

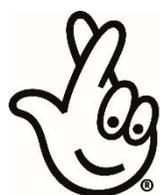


Wild Roots
Creative

Wild Roots Creative Community Interest Company

Heritage Craft Skills

Introducing and Engaging New Audiences



Made possible with

Heritage
Fund

The project

The aim of the project was to create opportunities for new audiences to take part in heritage crafts through providing accessible opportunities for a diverse range of individuals to have a go and learn more about the importance of heritage crafts.

What we hoped to achieve

1. Staff and volunteers develop new skills in heritage crafts
2. Introduce new audiences to heritage crafts through providing opportunities for people to engage from a diverse range of backgrounds.
3. Develop accessible heritage craft activities to enable adults with learning disabilities to engage with heritage crafts
4. Create three new heritage craft courses
5. Create an online course accessible ensuring location and mobility wasn't a barrier to accessing heritage crafts.
6. Demonstrate the positive environmental sustainability of the chosen heritage crafts
7. Create a monitoring form to measure the positive mental health benefits of taking part in heritage crafts
8. Build links with local accommodation providers to create packages of crafts and accommodation and build links with other local heritage organisations.
9. Create a more resilient organisation



What we actually achieved

1. Staff and volunteers develop new skills in heritage crafts

All staff and volunteers benefited from learning a range of new skills in heritage crafts. Through attending workshops, investing in recommended books and sharing knowledge we were able to develop skills in rush weaving, pewter, coil basketry, lip work basketry, printing, spinning, natural dying, pewter casting and embossing.

Through skill share days we were able to develop further skills in willow weaving and straw work. The process of passing on knowledge to other staff and volunteers acted as a fantastic team building exercise and generated an excitement and enthusiasm for the crafts and drive to learn more.

2. Introduce new audiences to heritage crafts through providing opportunities for people to engage from a diverse range of backgrounds.



Through the grant we attended four community events and were able to provide activities linked to heritage crafts to the public free of charge. These took place in a number of locations;

Stonegravels, Chesterfield

Storrs Wood, Sheffield

Fanny Shaws Park, Wirksworth

Hall Leys Park, Matlock

Ecclesbourne Valley Heritage Railway Jubilee event

The locations were chosen to ensure we met a diverse range of people. A number were focused in our local area to grow our audience locally.

Stonegravels in Chesterfield is one of the most deprived areas according to the ONS and classed as an area of multiple deprivation, it was important for us to visit some urban areas to widen our reach.

A further event was cancelled due to poor weather.

We took displays of heritage crafts along with posters giving a brief background to some of the crafts (see appendix 1). We then offered opportunities for the public to try out some of the crafts.



We also arranged sessions with the local cub group, we spent time talking about where the materials came from and why it's important to use sustainable materials and keep heritage crafts alive. This group really engaged with the activities and tried their hands at rush weaving and straw work. (See appendix 2 for comments from the cubs)



3. Develop accessible heritage craft activities to enable adults with learning disabilities to engage with heritage crafts

We were able to offer 2 sessions working with heritage crafts to adults with learning disabilities. These sessions were really well received and the participants really challenged themselves and came away with some great pieces and an understanding of the origin of the materials.

Comments included;

- I loved it
- I want to do more
- I like working with the materials



4. Develop 3 new 'in person' workshops in heritage crafts

Through upskilling our staff and volunteers we have been able to develop 3 new workshops. These include rush weaving, printing and coil basketry. The courses have been tried on a small number of willing volunteers and are currently advertised and taking bookings. We plan to continue to develop skills in these and other heritage crafts to create a varied and appealing program.

5. Create an online course accessible ensuring location and mobility wasn't a barrier to accessing heritage crafts.

Whilst our original intention was to create an online 'live' workshop we decided against this option due to a lack of people booking onto our workshops in general initially. Instead we decided to create a workshop that could be accessed anytime and can be left for sale on our website to be accessed anytime. It can be sold in conjunction with the materials or people can opt to buy the tutorial at a minimal cost.

6. Demonstrate the positive environmental sustainability of the chosen heritage crafts

Through all of our engagements we built in messages about sustainability of crafts and the materials they use. This proved to be of real interest with one of the most asked questions throughout the project being 'where do you buy your materials from' We ensured we bought materials from UK suppliers for example opting for English Rush instead of Dutch and local suppliers of fleece.

7. Create a monitoring form to measure the positive mental health benefits of taking part in heritage crafts

We created a monitoring form to be completed throughout the project however found that as most peoples interactions with us were less than 20 minutes people were reluctant to fill in the form.

Recorded verbal feedback around heritage craft can be seen in appendix 3.

8. Build links with local accommodation providers to create packages of crafts and accommodation and build links with other local heritage organisations.

