

Banbury Heritage Project

Reflections and ruminations from Project Coordinator

Helen Fountain

Age UK Oxfordshire



Historic England



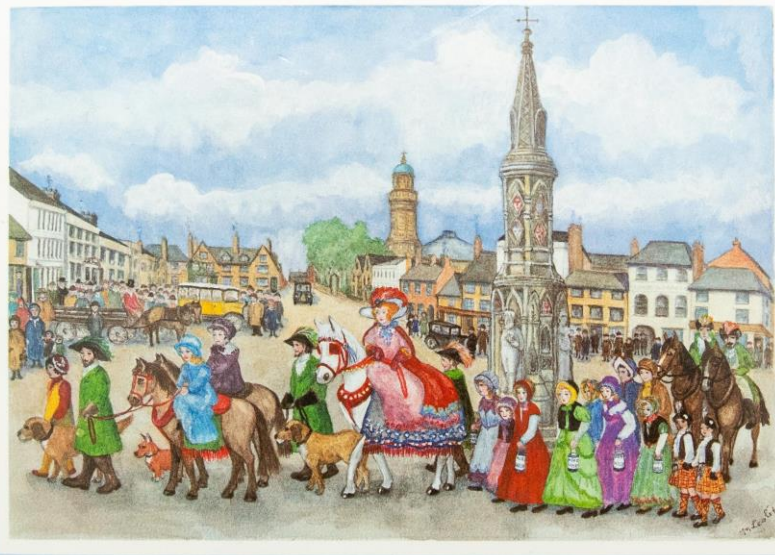
What was the aim of the Banbury Heritage Project?

- **The aim of the project was to explore ways in which Heritage could be made more accessible to people with barriers to access using a co-creation approach. We didn't have a particular group in mind but members of the Banbury Social Eyes group (for people living with sight loss) expressed an interest in taking part and others joined the project along the way.**
- **The project had brilliant support from local historians and local heritage and cultural venues including the Mill Arts Centre and Banbury Museum**

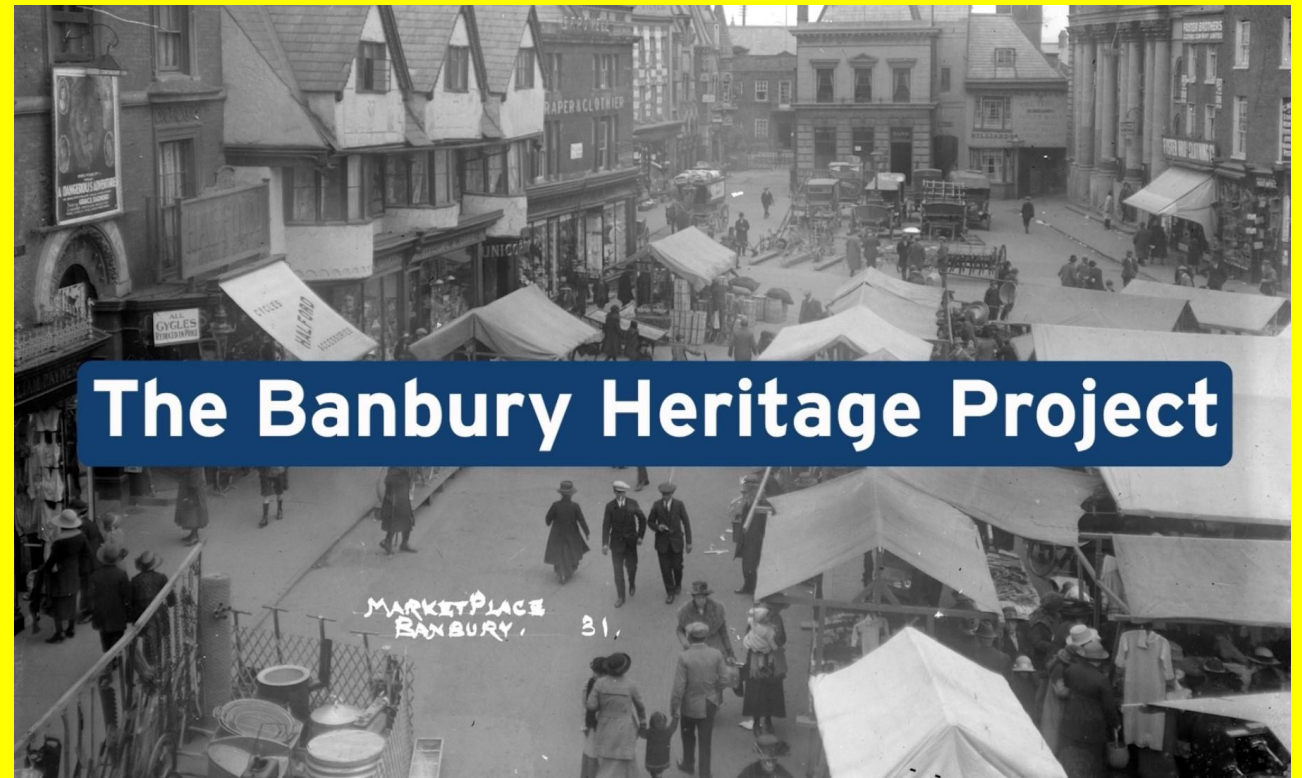
What are the outputs from the Banbury Heritage Project?

