

THE PHOENIX PROJECT



Charity no. 1153748

ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2021

Photo from
Summer Exhibition



funded
through



SUFFOLK
Community
Foundation



THE PHOENIX PROJECT 2021

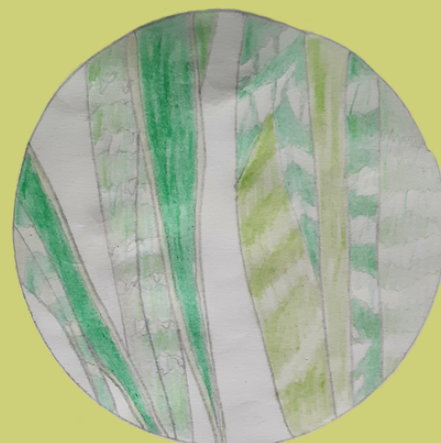
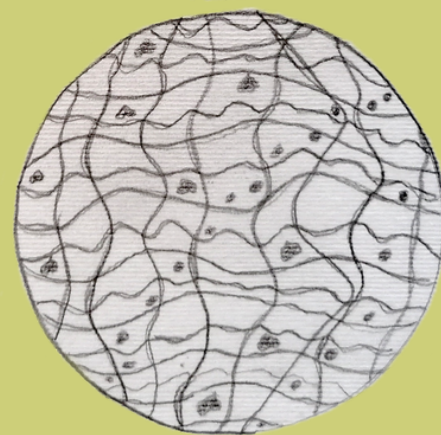
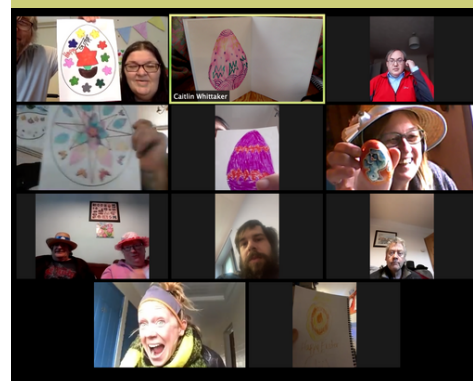
Lockdown #3 + Staying Connected *Jan 2021*

2021 started with the third lockdown, the Phoenix Project continued to maintain contact and support through these challenging times via texts, phone calls, newsletters and door step visits. This was of vital importance for those living alone and not able to join us online.

Our well-established Facebook group and weekly online meetings provided valuable connection and personal support. We created content for True Thoughts radio show, music playlists, poetry, art and film which reflected personal experiences of these times and gave opportunity for creative expression, helping people to improve and maintain their wellbeing.

Mindful Making Creative Online Project *Jan - March 2021*

The Mindful Making online workshops provided additional wellbeing support through the use of creative media. People felt less isolated through engaging with regular activity, developing friendships and support networks and feeling part of a supportive community. Participants developed technical skills that increased confidence with digital technology and media which also helped people to connect with the wider world.



Starting to meet face to face *March - Sept 2021*

The end of March saw some gradual easing of lockdown restrictions. We were able to meet outdoors in small groups, of particular value to those who couldn't access our social media platforms.

In the early Summer we held small outdoor acoustic music sessions in the garden of The Quakers Meeting House and in August we held our exhibition in The Central Library in Ipswich, showcasing all the creative work created by our members since the first lockdown in March 2020, a very proud moment for all!

Phoenix Club Reopening *August 2021*

By the end of the Summer, the Phoenix Club was able to open its doors again to welcome back members, staff and volunteers who worked very hard to ensure that face to face support could resume whilst keeping everyone safe. We worked in partnership with Human Us to provide digital support drop-in sessions to help to improve skills and confidence with digital devices. We also held some more acoustic workshops which have always been popular at the club.

Support from ICM

Throughout the last year we have continued to work in close partnership with Ipswich Community Media, their support and expertise has really enhanced the opportunities for engagement for all our members, working together to tackle social isolation and improve mental wellbeing during these most challenging of times.

