

South Bath Report 2004/2005



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nesa
creative change

organised by nesa who provide quality art provision for the community

South Bath End of Year Report 2004/ 2005

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1. Background to nesa's work in South Bath

Bath and North East Somerset recognised that there were areas of inequality within the city and commissioned the South West Regional Development Agency (RDA) to carry out a pilot study focusing on areas of high priority. In August 2000 the Bath Communities Partnership was formed to formulate a strategy for delivering projects that could have a positive impact on the regeneration needs in Bath. In November 2001 a Regeneration Framework was produced outlining the direction of a targeted scheme for priority communities in Bath. The areas identified were South West Bath area (Twerton, Whiteway and Southdown) and black and minority ethnic groups.

The framework identifies further areas in the Bath area which are Snow Hill/ London Road, Foxhill, Abbey & Kingsmead Wards, young people, people with disabilities and older people.

nesa has been working in South Bath since 2000 using the arts to increase social and personal skills among disadvantaged groups and to enhance community pride and spirit in South Bath. Initially they delivered a number of action research projects that fed into the pilot study. These projects highlighted the need for activities for all age groups.

Bath and North East Somerset Council have funded a **nesa** arts development worker for 7 ½ hours a week to develop arts projects which would support regeneration in the area, focusing on partnership, working with young people and projects that would become permanent features of local cultural life and promote community cohesion.

Aims:

- to build skills within the local community
- to enhance and develop a sense of community in Twerton, Southdown and Whiteway

Objectives:

- to provide opportunities for local people to experience a variety of new arts forms and learn new skills
- to provide opportunities for local people to develop their personal, social and key employment skills
- to enable local people to feel that they can contribute to developing their community
- to encourage individuals, community groups and agencies in the area to work collaboratively to raise the positive profile of these areas and their communities within B&NES

2. Partnership Working in South Bath

The **nesa** development worker attends a number of partnership meetings in the South Bath Area to share and exchange information with other agencies working in the area. These are:

- South Bath Interagency Meetings
- South Bath Community Development Workers Group
- South West Triangle Working Group
- Bath South Area Committee

nesa works and consults with:

- BCP,
- South West Triangle Working Group,
- Learning and Skills Council (LSC),
- Southside Family Project,
- Surestart, Envolve,
- Southdown Methodist Church,
- Rose Cottage,
- The Hut,
- Twerton Infants,
- The Foyer,
- Bath City Farm,
- First Steps Community Nursery,
- Quebec Sheltered Housing,
- Health visitors
- Community nurses.

Whilst meetings can be very consuming it is important to link with key agencies and organisations in the South Bath area and continue to build strong partnerships and link with other work in the area.

3. Projects

a) The Foyer

The Foyer and **nesa** began working in partnership in June 2003. A visual arts project was designed and planned by **nesa** and Bath Foyer to offer Foyer residents the opportunity to work with professional artists with a range of materials to create artwork that will enhance the public areas of the Foyer. The Funding for this project came from the successful award of £4,200 from 'Awards for All'

The Foyer agreed to liaise with residents to encourage participation in the arts projects; to provide a support worker to support artist's sessions; contribute to evaluation process and contribute to the final report.

nesa agreed to project plan with Bath Foyer; liaising, contracting and managing artists; to manage the budget for artists and materials, contribute to evaluation process and contribute to final report.

Aim: To increase resident involvement

Objectives

- * To offer residents activities that will bring them together as a community
- * To increase skill and creativity of residents
- * To offer experiences of working with a number of artists / facilitators
- * To enhance self confidence and pride
- * To enhance the look of Bath Foyer and foster a sense of ownership

Measures of success were to be measured by: Participants showing enthusiasm and commitment; participants cooperating with others (joint work); all artists actively working with residents; all participants contributing to at least one piece of artwork for display and at least 2 of the communal areas identified to be enhanced with artwork. Individual projects also had their own output success.

2004/2005 saw the culmination of the Foyer Makeover projects.

They consisted of:

- Metalwork forging signage artwork put on display at entrance to Bath Foyer
- Stonemasonry sculpture caste and garden stone furniture situated in communal courtyard garden.
- Digital Photography art work put on display in communal stairwells to residencies
- Graffiti art workshops in the inner courtyard have decorated the inner courtyard walls.
- Graffiti boards made for the residents communal hallways.
- A sign showing the route to the media suite 'Vibe on-line'.

