

QHA Creative Age

QHA is delighted to announce that we have received funding from the Kellett Fund at the Community Foundation serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland to extend our Creative Age project for another year (until summer 2021).

Creative Age brings together people aged 50+ from across West Northumberland to take part in creative and sociable workshops, projects and activities. Usually, we would be meeting in groups at Queen's Hall or in village halls, but during the Covid-19 pandemic, we're developing new projects that people can take part in at home. One of our ongoing projects, *Contribute to a Quilt*, involves people sewing decorative fabric circles using appliqué, embroidery or any other technique of their choice. Once we are able to meet up again, we'll be bringing socially distanced groups together within specialist-led workshops to combine all of the circles into one or more quilts to donate to care homes or other charities. Around 25 people have taken part so far and we'd love more people to get involved. Free materials and instructions/design ideas are provided in packs posted to peoples' homes and we've had some lovely feedback from participants:

"This activity fits perfectly with ideas that I've had recently to practice quilting, embroidery etc on a small scale. It's so much more incentivising to have a project to work towards."

"What a lovely project and I would like to contribute."

We have lots more Creative Age ideas in development, including *Dress a Doll, a Dog or a Cat*. Artist Cath Hodson has been busy printing rag doll, cat and dog patterns to be made up into stuffed toys. We're looking for people to make clothes to dress them in to create lots of lovely stuffed toys to donate as Christmas presents to families who may need a little bit of extra help this year (participants may, of course make one for themselves too). All dolls, cats, dogs and fabrics will be posted out to people until we can meet in groups again.

Several more activities are in the pipeline, including: a creative writing project exploring memories of villages/areas of West Northumberland to result in small, illustrated booklets; and '*From My Window*', a project asking for responses to a view from a window in participants' homes in any medium – drawing, knitting, writing, painting, textiles, 3D work, photography. The work will form part of a celebratory exhibition at Queen's Hall which will celebrate and showcase creative work made by the community during the Covid-19 lockdown.

All activities are free for anyone over 50 to take part in and we're particularly keen to reach people who may be isolated due to Covid-19 shielding. For more information about any of these projects, please email susan.priestley@queenshall.co.uk