

# MindSCAPE end of project report 2018



## Written by Dementia Adventure for the Wye Valley AONB Partnership



In March 2014 the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership were successful in securing funding with the Big Lottery Fund for the mindSCAPE project. The project began in March 2014, early links were made with a county early onset dementia nurse and through working in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society to help gain local knowledge of dementia services in the Forest of Dean area. Research was carried out by visiting existing dementia groups in this area, through this co-production the team at mindSCAPE were able to plan 24 activities for their year ahead and delivered these on a fortnightly basis to people with dementia and their carers who helped to inform their delivery model.

The mindSCAPE project has been delivered by Artspace Cinderford on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership. Throughout the four years mindSCAPE have worked in partnership with many local bodies to enhance links within the community and to inform people of the

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work they are doing, linking with Alzheimer's Society, The Forest of Dean Carers' Partnership, The Gloucestershire NHS 2gether Dementia Education Team, Managing Memory and Positive Caring programmes, Crossroads Care, Social Services Adult Care Team and Forest of Dean new Social prescribing team.

Taster sessions were run for potential beneficiaries, workshops were run at the Forest of Dean Health Forum engaging other local organisations and health providers (including the GP clinical commissioning lead for the Forest of Dean), The County NHS 2gether Dementia Education Team were invited to workshops to enable them to understand the project. The mindSCAPE team attended various promotional events and ran workshops/ had information stands at activity fairs, County shows, garden festivals, attended events such as carers' forums and carers' rights days and attended team meetings to present the work to the Forest of Dean (FOD) Social Services Adult Multidisciplinary teams. The project was also registered to the FOD district council's 'social prescribing' programme.

Information sharing and education has been a high priority for this project, through a partnership with the NHS 2gether Trust, mindSCAPE devised a training programme for carers in both a family and professional capacity. MindSCAPE ensured professional development for all their artists and their volunteers, offering them this training, 'Walk Leader' training provided by Dementia Adventure was also offered to encourage personal development, this was opened up to other local organisations, for example, Forest of Dean, 'Walking for Health' walk leaders, in-order to encourage existing groups to be more inclusive to those who have dementia. In year one 18 artists and volunteers were upskilled through dementia training and first aid courses. Ten volunteers participated in the county 'dementia link training' award, previous to this there were only two community dementia links in the whole of the Forest of Dean. MindSCAPE were invited to run a workshop at the Gloucestershire annual dementia conference in year one of the project and the team have been actively engaged with national research 'green exercise' and creativity.

In the third year of the project the mindSCAPE team were invited to promote the project at some high profile events including; The Dementia 2016 Conference at the Royal College of General Practitioners in London, the NHS England South Region Sustainability and Health Network well-being conference, the National Association of AONBs Landscapes for Life Conference and a presentation on the project for the Welsh Assembly. They provided talks and workshops at the NHS 2gether Trust Forest of Dean, Stroud, Gloucester and Cheltenham professional development events (for volunteers and professionals who work for people with dementia). They also ran workshops for the county 'Meaningful Activities' network (for care home providers and activity co-ordinators).

At the end of year one mindSCAPE had initiated the setting up of a dementia hub in partnership with Crossroads care. This facility offers monthly coffee mornings, information sharing, drop-in sessions and access to other dementia services. A review was carried out in year three for the dementia Hub as the numbers had fallen slightly and the team had a proactive approach to re- advertise in the local papers and also to potentially change the venue as they felt it could be the location that was a barrier for people.

By year 4, the hub had engaged 41 people overall. The mindSCAPE team felt that attendances to the hub were lower than they had expected. However regular access to other 'informal' support groups/services was regularly noted. EG - After a mindSCAPE Tai Chi session 6 people began to regularly attend Tai Chi. Other participants engaged with Artspace courses and events, and attended further workshops and walks at the Orchard Trust or with mindSCAPE artists. The group had also developed friendships and a number of them were meeting up, outside of session time, in order to socialise. The relative lack of interest in the Information Hub was considered by the team, and whether people with concerns about their memory would be more inclined to visit their GP for information. Likewise, individuals who had been through the diagnosis process may be keener to search for sociable, informal support without an explicit focus on dementia. Feedback from those who did attend the information hub was positive.

***“I have learned more about dementia coming to these sessions than I have from my GP.”*** – Feedback from mindSCAPE hub attendee.

Year two saw the project grow from strength to strength, both in terms of community awareness, participation and referrals, but also in terms of the team developing their practical skills working with people with dementia and their carers, in understanding the impact that this project has had on both of their lives. Particularly those of carers, some of whom have experienced bereavement or the stress and upheaval of their loved ones moving into full time residential care. Bereaved carers have given open and candid feedback which has helped mindSCAPE to understand the importance of emotional support that this project provides.

