



**Connecting Creatively to the Landscape**  
*Nature based activity guide for Care Homes*



Connecting creatively to the  
landscape of the Wye Valley AONB and Forest of Dean



**mindSCAPE** is a Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) project, funded by the Big Lottery (2014-2018), then Arts Council England (2019-21) and led and delivered by Artspace Cinderford. The mindSCAPE project aims to improve the well-being of people with dementia and their carers by connecting them to the landscape in a creative way.



Through the Heritage Lottery Funded Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme, the mindSCAPE model is being delivered in care home settings. This resource guide has been produced through the Foresters' Forest programme. It includes ten, easy-to-follow practical activities as well as important considerations for a manager or activity co-ordinator to plan, develop, implement or deliver a mindSCAPE activity in their residential care home.

The booklet is based on hands-on experience and learning from those who have:

- engaged in the activity, e.g. participants with dementia and their carers
- delivered the activities, e.g. commissioned artists and creative facilitators
- organised, planned, developed and implemented the activities in the Forest of Dean since 2014, e.g managers and volunteers.

Participating in a nature based creative activity is not about focusing on the finished product. It is to be seen as an exploration and adventure - an opportunity to allow the freedom of expression. Therefore, it is essential the person delivering or supporting the activity does not 'manage' or 'control' the participants' creativity. A successful activity is where those engaging in the activity are able to freely explore and 'find their flow' in the process of being creative.

**"In a care home it's an opportunity for someone to reduce boredom. Boredom is a real issue for people with dementia - they need to be stimulated." (Carer)**

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## Introduction

Delivering a nature-based activity improves people's emotional well-being. Working as part of a group helps to reduce isolation and there is a wealth of scientific and medical research that shows that the natural environment helps to reduce stress and anxiety levels and improve mobility and fitness.

It also provides a format to deliver person-centred care and achieves a significant number of standards and good practice guidelines that are set out by the National Standards for Clinical Excellence (NICE), the Care Quality Commission and the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

### **For example: Quality Standard 4: Dementia: Independence and Wellbeing (QS30):**

“It is important that people with dementia can take part in leisure activities during their day that are meaningful to them. People have different interests and preferences about how they wish to spend their time. People with dementia are no exception but increasingly need the support of others to participate. Understanding this and how to enable people with dementia to take part in leisure activities can help maintain and improve quality of life.”

Research shows people benefit from participating in arts-based activities. Evidence reveals these activities can help to:

- enhance the person's sense of self
- improve their mood and mobility
- facilitate social contact with others
- promote self confidence
- unleash unknown artistic talents!

**“Artwork provides a shared conversation piece. He is very proud of what he has done – he shows people who visit what he has achieved.” (Carer)**

## **Important Considerations**

A successful activity; a) meets the needs of those participating in the activity such as the clients and those supporting the clients such as volunteers and, b) fulfils the vision and objectives of the care home.

Therefore, before you deliver any activities, have you thought about the following issues:

- Funding – have you adequate funding to pay for materials?
- Co-ordinating – who will plan the activities that are to be delivered?
- Scheduling – will the activity be delivered at the same time every week or month?
- Decision-making – who will lead the activity?
- Reporting – is there a responsibility for the person delivering the activity to report on the participants' level of engagement in the activity?
- Evaluating – who will monitor and evaluate the activity?
- Supporting - who will support the participants during the activity?

**“Be mindful of resistance from staff to the extra work.” (Carer)**

Participants need to feel safe. Therefore, is your care home providing:

- A designated space to deliver the activities that is a safe space where it won't interfere with those who might not want to participate?
- Comfortable chairs for people to sit on and tables for them to use?
- Easy access to a toilet and/or a hand basin?
- Assistants to help the less able to engage in the activity?

**“To be introduced to a creative process has given birth to something creative.” (Carer)**

## mindSCAPE Activity Sheets

You do not need to be artistically talented or qualified to deliver the activities in this Resource Booklet. Furthermore, nearly all of the activities can be delivered indoors. However, this may require additional preparation time to collect natural materials in advance.

