

# The Network Newsletter: tackling social exclusion in libraries, museums, archives and galleries

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The Network's Website is at [www.seapn.org.uk](http://www.seapn.org.uk) and includes information on courses, good practice, specific socially excluded groups, as well as the newsletter archive.

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## Did you see ...?

### **Information Professional**

The April-May issue<sup>1</sup> includes:

- “Merton opens dementia-friendly library”, brief news-story about Colliers Wood Library<sup>2</sup> [p5]
- David Lindley “Designing the dementia-friendly library”, which outlines recent developments (and also mentions Colliers Wood) [pp42-43]

### **Museums Journal**

The June issue<sup>3</sup> includes:

- Caroline Parry “Be part of the bigger picture”, which argues that programmes to engage young people are more effective if they involve building relationships outside the cultural sector [p6]
- Geraldine Kendall Adams “The age-old issue of how to engage with elderly people”, which looks at work being developed by Age UK<sup>4</sup> (and mentions the positive role that libraries play), and cites the project, “Encountering the Unexpected”, led by the University of Leicester/RCMG<sup>5</sup> [pp12-13]
- Deborah Mulhearn “Just cause”, which looks at what museums are doing to mark the centenary of the 1918 Representation of the People Act [pp20-25].

### **Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance Bulletin**

The Alliance<sup>6</sup> has just published its latest *Bulletin*.

It includes information about:

- The National Alliance for Museums, Health & Wellbeing webinar series:

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<sup>1</sup> Further information at: <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/magazine>.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example: <http://designinglibraries.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=1493>.

<sup>3</sup> Further information at: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal>.

<sup>4</sup> See: *Creative and cultural activities and wellbeing in later life*. Age UK, 2018.

Available to download as a pdf (622.21kb) from:

[https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/health--wellbeing/rb\\_apr18\\_creative\\_and\\_cultural\\_activities\\_wellbeing.pdf](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/health--wellbeing/rb_apr18_creative_and_cultural_activities_wellbeing.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/rcmg/projects/seeing-the-museum-through-the-visitors2019-eyes/departments/museumstudies/rcmg/projects/encounteringtheunexpected/encountering-the-unexpected>.

<sup>6</sup> The Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance “[...] brings together the National Alliance for Arts, Health and Wellbeing and the National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing and involves over 50 leading organisations.” See: <https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/>.

- *Museums, health and wellbeing – methodologies for measuring impact*<sup>7</sup>, presented by Helen Chatterjee and Nuala Morse
  - *Opportunities for arts on prescriptions to improve health inequalities – a health sector perspective*<sup>8</sup>, presented by Byron Johnson-Brown from the Healthy London Partnership
  - *Working with art therapists*<sup>9</sup>, presented by Ali Coles (Lecturer in Art Psychotherapy, University of South Wales and Art Psychotherapist, 2gether NHS Foundation Trust)
  - *Sporting heritage, health and wellbeing*<sup>10</sup>, presented by Justine Reilly from the Sporting Heritage Network
  - *Core principles of social prescribing and its impact on health and wellbeing*<sup>11</sup>, presented by Marie Polley, co-chair of the Social Prescribing Network.
- A link to the DCMS inquiry into social impact of culture, which heard its first evidence<sup>12</sup>
  - A link to the Alzheimer’s Society *Dementia-friendly rural communities guide* [see below]
  - A link to the US report, *Art & well-being: toward a culture of health* [also see below].

### ***Library Journal***

The news-post<sup>13</sup> on 25 May reported on “Five Libraries Take 2018 IMLS Top Honors”.<sup>14, 15</sup>

These are:

- Georgetown Public Library, Texas
- “What set Georgetown apart from the pack, [Director, Eric] Lashley offered, was the exceptional level of trust the library has in the community – and vice versa. ‘We do not have any security gates. In my

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<sup>7</sup> See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQdVOhIV9cU&feature=youtu.be>.

<sup>8</sup> See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnpgwEIQjAc&feature=youtu.be>.