***“You achieve an environment which filled a need for both of us. After he died I was experiencing grief, but also a deep sense of isolation. Your understanding, kindness and friendship was just what I needed. Some of us have said that the group is just like a family.”*** – Feedback from Carer.

The team at mindSCAPE have developed an fantastic engaging set of activities for people to partake in ranging from, working with leather, going on ‘poetry walks’, working with artists from the RSPB, printmaking with objects found in nature, using natural materials to felt-make, trying mindful meditation and dance/ movement. MindSCAPE have linked to other community projects and initiatives including; The sculpture Trust decommissioning of ‘Place-The Giants Chair’, visiting the sculpture site at Beechenhurst, the Arts council Funded ‘Story of Objects’ and singing for dementia with ‘Mindsong’, working on a dramatic representation of a Kipling poem about the forest; working with a song writer to write a song about nature, reminiscing about our favourite pets and painting them, taking a tour around a small-holding and walking goats, printing using flowers and leaves, bread making and jam making (using collected ingredients), tribal drumming, seasonal weaving, making plaster casts of found objects of nature, aromatherapy (using natural ingredients to stimulate the senses), linking to local festivals ‘Hedgehog festival’ engaging with talks about hedgehog conservation and working with the Arts Council Funded ‘Story of Objects’ reminiscence project, outdoor circus skills session using an aerial hammock, two stone letter cutting workshops, a session making bird feeders, tai Chi, two sessions making mixed media insects,

a drama and music session- the group dramatized holiday postcards of their favourite visited places. Flower arranging, two 'mixed media meander' nature walks where the group collected natural artefacts for display in frames that they made themselves.

***“mindSCAPE is a lifeline, it is the only activity that fully engages my loved one”*** – Feedback from a family member of the group.

At the end of year one mindSCAPE commissioned Dementia Adventure to come and provide some further dementia training and also to review the project and to run an environmental audit. The result of this was a selection of recommendations, one of them was that the venue they were hosting these sessions in was not meeting the members, staff or volunteer's needs, as a result of this mindSCAPE were very proactive and found a new venue to run the sessions in, with more space and easier accessibility.

The work in year two saw the development of deeper understanding of the importance of the project to carers. Whilst the benefits continued to be reported for the people with dementia, the mindSCAPE social network and source of emotional support for carers was highlighted, carers developed friendships and would meet up outside of the sessions, car sharing to workshops and a sense of ownership of the project became clear. Two carers and one person with dementia requested to run sessions themselves, sharing their hobbies with the group. Independent public exhibitions of the work created within the workshops were arranged and members of the group were encouraged to submit pieces for the exhibition and also to attend.

***“I really enjoyed that session [wood carving] to such an extent that I am tempted to continue or at least potter around a bit! Thank you all so much for the work you are doing, it certainly lifts the spirits.”*** – Feedback from a Carer

Unfortunately since the start of the project, some of the participants with dementia have passed away, or moved into full time residential care. Carers have shown their support through attendance at funerals/ chatting supportively to each other through the sessions. One of the overwhelming observations made during this site visit was the inclusivity for carers and the support structure offered. MindSCAPE have shown unwavering flexibility, care, love and support to the changing circumstances of the members of the group and adapted the project to meet the needs of its participants. By realising the challenges faced by people losing loved ones to the disease or to personal circumstances changing they adapted their project to still meet the needs of the members and acknowledged the needs of the bereaved carers, they took a practical approach in changing venues in year two, therefore giving them more space and flexibility and they actively formed plans in-case the circumstances changed and they needed more funding or resources to enable them to continue to support the carers.

***“However if this trend continues we may reach a point where we need to divide the groups and seek further funding to provide additional workshops for the bereaved carers”***- Quote taken from Big Lottery fund report year two.

