

Silver Salisbury

Southern Wiltshire Area Board

Feb 2023



Summary

Silver Salisbury reduces social isolation by promoting events and activities where older people will get a warm welcome. In July, 2022 we were awarded a grant of £500 by Southern Wiltshire Area Board. This funding enabled us to develop the work already underway using the £990 Southern Wiltshire Area Board awarded to us in January 2022 and support from The National Lottery Awards For All and Wiltshire Community Foundation. This was initially to undertake an outreach programme to consult with around 80 older people in the Downton area. The older people we met were keen to get out and about again but were often unsure of what was available locally. This was particularly true for people that were not on-line.

Funding from the Southern Wiltshire Area Board helped us print and deliver paper activity guides in the Spring and Autumn InDownton newsletters. We also distributed 5000 copies of Silver Salisbury's 55-page Autumn Programme of activities in Salisbury, Amesbury, Wilton and Downton, including around 500 in the Downton area. We received great feedback from older people who had tried new things and met new friends. Local support services, such as the Wiltshire Council Prevention and Well-being Team and the Social Prescriber at Downton Surgery told us that the guides helped them in their work tackling loneliness and isolation.

How we used our funds in 2022

We carried out a research programme in Downton between February and November 2022.

We designed a questionnaire and visited groups popular with older people such as the Good Companions Club, Lover Repair Café and Fridays to encourage participation. An online version of the questionnaire was also available and advertised through the library and the Downton Surgery. We ran a focus group at Downton library and issued 60 questionnaires with pre-paid envelopes via the Downton Link scheme. There was a useful meeting with an older people's representative from the Lode Hill Travellers' Site. Overall, we printed 200 questionnaires; 56 were completed, giving a completion rate of 28%. There are around 500 over 65-year-olds in the built-up area of Downton so this was a good response.

Our consultation sessions featured group discussions where we shared our knowledge about local activities. This was particularly important in the early days after the lockdowns as many people that weren't on-line weren't aware of what had re-opened.

Transport emerged as a key issue early on. 30% of people said this was preventing them from leading the life they would like to lead. People were unsure of the scope of the local Downton Link scheme. We met with the Link team and were able to let people know that services were back to normal after lockdown, including support for social trips and befriending services.

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We researched local clubs and activities. The results were presented in a paper guide to places in Downton where older people would get a warm welcome. We wanted this to reach as many older people as possible, so we contacted the InDownton newsletter team. They were very supportive, and we used some of our funding to pay for a 4-page colour supplement in the InDownton Spring newsletter. The InDownton team delivered this 'cut-out-and-keep' guide, which also included information on the Downton Link scheme, to 1300 local households in March. We also paid for the printing of 150 stand-alone copies of the guide, which were distributed in places like the Lover Repair Café, clubs, shops, and petrol stations. The guide included an offer of afternoon tea deliveries to people that were housebound, but we didn't get any takers for this offer.

The April Silver Salisbury Spring Newsletter, promoting activities further afield in Salisbury, Amesbury and Wilton included a section promoting the Downton guide and other new initiatives in Downton, including the Make a Friend, Be a Friend Scheme and the Friday's Social Group. This was shared through the Downton and mobile libraries, the Wiltshire Council Housing Engagement team, clubs, shops and local older people's groups.

The main Silver Salisbury programme in the Autumn also included a Downton section as well as information on community transport options and Age UK's travel companions' scheme. To help people see what was available locally, we paid for a printed 2-page summary of local events in the InDownton newsletter and promoted this in Downton library.

Our consultation work informed the content and layout of our Autumn Silver Salisbury programme. This was a printed 55-page guide to 59 local regular groups and 36 one-off events that welcomed older people in Salisbury, Amesbury, Wilton and Downton. We researched activities that people wanted to know more about and provided information. This included the re-opening of the Silver Screen cinema session, singing groups, an art group and a support group for bereaved people. Funding from the combined Area Boards enabled us to print 5,000 paper copies of the brochure which were distributed across Salisbury, Amesbury, Wilton and Downton. Around 500 copies were distributed in Downton.

We have provided information to help older people make new connections. Printed brochures and phone numbers made the events accessible to the digitally excluded. One visitor said, *'The paper programme was such a help'*.

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Impact of our activities in 2022

- We met two ladies from Downton at a "Senior Youth Club". They'd started going in April and were still attending six months later. They spoke about how they enjoyed the activities including pool, crafts, board games and a hot lunch. They had made new friends, who they met up with outside the club. They'd had no idea about the group until they'd seen our Spring Newsletter but were glad, they'd made the effort to get out and try something new. They picked up another person who didn't get out as much along the way, so all three of them had a regular meet up.
- One lady who'd received the InDownton guide said, *'It was great having everything in one place, so I could sit down with my mum and talk about the things that are on and how she can start getting out and about again. We've stuck it on the fridge to remind us of what she can go to'*.
- Several people have phoned us, and we've been able to help them with information on activities and support services. This included a lady we were able to refer to the Downton Link befriending scheme and a man who was delighted to receive a brochure saying, *'I had no idea there was so much I could go to locally'*.
- We've promoted the work of the local Community transport and Link schemes, raising awareness of the full range of services on offer, including support for social trips and befriending schemes.
- We've built connections with social prescribers; patient leads and members of the Wiltshire Council Prevention and Well-being team. They have told us how our guides and programmes help them in their work improving the well-being of isolated people. One said, *'It's my bible'*, another *'A very useful resource, please let me have the next edition'*.
- Many of the groups we promote are run by older people. We've been pleased to promote the work of more than 150 volunteers. We've also advertised volunteering opportunities for the community transport teams, Arundells and Alzheimer's Support Wiltshire.

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- Around 1,000 older people came along to the one-off events in the Autumn programme, which ranged from a jazz social to history talks, to a coffee morning on living with dementia, to visiting historic buildings and taking tea with a pony. There was an ArtCare History Talk in Downton. It is difficult for us to determine how many of the 1,000 attendees came from the Southern Wiltshire Area Board area, but we expect this to be a reasonable number. The organisers of the 59 regular groups featured told us it was difficult to keep track of where new joiners had come from but estimated that at least 64 people attended new regular activities because of the programme.

Note

We were absolutely delighted when we heard that Stephanie Jalland was organising a special Silver Sunday event in the Memorial Hall on October 1st, International Older People's Day and understand that it was a great success. We hope it will be repeated this year and future years.