### Each activity sheet:

- States whether the activity can be delivered inside the care home, outdoors or both indoors and outdoors.
- Are colour coded to help you choose which activity best suits the season:
  - o Spring = Yellow
  - o Summer = Green
  - o Autumn = Orange
  - o Winter = Pale Blue
- Gives an outline of:
  - o a basic description of the activity
  - o the required ability of the participant
  - o the preparation time needed
  - o the time required to carry out the activity
  - o a shopping list of the materials required to deliver the activity
  - o a step-by-step process on 'how to deliver' the activity
  - o top tips!

It may also be important to practice some of the activities in advance so that you are familiar with the process. This will also mean that you have an example to show people.



# Spring Activities

"This has proved to be a great stress reliever and has enabled me to learn new skills and potentially take up new hobbies."

(mindSCAPE Participant)

# AIR DRYING CLAY BIRDS

These lovely decorated clay birds can be used in a variety of ways, such as mounted on a stick to place in a pot or planter, strung together in a string of bird 'bunting', or mounted onto a board to make a design. Of course any cutter shape could be used as long as the clay shape is big enough to decorate afterwards.

## **Activity rating**

Easy for most people although support may be needed for rolling out the clay.

## **Preparation time - 10 mins**

To lay out materials.

## **Time required for activity - 30 mins plus**

To roll out the clay and stamp patterns into the surface. Extra time needed for drying overnight before optional painting.

## **Shopping list**

- o White air drying clay (see supplier list).
- o Rolling pin.
- o Cookie cutter - (ideally bird shaped).
- o Items to stamp decorative surface - fir cone, fork tines, bark, seed heads.
- o Wire, sticks, string (optional).
- o Acrylic paint and brushes.
- o Trays for drying and storing.
- o Glue gun / strong glue (see supplier list).



# AIR DRYING CLAY BIRDS

## Step by step instructions

1. Roll out the clay, not too thin not too thick (around 5mm if your birds will be free standing but could be thinner if mounted)
2. Stamp out the bird shapes carefully, pulling the shape from the cutter keeping them flat.
3. Lay them onto a tray to work on.
4. Choose items to make textures by pressing into the surface of the clay to perhaps suggest feathers, eyes or beak, for instance a fir cone rolled gently over the surface is lovely for feathers!
5. Leave the clay to dry on the trays overnight
6. Once dry, the birds can be painted with acrylic paint - metallics look great, but they look equally good left plain.
7. If you intend to hang the bird up, remember to make a hole in the top before the clay dries.
8. The birds can be glued onto sticks with a glue gun or strong glue, or small hooks made of wire can be glued onto the back for wall hanging.

## Top tips!

- The birds are particularly appropriate for an Easter themed decoration.
- The clay needs to be kept wrapped to stay moist, but if it does dry too much or a shape isn't as desired it can be re moistened, this of course means they wouldn't survive outside for very long!
- Have some waste pieces of clay to practice on. If it isn't quite how you would like just roll it out and cut again, the clay stays workable for a while.

# DECOUPAGE PLANT POTS

This activity is a great way to recycle plastic plant pots and old magazines. Beautiful plant pots can be made for indoors and out by cutting out shapes and photos from magazines and pasting them onto the plastic pots. This activity provides an opportunity to discuss gardens, seasonal plants and colours and is suitable for any time of year. The decorated pots would be lovely for potting up cuttings from house plants, sowing seeds and planting bulbs.

## **Activity rating**

Easy. Especially suitable for people with limited attention span.

## **Preparation time**

15 minutes – cleaning and drying plant pots and collecting magazines, scissors, PVA glue.

## **Time required for activity**

20 – 60 minutes.

## **Shopping list**

- o Scissors.
- o PVA glue.
- o Paint brushes.
- o Water container for cleaning brushes.
- o Wet wipes/damp flannel.
- o Soil, bulbs, plants (optional).