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Engagement

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Successes

The residents have gained from these projects by gaining confidence and skills in creative arts and by participating in group workshops. The physical environment of the Bath Foyer has been improved by the metalwork forged art sign above the entrance, digital photography artwork displayed on the walls in the residential stairwell areas, signage to 'Vibe-on Line', graffiti art on the walls in the communal courtyard and stonecast furniture for use in the communal courtyard. The current residents of the Bath Foyer, approximately 30, and future tenants will also benefit from these artworks on display.

Opportunities:

There is a clear opportunity to establish a Foyer Photo group / club, but they do need ongoing support for this and ongoing stimulus. It is hoped that the display units will provide some of this but it will need to come also from the Foyer staff, ideally a "drop-in" tutor, and will be dependent upon the continuing availability of materials, computer time and disk space.

b) Wake Up and Dance for the Over 60's

A successful pilot for this course was run in 2002 and a course was developed from September 2002 to March 2003 attracting a regular group of 18 people. The dance group continued termly until March 2004 but retaining participants long term was a problem. A core group of 8 people always attended regularly with other drop-ins attending more sporadically.

In April 2004 Clive Andrews, the long term dance teacher resigned from the post due to other commitments, and on recommendation a popular dance teacher called Jim Brown took over the class. Although the style was slightly different it was enjoyed by participants and they got a lot from it. Jim had to leave due to a full time contract and Itta Howie, an experienced teacher with a specialism of working with older people, was able to step in at short notice. After a good hand over with Jim and the class, Itta continued teaching from mid-June. Liked by the participants, she delivered a style of dance teaching that falls somewhere between Clive's improvisation approach and Jim's structure of dances. The core group fell to about 6 and up to 8 attending.

Promotion of Wake Up and Dance

To raise awareness of the group **nesa**:

- Ran two taster workshops session at the nearby Quebec Sheltered Housing and Southdown Methodist Community Church
- The South Bath arts development worker, Philippa Forsey, met with the community nurses to promote the class in their work.
- Advertised and consulted with residents at the Health & Wellbeing Day for older people, 3rd Sept'04 at Twerton Village Hall organised by Bath and North East Somerset Council
- Advertised in doctor's surgeries, libraries, shops, café's etc.
- Advertise in the local paper and radio
- Gave flyers to all participants to put up.

Despite continual recruitment efforts up until March 2004 the number of participants continued to remain at a low level decreasing to a core group of 4 or 5. Insufficient interest was raised by the promotional exercises to enable the group continue so a decision was taken to take a break until alternative recruitment methods could be taken.

The local strategic partnership in Bath is keen to develop Healthy Living programmes and with new interest from partners in the 'Get Active' initiatives it is hoped that this project can be re-established in 2006.

c) Arts Training at Rose Cottage

The partnership with Rose Cottage and **nesa** began after a meeting with Chris Brann and consultation with staff at First Steps Nursery. It was identified that the in the South Bath Area there are many volunteers and employees who work with children and vulnerable people in schools, church groups, after school clubs and voluntary groups who would benefit from ongoing professional development in Creative Arts to learn skills that they can take back to their settings.

In November 2004 and January 2005 two evening Arts Training workshops were held at Rose Cottage. Artist Jo Harrison was recruited to hold the sessions and after consultation with interested people the following art forms were chosen: Printmaking, clay, and wire work, painting techniques, 'drawing for the terrified', and papier mache.

"The training has given us confidence as well as new ideas to use."

Chris Brann – Rose Cottage Centre Manager

“Many of the people in this area have low self esteem and have had very little opportunity to be involved in arts and crafts activities. It is so important to give the opportunity for them to expand their horizons and to gain confidence.” Deacon Joan Nicholson – Southdown Methodist Centre, Chair of South Bath Inter-Agency Committee

In the future Rose Cottage Arts Training group have identified they would like to learn skills in model making and sculpture and so a further programme is being developed for 2005/6

d) Childrens Dance at the Hut

Successful past projects run in partnership with the Hut and the community led to another year of summer programming. This year the Hut steering group identified the need for active arts and workers there were keen to respond to the children's interest in street dance. In August 2004 **nesa** organised a dance project for children attending the Hut Summer Playscheme. Dance artist Deena Moore was employed for 5 sessions to take children of all ages through a programme of dance styles with a focus on increasing confidence and the opportunity for them to develop their own dance routines.