<sup>9</sup> See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZC0DCpU-bvM&feature=youtu.be>.

<sup>10</sup> See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCf42MnyuzY>.

<sup>11</sup> Will be available to download from <https://museumsandwellbeingalliance.wordpress.com/> after 25 Jun 2018.

<sup>12</sup> The session is available to be viewed at: <https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/5abdaa2a-b3f0-4128-8d02-3e956464ba96>.

<sup>13</sup> Christina Vercelletto. “Five Libraries Take 2018 IMLS Top Honors”, *Library Journal*, 25 May 2018, <https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2018/05/industry-news/five-libraries-take-2018-impls-top-honors/>.

<sup>14</sup> IMLS is the Institute of Museum and Library Services, see: <https://www.impls.gov/>.

<sup>15</sup> Source: *LJXpress – Library Journal*, 29 May 2018.

opinion, security gates tell your visitors they can't be trusted.' In 2017, the meeting rooms at Georgetown – where the total population is 67,000 – were used more than 1,600 times, including 'after the library closes and before the library opens. Our policies are patron-centric, not staff-centric,' said Lashley."

- Orange County Library System, Orlando, Florida [OCLS]

"ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages] training. Career Online High School. The lauded Melrose Center for Technology, Innovation, and Creativity. Inspired Children's STEM education. Those are just some of the distinguishing services that landed OCLS on the IMLS short list [...]

Another program that sprung from OCLS staff's determination to address needs specific to their community are the popular sewing classes. Participants are getting jobs with the nearby theme park costume departments and as alteration specialists. To help the influx of new residents into the Orlando area from Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, ESOL classes were expanded to 11 branches."

- Pueblo City-County Library District, Colorado [PCCLD]

"We have worked strategically over the past several years to align our services with the needs of our community,' Jon Walker, executive director of PCCLD, told *Library Journal*. That work has paid off in the form of skyrocketing checkouts, use of digital resources, visits to libraries, and attendance at library-sponsored programs and events. Among those is the All Pueblo Reads series, which attracted more than 39,000 participants in 2017; gang intervention programming with licensed social workers in at-risk neighborhoods; Accessible Avenues services for customers with special needs; and community gardens and a seed lending library. Many others were equally successful.

Yet 'nothing we do is more important than our support for early childhood literacy,' insisted Walker. That support is demonstrated in PCCLD's Supporting Parents with Early Literacy through Libraries, reaching socioeconomically challenged families with early literacy support; a partnership with local schools to automatically issue library cards to students; and an award-winning summer reading program."

- Reading Public Library, Pennsylvania

"Reading, a city of 90,000 people in southeastern Pennsylvania, is one of the poorest in the United States. 'So we offer programs and services to help residents bridge the literacy divide in five areas...basic literacy, civic and social literacy, information literacy, health literacy, and financial literacy,' Bronwen Gamble, Reading Public Library executive director, explained to *Library Journal*.

Reading Public takes its programs, such as 'Returning Citizens' for those coming out of incarceration, outside its walls, including to homeless

shelters. 'By taking library services out into the community, we learn what our residents need, what they dream about, and the stumbling blocks they face,' said Gamble.

As with many places in America, the opioid crisis has hit close to home in Reading. 'After five overdoses and one death inside the main library, rather than wringing our hands, we organized an Opioid Crisis Panel which brought medical personnel, victims' families, and concerned officials together,' said Gamble."

- Rochester Public Library, Minnesota

"Removing barriers by serving as a welcoming space is the mission of Rochester Public Library. "We strive to listen and respond, so that every member of our community has the opportunity to succeed,' said library director Audrey Betcher."

### ***School Library Journal***

Just published in the June 2018 issue is Hiten Samtani "Librarians Collaborate to Support English Language Learners and Their Families"<sup>16</sup>, which looks at:

- Publishing material to fill community needs:

"When Seattle's Somali population sought more materials to help parents and children communicate in their native language and share their culture and customs, the library set out to develop a pilot project that would allow for family learning and promote cultural understanding—then possibly be scaled for wider use."