DONNA GARROD

Project Organiser / Facilitator



It's been so rewarding working with the Phoenix Project in 2021 – the exhibition in August was definitely a highlight of the year! It was great to have a group to work with every week online in February and March (Mindful Making) keen to take part in creative activities and willing to try out a variety of approaches to making art work. It was lovely to see everyone's work on display in our online gallery – a collection of drawings, collages, map making and mark making – and it was great that we could stay connected with each other in between sessions via the facebook group.

The **Mindful Making Creative Challenge** we set for the wider group, shared via a printed **Newsletter**, brought out so much incredible creative work. Paintings, writings, photos, sculptures and other hand made objects by group members were gathered together from across town and prepared for exhibiting upstairs in the Ipswich Library.

Getting ready for the exhibition was a mammoth team effort. It was so utterly worth it to see such a great display of creativity communicating, amongst other things, many 'true thoughts' about the lived experience of mental health. To see the group's work in a lovely, light gallery space on big canvases, on little foamex boards and in proper frames was a joy and hopefully signalled to group members that their work, their words and pictures, their creativity are valued and important. I feel this exhibition really spoke to people and struck a chord, particularly with those who may have, at some point in their lives, experienced mental health struggles themselves.

MICHELLE BRACE

Project Facilitator

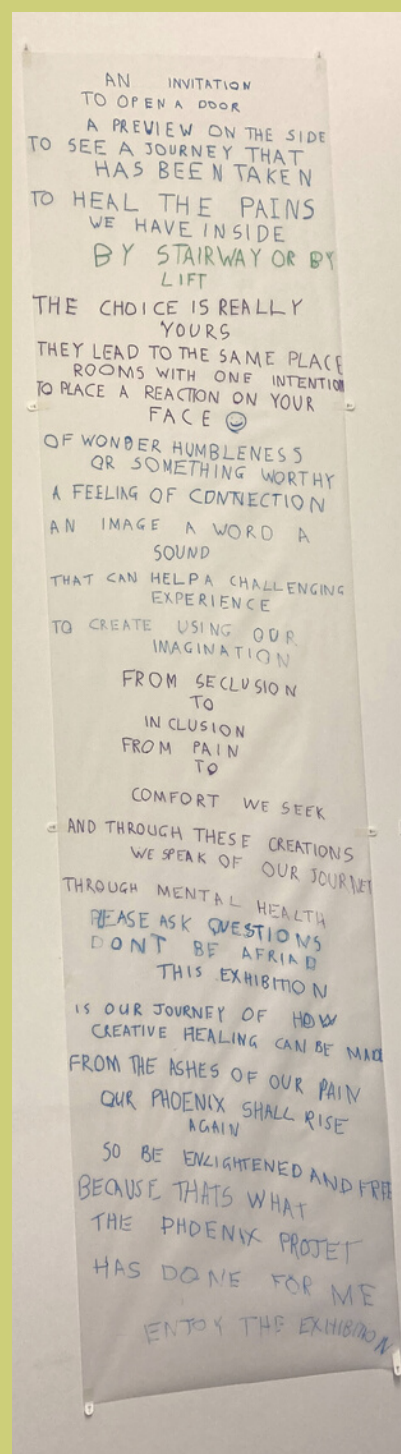
This past year has been a difficult one for everyone but I'm so proud of how much we achieved and how the group continued to be creative and supportive. The summer exhibition was a highlight and something I think we definitely want to do again, from the vast amount of work that was created, to the production team setting up the gallery.

In September I facilitated a **Digital Skills** drop-in clinic which adapted to individual needs every week. It really highlighted the digital divide, with issues ranging from banking apps to online accounts.