- We have created an audio book version of Memories of Banbury chapters 1 and 2 by Marjory Lester, a Tactile Mosaic of the Fine Lady on a Horse, a series of digital postcards using AI, a symposium to share learning on new approaches to evaluation for commissioners and others who have influence over funding, a project legacy film. All outputs and learning from the project will be shared on a website ([Creative Later Life](#)).
- Tim and Karen from Supersum are exploring new ways of evaluating heritage and wellbeing projects which will be shared with the Creative Health and Heritage sector (visit the [Creative Later Life](#) website to find out more)

MEMORIES OF BANBURY



Marjory Lester



We see photos of the cover of the book Memories of Banbury, an old photo of Banbury Market Place and a photo of the group having a meeting with artist Tom Cross holding up the mosaic



The timeline of the Banbury Heritage Project

Over the summer of 2023 we held project recruitment events in Castle Quay shopping centre and Grimsbury Community Centre. We asked people to identify aspects of Banbury heritage they would like to explore, and we shared information about how to join the project

We see photos of pages from a flip chart with colourful lists of Banbury heritage topics in stylised, colourful writing.



We see a posters promoting the Banbury Heritage Project and how to get involved.

 **Oxfordshire ageUK**

Explore Banbury's Heritage

Help us discover Banbury's Hidden Heritage



We are setting up a project to explore Banbury's heritage in all its forms, including buildings, diverse communities, work places, special events and green spaces.

The project will be a fun, inclusive space for people to share and learn more about their local heritage and make new friends. If you are aged 60+, based in or around Banbury and interested, please get in touch. Group leaders also welcome to connect.

Find out more
helenfountain@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk
07887 882 960

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Working together with

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 **Oxfordshire ageUK**

Explore Banbury's Heritage

Help us discover Banbury's Hidden Heritage



**Are you aged 60+ with an interest in Banbury's history and heritage?
Please join us to say hello and find out more!**

When: Thursday 24th August 2-4pm, Wednesday 13th September 10.30am-12pm, and Tuesday 19th September 12pm-2pm.

Where: Castle Quay Community Space, Castle Quay Shopping Centre, Castle Street, Banbury OX16 5UN