- Identifying – and trying to fill – language gaps:

"In New York State, 65 percent of the ELL students are native Spanish speakers, state data show. Librarians can tap a wealth of Spanish-language materials to cultivate their communication and language-acquisition skills [...] But nearly 50,000 students in the state are native speakers of Chinese, Bengali, Russian, and Arabic, languages that are less common and more difficult to find."

- The role of makerspaces in boosting English language learners' confidence (thereby encouraging them to persevere)

- The importance of grassroots activity:

"Miriam Lang Budin worked in the children's department at the Chappaqua Library before retiring in December. She recalls a Hindi-language book that was written and self-published by a father in the community. The book circulated throughout the

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<sup>16</sup> See: <https://www.slj.com/2018/06/collection-development/librarians-collaborate-support-english-language-learners-families/>.

Westchester Library System far more than she originally thought it would.”<sup>17</sup>

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## **Tackling social and digital exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government**

### ***Community Life Survey focus on: Diversity 2016/2017***

DCMS has just published this latest report<sup>18</sup> from their Community Life Survey:

“The Community Life Survey is a household self-completion study of adults aged 16+ in England. The survey is a key evidence source on social cohesion, community engagement and social action.

Results are based on data collected between August 2016 and March 2017” [p1]

The report looks particularly at social cohesion; volunteering; civic engagement; and loneliness; here are some of the headline findings.

#### **Social cohesion**

- Chatting to neighbours

“Respondents were asked how often they chat to their neighbours more than just to say hello. Overall, 73% of respondents said they chat to their neighbours at least once a month.

The largest differences were seen between age groups, with older people more likely to chat to their neighbours than younger people. Only 46% of 16-24 year olds said they chat with their neighbours regularly compared with 88% of those aged 75 or older.

There were some differences between ethnic groups, with White people being more likely to say they chat to their neighbours than Asian people (74% compared with 67% respectively).

People who lived in the less deprived Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintiles, were more likely to say they chat to their neighbours at least once a month than those who lived in the more deprived quintiles.” [p3]

- Agreeing that people from different backgrounds get on well together

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<sup>17</sup> Source: *LJXpress – Library Journal*, 19 Jun 2018.

<sup>18</sup> *Community Life Survey focus on: Diversity 2016/2017*. DCMS, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/705848/Community\\_Life\\_Survey\\_Focus\\_Report\\_Main\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/705848/Community_Life_Survey_Focus_Report_Main_Report.pdf).

“Respondents were asked if they agreed that their local area is place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Overall 81% of people either said they either definitely or tended to agree.

Asian people were more likely to agree than White and Black people (85% compared with 81% and 77% respectively).

Older people were more likely to agree than younger people. 88% of those aged 75 or older and 84% of those aged 65-74 agreed. In contrast, 78% of those aged 16-24 and 25-34 agreed.” [p4]

- Belonging to local neighbourhood

“Respondents were asked whether they felt they belonged to their immediate neighbourhood. Overall, 62% of people said they felt very or fairly strongly that they belonged to their immediate neighbourhood.

Feeling of belonging to the neighbourhood appears to increase with age. Only 48% of 16-24 year olds felt they belong to their local neighbourhood compared with 76% of over 75s” [p5]

- Belonging to Britain

“Respondents were asked how strongly they felt they belonged to Britain. Overall, 85% of respondents said they either felt very or fairly strongly that they belong to Britain [...]

Feelings of belonging to Britain increased with age, ranging from 79% of 16-24 year olds and 78% of 25-34 year olds, to 96% among those aged 75 and over.” [p6]

## **Volunteering**

- Formal volunteering

“Formal volunteering is defined as providing unpaid help for clubs or groups. Overall, 22% of respondents engaged in formal volunteering regularly (at least once a month) [...]