CAITLIN WHITTAKER

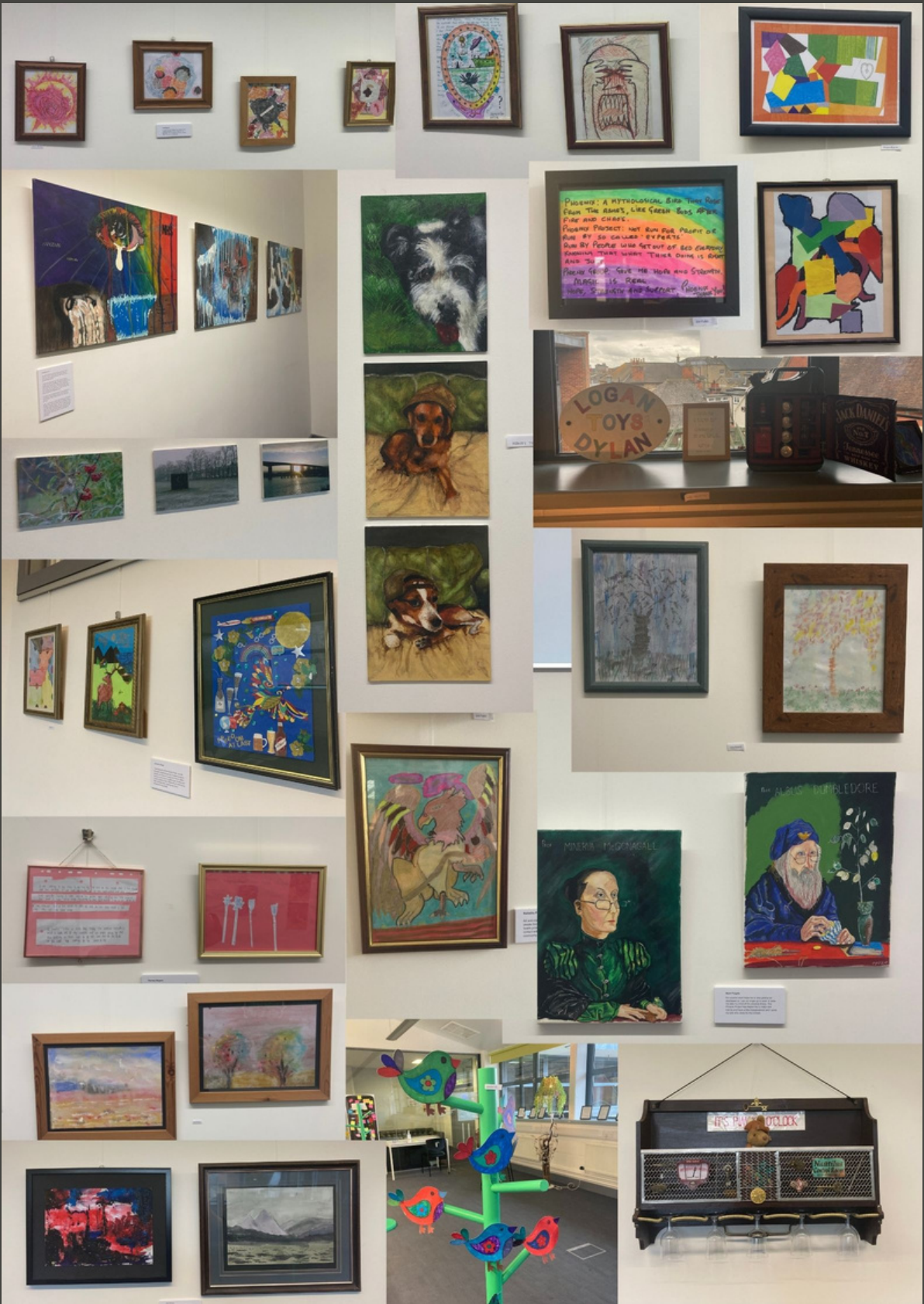
Technical Support and Project Facilitator

