

## Evaluation: Friary Mosaic Bench Project Jan – June 2019

### Overview:

In early 2019 Salisbury based artist Sif Wolthers led a series of mosaic workshops with youth groups at the Friary Community Centre thanks to funding received from Sarum Arts Society.

- **6 mosaics workshops took place in this area of deprivation**
- **26 young people took part in workshops**
- **30 people attended an unveiling of the bench they had completed during Salisbury International Arts Festival**
- **Participants ranged in age from 6 to 20 years, with some adults helping too**

Young people from Friary After School Club, Friary Youth Club and local residents designed and created a mosaic bench for their community garden. We chose to work in mosaic as the material will be resilient to weather and potential vandalising.

The hope is that by working with young people who live on the estate and with their Community Development team we will help to create a feeling of pride for the art work and the garden it is sited in.



We ran a Mosaic Taster Workshop and Design Workshop for both clubs at their regular meetings to promote the project. In the first session the young people were taught the basics of mosaic – how to use the tools safely, cut the tiles, create designs and grout their work. Each participant created their own coasters to take home.

In the second session they were asked to come up with design ideas for the final bench – in particular thinking about things that represented them, their community and the garden. The designs were used by Sif to inform the design of the bench and the colour tiles used.



In February Half Term we will ran 2 longer workshop days open to both groups and any other young people on the estate who wish to take part. In these sessions Sif and Wiltshire Creative staff worked with young people and their families to turn the designs into a reality. The designs were transferred onto outdoor mosaic board cut to fit the bench and fixed with weather proof grout.



At the end of the project Wessex Solutions kindly sited the bench securely for free in the community garden. The site chosen was under a tree behind the raised beds, hopefully providing a spot where groups including Spurgeons (preschool children and families charity) can sit and share stories or activities in the garden. The bench was unveiled in an early evening gathering and bbq at the community centre during Salisbury International Arts Festival 2019 which local residents, councillors, project staff and funders were all invited to.



## **Feedback:**

Feedback was collected via evaluation sheets handed out after the workshops and emails received from participants and group leaders. When asked how much they had enjoyed the project the average was 8/ 10.

Participants enjoyed the chance to learn new skills and to work together as a community on this project. When asked what they enjoyed feedback included:

*'Working alongside the children and seeing the work come together'*

*'Learning to make tiles'*

Youth Group Leader Tony Wilson was pleased with the project, although he had hoped more young people would take part:

*'The project should be regarded as a success. Not as many of the Youth Club got involved as I had hoped. Several enjoyed making the coasters, which probably involved as much work as creating the bench. Thanks for your hard work.'*

He also commented about the risk of vandalism, but several weeks after completion the bench is still looking as good as new:

*'I hope it will be looked after. We have deliberately involved the young people in similar projects (notably the murals on the subway) in the hope this will limit vandalism.'*

Community Development Officer Dawn Beauchamp was also pleased with the project:

*'The project was very successful. The bench looks fabulous and we have had many positive comments about it from the community.'*

In particular, she said that the project had prompted plans for future work in the community garden which is really positive:

*'The project has kick-started the enthusiasm and motivation to get the garden project back on track and involve as many community members as possible.'*

*'We are hoping that with the young people on the friary investing in the project they will feel part of the community garden, and going forward bring lots of ideas and creativity to the table which we can support them to bring to fruition.'*

## **Future ideas:**

These workshops have been a great way to work with young people at the Friary, introducing them to new art forms and reinvigorating their interest in their community garden. We hope to follow up these sessions with more arts opportunities at the Friary in the future, and in particular have begun discussions about using more arts projects to add interest to the garden and other outdoor spaces on the estate.