# DECOUPAGE PLANT POTS

## Step by step instructions

1. Look through old gardening magazines choosing pictures to cut out, thinking about which colours work well together or are appropriate for what the pot will be used for.
2. Cut into fairly small pieces, roughly 2" x 2" maximum. No need to be exact and precise! Assorted shapes and sizes of pieces work best.
3. Paint PVA glue onto the back of the pieces of paper and place onto the pot. Smooth firmly down.
4. Continue adding pieces of paper, overlapping them, until the pot is covered.
5. When you are happy that the decoupage is finished, coat the pot with a final layer of PVA.
6. Leave to dry (a coat of PVA usually takes at least 24 hours).
7. Place a few stones or gravel in the bottom of the plant pot for drainage, add soil, and plant the bulb or cutting, or sow seeds.

## Top Tips!

- Time can be enjoyed sorting pictures into colour piles before glueing onto the pots.
- If larger pieces of paper are used, they are very likely to crinkle when glued onto the pot. This can be fine, but people might want to avoid too many crinkles!
- You might want to leave the pots outside. In this case they would need to be coated with exterior varnish by staff before going outside.



# MONOPRINTING

A collection of seed heads, leaves, flowers, pebbles or shells could provide inspiration for monoprinting. Monoprinting is a technique where only one unique print is made. Many artists have used this technique including Tracy Emin.

The method works by drawing with a pencil on the back of paper that is placed on top of an inked piece of perspex. When pressure is applied (with a pencil, or fingers) the ink will be picked up on the reverse of the paper. Colours can be added by re-inking the perspex and re-laying the paper on top to draw on again.

## **Activity rating**

Suitable for all abilities and ages.

Focus on looking at pattern, textures and colour to encourage those that think they cannot draw!

## **Preparation time 30 minutes**

Time will be needed to collect inspirational natural materials and could be part of an enjoyable walk outside.

Lay out the materials for people to select themselves. Ink up some perspex or other flat non-absorbent material – even a wipeable tray or table top would work!

## **Time required for activity**

30 minutes. 20 minutes clearing up.

This activity can be shortened or lengthened. Clearing up takes a bit of time as monoprinting can be a messy business!

# MONOPRINTING

## Shopping list

- o Water based printing ink.
- o Inking rollers - at least two would be useful.
- o Perspex sheet or thick acetate (optional as a wipeable tray or table top works just as well).
- o Paper.
- o Pencils.
- o Damp flannel or wet wipes to keep hands clean.

## Step by step instructions

1. Assemble inspirational natural pieces and discuss the merits of each.
2. Choose appropriate coloured ink and roll out a thin layer onto the perspex / table top.
3. Place a sheet of paper down on top of the ink - resist touching it as any pressure will cause the ink to transfer.
4. Draw with a pencil onto the paper.
5. Carefully pull the paper away from the ink to reveal the coloured drawing.
6. If desired, roll out a second ink colour and roll out then place the drawing back down (ink facing ink) and add more to the drawing.

## Top Tips!

- Experiment with other drawing implements such as sticks or even forks for multiple lines.
- Using a second colour can add extra depth to your artwork and looks impressive!

# Summer Activities

**"The activity was great fun and relaxing although hard work ha ha!  
Lunch was lovely. We enjoyed spending time outdoors and find everyone  
so friendly and kind."**

**(mindSCAPE Participant)**



# NATURAL NAPKIN RINGS

Natural napkin rings can make a table look beautiful and can be used to mark an occasion, for example a birthday, or Christmas.

## **Activity rating**

Easy. Especially suitable for those people that are partially sighted and with limited dexterity.

## **Preparation time**

10 minutes to gather plant material.

Edible plants that have flexible stems that don't snap easily are the most suitable, for example rosemary, sage or thyme. Be sure to use plants that are non-toxic. Edible plants are safest.

Gather small balls of wool in a range of seasonal colours for fastening the plant stems.

## **Time required for activity**

10 – 30 minutes

## **Shopping list**

- o Plants.
- o Wool.
- o String or raffia.

## **Step by step instructions**

1. Use napkins that are folded and then rolled.
2. Choose plant material.
3. Choose wool, string, raffia and tie it around the joining ends of the plant material or wind it all the way round the ring to decorate (this is also useful if the stems are not too flexible).
4. Wrap the stems around the napkin and tuck in ends as you go. If the stems do snap then a bit of extra support from some tied in wool will keep it all together.