Challenges	Solutions
As a result of bereavement and people with dementia going into full time care, carers are no longer able to bring their loved ones to mindSCAPE, however they are still keen to attend, As a consequence the group which was originally 50% /50% carers/ People with dementia, is now made up of a higher % of carers	The larger venue means mindSCAPE have been able to accommodate new couples, however if the trend continues we may reach a point where we need to divide the groups and seek further funding to provide additional workshops for bereaved carers.
Some participants have considerable mobility issues which make active sessions challenging.	Activities need to be adapted so that everyone can participate.
Sustainability strategies for the project.	During 2015 mind SCAPE enlisted a consultant, Yolande Watson, who investigated potential funding opportunities for the continuation of mindSCAPE. Yolande's finding suggested that whilst commissioning opportunities via NHS are unlikely, there is interest in the project from other voluntary organisations, who may consider joining forces in order to fundraise and duplicate the project in other locations (for example across the border in Herefordshire and Monmouthshire). Whilst we could consider charging a small fee to attend, we anticipate we will need to continue to seek funding from grant- making trusts and foundations as the support costs when working with people with dementia are high.
Yr. 3 – attendance at the Hub meetings had not been as high as mindSCAPE had hoped.	Advertising in local newspapers to boost numbers, considering moving the venue.
Since the start of the project, the health of some participants has deteriorated significantly. Some are unable to walk for more than a few minutes.	We have adapted activities to suit but as a result walks are usually restricted to the immediate areas near the cabin/ facilities.
Some participants are sensitive to the cold, or intense heat.	We have overcome this by enabling participants to chat inside with volunteers (rather than participate outside), however this is not always ideal and we are extremely mindful of not excluding less able participants.
mindSCAPE have a waiting list of people who want to access the project.	An attempt to remedy this was to go to a bigger venue in the winter months, it was however felt that the optimum number of participants is 20, mindSCAPE are mindful of noise levels and activity levels for people with dementia and in addition levels of support and staffing.
Monitoring and evaluation; mindSCAPE continue to explore best practice in terms of evaluating their project in terms of people with dementia. As dementia is a progressive disease, the benefits/ impact of sessions may appear to	mindSCAPE commissioned a film to record the benefits to people with dementia and their carers who attend their sessions. They felt the impact captured on the films reflected the benefits more so than the questionnaires.

reduce over time as conditions worsen. Benefits to carers on the other hand increase.	<a href="https://youtu.be/ArxP6JYhUBE">https://youtu.be/ArxP6JYhUBE</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/kMLCcTOHPiE">https://youtu.be/kMLCcTOHPiE</a>
The weather, uneven ground, slippery surfaces.	Adapted activities, changed walks and trails.  In the winter months have worked inside, bringing the outdoors in.  Connecting with the landscape through sensory stimuli and imagination.  Health and Safety audit carried out by Dementia Adventure to help with planning and support.
Staff, volunteers, members struggling with some accessibility, shown up in the report carried out by Dementia Adventure.	Moved to Bishopswood Village Hall in October 2015.



### Impact

During the 4 year period at the end of each session a session feedback form was handed out. The statistics show that in total 277 feedback forms were completed. The questions on the forms were as follows;

**How do you feel at the start of the session?** Of the 277 forms filled in the following were the answers;

☹️ 17	😊 116	😊 143	N/A 1
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**How do you feel at the end of the session?** Of the 277 forms filled in the following were the answers;

☹️ 5	😊 7	😊 264	N/A 1
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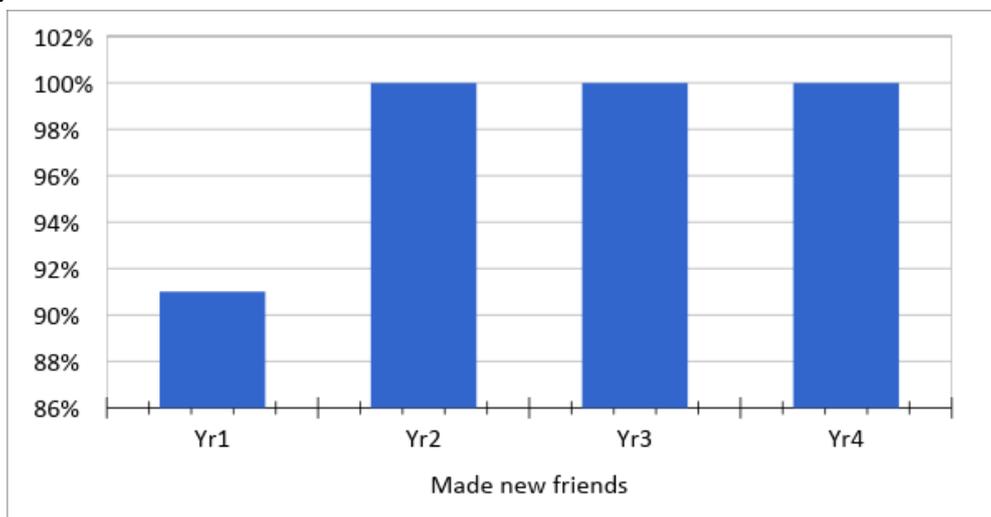
Qualitatively on the feedback forms 89 people stated they enjoyed all of it, 59 people commented on the social benefit, meeting friends and the friendliness of staff, 88 people said they enjoyed the activity the most, 9 people said they enjoyed the food the most 6 people said they enjoyed the friendly environment, 2 people said they liked the end product the most and 2 people mentioned the fact that they enjoyed working with their loved one with dementia the most.

