thousands shared their passion for creativity during Voluntary Arts Week

Friday 20 May, 2016

Voluntary Arts Week drew to a successful end! Highlights in pictures available to download here.

Voluntary Arts Week sees thousands share their passion for creativity

- Voluntary Arts Week is an annual celebration of participation in creative cultural activities across the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland; this year's dates: 6-15 May.
- Over 420 events listed under the Voluntary Arts Week banner took place.
- Voluntary Arts Week microfund with the support from Spirit of 2012 and various other partner organisations helped 127 groups put on an event during the Week
- Woollen Woods, CraftBombs, Flashmobs, Come and Play/Sing Day were just a few types of creative activities happening during the Week.
- People are encouraged to sign up to Voluntary Arts e-news to stay in touch and get involved in future projects, including Voluntary Arts Week 2017.

www.voluntaryartsweek.org

@VolArtsWeek / #lovetoCREATE

www.facebook.com/VoluntaryArtsWeek

Voluntary Arts Week is a series of events showcasing the nations' creativity run by **Voluntary Arts** with support from **Spirit of 2012**, an independent trust that funds projects that empower people to get out, be involved and feel better.

Taking over the UK & ROI between 6 and 15 May this year, the Week's **programme was made up of a wide variety of creative and cultural events run by groups and organisations** of all shapes and sizes.

There are no boundaries as to the type of cultural activity groups can register as part of this special Week. It can be anything from one-off performances, to singing sessions, **CraftBombs** (eye-catching outdoor crafty installations), music and song **Flashmobs** and **Woollen Woods** featuring woolly creations exhibited in forests. **Over 320 events were listed on the Voluntary Arts Week website with another 100 workshops developed in preparation for these**.

11 Woollen Woods flourished across United Kingdom this Week! **Liverpool's Speke Hall** was transformed into **William Morris-themed *Kitchen Garden*** of intricate woolly creations. Organised by Up For Crafts who teamed up with the National Trust at Speke Hall, the project will continue as a summer display and amaze Hall's visitors until the end of August. Well-attended workshops in preparation for this Woollen Woods enjoyed **great feedback from the participants who said**: "Wonderful idea, nice feeling to contribute to a community project making something different from my usual crafts and the tour of Speke Hall was unexpected pleasure. Beautiful setting for our crafts day!"; "The History of Speke Hall really brought alive the craft items we were making for the display in the kitchen garden."

The opening day of **Woodend Barn Woollen Woods in Aberdeenshire** saw over 300 people coming through the door – the youngest was 3 years old and the oldest 93! - whilst the Woollen Woods in Whitehead, Northern Ireland returned after a successful project last year as ***Woollen Wonderland***, a large-scale project involving the local community and schoolchildren.

127 groups across UK and Republic of Ireland received a microfund which helped them put an event during this year's Voluntary Arts Week. This was achieved thanks to support from various partner organisations, including **Spirit of 2012**, **Super Slow Way, LeftCoast**, **artsNK**, **Transported** and **First Art**.

Media:







Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits :: Children & Teenagers :: Entertainment & Arts ::

Related Keywords:

Creativity :: Voluntary :: Passion :: Volunteers :: Voluntary Arts Week :: Voluntary Arts ::

Scan Me:

The highlights of the microfunded projects are:

Musselburgh CraftBomb was organised by **Musselburgh Riding of the Marches**, a local group celebrating the ancient ceremony first recorded in 1682 and now happening every 21 years. The CraftBomb saw Musselburgh's main street as well as focal points in town transformed by knitted flowers and animals gracing benches, boats and railings. ***This is Not a Fashion Show*** showcased some of the best amateur and professional upcycled fashion garments with over 180 people attending the event which raised £1000. The proceeds will support **Govanhill Baths Community Trust**, the organiser of the event which provides free workshops for local community.

Belfast-based project ***Social Sofa***, which **won Epic Award for Exception work with people with disabilities** this year, moved their 1750kg concrete Sofa to **Belfast City Hall** and unveiled it at a special launch during this Week. Celebrating the creative spirit of people living with dementia, this ambitious endeavour saw the tenants of supported-living accommodation Hemsworth Court identifying, drafting and applying a mosaic design onto the concrete sofa. Punters are now encouraged to take a **#SocialSofaSelfie** at the Belfast City Hall and post it on social media using the hashtag to help raise awareness of dementia. **CraftBomb Meath** was based in the towns of Navan and Trim and involved young people from **Travelling Communities**. This ambitious and inclusive project not only proved to be a huge success but also helped to fight the stereotypes of Travelling Communities, which is sometimes accused of anti-social behaviour, and made all participants feel like they are part of and contributing to their local communities.