Asian people and people from a Mixed ethnic group were less likely to regularly volunteer than White people. Black people were also more likely to volunteer regularly than Asian people. A quarter (25%) of Black people and 23% of White people said they regularly volunteered compared with 17% of Asian and 16% of people with Mixed ethnicity. It should be noted that rates of *informal* volunteering, such as helping friends and neighbours, do not differ significantly between ethnic groups [...]

Those aged 25-34 were least likely to volunteer formally, with only 15% volunteering at least once a month, compared with 32% of 65-74 year olds. This may be linked to greater work and childcare commitments among this age group.” [p7 – emphasis theirs]

- Informal volunteering

“Respondents were also asked about informal volunteering. This includes giving help to people outside of the family such as doing their shopping, giving advice, or helping with household tasks [...]

Women were more likely to have informally volunteered at least monthly than men, at 30% and 24% respectively.

People aged 65 or over were more likely to informally volunteer than those aged 25-64. People aged 16-24 were also more likely to informally volunteer than those aged 25-49. Those aged 65-74 had the highest rates of informal volunteering at 39%, compared with 21% of 25-34 year olds.” [p8]

### **Civic engagement**

- Influence over decisions affecting the local area

“Respondents were asked if they agree that they personally can influence decisions affecting their local area. Overall, 27% either tended to or definitely agreed.

People from Black, Asian and Mixed ethnic groups were more likely to agree that they can influence local decisions than White people. Black people were most likely to agree, with 44% saying they agreed compared with 25% of White people.” [p9]

- Civic participation

“Respondents were asked about civic participation in the last 12 months. This includes contacting a local official, attending a public meeting or signing a petition. Overall, 41% of people had engaged in civic participation.” [p10]

### **Loneliness**

The overall summary was: “Respondents were asked how often they feel lonely. Overall, 5% of people said they felt lonely often or always and 23% said they never felt lonely.” [p11]

This is followed by a breakdown of the figures by gender; ethnicity; age; long-term limiting illness or disability; region; and Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile. These also give some interesting insights, eg:

“People who lived in the North West were more likely to say they never felt lonely than people who lived in the East Midlands, London or the South East.” [p13]

As the Overview concludes:

“This nationally representative survey provides data on behaviours and attitudes to inform policy and action in these areas. The survey provides data of value to a range of users, including government departments, public bodies, external stakeholders and the public.” [p2]

This report includes some valuable background data.<sup>19</sup>

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## Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

### ***I am connected: new approaches to supporting people in later life online***

This new report<sup>20</sup> from Good Things Foundation follows nearly a year’s research for the Centre For Ageing Better to try and understand the underlying reasons for older people’s digital behaviour.

The research looked in particular at:

- “What are the benefits of personal use of the internet for older people, and can these benefits be obtained offline, or through a friend or family member?
- What prevents and enables people in later life from making meaningful, sustained use of the internet?
- What characteristics distinguish the older online and offline populations, and what makes the difference at an individual level?
- Why do some older people continue to choose to not use the internet, and what strategies - if any - might encourage them to do so?
- With non-users becoming increasingly rare, how can digital inclusion practice remain economical in the short to medium term?
- What mechanisms can be used to identify at what point a change in personal circumstances turns the internet from an optional extra to a lifeline?” [p4]

The findings take a refreshing stance on digital inclusion:

“National survey data shows that most older non-users cite a lack of interest to explain their behaviour. This position is not necessarily straightforward: lack of interest may obscure an underlying lack of confidence, or arise from misinformation about the risks and benefits of the internet. But in other cases, lack of interest may be a reasonable and well-informed choice. One of the clearest findings of our research is that older people with good social resources and little need for health and public services are able to live – and thrive – without access to the internet. It is derogatory and unhelpful to describe them as facing ‘motivational barriers’, and to assume that they could be persuaded to go

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<sup>19</sup> Source: *Heritage Update*, 370, 17 May 2018.