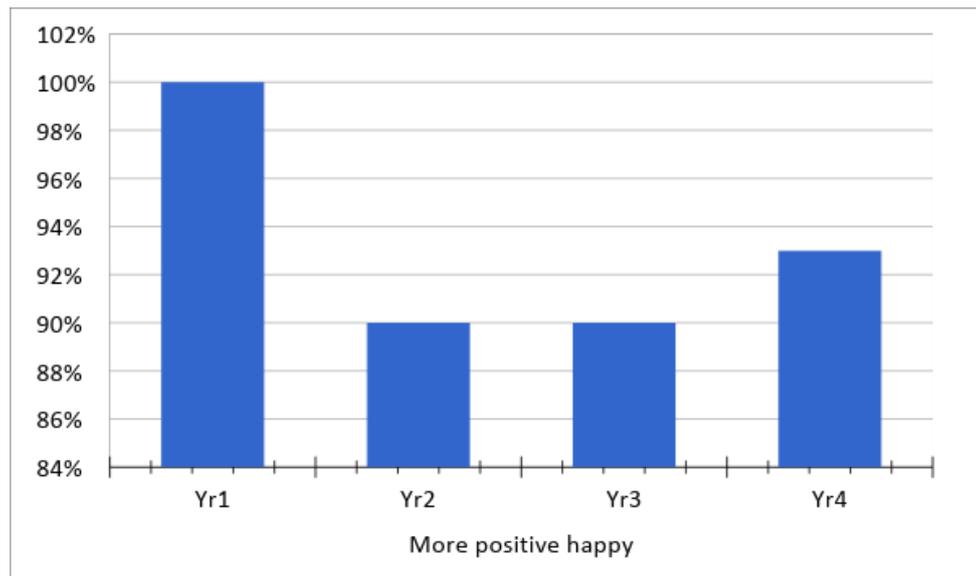
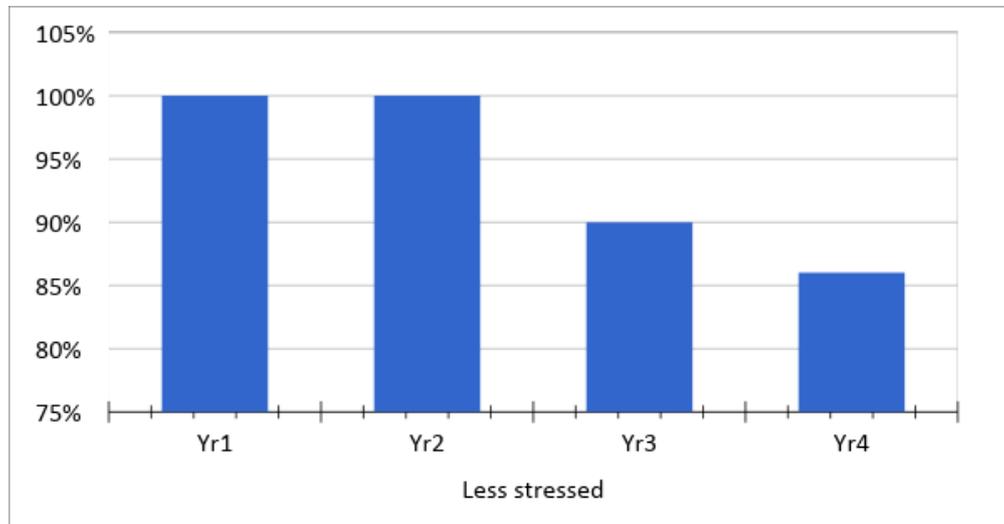
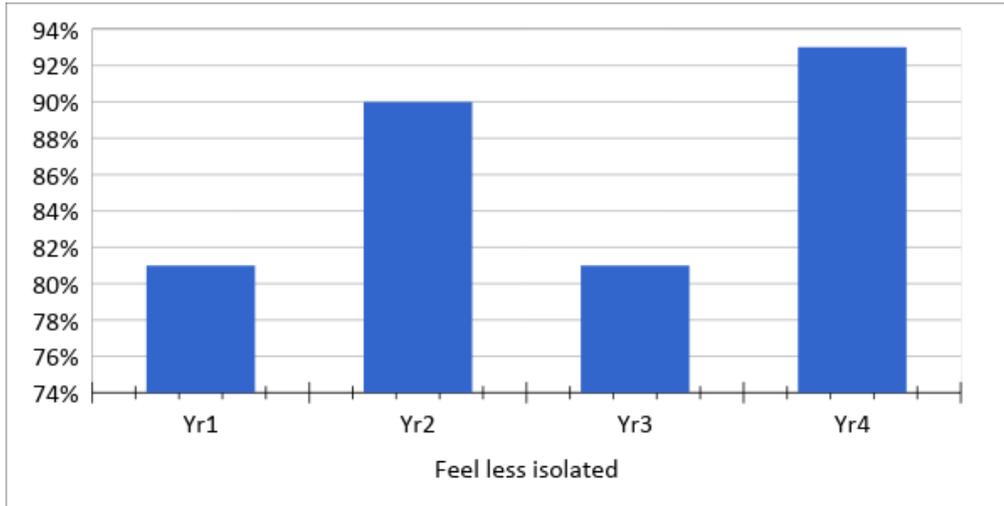
When asked what you didn't like the session, 2 people said they felt tired and could not find the energy to enjoy the session, 5 people mentioned the weather and one person mentioned the cold room.