## **Top tips!**

- This activity can be extended into a discussion about perfume and memory. Participants could be encouraged to smell the plants and herbs and talk about memories perhaps of cooking and eating or gardening.
- When napkins are taken to be washed, keep the plant napkin rings to include on a nature table for stimulating discussions on aroma and seasonal plants.

Printing with seasonal fruit and veg can stimulate all sorts of discussions on growing and gardening, holidays and places visited and so on.

Suitable veg should be quite firm so that it doesn't disintegrate too quickly. Good examples include celery – which is good for making waves in a seascape, broccoli - good for trees or sea foam and mushrooms. Potatoes sliced in half are good to draw designs into with a sharp pencil (when printed the lines will be white).

## **Activity rating**

Suitable for all abilities.

## **Preparation time**

5 minutes to slice up the fruit and vegetables.

## **Time required for activity**

15 mins - 60 mins, or for as long as it holds peoples attention.

## **Shopping list**

- o Sharp knife and cutting board (store this safely).
- o Water based printing ink (see supplier list).
- o Something to roll the ink out onto - washable tabletop or a tray.
- o Rollers – preferably two (see supplier list).
- o Seasonal fruit and veg.
- o Paper to print on to.

## Step by Step Instructions

1. Slice up the fruit and veg. Choose the best cross section for shape and pattern.
2. Roll out some ink (not too thinly).
3. Take the veg piece and press onto the ink.
4. Press the inked surface onto the paper.
5. You can stamp more than one print from one inking.
6. Continue to make veg / fruit prints to build up texture, colour and shapes.
7. Discuss what the patterns and shapes resemble.

## Top tips!

- This method of printing could be used for making cards or for decorating paper to wrap gifts or to cut up for bunting or to make seasonal table runners or table napkins.
- When printing, remember, the colours can mingle on the pieces of veg which can be pleasing but if not – simply slice off the end to reveal a nice clean surface.



# FIR CONE BOUQUET

Collecting fir cones and small twigs and branches can be an enjoyable activity. Choose materials in a variety of sizes and colours that can form a decorative seasonal bouquet. Larch branches are particularly useful as the small cones are already attached to pliable twigs that can be loosely twisted around others. You may be lucky and have access to decorative garden shrubs such as corkscrew hazel or willow and eucalyptus.

## Activity rating

Some dexterity will be needed to tie together the different elements and some mobility if collecting from the woodland. Everyone can be involved with the design and decoration.

## Preparation time

Residents and staff could spend some enjoyable time outside collecting fir cones, twigs and branches. 5 minutes will be required to assemble your collected materials.

## Time required for activity

30 - 60 minutes, depending on how elaborate the design becomes.

## Shopping list

- o Coloured or natural twine or black cotton.
- o Additional embellishments such as christmas baubles, beads or ribbon.
- o Secateurs.
- o Scissors.

## Step by step instructions

1. Gather together some twigs and small branches and tie them together at one end with a long piece of string. Keep adding smaller twigs or branches, wrapping and knotting the same piece of string tightly.
2. More layers can be added until the desired bouquet effect is achieved.
3. Once the basic bouquet of twigs is made embellishments can be added such as beads, feathers, shells or more fir cones (tied on with black cotton which is almost invisible).
4. Tie a ribbon or twine loop around the top for hanging or place the bouquet into a large vase or bucket weighed down with a couple of stones.

## Top tips!

- Use as a Christmas decoration by adding some 'bling' or decorative berries and fruits and even fairy lights. Paper stars or snowflakes could also be added. Fir cones could be rolled in glue, or sprayed with gold or silver paint or simply painted with white acrylic paint.
- Paper cut out hearts for a Valentine-themed decoration or Easter eggs, there are endless possibilities! Small bunches could be hung on walls or doors, and really large ones hung outside.

# Autumn Activities

“It is good to have activities that run into each other. He finds it hard to cope with too much change each time.”

(Carer)

# AUTUMN LEAF WINDOW DECORATION

Make a beautiful window decoration using Autumn leaves. Collecting leaves is an activity most can do or have done in the past. The memories of swishing through the fallen leaves could provoke discussions about the colour and the smell at that time of year in woodland.

