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Joanna Simons  
Chief Executive

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02 December 2011

Dear Care Home Manager and Activities Coordinator

### **Caring About Art**

I am writing to encourage you to take part in Artweeks 2012 and a brand new initiative especially for older people called **Caring About Art**.

Increasingly, evidence demonstrates that engagement in the arts by older people as participants, audience and commissioners contributes to improving the quality of their life and encourages independence and well-being. This is because the arts provides the opportunity for self-expression which does not rely on conventional means of communication (e.g. spoken language); this can be very empowering for people with dementia, stroke or end of life care needs.

Equally, national evidence (DCMS - Taking Part Survey 2007) shows that as a person ages his/her participation in the arts decreases. This happens at a time in a person's life when they often have more time to get involved, but may find it harder to get involved because of immobility, physical illness, mental health issues (such as dementia) or caring responsibilities.

**Caring About Art** is a *new* county-wide initiative to showcase the art and craft of cared-for older people. It's happening for the first time this year *as part of* Artweeks 2012. For care homes, sheltered housing, day centres and community groups this is a wonderful opportunity to open your doors and invite friends, family and the public into your building to see the artwork your staff, volunteers and residents have created. It's also a way of making a connection between older people in care homes or day centres to the local community, and being part of an Oxfordshire wide event.

Artweeks is a well-established Oxfordshire community event, where artists open the doors of their homes, studios, schools and community centres, and welcome people in to see or buy their work. It's a celebration of visual art. However, the artwork of cared for older people in care homes, sheltered housing or at home is not well represented in Artweeks, or similar events; **Caring About Art** is setting about changing that.

### **What do you feel when you are drawing and painting?**

*I absolutely love it I forget everything else. I go into another world when I'm drawing and painting. I love going into the studio. A famous artist - I can't remember the name - said, "Arrange your life so you can paint!"*

**Susan, aged 80, Aug 2011**

There are two different ways of getting involved in Artweeks 2012 and **Caring About Art:**

#### **Using your own venue for Artweeks 2012**

By providing your own venue you are responsible for providing the artwork and putting it on display. It can be work produced during the year, i.e. you don't have to do special work for the exhibition.

If you decide that you would like to do some work specially for exhibition, then you might like to know about the **Taking Part Scheme** in the following District Council Areas: South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire and Cherwell. If you have a group of people who would like to try a new activity – e.g. paper making, felt making, collaging, you may be eligible for some financial support for your project. The **Taking Part Scheme** has artists who are CRB checked, experienced and skilled with working with older people. See contacts below:

To do this you need to register with Artweeks online by 31 December 2011 and there is a fee of £57.50. For this you will get your own entry in the exhibition guide; 50,000 copies are distributed countywide and you need to provide a picture and 12 words of text for the guide by 31 Dec.

[artweeks@artweeks.org](mailto:artweeks@artweeks.org).

**OR**

#### **Using a venue already set up for Artweeks 2012**

If you have work to display but it's not appropriate or possible to use your own venue (e.g. security reasons, a small number of exhibitors or limited resources) then Day and Night Care Assistance have kindly offered an exhibition space free of charge in their offices 46 Market Square, Witney to launch **Caring About Art**. The venue is fully accessible by wheelchair and the exhibition space is on the ground floor. This is the first year this has happened, so it would be wonderful to see the work of as many artists as possible to attract as many viewers as possible.

To do this there is no entry fee at all, you do not need to register with Artweeks, as Day and Night Care Assistance has registered **Caring About Art** and paid the fee. You need to contact John Maloney and agree with him how to deliver the work by **30 March 2012**.

*"We're celebrating not just painting but knitting, crocheting, lace work etc., all the things the older generation did in their past, can be done in their own homes or in a nursing/ residential home setting, and that gives the less mobile a chance to take part. It motivates people and provides a great sense of achievement. An award will be made to the winning artist and to their home/car provider to help develop their art provision" (John Maloney, Director, Day and Night Care Assistance).*

**Not sure? It sounds like a good idea but lots of work...we've never done it before...**

Please do contact me to talk about ideas on how to get involved in small way. Perhaps by dipping a toe in the water this year, you'll take the plunge next year!

Warm wishes

*Angeli Vaid*

Angeli Vaid  
Coordinator, Arts for Older People  
Strategic Commissioning  
Adult Social Care

**FAQs**

**What do you mean by visual art?**

Paintings, jewellery, sculpture, felt-making, mosaics, photographs, collages, ceramics, puppets, embroidery

**What do you mean by older people?**

50+

**How much will it cost?**

£57.50 if you register your own venue and have your own entry in the Artweeks festival guide, no cost if you used Day and Night Care Assistance venue in Witney

**Do I need my own venue?**

No, you can use Day and Night Care Assistance venue in Witney (contact John Maloney)

**Can you help me find a CRB checked artist to work with older people in the care home/group I run?**

Yes! Please contact Angeli Vaid or your District Arts Development Officer

**What are the key dates?**

31 Dec 2011 to register at Artweeks online for your own venue

30 March 2012 if you go to Day and Night Care Assistance, Witney

**Is there any funding?**

Some funding may be available through the Taking Part scheme in District Councils (excluding Oxford City and Vale of White Horse)

**Who are the contacts?**

Day and Night Care Assistance, 46 Market Square, Witney, Oxon, OX28 6AL :Contact Fiona Walton or John Maloney. T: 01993 708 905. [enquiries@danacare.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@danacare.co.uk)

Artweeks 2012, Esther Browning, Director T. 01865 865596. The office is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9.30am – 2.30pm. [artweeks@artweeks.org](mailto:artweeks@artweeks.org).

**Taking Part Scheme**

**Cherwell District Council**

Contact Hannah Cervenka

T: 01293221803

[arts.visitorservice@cherwell.doc.go.uk](mailto:arts.visitorservice@cherwell.doc.go.uk)

**Taking Part Scheme**

**Vale of White Horse District Council**

Contact Abi Brown, Arts Development Officer

T: 01235 540338

[arts@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:arts@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

**Taking Part Scheme**

**West Oxfordshire**

Heather McCulloch, Arts and Leisure Development Manager

T: 01993 861554/861562

[leisureandtourism@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:leisureandtourism@westoxon.gov.uk)