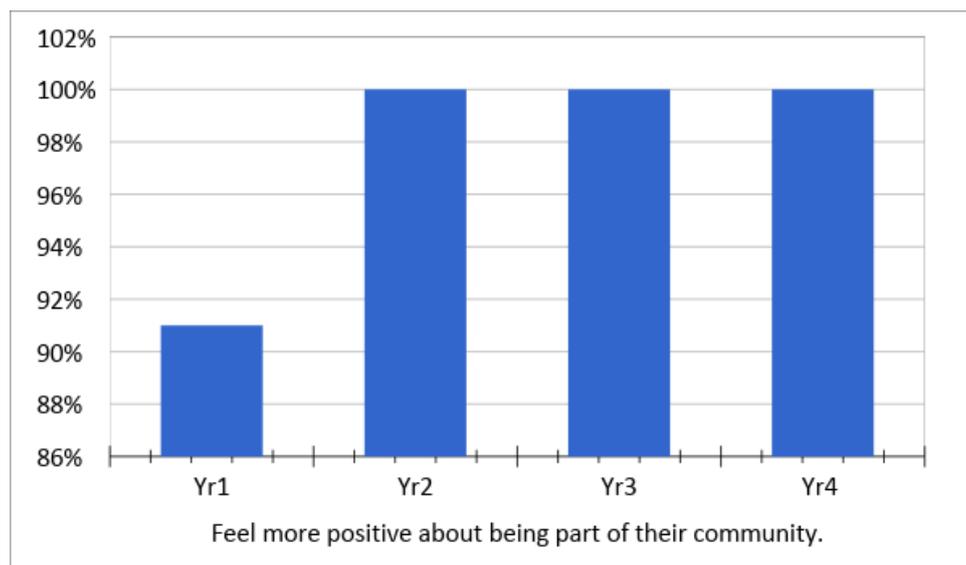
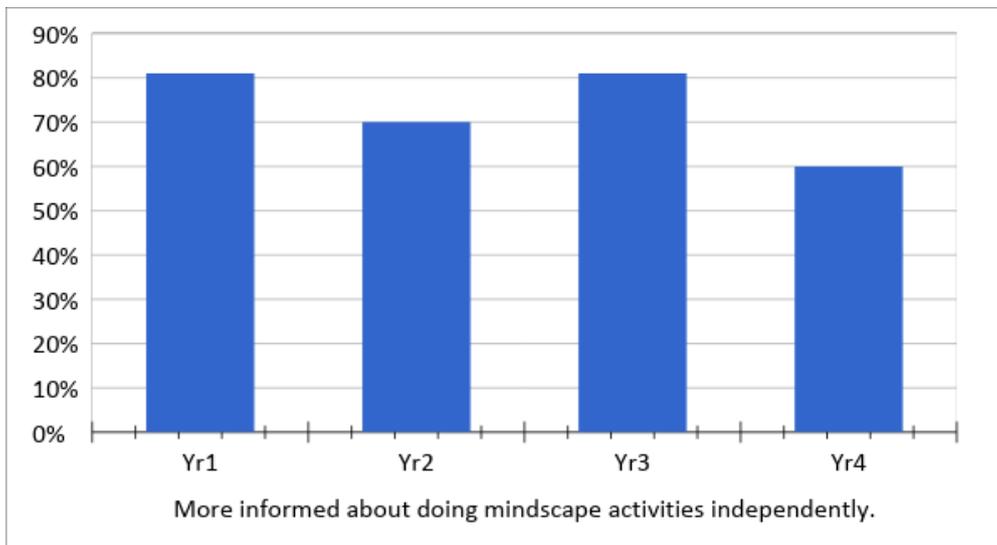
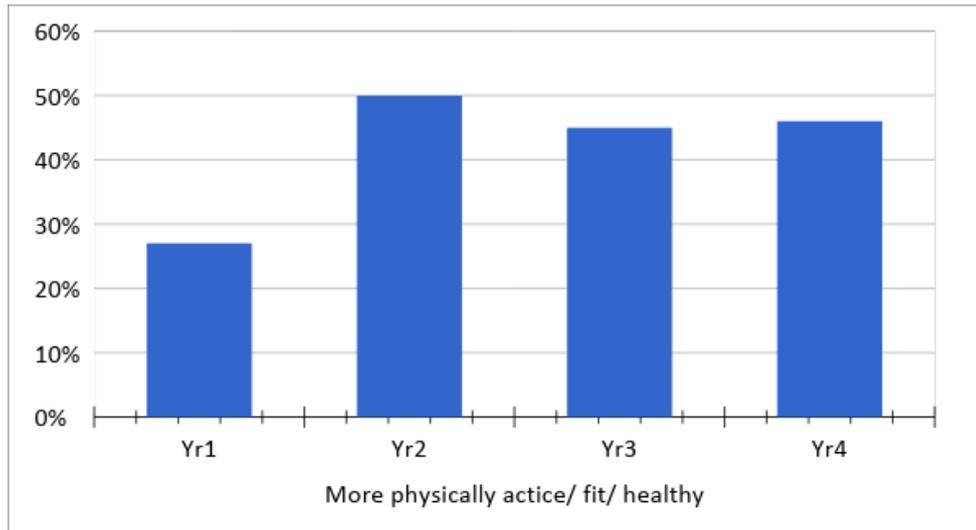
<b>I enjoyed the mindSCAPE session and I want to come again.</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>I enjoyed the mindSCAPE session but I am undecided if I shall come again.</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>I don't think the mindSCAPE session is for me and I will not be coming again.</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>No answer</b>	<b>134</b>