<sup>20</sup> James Richardson. *I am connected: new approaches to supporting people in later life online*. Good Things Foundation, 2018. Available to download as a pdf (3298 kb) from: [https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/research-publications/cfab\\_report\\_v4.pdf](https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/research-publications/cfab_report_v4.pdf).

online if only the right message or incentive can be found: digital is a means to an end, and older people can and do achieve these ends in other ways.” [pp4-5]

However:

“Policymakers and practitioners need to recognise the difference between this unproblematic non-use of the internet and true digital exclusion: non-use which accompanies and exacerbates other forms of social exclusion and disadvantage. When major life changes such as bereavement, retirement and redundancy impact older people’s wellbeing and social resources, the internet can change from an optional extra into a vital lifeline.” [p5]

The report’s main findings are challenging, especially to those of us involved in providing taster and other short courses, in that:

“Helping older people to get online requires intensive, tailored support, and an open-ended time commitment, especially for those experiencing low confidence and facing multiple barriers and disadvantages. This kind of provision may not come cheap, but it is a far better investment than the false economy of short-term ‘tasters’ and ‘one size fits all’ courses. By damaging older people’s motivation and confirming their assumptions that the internet is irrelevant, these approaches may be worse than doing nothing at all. Digital inclusion for older people should not be about high volume, low cost-per-head programmes that focus on specific skills as measures of success, but on focused activities aimed at improving the motivation and perceived value that creates independent, self-guided learners.

Finally, older people themselves should be put in control of their digital destinies. We observed peer-support digital inclusion models that utilise the skills and energy of self-supporting communities; these approaches provide an exciting and underexplored avenue for action research.” [p5]

It looks at the needs and motivation of four types of older people, whom the report calls:

- The Engaged (who, for example, “Believe the internet is useful to them personally/ Believe that they are capable of getting online, or improving existing skills” [p34])
- The Disheartened (who, for example, “Believe that the internet is too complicated for them to learn/Concerned and confused about online risks” [p36])
- The Uninterested (who, for example, have: “Little current need to use public or health services regularly/Prefer to find information and communicate offline/Do not see the internet as valuable or relevant to them” [p37])
- The Transitional (whose characteristics include: “Recent major life changes, e.g. retirement, ill health or bereavement/Sudden higher need for health and public services/No or very restricted internet use, limited to

things like social media/Changing personal circumstances may cause current use to lapse” [p38])

The report then looks at a number of key issues, including:

- Connecting older people to digital learning
- Social prescription: “Social prescription – especially the community signposting model – is an effective way to engage older people who could benefit from digital as a result of poor physical or mental health, or transitional circumstances [...] Prescriptions work best if they are made to socially inclusive activities with an immediate appeal, in which digital support can be embedded as appropriate.” [p41]
- The needs of older job-seekers
- The importance of spreading the word by word-of-mouth

This is an important piece of work which deserves to be widely read, especially by those of us attempting to engage older people digitally.<sup>21</sup>

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## Health & Wellbeing issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

### ***Art and wellbeing: toward a culture of health***

This report<sup>22</sup> has been produced by the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture [USDAC] which:

“[...] is a network of artists, activists, and allies inciting creativity and social imagination to shape a culture of equity, empathy, and belonging [...]

The USDAC is not a government agency” [p72]

The report is in four sections:

1. “Introducing a culture of health”, which looks at definitions, key resources, and an introduction to this field of work, including the larger social context for a culture of health.
2. “Approaches to art for well-being” – this includes “Description and examples of key types of art and well-being work, including: Public and visual Art; Poetry and Narrative; Music; Dance; Theater; Media and Photography; and Story-Gathering.” [p1]

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<sup>21</sup> Source: *Good Things Foundation News*, Jun 2018.

<sup>22</sup> *Art and wellbeing: toward a culture of health*. U.S. Department of Arts and Culture, 2018. Available to download as a pdf (8059 kb) from: <https://usdac.us/cultureofhealth> (NB you need to register on the website to download the report).

