



Report; Value of Age 2013

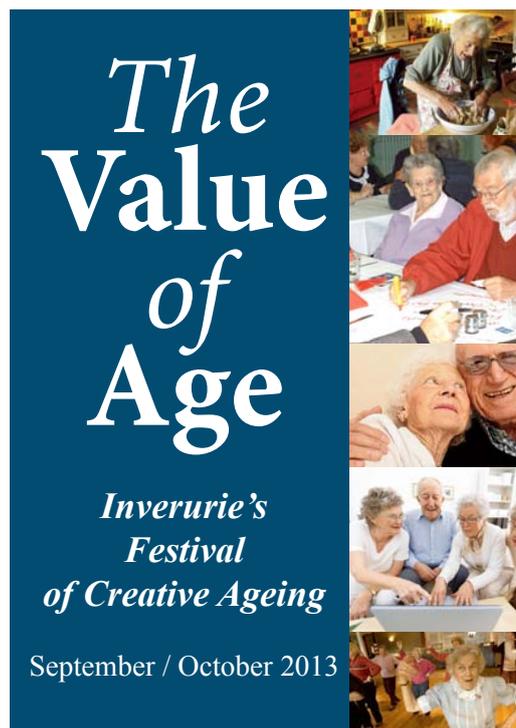
Introduction

The Gordon Forum for the Arts (GFA) is a fully constituted voluntary community body based in Central Aberdeenshire with, inter alia, the following constitutional objectives;

Promoting and encouraging creativity and participation in the arts; supporting local cultural activity; engaging with other statutory and voluntary groups, both local and national, to facilitate collaborative working.

As part of an action plan the GFA has determined to work towards enabling older people to participate in arts activities and attend arts events; the Value of Age Festival is the main expression of this aim.

The Gordon Forum for the Arts worked hard this year (2013-2014) to build on the success and the lessons learned from the inaugural Value of Age Festival in 2012. As a result ten separate events took place over a four week period reaching an estimated older people's audience of 1600. Almost all the events were free. Two further events were postponed to be part of a continuing provision of activities outwith the October Festival.



One of the care home event providers (Drama Wifies) has been booked for many further performances.

In addition to a developing partnership with Age Scotland (GFA has contributed to three Age Scotland conferences this year) five new partnerships were established; with Inverurie Music, Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service, Aberdeenshire Council Corporate Communications, the Donside Camera Club and Castle Fraser. Strong working links have been made with local authority Social Care and Older People's Officers. The GFA also worked with successful venues from last year and have received positive



feed-back from staff and volunteers on site. The festival was included in the national Luminate program.

The “Talking Tea Shop” in the Shelf Life event.

Funding

Grants included the following:

£2495 Age Scotland

£800 BAA Communities Fund

£1200 Aberdeenshire Council Corporate Communications (Older People)

GFA core funds were identified for use as required.

£350 income from advertising in the brochure was obtained.

An income and expenditure balance sheet is included as an appendix.

The GFA thanks all grant providers for their generous support.

Modus Operandi

“Creative Retreat” (pictured) was engaged to provide project management. The festival was marketed through posters and flyers, local press, the GFA website and Facebook platforms, Aberdeenshire Council's events pages, and older people's and creative networks. Feedback from audiences, performers and providers has been overwhelmingly positive – most of this has been anecdotal but the GFA is gathering other feedback from care



staff within the Aberdeenshire Council network. As with last year, it is clear there is a significant need for more creative opportunities for older people within central Aberdeenshire. The GFA is responding to this need, and has the support of the local authority in this respect. Building on the successful structure developed last year, individual GFA committee members took charge of specific events to share the work load and capitalise on their area of expertise. This led to a good range of arts being represented, and all delivered professionally and to a high standard. For future festivals it will be good to develop more partnerships, and consider employing a marketing specialist to promote the whole festival.

The Events

Matinee Concert & Choral performance

'Older Arts at the Acorn', exhibition

'Div Ye Mind Langsyne?', drama performances

'An Hour of Delights', poetry performances (X4)

'Shelf Life', information and creative activities open day.

'Photographing the Natural World' , workshop

'Brass Diversions', Inverurie Music Concert

Doric Storytelling, performance

“We are the future” , discussion event over lunch on themes from previous work. (postponed).