Find out more
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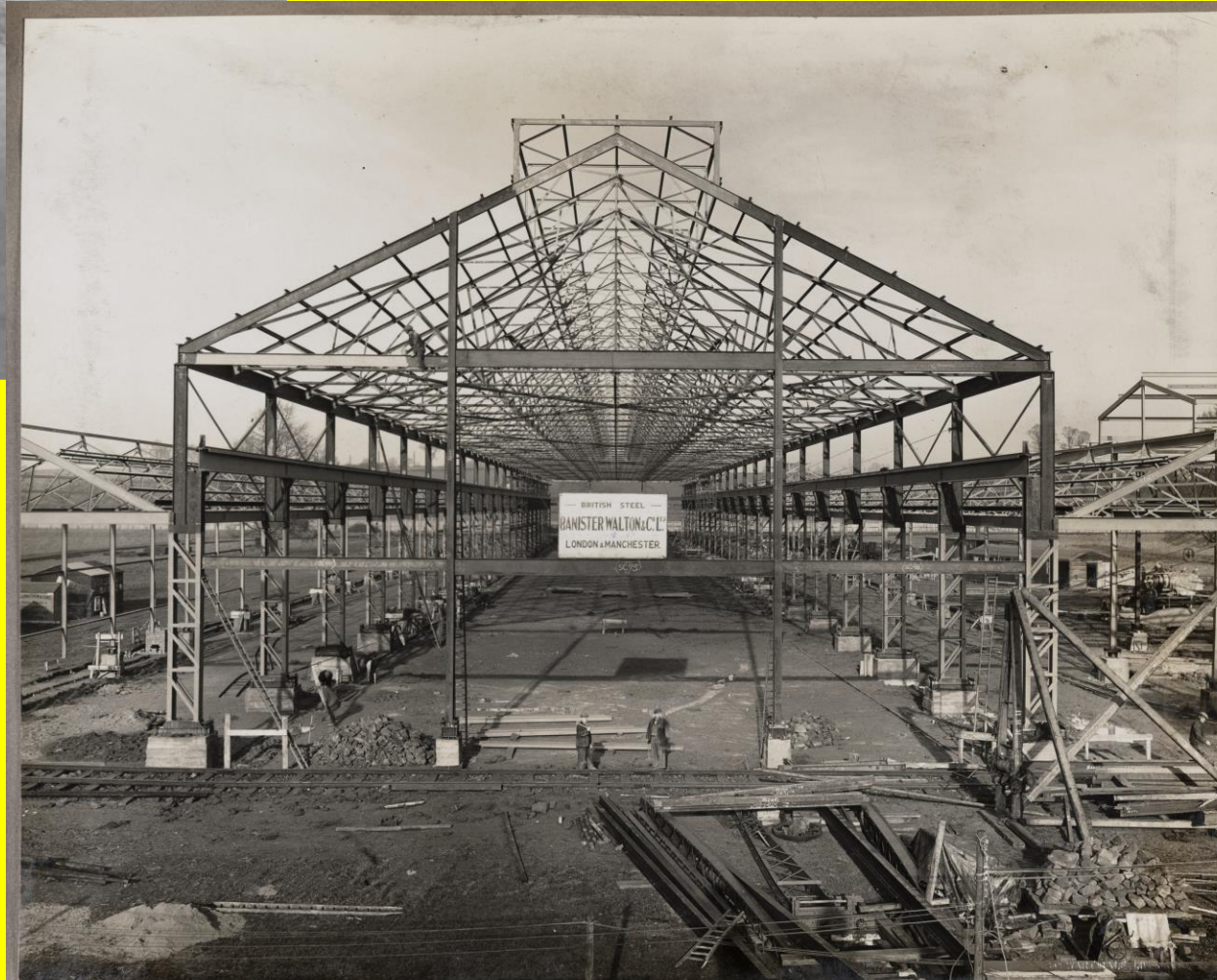
Throughout the autumn of 2023 we held monthly meetings at the Mill Arts Centre– we discussed the Peoples Park, Spencer's Corset factory and the Alcan factory and the participants got to know each other as the group slowly formed



We see a photo of the group at a meeting at the Mill Arts Centre and an old postcard of the People's Park in Banbury



We see an historic photo of the Alcan Aluminium Factory Headquarters on the Southam Rd in Banbury and a historic photo of the metal framework of one of the factory buildings during construction



Spencer
INDIVIDUALLY DESIGNED
Corsets and Brassieres

We see a photo of a clothing label from the Spencer's Corset Factory in Banbury and an aerial photo of the factory in the 1950s





In December 2023 we worked with Artist Tom Cross to begin making a Tactile Mosaic depicting the Banbury Fine Lady upon a white horse-here we see the mosaic being created



We finished the Mosaic off in March 2024 and it is going to be hung in the café at the Mill Arts Centre for all to enjoy

- **In January 2024 we began a programme of monthly meetings alternating between Banbury Museum and the Mill Arts Centre. Each session was themed to link to a Banbury heritage topic that the group had expressed an interest in.**
- **Banbury Museum has a well-established reminiscence group called Times Gone By, and it was hoped that when the Banbury Heritage Project ended our participants would join Times Gone By and that this would provide a continuation of engagement with local heritage and enable group members to stay in touch once our project had ended, this aim has come to fruition.**



We see a photo of the group enjoying a project session using handling objects at Banbury Museum and a photo of one of the objects, an old cake box from Browns bakery on Parsons Street in Banbury, home of the famous Banbury cakes





We see a photo of the group enjoying the talk on Banbury during the war and a photo of VE day (1945) in Banbury shared by the project participants, some of whom are in the photo