## **Activity rating**

Easy, although some dexterity may be required when placing leaves onto the sticky backed plastic.

## **Preparation time**

Collecting the leaves can be incorporated into a walk outside (for those that are able). The leaves need to be flat and dry so lay them between sheets of newspaper, lightly weighted down, for a couple of days before the activity takes place.

Pre-cut pieces of sticky backed plastic. You will need two pieces the same size for the top and bottom of each artwork. The leaves will be sandwiched between the two sheets of sticky backed plastic, so be sure to cut two pieces, the same size, for the top and bottom of each artwork.

## **Shopping list**

- o Transparent sticky backed plastic.
- o Masking tape or cellotape.
- o Scissors.

## Step by Step Instructions

1. Pull one edge of the backing paper on one piece of film back. With the sticky side up fasten the top two corners on the table top with small pieces of tape.
2. Gently pull the paper backing right off and stick the bottom two corners to the table or onto paper to give a clearer view. This will give you a sticky piece of plastic facing up.
3. Arrange the leaves on the plastic to make a formal pattern such as a wreath shape, or more randomly to suggest the woodland floor. You might want to have a 'dry run' on some plain paper first.
4. When satisfied with the design, take the other piece of sticky backed plastic the same size and pull back one edge of the paper backing as before. Stick the sticky sides together at the top.
5. Carefully pull the paper backing down with one hand and smooth the plastic down with the other hand. Keep pressing the plastic down around the leaves as you go.
6. Once the paper is removed, go over the laminated piece with your fingers to push the two sticky plastic sheets together. Work from the middle to the edge to push out any air bubbles encasing the leaves.
7. If desired the plastic could be cut into a large leaf shape, tree shape or into geometric shapes.

## Top Tips!

- It might be useful to have a practice on a smaller scale first. You could make a bookmark or even a small brooch.
- The finished pieces could be taped to the window to allow the light through to show off the colours and patterns of the leaves, or made into a seasonal bunting perhaps adding tassels or prints and even pieces of writing or poems.

# MAKING TASSELS

Tassels are fun to make and can be used as decorations in their own right, or to embellish other items – people can even attach them to their wheelchairs or frames!

They can be multi coloured, constructed with natural materials and can even be embellished with fir cones or shells.

## Activity rating

Easy.

## Preparation time

15 minutes to make cardboard templates and to assemble wool and ribbons.

You might want to wind wool into smaller balls for ease of handling.

## Preparation time

15 minutes.

Make your card templates in advance; use a piece of rectangular cardboard, and cut two slits in the bottom of one of the short sides (cut the slits about 2cm long – see illustration).

Assemble wool and ribbons (you might want to wind wool into smaller balls for ease of handling).

## Time required for activity

20 to 60 minutes.

## Shopping list

- o Cardboard for making templates.
- o Wool and ribbon in a range of thicknesses and colours.
- o Scissors.
- o Bodkin (blunt needle with a large eye).
- o Decorative bits – beads, shells, fir cones (optional).

## Step by step instructions

1. Choose your first piece of wool, a thicker piece is ideal as you want to make a thick first layer as central core for the tassel.

2. Take your template, and start by inserting the end of your piece of wool into one of the slits on the card at the bottom of the card template to hold the yarn firm.

3. Wrap the wool, lengthways, across the width of the template (see images) taking care not to pull too tightly, avoiding bending the card template as you wrap.

4. When you have finished winding the wool around the template (or when you want to change wool colour) secure the end of the piece of wool in the second slit on the template (cut off any unwanted remainder).



5. Repeat this process, adding further layers of wool until pleased with the thickness and colour combinations (you can experiment with different colours and different thicknesses of wool, the tassel can be thick and chunky or willowy and elegant and everything in between!)

6. When you have finished wrapping your wool layers, thread your bodkin with a fresh piece of strong wool. Pass the bodkin behind the layers of wool at the top of the template (the top is the end of the template without the slits in). Then, unthread the bodkin, and tie the ends of the wool together firmly to gather the layers together (see images above). The loose ends will provide something to hang the tassel with afterwards.

