



Reaching More Older People

Report from the trustees for the year October 2023 to September 2024

The first Silver Salisbury directory and programme of events in celebration of International Older People's Day was initiated in 2018 by Irene Kohler in her role as Salisbury Older People's Champion. Eighteen months later a voluntary organisation had been created with a constitution and management committee whose members, in February 2022, became the founding trustees of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation Silver Salisbury Group.

This has been a busy year for Silver Salisbury with lots going on made possible by the work successfully undertaken by Moira, our Senior Outreach Worker, and the hands-on involvement of our trustees Alan, Alex and Jon without which we couldn't achieve our aim to reduce loneliness and isolation amongst older members of our communities. We have benefitted this year with the growth of our pro-active outreach team to reach out to older people in the LGBTQ, Ukrainian and Bangladeshi communities and geographically to reach more people in Amesbury and surrounding area and Old Sarum, Longhedge and Laverstock area. To achieve our objectives, our main activity is to introduce older people to activities and groups which welcome older people augmented by additional activities such as our intergenerational projects in primary schools.

Our main activity is to produce a hard copy directory of ongoing groups and activities which welcome older people together with a hard copy programme of events and activities taking place around 1st October which is International Older People's Day. This has become known as our Festive Fortnight. Both are available on our website but in order to reach older people the hard copy is widely distributed throughout our area of operation. In response to feedback from older people who said that "a year is too long to wait for the next programme", we now also publish a Spring Newsletter in April with a mini programme of events during May.

Reaching out to older people

One of our major achievements is the creation and distribution of 5,000 copies of our hard copy annual brochure of groups and activities and a similar number of our Festive programme of events and taster sessions. We take feedback from older people and consult them in their groups and individually and are rewarded by their eagerness to know when the next brochure or programme will be available. They have come to trust that events will be no or low cost, accessible, and as older people they will be made to feel welcome.

We are aware that we have a core audience who attend a range of different activities. We are also aware that we are achieving our aim as there are always a few fresh faces amongst the familiar ones. A number of people have fed back that they have recently moved to the area or recently been widowed and the brochure is invaluable to get to know what is available in the area. Group leaders are eager to be included in the directory; organisations seek to be able to make their services known; older people keep asking when the next brochure will be ready.

We know we have reached more older people this year as the numbers attending events during the autumn festival have increased from just under 1,000 to 1,500 at a wider range of events and new hosts providing opportunities for engagement in new interests and meeting new people.

We continue to seek ways to reach more isolated people as we know that it is usually direct human contact and support that enables people to make that move to engage with other people, interests, or activities.

Drop in Coffee mornings

To reach more older people who do not feel able to sign up for something or make a commitment to attend a group on a regular basis, we set up our first drop in coffee morning with occasional speakers in the Salisbury library in November 23. It meets monthly with an average attendance of 17 people. There is a group of regulars but also people who come when they feel up to it or have an interest in the speaker's topic.

Based on the success of this coffee morning, we plan additional ones in other locations which will also offer social engagement in a warm space and occasional speakers on topics of interest to the members. We very much appreciate our relationship with Philip Tomes, Salisbury library manager, for enabling the development of the coffee morning in a central venue, and the library's contribution to our autumn festival programme.

Teas project

When at the end of 2023, we reviewed meeting our objectives to alleviate loneliness and isolation we sought to find ways to reach more isolated older people. We were very pleased to be awarded a grant from Sir George Earle Benevolent Fund (via Wiltshire Community Foundation) for our teas project due to start at the beginning of 2025. The project entails recruiting and training a team of volunteers to deliver a tea and social engagement with isolated older people who for whatever reason find it difficult to leave their homes.

Our Geographic Reach

Thanks to grants from four Area Boards i.e. Salisbury, Southern Wiltshire, South West Wiltshire, and Stonehenge, we are able to co-ordinate activities, groups and events and distribute brochures, programmes, and flyers for one off events in Salisbury and also the towns and villages in the surrounding area including Amesbury, Downton, Durrington, Laverstock, Long hedge, Old Sarum, and Wilton.

Until recently Moira was the only member of our team who was contracted to undertake outreach work and generally support the voluntary trustees. A number of grants have enabled us to contract other outreach workers to extend our reach to more older people across a wider geographic area.

Our Digital Reach

As well as promoting our activities through flyers, local press and newsletters, we have been increasing our digital presence. This helps us connect with those that are comfortable using IT, family carers, health and social care professionals and other organisations supporting older people. Our major print publications are in the spring and autumn, supplemented by flyers for one off events: we also use social media in between print copy to highlight events. Our Facebook posts and visits to our website increase month on month. We reached over 10,000 people through Facebook during our Autumn programme in 2024 with 348 people following our page (up from 100 a year earlier). This expansion was greatly helped by our digital support volunteer, Hikmat, who worked with us remotely.