We had a project session at the Mill Arts Centre in February with local historian Stephen who shared information about Banbury and Oxfordshire during wartime, the group were really beginning to get to know each other and offer each other support and friendship



In March project participant and local historian Steve gave a talk on Herbert Payne (a local councillor and social housing pioneer). Steve organises local history walks which some of the participants attend. One of the project participants was inspired to create a sermon for his local church (the same church that had been attended by Herbert Payne)



In April the group visited Broughton Castle



There were some access challenges at Broughton Castle as it is a very old building, but everyone pulled together to support each other, and a good time was had by all. We see the group in the great hall listening to the guide



In May Karey and Chris delivered a wonderful session at Banbury Museum on the importance of the canal on Banbury, Chris dressed up as a canal woman and there were lots of canal related objects to handle and discuss





In June we had a reflection and planning session and in July we had a lovely session at the Bridge St Community Garden, we see a photo of the group underneath the shelter and we see a photo of a box of very colourful flowers and plants from the garden



In August we went on a trip to the Historic England Headquarters and Archive in Swindon. A good time was had by all and a copy of the book, Memories of Banbury (written and illustrated by one of the participants mother) was accepted into the Historic England archive library. A lot of planning went into the visit, and we had lots of wonderful support from colleagues. Here we see the group on the minibus and the group in the archive stores which was wonderfully cool on a hot summers' day





We see the group on a guided tour of Historic England Headquarters and Archive store led by staff member Gary



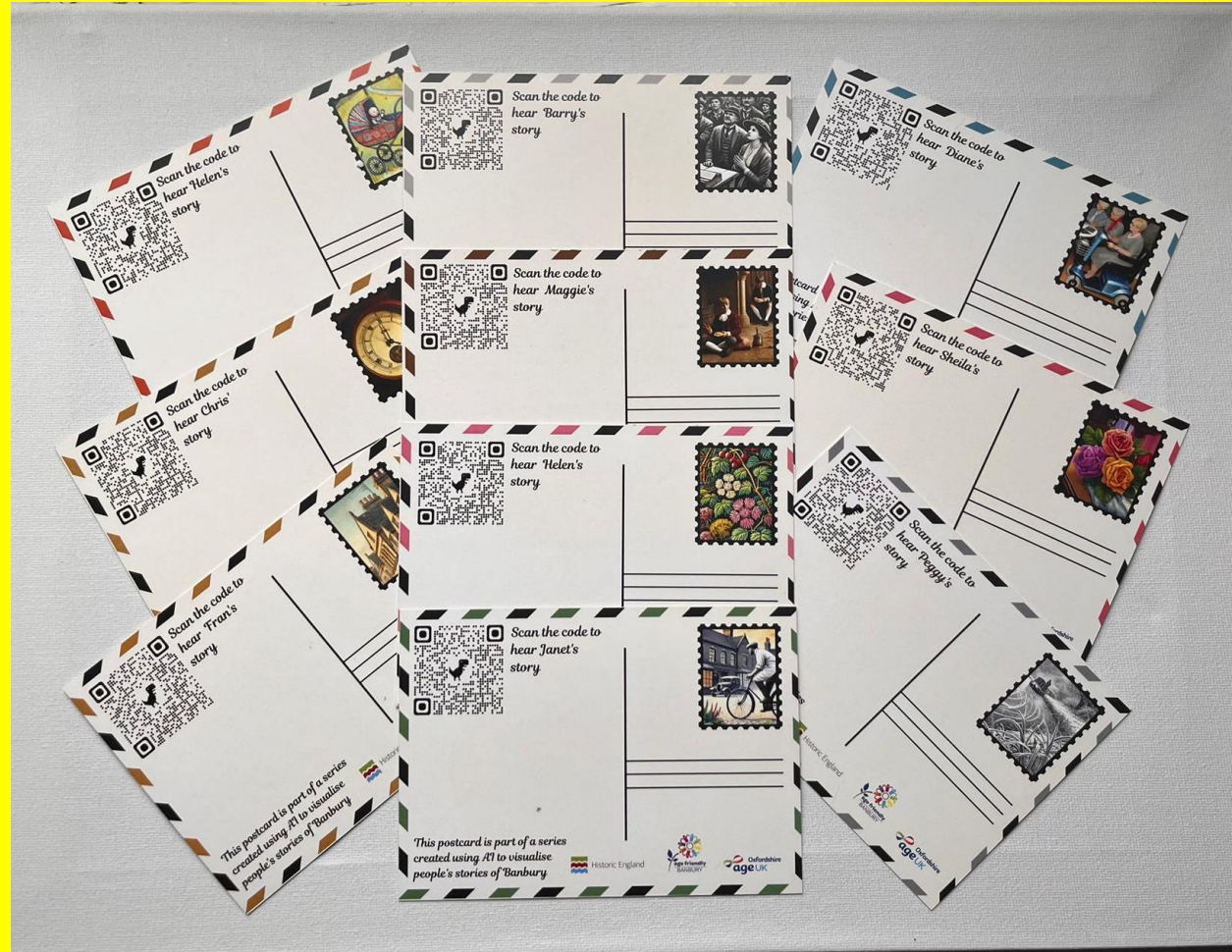
**In Sept we had
another reflection
and planning
session at
Banbury
Museum, here we
see the group
chatting and
making plans**