The total number of sessions run throughout the 4 years was **96**, the total number of participants throughout the project was 55 (29 carers and 26 people with dementia). The statistics have shown that, from year one the participants have felt that they have made new friends showing scores of 100% throughout years two, three and four. In years two and four the statics show higher scores when asked if people feel less isolated, this dip in statistics for year three could be due to bereavement or the change in people going into long term care. Over the four years people showed that their stress levels increased, this again could be due to the progression of the disease and living arrangements as opposed to the stress levels of taking part in the sessions. The statistics show that the participants went from feeling more happy in year one (100% to a drop to 93% in year 4). The participants went from scoring 27% in year one when asked if they felt more physically active/ fit/ healthy to a raise to 50% in year two and then back down to 46% in year 4 which still shows an increase. The participants said they felt more informed about doing mindSCAPE activities independently in year one 81% said yes, to 70% in year 2 and 81% in year 3 to 60% in year 4. There was a progressive increase in people feeling more creative throughout the project resulting in 93% of people saying yes to feeling more creative in year 4 and in year 2, 3 and 4 all participants said they felt more positive about being part of their community.

### Graphs.







One of the resounding findings were reports of the group members taking ownership of this group, by being consulted in the activities that took part in and by being included in decisions that were made (for example in whether the centre was accessible during year one). This resulted in a wonderful sense of pride, commitment and loyalty to the group resulting in independent work coming from the group, for example, the initiative to get the artwork from the group exhibited in local exhibitions; two of the participants writing and illustrating a poetry book about their cottage garden, then later, an illustrated children's book about their small-holding and a calendar with photos of all the work created at the sessions (the books and calendars were sold by the couple and proceeds raised were donated to mindSCAPE). MindSCAPE themselves produced a really high quality newsletter each year and in them describe the project and have in turn created a history of how the group have managed to get to where they are now.



MindSCAPE were included in a publication written by National Parks England and the National Association for AONBs entitled 'So much more than a view....' as a result of this several other AONB and National parks expressed an interest in the project and requested to share the work as an example of good practice. This piece of work was shared with all MP's after the May 2015 General Election.

In Year 4, learning was shared, at a conference organised by mindSCAPE, in October 17. Presentations from speakers included; Liz Lavendar - a mindSCAPE Carer, Helen Vaughn - Commissioning Manager, Dementia, Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group and Tina Kukstas - Non-Medical Consultant, 2gether Trust.

Over the 4 years, mindSCAPE provided support to other organisations keen to develop similar work. They welcomed a variety of other organisations and individuals to visit the project, meet participants and project leaders. Some of the visitors to the project have included; Cornwall AONB, The Forest of Dean Sculpture Trust, Forestry Commission/Westonbirt Arboretum, NHS 2gether Trust Dementia Education Team, Forest of Dean District Council Dementia Enablers team, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council Village Agents and The Alzheimer's Society.

