

Arts Volunteering - September 2023 to July 2024

The aim for the grants that we make is to enable the participants to experience the visual and expressive arts so that their lives will be enriched thereby.

This year we have given a grant to a school, supported the Beaconsfield Community Mosaic project, provided workshops at Bradbury House and established links with Koestler to promote an interest in art for young offenders. We sponsored a recycling project at Holtspur School, and we purchased a sewing machine for Alfriston School.

I applied to The Arts Society for a Community Grant of £250 to contribute to the £350 costs of the collage project at Bradbury House on April 3 and 17. Our Young at Heart project at Bradbury House was a delight. Thanks to Sarah Dawson whose idea it was we both enjoyed our 2 sessions there. The success of the first one 'The Lily Pond', which was put on display outside the activities room was evident on the 2nd visit April 17 as we had far more residents joining the activity. This time the theme was 'An Aquarium' and two collages were produced. Shelley Rees, the superb facilitator put in a goodly number of hours in preparation each time and supplied paints, brushes, sponges, cut out shapes relating to the subject and pictures of the subject matter as stimulus material. A full report and photographs of the Lily Pond were to be found on the Arts Society website and later were replaced with the aquarium photographs.



We had some delightful comments from the residents. One said she had not painted since she did O level art, and her contributions were very creative.

Four more lovely mosaics have been commissioned for the New Town and a new walking trail is to be devised. We have contributed to this venture in the past and it was agreed that £250 should be allocated for this purpose.

In September 2023 I contacted St May's School to explore the possibility of TASB supporting a project that came in the category of visual or expressive arts. As a result, we contributed £500 which was put towards the cost of coach travel to the Royal Albert Hall for the choir to perform

at Echoes, a Bucks Music Trust performance which takes place every two years. Gratitude was expressed by the school as it enabled them to take the choir of 60 children. They performed on the stage at The Albert Hall, much loved by many as the venue for 'The Proms.'

We bought a sewing machine at a cost of £250 for Students at Alfriston School to enable them to develop their craft making skills in their Young Enterprise project.



The significance of 'our machine' is the variable speed function which enables the students to use the machine effectively and speed up as they become confident. It has a plate with our name as the donor. The students are allowed to use it at lunchtime in their dedicated 'work room'. A benefit of this donation I learned about later was that one of the students was offered two courses at Berkshire College of Agriculture, one to study 'Social Enterprise' and the other 'Art and Design'.

We also funded a project at Holtspur School to enhance their outdoor area in a quiet place where children could sit away from the hubbub of the playground. The aim was to create a sensory garden area in the playground using recycled materials making flowers, wind chimes and decorated railings. The children made flowers using water bottles and fast coloured pens. In the afternoon the pupils worked in groups of 4 with 2 children from year 2 and 2 from year 6, which worked very well. They were using old bicycle wheels to create enormous flowers by weaving a yellow centre very tightly and then looser outer weavings under and over the spokes of the wheels. I was very impressed with the Artist from Route Canal Arts for his imaginative ideas and the collaborative style he used enabling the children to create attractive designs and to work co-operatively. We paid £500 for 2 days of the artist's time at Holtspur School.

We trust that these projects enhanced the lives of the artists and the creators such that they will remember them in some aspect in future times.

Val McFarlane
Arts Volunteering Leader