7. Once the layers of wool are tied off at the top of the template (as described above), remove the ends of the wool from the slits. Then cut across all the loops of yarn at the bottom of the template.

8. Remove the tassel from the card template.

9. Take a fresh piece of wool (choose a contrasting colour if you wish) to make the 'neck' of the tassel.

10. Position the end of the piece of wool just below the top of the tassel and wrap repeatedly around the tassel. Continue wrapping until the neck is as thick as you would like, then, to finish, thread the end of the wool with the bodkin, and pass the thread back through the neck a few times to secure.

11. You might want to trim the bottom of the tassel to make it nice and even.

## Top tips!

- Tassels can make a great addition to bunting or make tassel tie-backs for curtains. Beads and other decorations can be added for an opulent look!

# Winter Activities

**“I am able to settle into these sessions and remain for the whole time. Sometimes I have to leave activities after only a short time. Not with this.”**

**(mindSCAPE Participant)**

## Herringbone Stitch

Buttonhole Stitch, when stitches are worked closer together it's blanket stitch

Chain Stitch

Feather Stich

Looking in the garden, discussing the colours of the seasons and finding inspiration in books and magazines, can be a great starting point to this activity.

Many older people, may have enjoyed doing embroidery in the past - but stitching with thick wool and ribbon could be new. Sticking can be made accessible by using a loosely woven colourful fabric (such as cross stitch fabric), along with thread, ribbons or wool and large needles. Many can enjoy stitching, including the visually impaired, and remembering sticking can be rewarding.

Embroidered pieces could be framed, or made into personal gifts. You could even embellish with tassels, or join them together to make fabulous bunting!

## **Activity rating**

Easy to moderate. People with limited vision and dexterity can be supported to stitch.

## **Preparation time**

10 – 15 minutes to assemble fabric, scissors, wool and ribbons.

## **Time required for activity**

20 – 60 minutes.

## **Shopping list**

- o Cross stitch fabric.
- o Needles with large eyes – blunt ones are fine, as are bodkins.
- o Ribbons, raffia, string.
- o Wool and fabric – check charity shops, this could be donated by family and friends .

## Step by step instructions

1. Spend some time discussing seasonal colours, perhaps looking in gardening and countryside magazines for inspiration.
2. Choose cross stitch fabric to be decorated with stitching.
3. Cut the fabric to the desired size.
4. Choose wool/ribbon to stitch with and thread the needle.
5. Tie a knot at the end of wool/ribbon.
6. Enjoy stitching! Patterns can be made using plain running stitch as well as more complex stitches. People might like to be reminded of stitches such as chain stitch, herringbone stitch, blanket stitch, (examples of these are included in this guide).
7. Change wool/ribbon and enjoy adding colour and texture to the stitched piece by choosing a variety of thicknesses and finishes – smooth, knobbly or hairy! Your finished piece could be very tactile.

## Top tips!

- This activity can be revisited over a few sessions allowing the piece to develop individually over time. These pieces could then be joined to make beautiful collaborative hanging. Smaller stitched pieces can be made into brooches or even small bags by sewing the sides together.



Making personalised seasonal decorations can appeal to people of any age or ability. Old Christmas baubles are ideal for up-cycling because the loops on the tops of the baubles are perfect for attaching your decorations to trees (or to almost anything else that is in need of a festive make-over!)

### **Activity rating**

Easy. Especially suitable for people with limited attention span.

### **Preparation time**

10 minutes, to assemble your lightweight scraps of material, pva glue scissors and baubles.

### **Time required for activity**

15-60 minutes.

### **Shopping List**

- o Christmas baubles.
- o Scraps of fabric or paper.
- o PVA glue.
- o Paint brushes.

# SEASONAL 3D DECORATIONS



## Step by step instructions

1. Choose materials to cover your baubles. This could be scraps of fabric (eg. cotton, yarn or lace), or patterned paper (eg; wrapping paper or cuttings from magazines).
2. Cut your chosen fabrics into small pieces.
3. Paint glue onto the back of the fabric/paper pieces and place them onto the bauble, overlapping the pieces until the bauble is covered.