In year three mindSCAPE delivered more carer training than they had anticipated and exceeded their target of carers reached. As a result of this, they were booked by the NHS 2gether trust to run an additional 7 workshops in year 4.

### **Dementia Adventures involvement.**

At the end of year one, mindSCAPE commissioned Dementia Adventure as a consultant to review the project, to provide practical advice and support in how the project was performing. As a result of this a number of advisories were made all of which mindSCAPE put into practice, Dementia Adventure also provided a 2 day walk leader training course for the mindSCAPE staff and local providers. Now at the end of the project they have invited Dementia Adventure back to complete a review of the project. Within this a practical visit was made and the following was found through a consultation with the participants of the group, the volunteers and the staff.



***“This is proving to be a ‘lifeline for us”***

## The beneficiaries say....

Lovely to get outside

Going to conferences, Welsh assembly cross party working group.

The whole set up is made for people with disabilities

A safe environment without being considered- we are able to go out and walk.

Lovely group we are very close

We love the group, staff and volunteers

The food is incredible, fantastic job.

**What have you enjoyed the most?**

Robbie loved the African drums we haven't been able to find anything like this again.

The way Hannah and the group make people who have lost people still feel welcome.

Lovely to see Alan working with tools again, this gives him the chance to do things he used to

Stone carving – dad was an engineer, stone carving allowed him to use his tools again.

Gerald and Valery made a calendar – Gerald wrote his story and his cousin illustrated it for him, they made £1000 for mind SCAPE

We are all equals – no labels there is support for everyone.

Anyone who's involved feels it is such a positive thing.

The venue is good, accessible and good communication

Different activities and bringing something of ourselves to a story or object.

The drive to get here is itself an adventure, and means getting outside.

Made more friends, go and visit real social activities, carry the activities on outside.

All of it, I love these sessions.

Like the drive to the location and the venue.

Always lots of interaction in the sessions.

What have you enjoyed the most?

People want to get outdoors – the venue is a lovely place especially being in the AONB

A big part of the programme – when people have lost people they can still come.

People finding out about the sessions, Alzheimer's society, Debbie and Gill in the Forest of Dean.

When people get a diagnosis their worlds become smaller and safer, here it is a space people can walk if they want to, the staff are very aware and enable to people to get out and about.

More sessions –  
once per week.

Getting the group into  
nature is difficult.

What could be improved?

Well supported with  
volunteers, peoples  
diagnosis can sometimes  
be a barrier to people  
only being able to go as  
fast as the frailest  
person.

Same format, keep this group as it is – if other groups open to older people not specifically with dementia can be more open and inclusive.

Establish groups for older people – day centres and care homes

Field trips

Self-run sessions?

Take this group to Monmouthshire and Herefordshire

Running practical sessions with care homes to get people outdoors – staff are keen to bring people to activities there is no need to try hard to get people to the sessions.

What are the next steps?

Felt making?

So much interest from other organisations – western burton – sessions with activity coordinators from care homes.

Theatre show together – tour care homes talking about getting outdoors.

Resource guide/ activity guide – free handouts community activities, legacy of mindSCAPE

Sessions are free at the moment, it will continue to be free for participants.

Physically getting people into the woods – happy to run this type of programme

Crossroads are good for commissioning groups- professionals support enable you to be fully inclusive for all the community.

Get carers to set up more groups – Liz and the lived experience.

AONB cross border to England and Wales. The project across Monmouthshire and Herefordshire.

Project called branching out? Take this into care homes through the foresters in the Forest of Dean Landscape partnership scheme. 2 x care homes per year 8 in total.

Enabling families to come together and take part together

Lessons learned here can be taken further afield. Showing best practice.

What are the next steps?

Arts council running an additional group. Groups around the forest and the Wye valley.

Celebrating age – budget to work with a care company. Cross roads care enable carers to come in good for new groups.

## **Longevity of the project-**

Artists and volunteers have received training and will continue to work with people with dementia, thus benefiting the wider community through the delivery of other projects for older people during and after the mindSCAPE funding has finished.

Promotion of the project (at events and conferences) raises awareness of the impact of working creatively with people with dementia in green spaces. Several other AONBs and National Parks have expressed interest in the potential to share with good practice developed by the project.

mindSCAPE have developed a community activity resource guide, an A4 publication is a 'how to' guide for carers or community groups to deliver their own mindSCAPE activities. It has been endorsed by the Gloucestershire Dementia Education Team who are using it as part of their training programmes. Similarly, they have made two short films about the project, featuring interviews with participants; this has been shared in training sessions by both 2gether Trust and Dementia Adventure.