In October we had a very interactive session led by Karey and Chris from Banbury Museum on Banbury Cattle Market, Chris dressed up as an auctioneer. One of the project participants commented that she reminded them of a real person who used to frequent the cattle market. Here we see a photo of Karey and Chris wearing a brown overall and flat cap and smoking a false cigarette



In October we had a lovely session with Tim and Karen from supersum and Tila from Bridge St garden to create the AI digital postcards, each participant described their favourite story from the project and this description was used to generate an image using Chat GPT. A recoding of each story was embedded into each postcard using a QR code. On the next slide we see the front and back of the postcards





We see photos of the group taking part in the AI postcard workshop at the Mill Arts Centre in the Auditorium

At the November session we invited partners to share information about their services and activities to ensure that everyone had options for connection and support once the project had ended. This included Banbury Museum and the Mill Arts Centre. We see pictures of flyers with information from Banbury Library, Age UK Oxfordshire Community Links team, a photo of the Age Friendly Banbury logo and the Castle Quay Community Information shop

The Library

Banbury



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Christmas & New Year
opening hours

Monday 23 rd December	9am – 1pm
Tuesday 24 th December	9am – 1pm
Wednesday 25 th December	CLOSED
Thursday 26 th December	CLOSED
Friday 27 th December	9am – 5pm
Saturday 28 th December	9am – 4:30pm
Sunday 29 th December	CLOSED
Monday 30 th December	9am – 1pm
Tuesday 31 st December	9am – 1pm
Wednesday 1 st January 2025	CLOSED



age friendly
BANBURY



Bereavement Support Groups
A support network of groups across Oxfordshire for anyone aged 60+ who has been bereaved. We provide a relaxed and friendly space where those that have been bereaved can just be themselves, providing an opportunity to remember with others who understand.

Silver Pride
We offer groups for older people in the LGBTQ+ community which offer the chance to meet others in a welcoming and friendly environment.

Digital Support
Free support and help available to help you make the most of your gadget or device. If we can't help you ourselves we can usually link you into the right service.

For more details on any of the above, please give us a call on 01865 849434 or via email community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

Wellbeing Walks
Walking is truly accessible- almost everyone can do it anywhere and at any time. It won't cost you anything, and you don't need any equipment to hit the pavement. Walking can be very positive for your health and can help your heart and lungs work better and lower blood pressure. For all enquiries: call 02073 398541 or e-mail walkingforhealth@ramblers.org.uk

Your Community Link Workers
For more information about the activities and groups listed, or for more general information and advice, contact your local link workers:

Jackie Roberts	07827 235408
Sarah Champkins	07469 150669
Siobhan Griffin	07827 235406
Troy Bryon	07827 235448
Alison Pearce	07584 148 507
Chrissy Papantoniou	07827 235459

Volunteering opportunities
If you would like to contribute to your community, meet new people, develop new skills or take on a new challenge then we would love to hear from you! Please contact Leigh via 07570 302 643 or via email on volunteering@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

Live Well Information Directory
A free online search tool that features a wide variety of activities, support & opportunities available in Oxfordshire. <https://livewell.oxfordshire.gov.uk>
If you can't access the internet, let us know and we can search the directory on your behalf by calling 01235 849410.

 **Community Links
Oxfordshire**

**My Connected
Community
Banbury
Area**

**Groups and activities to visit
and enjoy, make new friends
and live life to the full.**

 **Age UK
Oxfordshire**

Updated May 2024
Age UK Oxfordshire is a registered charity (No. 1091520) and company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 4328143. Registered office: 9 Napier Court, Barton Lane, Abingdon OX14 3TT. Age UK Oxfordshire is an independent autonomous organization working with older people and their carers in Oxfordshire.

