

16<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Working with artisan and creative professionals, unique talents and creative abilities of older individuals are being focused on by a new project in the Causeway Coast & Glens Community. Involvement with artists can inspire and guide participants, fostering a sense of growth, self-expression and cultural heritage preservation.

Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust (CCGHT) in partnership with Age NI Living Well Moyle and Armstrong Storytelling Trust, is providing older adults in the area with opportunities to connect to cultural heritage through creativity.

Heritage Project Officer at CCGHT, Tiérna Mullan states, "This partnership, with thanks to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's National Lottery Arts & Older People Programme and Tourism NI is a vital source of connecting older individuals in our community to have access to creativity through arts, craft, food, song and storytelling. It is a natural partnership to work together, to not only preserve and enhance cultural heritage but to work to breakdown age-related stereotypes and give greater opportunity for intergenerational exchange."

The project aims to promote positive mental health and emotional well-being among older adults, empower them to have a voice in today's society and enhance their independence and social connectivity.

Lorraine Calderwood, Arts Programmes Officer, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, commented, "We know that taking part in arts activities can raise self-esteem, boost confidence and motivation, as well as help to relieve stress, loneliness worries and pain. Thanks to The National Lottery players, the National Lottery Arts and Older People Programme is providing meaningful opportunities for older people to take part in the arts, enriching their lives for the better and the Arts Council is thrilled to support this wonderful, engaging project from Causeway Coast & Glens Community."

Over the next 8 months the project will work closely with local artisans, particularly in rural areas, organise creative experience, such as watercolour painting, chocolate making, woodturning, music, and storytelling, offering new experiences and the development of skills. Identifying areas at risk of greater isolation, loneliness and poverty the project will reach out to participants in Bushmills, Ballintoy, Armoy, Ballycastle, Cushendun, Cushendall, Rathlin, Coleraine, Ballymena and the Glens of Antrim.

Anne McCloskey, Age NI Living Well Moyle Co-ordinator states, "Partnership delivery of creative activities, with additional skills from Armstrong Storytelling Trust has shaped a schedule of activity that can only benefit our local community. The workshops and events will be relevant, tailored to the needs of our aging community and play on their creative interests. By actively involving older people in the workshop schedule their perspectives, experience and creative expressions are valued and incorporated. Each event will give opportunities for our older

people in the area to increase a sense of purpose, belonging, and engagement with their wider community, of all ages.”

If you would like to receive the news about the upcoming project events and workshops, please contact Tiérna Mullan [info@ccght.org](mailto:info@ccght.org) / **(028) 2075 2100**.

Photo: Carole O’Kane CCGHT, Tiérna Mullan CCGHT, Anne McCloskey, Age NI Living Well Moyle, Clare O’Neill Armstrong Storytelling Trust, Liz Weir MBE Armstrong Storytelling Trust.