Artspace Cinderford have secured continuation and development funding for mindSCAPE as part of Arts Council England's 'Celebrating Age' programme. This will support the project from 2018-21. The team plan to set up an additional two groups in the Forest of Dean Wye Valley area. These groups will be inclusive to older people and not be dementia specific. The Wye Valley AONB also plan to develop more mindSCAPE activities but in other areas of the AONB, Monmouthshire and Herefordshire are of particular interest. In the true sense of the mindSCAPE delivery model there is a hope that members will lead their own sessions and potentially start up their own groups to enable more people to benefit from the project.

mindSCAPE is also part of the Heritage Lottery Funded, Forestry Commission, Landscape Partnership project 'Foresters Forest' - 2017/18 – 20/21. Which aims to connect people with dementia living in residential care homes to nature. Over the course of the 4 year project, 80 mindSCAPE sessions will be delivered across 8 carehomes in the FOD and Wye Valley.

## **Overall summary.**

This project was a joy to go and review. As soon as I walked in the door I was welcomed by the staff and volunteer team and also by the members. It is clear that there is a team approach to every aspect of the project. In the early stages of planning the project delivery model the team at mindSCAPE were keen to have the voices of people with dementia, their care partners, local professionals and partner organisations involvement to help inform the development of the programme. This is a fantastic example of co-production.

Through listening to their members needs the mindSCAPE team has managed to adapt their delivery model to enable the members to take part in as much or as little as they can when attending sessions, it has not been easy and has seen the group change venues, adapt to the

weather and also in the sadness in losing members through progression in the disease, resulting in people going into full time care or in bereavement. It is clear that the peer support provided through attending the fortnightly sessions has become a lifeline to members and one of the biggest adaptations was for the carers to be able to carry on attending, when asked about what was the best thing about the project it was very clearly stated that it was this support and kindness that had enabled people to carry on living.

The variety and quality of activities offered to the group has been outstanding. The members reported being empowered to use tools which they did not think they would be able to use again, to take part in things like African drumming which they had never heard of and to have social activities like drama and music to participate in which has been so much fun. Independently members of the group have displayed their work in local exhibitions, two of the members have written poetry and illustrated this work themselves. Two of the members also designed and had printed a set of calendars showing the work the group have created and raised £1000 for the group.

The importance of partnership working has been apparent at every step with this project through the co-production of the delivery model, to sharing good practice with local groups and practitioners. MindSCAPE are very good at information sharing, personal development for the volunteers, staff, artists and local practitioners has been very important to the mindSCAPE project. They have demonstrated this through the development and delivery of their own resources and training, working in partnership with the NHS 2gether Trust they provided training to all their staff, volunteers, artists, carers and people with dementia. Through the investment of Dementia Adventure Walk Leader training they were able to offer places to 'Walking for Health' walk leaders and local volunteers and they have also provided first aid at work training for all staff and volunteers. As a result of this the project saw a rise from 2 to 10 people participating in the dementia link training award.

MindSCAPE have been invited to run workshops, speak at national conferences and The Dementia 2016 Conference at the Royal College of General Practitioners in London, the NHS England South Region Sustainability and Health Network well-being conference, the National conference for AONBs and a presentation on the project for the Welsh Assembly. They provided talks and workshops at NHS 2gether Trust professional development events (for volunteers and professionals who work for people with dementia) and ran workshops for the county 'Meaningful Activities' network (for care home providers and activity co-ordinators). They have presented the work to the Forest of Dean (FOD) Social Services Adult Multidisciplinary teams and the project has been registered to the FOD District Council 'social prescribing' programme.

The statistics show that as a result of attending the sessions, the participants went from scoring 27% in year one when asked if they felt more physically active/ fit/ healthy to a raise to 50% in year two and then back down to 46% in year 4 which still shows an increase. The participants said they felt more informed about doing mindSCAPE activities independently in year one 81% said yes, to 70% in year 2 and 81% in year 3 to 60% in year 4. There was a progressive increase in people feeling more creative throughout the project resulting in 93%

of people saying yes to feeling more creative in year 4 and in year 2, 3 and 4 all participants said they felt more positive about being part of their community.

***“The activity was great fun and relaxing although hard work ha ha! Lunch was lovely enjoyed spending time in the wood and find everyone so friendly and kind!” – mindSCAPE Participant***

There is a clear development plan for the next three years which will hopefully involve more sessions running and more people taking part with mindSCAPE across Hereford and Monmouth, it is a delivery model that clearly works. I have personally used the films as an example in the Dementia Adventure creating outdoor experience training as an example of best practice.

***“The project has been superb, it has been proved to be a great stress reliever and has enabled me to learn new skills and potentially take up new hobbies. Long may it continue.” – mindSCAPE Participant***