Cordwainers Grow, London-based group which runs free community workshops mixing gardening, environment and community with arts and crafts was behind ***Plant Safari***. Aimed at children, this event encouraged people to think about environment by looking at, identifying and drawing the small, unnoticed plants growing in the cracks and corners around us all. The event proved to be a success with the **feedback from the organisers being very positive**: "It was a lovely day and if we got a handful of children looking at the natural environment a bit differently - seeing nature on their doorstep instead of just in the countryside or elsewhere, then it was a good day!". **Kirklinton Hall Woollen Woods** saw more than 100 woolly creations being moved into the trees at Kirklinton Hall near Carlisle for the Voluntary Arts Week. Local group **Brampton Knit & Knatter** created birds, insects and flowers for months and the **Ovingham Craft Group** knitted an entire swarm of woolly bees (cuddlier than the real thing). The project will continue to grow and involve **Chronic Creatives**, a very supportive Facebook community of crafters with chronic diseases, whose woollen creation will go into the trees of Kirklinton Hall in June.

Cardiff-based **The Printhaus Workshop** organised free screenprinting workshop for people over 50, hugely popular event with locals. Participants learnt how to design and print greeting cards which they could then take home. **Span Arts' Singing Tea Party** provided 'Lyons-style tea house' type of refreshments with local choir leaders singing songs from bygone era. This down-the-memory-lane event was a follow-up on **Caring Choirs**, a 6 months long singing project set in care homes which aimed to improve participants' health and wellbeing through singing.

Recent study showed that being creative for as little as 2 hours per week significantly improves mental wellbeing and Voluntary Arts Week aims to support this message and help achieve the goal with its various events and activities happening across the nations when audiences are encouraged to join a group or take up a new creative hobby. Sign up to the Voluntary Arts e-news to stay up to date with plans for Voluntary Arts Week and other opportunities.

Voluntary Arts also serves as a point of information for people at various stages of being involved in an arts and crafts group, from starting at the beginning to securing funding and publicity.

Robin Simpson, Chief Executive of Voluntary Arts said: "Tens of thousands of people across the UK and Ireland got creative during this year's Voluntary Arts Week. They craftbombed towns, participated in open theatre and choir rehearsals and tea parties, learnt how to make dumplings and immersed themselves in Japanese culture to then go off to fill woods with knitted animals, flowers and insects! It was great to see that arts and crafts groups gained new members and many people decided to take up a new creative hobby in the process. We at Voluntary Arts are extremely proud to be part of this nationwide initiative. We are grateful to all our partner organisations, but particularly to Spirit of 2012 for their help to shine the spotlight on the amazing range and scale of creative cultural activities organised by local volunteers all year round across the UK and Ireland."

Debbie Lye, Chief Executive of Spirit of 2012, said: "It was really good to see such a variety of

projects happening across the whole country, giving people the chance to take part in Voluntary Arts Week in their own communities. A particular Spirit highlight was seeing the Social Sofa – winner of our Epic Award for Excellent Work with Disabled People - transported to City Hall in Belfast and watching all the #SocialSofaSelfies come in!"

/ENDS

Notes to editors:

Practical advice and toolkits available for groups can be found here.

www.voluntaryartsweek.org

Connect on Facebook, Pinterest or Twitter using #lovetoCREATE

Voluntary Arts e-news

Voluntary Arts Week

Thousands of volunteer-led cultural groups meet regularly across the UK and Republic of Ireland, to share skills, have fun and feel good. Voluntary Arts champions and promotes this creative cultural participation, recognising the important role it plays in improving health and wellbeing and bringing communities together.

Each May, Voluntary Arts coordinates the Voluntary Arts Week festival, which shines a spotlight on this activity and invites groups to showcase their work to others.

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 work with policy makers, funders and politicians to improve the environment for everyone participating in the arts, and provide information and training to the many thousands of groups and individuals who participate in the voluntary arts sector.

Spirit of 2012 is an independent trust, established with a £47m endowment from the Big Lottery Fund. They fund projects that empower people to get out, be involved and feel better. For more information visit www.spiritof2012trust.org.uk

Woollen Woods nationwide project on Facebook and on Voluntary Arts Week website.

For more information, photographs or interviews please contact Magda Paduch at The Corner Shop PR: magda@thecornershoppr.com / 0131 202 6220

The Voluntary Arts Network (operating as Voluntary Arts) is registered in Scotland as Company No. 139147 and Charity No. SC 020345.

Registered office: Creative Exchange, 29 Constitution Street, Edinburgh, EH6 7BS

Company Contact:

Voluntary Arts

T. 0131 202 6220
E. epic@voluntaryarts.org
W. https://epicawards.co.uk/

Additional Contact(s):
susie@thecornershoppr.com; magda@thecornershoppr.com

View Online

Additional Assets:

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.voluntaryarts.pressat.co.uk