In December we visited Upton House, a National Trust property a few miles north of Banbury, we see a photo of Upton House with a camera pointing towards it and a photo of the wonderful Christmas trees on display there



We see a photo of the group at Upton House



We see a photo of a group member admiring a table decoration of Christmas cheese



We see some of the group members laughing and smiling outside the café at Upton House



In December we had our end of project celebration in the Community Room at Lock 29 in the Castle Quay Shopping Centre. We had some lovely food and reflected on our time together. We see a photo of the group in the space and a photos of the food which included Christmas spiced scones!



Audio Book – Memories of Banbury by Marjory Lester

- **Early in project we were made aware of a local artist Marjory Lester who had written 2 books about Banbury and illustrated them with her paintings. We were delighted that one of the project participants was Marjory's daughter Helen and we were able to learn a lot about the paintings from Helen. Many of the project participants where no longer able to read the books due to sight loss so we worked with Banbury Museum to create audio versions of Chapters 1 and 2 of Memories of Banbury by Marjory Lester and we included audio descriptions of the paintings. You can access the audio versions of the book [here](#)**

Banbury Heritage Project film

We worked with Film Oxford to create a film about the project, we incorporated some audio description into the soundtrack of the film



What have we learnt from the project?

- **Project participants are our greatest asset, they bring knowledge and enthusiasm to the project, without them we have nothing. Having the participants voice and views embedded into all aspects of the project planning and delivery was crucial to the success and engagement in the project.**
- **It is important to make sure everyone has a voice and feels heard but it is wrong to assume that everyone wants to co-produce or co-create as project, people have many life challenges to deal with and may wish to take a more passive role. This is fine, everyone is different, and we are all evolving and our needs change. People may want a break from their busy lives and a rest and wish to be more passive and at other times may wish to be more involved, flexibility is crucial.**
- **Groups take time to form and get to know each other and trust builds up over time. It is important to allow people time to get to know everyone and become used to the group norms, this process can't be rushed**

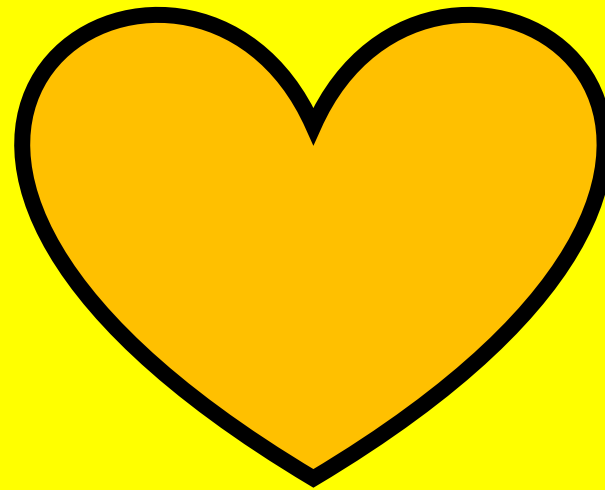
What have we learnt from the project (continued)?

- **If the participants are not sure of the dates and times, can't get to the meetings or don't feel confident to attempt the journey they won't attend. Clear communication, reminders and help with safe route planning is vital**
- **If people have signed up for a local history project, they may not feel comfortable trying art or other creative activities in the early stages, once an understanding of what the project is about has developed and trust has built up and it may be easier to introduce different creative activities**

What have we learnt from the project **(continued)?**

- **Access can be a challenge in historic buildings but try to work around it, showing willing means a lot to people and making adjustments and offering alternative options fosters inclusivity. For example, a quiz and cake for those who can't manage the stairs on a tour of a historic building, a dedicated car for transport to the toilets for those who can't walk long distance at a site which is large, being allowed to touch wood carvings in a historic building and describing what others can see in photos. All these things help to create an inclusive project**
- **Offer hospitality and refreshments and be kind and patient and encourage it in the group. Making people feel valued and welcome makes a massive difference to confidence and engagement with the project**

Most importantly of all we acknowledge that older people are our greatest assets in heritage and reminiscence work, and their lived experience is invaluable. A big thank you to everyone who brought their wisdom to the Banbury Heritage project, you are amazing, and we couldn't do this work without you



Historic England