## Top tips!

- Use the baubles to decorate a tree, or hang them together in a chain to festoon a window or doorway.
- Why not make some baubles to celebrate other seasonal occasions - for example, Harvest Time or Easter?
- Collect additional items to embellish your baubles with – for example; buttons, bows or diamantes - the choice is yours!

## Guidance for people supporting the activities...

It can be challenging and overwhelming to those who have not participated in a nature or artsbased activity before. Therefore, it is important to have at least two people to support a group of six participants.

### **At the start of the session, ensure the participants you are supporting:**

- Understand the aims of the activity – you may need to translate the instructions into their own language or terms of reference.
- Are able to access resources, materials and equipment to fully engage in the activity. If possible, assist them in clearing away their resources and materials at the end of the activity, thereby, leaving the area clean and tidy.
- Have every opportunity to do their own work, but do let the person leading the activity know of any difficulties that prevent them from participating fully.
- Feel safe. Follow the care home's policies if you identify any concerns, particularly safeguarding.

### **You have a key role in assisting the person, so please:**

- Ensure you arrive on time at the start of the session.
- Leave your mobile phone switched to vibrate.
- Observe (or if required by the care home - record) the participants' behaviour in the activity and take note of what they achieved (or what provoked any form of agitation or difficulty).
- Know that your presence throughout the duration of the activity is greatly appreciated.

### **“It's all about getting into their world.” (Carer)**

#### **Background**

mindSCAPE evolved from an earlier Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) project called 'Inside Out' which was developed in partnership with the Forestry Commission and designed to allow under-represented groups access to the landscape and work through health issues creatively. These participants included people with mental health issues, physical and mobility issues, visual and hearing impairments, drug and alcohol issues, learning difficulties and those with age related problems and caring roles.

This pioneering project revealed older people (particularly those with dementia and their carers) faced the greatest barriers to participation and were therefore the 'hardest to reach'. The need for a specialist project for people with dementia sparked a consultation process whereby the AONB focused on the barriers people faced and how these could best be overcome. This thorough consultation included over 40 partner organisations, service users and carers and was a key element of the successful 'mindSCAPE' bid to the Big Lottery.

The mindSCAPE model has been adapted for inclusion in the Heritage Lottery funded Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme. It will deliver nature and landscape arts-based activities in residential care settings, in order to reach those who are unable to attend the mindSCAPE project in the Forest of Dean.

# Foresters' Forest Heritage Lottery Funded Landscape Partnership Scheme

“Our forest is a shadow of our past industrial endeavours, our built heritage is being lost, our memories are fading and our knowledge of our past is becoming blurred and grey. We have unique cultural traditions that are in danger of coming to an end as this generation passes. We want to grasp this opportunity to draw a line under a long period of steady decline and loss, to take time to refocus on what makes our Forest, our Community, our Story special. To take time to inspire our youngsters and capture the knowledge and memories of our older generation before we lose that special link with our past.” (Foresters Forest)

Within The Foresters' Forest Heritage Lottery funded Landscape Partnership Scheme, mindSCAPE is working with residents in residential care homes in the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley AONB. It builds on the learning from the mindSCAPE project and records the stories and creative imagery of these residents in order to celebrate, remember and connect to the beauty, history and heritage of the area.

This resource is a step-by-step guide to support those working in residential care homes to deliver activities. It will ensure the learning and experiences from the mindSCAPE project are sustained and replicated in other settings to benefit others.

## Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The Wye Valley AONB is a protected landscape, covering 92 km of the lower reaches of the River Wye from Mordiford to Chepstow, it is one of the finest lowland river landscapes in Britain. The AONB Unit are a small team who work, often in partnerships, to develop and deliver projects which contribute towards the areas natural beauty, and benefit people living in and visiting the landscape. MindSCAPE is one such project, which has been developed to enable people living with dementia and their carers to connect with the landscape in a sociable and creative way.

If you require further details of the mindSCAPE Project, please contact Hannah Elton-Wall at **Artspace Cinderford** on 01594 825 111 (extn 4) or e-mail: [hannah@artspacecinderford.org](mailto:hannah@artspacecinderford.org)