“Out of Time” , outdoor sculpture event at Castle Fraser
(September 2014)



Inverurie Choral Soc conducted by Dr. John Hearne at the Matinee Concert

Matinee Concert 30th September £5.00

Building from a smaller event last year, the concert was aimed at care homes and sheltered housing complexes contacted by members of the GFA committee and by Social Work partners in Aberdeenshire Council. It was held at Inverurie Town Hall with an audience of 160. More wished to attend but this was the maximum. The majority of people travelled with care staff either by private minibus or by taxis, with some transport costs being paid for by the organisers supported with a grant from Aberdeenshire Council; some travelled over 40 miles. The audience were treated to a range of instrumental and choral performers in different styles over 60 minutes, followed by tea and cakes brought to the table by volunteers. The afternoon was partly funded by Aberdeenshire Council who promoted the concert as its

flagship event for Older People's Week, with Provost Jill Webster providing the opening speech. Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive from both older people and care staff;



additional feedback is being gathered by Aberdeenshire Council Social Care staff and will feed into future planning. The timing of the concert was carefully chosen to enable care home residents and activities staff to attend.

'Older Arts at the Acorn' 1st-30th October free

The aim of this visual art exhibition was to offer amateur older artists the opportunity to show work in a central, accessible public venue. Many of the target group are either geographically isolated due to the nature of living in our rural area, or are not part of an existing arts group. The exhibition was by open submission, and the opportunity promoted through local personal, business and council networks. Kindly hosted by the Acorn Centre Cafe in Inverurie, the exhibitors benefited from a steady number of visitors to the cafe space where the work was on display, with some sales of work made. Although difficult to determine precise numbers, it's possible that up to 1200 people passed through the cafe over the month providing a large and wide ranging audience

for the work. There were 10 exhibitors and 24 pieces of work - Following the exhibition, two of the artists involved have approached the cafe to use the space for individual exhibitions in the future.

'D'ye Min Langsyne?' 2nd and 3rd October - Free

Created and performed for the Value of Age Festival by a recently created group of retired drama teachers (The Drama Wifies), this intimate performance of Doric stories and bothy ballads toured to two care homes in Kintore and Kemnay. As part of the visit, the audience shared tea and cake with the performers and took the opportunity to share anecdotes of their own lives and experiences. As a result of the shows The Drama Wifies now have had many more bookings in care homes. The audience totalled around fifty people.

'An Hour of Delights' 6th and 28th October - Free

A chance for care residents to enjoy live poetry and music, 'An Hour of Delights' offered performances at two venues on October 6th delivered by poet Kenneth Steven and fiddler Sharon Hassan (pictured),



and at two different venues on the 28th by poet Haworth Hodgkinson who accompanied himself on percussion. Performed in a mix of care homes and sheltered housing complexes, these

were intimate shows of original contemporary work. The performers found the sheltered housing residents to be interested and engaged by the shows with spontaneous discussion taking place in between each piece, and afterwards with the performers. The care home residents were generally less engaged, although the performers did adapt their performances where possible. Approximately fifty people saw the performances. Discussion about future performances will include the differing needs of sheltered housing and care home residents and how best to address them

'Shelf Life' 9th October



Developed from a similar event last year but with more emphasis on creativity, 'Shelf Life' was a free open day of information, participatory activity and creative demos aimed at older people. There was a total of 26 stalls encompassing arts, health and wellbeing. Participants included local practitioners in yoga, quilting and singing. National organisations such as Alzheimer Scotland and CRUSE, local authority services such as the Library Service and

the Mens Shed initiative, independent businesses such as speech therapy and food providers, and community groups such as the Garioch Heritage Group and the Bennachie Arts and Crafts Society were also represented. Held at Inverurie Town Hall, around 100 people attended. There were home made scones and drinks available at the “Talking Tearoom”, an ongoing social arts intervention to record views on ageing. Feedback from visitors and stall holders has been very positive. Targeted marketing work had been done to promote the event through posters, flyers and older people's networks but any future event would benefit from a more comprehensive marketing approach.

