participating in the arts, and provides information and training to the many thousands of groups and individuals who participate in the voluntary arts sector.

[www.voluntaryarts.org](http://www.voluntaryarts.org)

### **Age UK**

Age UK is the country's largest charity dedicated to helping everyone make the most of later life. We believe in a world where everyone can love later life and we work every day to achieve this.

We help more than 7m people every year, providing companionship, advice and support for older people who need it most. Our partnership delivers over 2,000 services to millions of older people each year. Our partners do this and are best placed to understand and respond to the needs of older people, and give a voice to older people, by advocating and campaigning on local issues.

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

### **Age UK Oxfordshire**

Age UK Oxfordshire is an independent local charity dedicated to giving older people in Oxfordshire comfort, support and opportunities and enabling them to love later life. We provide free local information, advice and support and research and campaign on the issues that matter to people in later life. We work with our national partner, Age UK, and our local Age UK partners in England. Our work focuses on five key areas: money matters, health and wellbeing, home and care, work and training and leisure and lifestyle. You can find further information on all our services and volunteering opportunities by telephoning 0345 450 1276 or by visiting our website: [www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire). Age UK Oxfordshire is a charitable company limited by guarantee (registered charity number 1091529 and company

number 4328143). For all media enquiries please contact Sophie Dyer on 07827 235405 or email [media@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk](mailto:media@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk).

### **Age of Creativity**

The Age of Creativity provides leadership, profile, advocacy and infrastructure development for everyone who believes in the value of creativity for older people. Established in 2012 with funding from the Baring Foundation, the project aims to support professionals working in arts, health, culture, social care, academia, voluntary and community sectors to enable more older people to take part creative activities and enjoy improved health, wellbeing and quality of life. Membership is free and accessible to all. For all media enquiries please contact Tei Williams on 07957 664 116 or email [teiwilliams@ageofcreativity.co.uk](mailto:teiwilliams@ageofcreativity.co.uk).  
[www.ageofcreativity.co.uk](http://www.ageofcreativity.co.uk)

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The Voluntary Arts Network (operating as Voluntary Arts) is registered in Scotland as Company No. 139147 and Charity No. SC 020345. Registered office: Mansfield Traquair, 15 Mansfield Place, Edinburgh EH3 6BB. Voluntary Arts acknowledges funding from Arts Council England, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Creative Scotland and the Arts Council of Wales.