Through the project we trialled a number of joint events with accommodation providers, making links with local campsites and venues including a weddings and events venue and a glamping site. Unfortunately these failed to book and so were cancelled. We continue to build links and will be trialling a heritage craft event in conjunction with a local alpaca farm and holiday accommodation.

Through the project we have created strong links with our local Heritage centre through running some mini heritage workshops in partnership with them. We plan to display the infographic of the project at this site.

9. Create a more resilient organisation

Through the project we have developed our organisation and raised it's profile through the many events we attended and the people who have spent time working with heritage crafts with us. Our range of workshops is now more varied and we have picked up other skills and inspiration to continue to develop our practice and grow our volunteer base to ensure our organisation grows in strength.

What worked well

The project brought the team together through the skill share sessions, they gave volunteers the opportunity to take the lead and improve their confidence in delivery

Offering free activities meant we could reach a diverse audience who wouldn't normally take part.

People were really interested in seeing the list of endangered crafts- most had never heard of it.

The variety of crafts displayed at community events created a great talking point.

Seeing handmade objects brought many reminiscences from people learning crafts at school down to grandfathers making corn dollies.

Unexpected outcomes

Cross overs between crafts

Meeting other practitioners through attending courses has led to the possibility of some collaborative work, with a couple of tutors offering their expertise and support to our organization.

Learning through the project led us to include activities around the processing of the 'raw' material to be worked with for example sorting and carding fleece. This has been really well received by individuals many of whom have commented on the mindful effects and have shown a great interest in the origin of the material. This is an area we want to develop and incorporate further into our work.

Links with other heritage organisations locally and Nationally. We are now a member of the Heritage Crafts Association

Lessons Learned

Not all training lead to running courses due to them being deemed impractical, for example pewter casting requires the use of blow torches which we felt wouldn't work in our setting – we continue to explore other options though and feel this craft will be used in the future.

Some of the heritage crafts are difficult to make accessible for a wide audience as they require more in depth learning- for example using natural dyes. Simple activities like botanical printing offer an opportunity for people to explore natural dyes at an introductory level, whereas creating a course on natural dyeing would require more intensive training.

Feedback forms for drop in style activities should be very succinct.

To get a true measure of the wellbeing effects of taking part in heritage crafts longer and more in depth engagements as well as a larger sample size would be beneficial and give a better indication of mental health impact.

Project Outcomes

Numbers engaged with through all events and workshops. (figures collected during events, workshops and drop in activities)

Age	0-18	19-35	35-65	65+
Number engaged with	124	104	238	84

Total number of engagements 550

Qualitative feedback

Comments from participants were noted throughout the project and can be found in the appendix. One limitation of this method of feedback was that it was done through questioning participants and on reflection doesn't give people the opportunity to reflect fully before answering and they may give a positive answer through politeness.

Feedback boards were provided at events to encourage people to provide written feedback but responses were limited and didn't provoke meaningful feedback.

Feedback boards were used with the cub group and were more effective after a structured session. Cubs were encouraged to write a response to the following statements;

- Why do you think heritage crafts are important?
- Why should we learn heritage crafts?
- What do you think of the heritage crafts?

(An example of the feedback board and comments from cubs is pictured in appendix 2)

Feedback from community events can be found in appendix 4.

Feedback from stakeholders

Throughout the project we asked stakeholders

Quantitative feedback

Data gathered from feedback forms proved difficult to interpret due to the small data set. Because most interactions with visitors were brief people were reluctant to fill out any feedback. In terms of measuring the effect of the activities on mental health a longer engagement with the activity would be

more worthwhile. In one of our longer engagements we received 10 feedback forms (see appendix 5) for an example of the feedback form used).

I feel more positive after attending these sessions	100% felt more positive
I am learning new skills	100%
I value spending time with others	100%
I feel more relaxed	100%

This is something we will look towards developing in the future to use on our regular groups to increase the data set.

Infographic of the Project

As a reminder of the project and it's achievements we have produced a final poster which sums up the project, it includes a quote from one of the participants along with some photographs of the project. This is now on display at our base at the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, a heritage railway line in our home town. It will also be going on display at our local heritage centre. (A copy can be seen in Appendix 6)

Appendix to Evaluation

APPENDIX 1. Posters created for display at events and workshops, teaching the history and background of different crafts


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Heritage Craft Focus
Willow Weaving



Willow is a sustainable material, fast growing and good for wildlife. It provides us with an environmentally sustainable material. It can be woven with when fresh (green) or dried and soaked as needed.

Basket making is one of the oldest crafts known to man, The practice of weaving natural materials into useful objects, from shoes to baskets and even to boats spans the world. Willow can be woven using many different methods to create useful objects as well as sculptural pieces.

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Heritage Craft Focus
Rush Weaving



Rushes are sustainably harvested from river banks and can be woven straight away or dried and used later, dampening them first.