Jeremy's Poem



ARTWORKS FROM THE PHOENIX PROJECT EXHIBITION

August 2021 at Suffolk County Library



My name is Treacy and I am blessed to hold three roles within the Phoenix Project. Firstly as chairperson of the trustees, secondly as a volunteer and thirdly as a member of the phoenix project. Whilst I really enjoy being chair of the trustees, for me the most important of my roles are as a member and volunteer. As a member and volunteer I feel privileged to be part of an all inclusive group, a family. Other members and volunteers make me feel a part of something very special. Because of the support I receive from those at the project, I know that whether it is a good day or a bad day I will be accepted and supported.

I have been with the phoenix project for six years now and it has become a very important part of my life. The Phoenix Project offers help, support and friendship - we are a project that welcomes anyone who comes through our doors. Along with help, support and advice we offer a very reasonably priced nourishing hot meal on a Friday which is served at 12 and hope to restart our Phoenix Friends group on alternate Tuesdays 11-1 in the near future. Several times a year we also offer different courses from information and technology to arts/crafts and music to mention a few. Covid has had a profound effect on everyone but especially on those with mental health conditions. During lockdown we were unable to meet up as usual but kept in touch with members through zoom, phone calls, texts and when possible socially distanced meet-ups. I look forward to many more years of being not only a trustee but a volunteer and member of the Phoenix Project.

TREACY

Chairperson of the trustees, volunteer and member

I am extremely proud of True Thoughts Radio, and everything that we have achieved over the years - hundreds of radio shows and confidence, stories and positive sharing of experiences to help others in recovery or just a way to remind ourselves we are not alone.

When Donna asked me last year if I would like to be a trustee for Phoenix, I leapt at the opportunity. I was sure I could help bring ideas, partners and potential funding ideas to the table. I love the Phoenix club, the team, the people that come, and the ethos. Bringing people together, eating, talking, creating things, supporting our wellbeing, generally having fun etc whilst also being able to open our hearts to each other when we need to, well, it all sounded good to me.



Lockdown was obviously an extremely challenging time for everyone, the club wasn't open, projects were not running, so everyone should feel proud to just get through this really difficult time, we all missed each other and had to navigate a new world.

But, for some time, there were surprising and unexpected positives! Winston is a brilliant artist, a writer and a radio presenter, lockdown meant he was stuck in a flat in Ipswich and not able to get to all his weekly appointments such as, church, the club, the library etc. This was really testing, so we would make sure that we visited Winston regularly to check up and take food round.

One day I was at home working when I got a call from an unknown answer, I picked up and to my enormous surprise it was WINSTON! He had managed to get a phone, get some credit, and make a call - this was an absolute first and I was so excited to tell Caitlin, Donna & John. Well, it wasn't long before Winston had not only nailed the art of calling, but he was in full swing with sending a text! It's hard to express how exciting this is, especially because at some level this is all so normal to many people, but it is very intimidating if you haven't had to do it before.

Many of you know that Winston is a radio addict! He listens all day, including many of the local shows on BBC Suffolk, but a few in particular are his favourites - Foz and Nick Risby, who does the late show - well, before too long Winston had learnt to text these shows and be able to request music - Nick loved getting messages from Winston and even had him a few times choose the FAB FIVE tracks for the nights show.

I see this as one of the great outcomes of a miserable time, making Winston more in touch, even though he was still stuck at home. Winston even managed to teach himself how to take photos on the phone and record the songs that he had written! Well done Winston - we are all proud of you!

CAD TAYLOR

Trustee and supporter



A LOCKDOWN SUCCESS STORY

INCOME RECEIVED FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/2021



Charity no. 1153748

Suffolk Community Foundation - Local Connections	£2,500
Suffolk Community Foundation - Reviving Our Communities	£5,000
Ipswich Borough Council - Community Cash	£2,500
People's Health Trust - Active Communities	£15,580
TOTAL	£25,580

Thank you to all our funders for their support.