3. Three case studies: “These case studies focus on three recipients of ‘Culture of Health’ grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Youth Radio: ‘Remix Your Life;’ Mural Arts Project: ‘Voices: Giving Voice To Those With Lived Experience About Successful Reentry;’ and ‘San Francisco Mime Troupe: Toward An Inclusive Culture Of Health Through Engagement, Satirical Theater And Song.’”
4. Building the right relationships, focusing on partnerships, ethics, values, caring, and selfcare.

The report has examples from across the English-speaking world, including from the UK (eg the work of Entelechy Arts in Lewisham<sup>23</sup>; the Bristol Reggae Orchestra<sup>24</sup>; Clive Parkinson’s *Arts and health blog*<sup>25</sup>). It refers to a number of (mainly US) museum activities.

Useful background report, especially to catch a glimpse of work going on elsewhere.

## Health & Wellbeing issues – Other Agencies

### ***Dementia-friendly rural communities guide ...***

This new guide<sup>26</sup> begins by outlining the scale of the dementia challenge across the UK, and then focuses on why rural communities matter:

“Often people stop doing the things they enjoy in their local community as their dementia progresses, due to lack of understanding, stigma and inaccessible environments [...<sup>27</sup>] This is compounded for people living in a rural community as there is increased difficulty accessing transport, health and social care services and support. The double impact of living with dementia and rural isolation also has a negative effect on people’s quality of life and health.” [p8]

It then looks at the scale of the dementia challenge in rural communities, particularly, in addition:

“After speaking to people affected by dementia living in rural areas we found they face additional challenges below:

<sup>23</sup> See: <http://entelechartyarts.org/about/>.

<sup>24</sup> See: <https://bristolreggaeorchestra.com/>.

<sup>25</sup> See: <http://artsforhealthmmu.blogspot.com/>.

<sup>26</sup> *Dementia-friendly rural communities guide: a practical guide for rural communities to support people affected by dementia*. Alzheimer’s Society, 2018. Available to download as a pdf (5450 kb) from: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-05/Dementia-friendly%20rural%20communities%20guide.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> See: *Building dementia-friendly communities: a priority for everyone*. Alzheimer’s Society, 2013. Available to download as a pdf (1540 kb) from: [https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrate/downloads/building\\_dementia\\_friendly\\_communities\\_a\\_priority\\_for\\_everyone.pdf](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrate/downloads/building_dementia_friendly_communities_a_priority_for_everyone.pdf).

- difficulty accessing health services at different stages of dementia
- lack of appropriate transport and stopping driving
- loneliness and social isolation; little carer or dementia-specific support services
- emergency situations
- farming environments.” [p13]

and goes into some depth with each of these challenges. For example, in relation to loneliness and isolation:

- “Reduction of local services such as regular buses, pubs, shops and post offices, limits the daily social contact for people in rural areas.
- The cost and availability of wifi, broadband and a reliable mobile phone signal in rural areas can make it harder to stay in contact with family and friends, increasing loneliness and isolation.” [p18]

The guide then looks at practical steps that rural communities can take to ensure that people with dementia are supported. For example:

#### “Arts, culture, leisure and recreation

- Set up a walk and talk group that encourages people with dementia and their carers to meet up and get some exercise.
- Ask any arts venues like museums or galleries to give dementia-friendly tours or have them come to you.
- Request the mobile library, sports clubs or leisure centre visit your village to hold outreach sessions in any community spaces.
- Adapt local activities like knitting, swimming and social networks to be inclusive for people affected by dementia.
- Offer support for gardening either through a gardening club, the local allotment or through local horticulture charities.” [p30]

It concludes with a collection of brief case studies; information about useful resources and organisations; links to “[...] a series of guides for different sectors including practical advice and guidance to help them become more dementia friendly” [p47]; links to broader organisations operating in rural areas; and a list of references.

This guidance includes important practical tips on how to develop dementia-friendly rural communities – recommended.

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

DCMS = Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

ESOL = English for speakers of other languages

IMLS = Institute of Museum and Library Services

STEM = Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

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This Newsletter was compiled by John Vincent, and all items are written by him, unless otherwise stated. Please send any comments or items for the next issue to:

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