'Photographing the Natural World' 10th October – Free

Run in partnership with the Donside Photography Club and Aberdeenshire Council Rangers' Service, this photography workshop was fully booked (12 places), and took place over a full day at the Bennachie Centre. Participants took their own cameras and had the opportunity to take pictures in the centre and outside in the woodlands of Bennachie. The tutors offered their services for free. Good feedback from the participants, tutors and staff indicate the partnership worked well and similar short creative workshops for older people would be welcomed in the future

'Brass Diversions' 12th October - £12 full price, £9 concession, £1 child

Another partnership event, this evening event was presented with Inverurie Music, a local promoter of classical and non-mainstream music. Royal Conservatoire trained performers Tom Poulson and Chris Baxter played trumpet and piano respectively to an audience of around 26 people, 6 of whom were from the Grove Care Home who attended directly as consequence of contact with the GFA. The GFA contributed £50 to Inverurie Music's marketing budget. Audiences to Inverurie Music events are traditionally small so the

care home residents swelled the audience considerably. The residents described the whole experience as very exciting, from getting dressed up and being out late to discussion of the performance afterwards. The care home Activities Coordinator is hoping to include concert attendances as a regular activity in future planning.

'Doric Storytelling' 16th October – Free

Renowned in Doric circles, writer and performer Deborah Leslie delighted a small audience with an hour of original stories and poems in the Doric. The event took place at The Acorn Centre Cafe, with cafe users coming and going during the performance. The audience was very appreciative, sharing their own love of the Doric tongue that is unique to the North East. Any future events would probably benefit from wider marketing.

Postponed events

One of two events originally planned for the festival took place in **September 2014** – 'Outside Time' was an outdoor sculpture exhibition of invited artists at Castle Fraser.

Norma D Hunter exhibited two participatory pieces, a “Memory Walk” in the form of a labyrinth and a Matisse based colouring piece.

Kevin Andrew Morris hung porcelain icicles and china bird houses.

Caroline Harvey exhibited exquisite pottery in the Vinery Dolina, Gurdie and Pru exhibited pottery for the rock garden. Louise Gardener exhibited two bronzes :”The Hare” and “The Seed Pod” Sarah Gordon and Merlyn Riggs created three wicker Guardian Angels on which the public could attach tracing paper feathers on which they had written comments about life, and legacy.

Merlyn Riggs produced a mushroom installation which reflected on the value of age in that it used old artefacts in different setting.

On the Saturday there was a Talking Tearoom around the Castle Garden. It was very successful and well used.



All in all it was a successful piece with much resulting participation and thoughtful conversation around the subject of Legacy , Preservation of Traditions and Guardian Angels. This format of Tea and Talk could easily be transported to other locations to stimulate discussion and action(Care Homes and established 60± clubs)

The Legacy Lunch, a social arts event based around a table discussion format over lunch was rescheduled but eventually abandoned. The lunch was to be held outdoors at Castle Fraser during the Sculpture Exhibition. There had been limited response to the invitations to attend but also the day of the lunch saw torrential rain so it was called off. The GFA is still committed to delivering the discussion Lunch and will be exploring the possibilities of doing so in 2015.

The discussion and lunch was to involve facilitators who are academics and/or leaders in their field. Topics were to include those originating in the 2012 “Square Meal” with the results of the meeting being made available to interested parties.

Feedback, legacy effects and future plans.

Feed-back at the events, and later from various sources, has been unequivocally positive with only minor logistical issues to be considered re future events. The financial out-turn was better than expected although two more events making a claim on the budget have yet to take place.

Many more performances by the Drama Wifies have been staged at care facilities across the county. There have been many requests to repeat the Matinee Concert, which was unable to accommodate all who wished to attend. One hundred and sixty elderly people including carers from establishments from Fraserburgh to Banchory attended. Support funds for travel arrangements were essential to several homes. “ A great day out” was had with discussion of the event continuing for days afterwards.

The Donside Camera Club is considering a repeat of the photographic workshop as it went so well.

The care home that managed to get six people to an evening concert reported that the residents had a “wonderful time’ such that they are now including concert-going in their regular activity program.

Two of the artists who exhibited at the Acorn Centre are now respectively considering taking space to organise exhibitions of their work.

Music and poetry in sheltered and care home settings was well received. It could be extended to more venues but would need to be self-financing. Discussions will need to take place with care home managers about how these performances are organised and supported by the respective homes.

Transport logistics and costs, plus the timing of events, are big issues for most caring establishments.

The GFA is considering how it might spread the VoA activities through the year with the objective of bringing arts events and participatory experiences to more elderly people. It will be discussing with funding partners and interested public bodies how such activities may contribute to achieving the policy objectives of various voluntary and statutory bodies.

There was a VoA element in the Inverurie Orchestra's Matinee Concert in Turriff in June 2014 and a concert by Duo Diaz will take place in a care home in Inverurie in April 2015.

IC & CA Dec 2nd 2013 revised Nov 23rd 2014

Appendix

VoA finances; balance sheet at 30/12/2014