The aims of the project were:

- To run a series of 4 dance/ movement workshops for children designed to encourage physical well-being, creativity and self-confidence.
- To work in a way that inspires and motivates children
- To ensure that the sessions allow participation by everyone whatever their skill, experience, physical ability / disability.
- To include street dancing, routines to popular songs and improvisation.
- To give the children the opportunity to learn new dance skills, to be supported in making-up their own dance sequences and have the opportunity to perform to other children in the group if they wish.

The success of this project led to Twerton Infants after school club interested in taking this project further. **nesa** funded a dance taster session at the school with dance artist Itta howie and consultation was carried out with pupils to gauge interest. The afterschool club felt that as numbers of their newly formed group increased they would like to fundraise to develop dance as a regular part of the after school activities.

e) Twerton High Street Improvement

An environmental enhancement scheme involving pavement widening, repaving, tree planting and public art was proposed sometime ago for the junction of Dominion Road and Twerton High Street. The scheme was the subject of extensive consultation in the autumn of 2002, and was awarded approximately £45,000 from Bath Communities Partnership (BCP) in September 2003.

An integral part of the planned scheme was the installation of an artists' designed bench. The intention of this element was to provide something particularly special for this area and also to involve young people in the design and fabrication of the bench. A contribution of £2,500 towards was offered by **nesa**, and it was proposed that the total cost of the public art element should be limited to about £5,000. Through working in partnership with **nesa**, two artists with a specialism in metalwork, John Packer and Kevin Hughes, ran five design workshops and a mobile forge workshop in the area, with a particular focus on consultation with young people.

Since December 2003 there has been considerable debate and discussion over whether or not the artist designed bench should be installed. The reason for this related to concerns about anti-social behaviour associated with the bench. It was proposed by local Councillors, BCP and SWT that further consultation should take place in order to resolve the issue of the bench.

In April/ May 2005 further consultation and community involvement was planned for the public art element of the proposed Improvement Scheme and **nesa** remained an active partner.

4. Consultation with the Community

During 2004/2005 **nesa** consulted with many groups in the South Bath area to establish the needs of community groups and establish the foundation for putting in a bigger area wide grant for a community arts project.

Groups consulted with included:

Rose Cottage and participants of Arts Training group
Southdown Methodist Church lunch group
Quebec Sheltered Housing residents
Blagdon Sheltered Housing residents
The Hut staff and children participants,
Twerton Infants,
The Foyer staff and residents,
Bath City Farm staff and participants,
First Steps Community Nursery staff,
Southside Family Project staff and participants
Health visitors
Community nurses
Involve staff
BCP
BANES Community Safety team
South Bath Community Development Workers Group
South West Triangle Working Group,
Learning and Skills Council (LSC),
Surestart,

Summary of suggested arts projects:

1. **Reminiscence and Intergenerational arts project** that link present day experience to a historical perspective of South Bath linking members of the community. This could be developed into reminiscence arts projects with Quebec Sheltered housing, Southdown Methodist lunch group and Blagdon Sheltered Housing and linking with the Foyer, Rose Cottage arts group, the Hut Playscheme, Bath City Farm and the Southside Family Project. A consultation by ENVOLVE gave evidence of a need for intergenerational projects which would link individuals and community groups.
2. **Singing /Community Performance**
Participants at the Southside Family project have expressed an interest in developing singing. These skills could be combined with the storytelling and reminiscences of the groups mentioned in 1. , the dance skills of the children at the Hut and Twerton Infants and over 60's dance, the digital skills at the Foyer and visual arts skills of the Southside Family project and

Rose Cottage Arts Training group. A community performance could be staged at the Bath city Farm or other community building resource such as a village hall or church.

3.Sculpture Art Trail at Bath City Farm

Bath City Farm is a developing community resource which many groups and individuals in the community access for leisure and taking part in events. It is rich in history and would like to develop as a significant venue for residents in the South Bath area. Consultation with visitors to the farm has led to the idea of developing an arts sculpture trail involving community groups and individuals in the area.

4. Community /Youth Building

There is a growing need for a community resource for a community building that would be big enough to develop community projects for the South Bath area. Historically the Youth Centre in Whiteway has developed a community wide play. The venue has the potential to develop space for community groups to develop arts and leisure activities and so attract and bring together individuals and community projects.