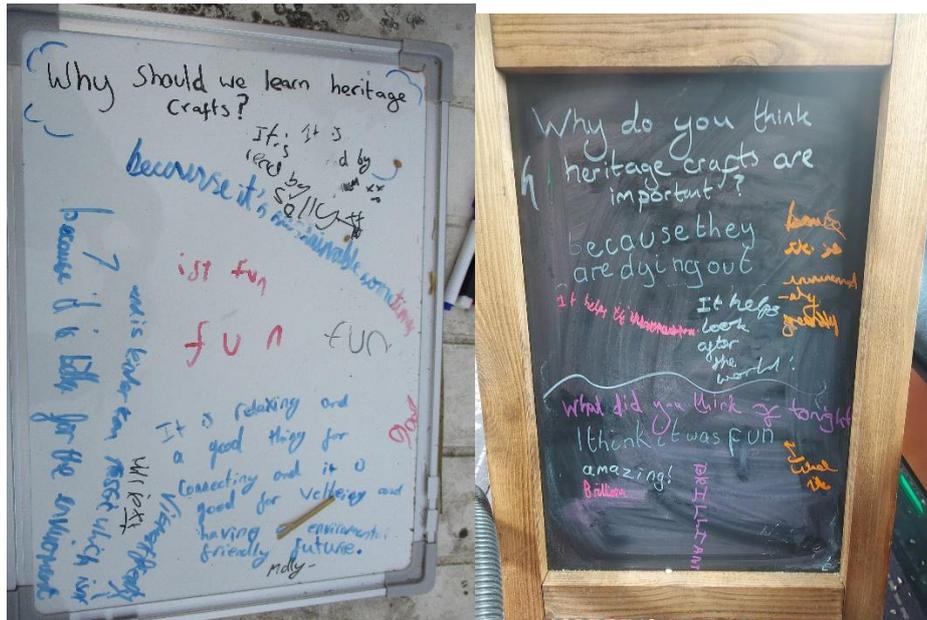
The craft of rush weaving dates back to Anglo-Saxon times. Rush weaving prospered as a cottage industry and groups of ladies would gather in their houses and villages to use the locally sourced rushes to weave baskets and carpets.

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APPENDIX 2



Questions asked to cubs

Why should we learn heritage crafts?

It is fun

It is relaxing and a good thing for connecting and it is good for wellbeing and having an environmentally friendly future

Because it's sustainable sometimes

Why do you think heritage crafts are important?

Because they are dying out

Because it is environmentally friendly

It helps look after the world

What did you think of the heritage crafts?

I think it was fun

Amazing

Brilliant

I liked it

It's fun

APPENDIX 3

Feedback from community events.

'I never thought I'd be able to make that.'

Talking after having a go at a heritage 'I have been worrying about filling my time after recently coming off heroin. Evenings are the worst time for me but I could really get into this- it so therapeutic!'

'It's so relaxing'

'I could do this all day'

'this is so mindful'

'Lovely way to spend 2 hours, well organized, planned sessions'

'Lovely supportive, positive and enabling atmosphere'

'I have always wanted to have a go at this (rush)'

'I remember my grandfather making these (corndollies) He made all sorts of different ones'

APPENDIX 4

Feedback from Stakeholders

'We've had nothing but positive feedback from staff and service users and being able to come to one of your sessions too I can see why'
Craig Dowsett. Deputy Project Manager, Medway Centre

'The cubs have had a fantastic evening engaging with heritage crafts. So many of them have come and asked me if they can do it again' Simon Flitter, Cub leader

'(my son) loved the session on heritage crafts, he came home really enthused about it and wants to do more!'
Sharon, Cub parent.

'Everyone really enjoyed the session, they got a lot out of it. They are really keen to do more if you are able to.' Andrea, Our Vision our future, Project Coordinator

APPENDIX 5



Heritage Craft Taster Sessions

Which Heritage Craft have you tried today?

Have you worked with this material / method before?

Thinking about the sessions; please rate how much you agree with the following statements.

	Not at all				Very Much
I feel more positive after attending.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am learning new skills	<input type="radio"/>				
I value spending time with others	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel more relaxed	<input type="radio"/>				

What have you particularly enjoyed about the session(s)? (Might be one of the things you have made, a technique you have learnt, some relaxation time etc...)

Would you like to tell us anything else? (Improvements we could make, other activities you would like to try, any thoughts / feelings about the session?)



Heritage Crafts



For most of our history, making things by hand was the norm, and the skills were passed from one generation to the next"

Heritage Crafts Association



Heritage crafts act are a shining example of sustainability; making something from a natural material, sourced responsibly offers an environmentally sound alternative .



"It is relaxing and a good thing for connecting and it is good for wellbeing and having an environmentally friendly future"
Lillie age 9



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