Minority Community Outreach Work

An initial grant from Salisbury City Council has been matched by Wiltshire Community Foundation to enable us to contract three outreach workers to reach out to older people in minority communities in Southern Wiltshire, South West Wiltshire, and Stonehenge, as well as Salisbury. After a slow start last year due to difficulties recruiting, we are beginning to see results in older people in minority communities participating in Silver Salisbury activities.

- Olena is working initially with Ukrainian elders and with the group has built up regular visits to the monthly screening for older people at the Everyman cinema; through links with the Civic Society the group has been getting to better know the historic City in which they are now living.

- Monawara is working with Bangladeshi elders some of whom have lived in Salisbury for up to fifty years creating an oral history record of their experiences. We aim to use these stories to create a lasting legacy for future ethnic minority newcomers to the area.
- Rook has contacted a range of LGBTQ groups in the area.
- We have planned a group for older people in the Polish community
- We have been researching the need for a group for older people in the Afghan community

Consolidating our work beyond the Salisbury boundary

We are aware that with Silver Salisbury starting in Salisbury and four of our five trustees living or working in Salisbury, it is much easier to be on the ground hearing of new groups or activities that welcome older people. We were incredibly pleased to be awarded funding by Awards 4 All Community Fund Programme to further develop our presence in Amesbury, Downton and Wilton. We were also awarded funding from Southern Area Board to outreach in Laverstock, Longhedge and Old Sarum.

All the locations we work in need local people who know their patch. Initially it proved very difficult to recruit local people but we are now able to develop our outreach and will report on the impact in our next report.

Involving volunteers

Silver Salisbury trustees all undertake their roles on a voluntary basis and contribute skills and experience to run the organisation as well as hands on support at our events. We have had a team of volunteers who as individuals have always come forward to bake cakes and help with one off events. Resulting from an initial grant from the Postcode Lottery, we engaged Nina as a contractor who has set up systems to develop our volunteer team. We are building up a team to help the drop in coffee mornings run smoothly. We had a small volunteer fair in 2024 and are now planning a larger one for Volunteer week 2025 in partnership with Wessex Community Action in the Salisbury library at the beginning of June.

Intergenerational Project

Building on our experience of the Jubilee Intergenerational project, we had a small project for older people to go into three primary schools in Salisbury and Amesbury to share their childhood experiences: we were able to donate the book created from the Jubilee project to the children involved. The schools and the older people enjoyed and valued the experience.

As part of the autumn 2024 festival fortnight, in partnership with local scouts groups, we had a successful (in spite of the rain) grandparents and grandchildren day at the River Bourne Community Farm.

How do we know our service is valued and making a difference?

- We get feedback from people at events, who we meet, who contact us to ask when the next newsletter will be out
- We see familiar faces at events and new ones too
- social prescribers, community connectors, health prevention team tell us how important our publications are to their being able to signpost their clients
- we get positive feedback from activity organisers
- people who organise groups contact us wanting to be included in the directory.

We would love to have the capacity to monitor more methodically regarding attendance, age range, whether people travel or stay in their local area as this would inform our planning.

We get verbal feedback:

“when will the next brochure be ready” , “ I’ve just retired here and am new to the area “, “my husband died last year “, “the brochure has helped me to get to know the area”, “I have got to know new people in the group I’ve joined”, “ I went to one of your musical afternoons and got chatting to May who had also come along; we now regularly go to activities together”.

As Chair of the Board of Trustees I wish to thank our trustees, contractors and volunteers for all they contribute to Silver Salisbury, our several funders and donors, and also all the organisations who contribute to the directory and festival programme and who help to distribute and publicise its contents.

Irene Kohler

Chair

Thank you to our funders:

- Salisbury, Southern Wiltshire, South-West Wiltshire, Stonehenge Area Boards (Health and Wellbeing funds)
- Wiltshire Community Foundation
- Wiltshire Council Housing Engagement Team
- Salisbury City Council
- Community Fund – Awards for All programme
- South-West Procurement Alliance
- Postcode Lottery
- Abri Housing Association
- Individual donations



Trustees all appointed at the date of registration

Alex Charleson,

Jonathan Gapper,

Irene Kohler (Chair),

Alan Mitchell (Treasurer),

Anne Trevett (stood down 5th June 2024)

All appointed on registration with the Charity Commission as CIO on 20th February 2022

Following Anne's resignation, we have been seeking new trustees to ensure a minimum of five.

Contractors providing outreach work

Lorraine – Amesbury and villages in Stonehenge Area Board

Moira – Senior outreach worker and lead on producing newsletters and annual brochure

Monawara – Bangladeshi community

Nina – Laverstock, Longhedge, Old Sarum outreach and Volunteer Co-ordination

Olena – Ukrainian and Eastern European communities

Rook – LGBTQ community and ad hoc outreach in Downton

Volunteers: we are incredibly grateful to our ad hoc volunteers who support our events by baking cakes, meeting and greeting, and serving refreshments

Brochure design: Kirstie Pugh

Printers: Baskerville Press. Multitude of Voyces

Examination of the accounts: Grevett &Co

