



# LEICESTER AGEING TOGETHER project book



**Leicester Ageing Together** is part of a nationwide Ageing Better programme with a £78 million investment of National Lottery funding from the Big Lottery Fund.

The programme aims to support people in later life at risk of or experiencing social isolation, loneliness or poor wellbeing.

Working in conjunction with older people, the City Council and Health partners, Leicester Ageing Together, consists of 23 projects that, over the course of four years, will have involved 17 voluntary sector delivery partners.

[www.leicesterageingtogether.org.uk](http://www.leicesterageingtogether.org.uk)

### **Beauty and Utility Arts / Crafting Relationships.**

In July 2018 Beauty and Utility Arts changed name to Crafting Relationships, as it says so much more about our work.

Crafting Relationships is a small social enterprise with a 100% values based approach to tackling social issues.

Our work is a combination of:

Direct delivery with primary aged children and older community members, independently and together.

Tailored support for other organisations developing and enhancing their own value based approaches.

[www.craftingrelationships.co.uk](http://www.craftingrelationships.co.uk)

**EMH Homes** have been providing good quality affordable homes to individuals and families in the East Midlands since 1946.

[www.emhhomes.org.uk](http://www.emhhomes.org.uk)

Since Spring 2016 Crafting Relationships have run a wide variety of creative workshops for older community members in Leicester, some with local children and young people.

All have involved creative talent from across the city and a little beyond. Our thanks to the following artists and writers for their energy, commitment and ability to spark joy: Mandeep Dhadialla, Kate Wiltshire, Louise Katerega, Katie Sone, Alison Chapman, Anna Greyer and Clare Miles. All artists are referred to by their first names within this book.

Many thanks also to:

Emh homes Scheme Co-ordinators:

Sejal Patel, Jayshree Palmer, Khrisna Bhatt and Kam Gohil

Emh homes Supported Housing managers across the life of the project:

Sally Taylor, Heather McAteer and Maria Ward

The LAT core team and other delivery partners.



Finally, a huge thank-you to each individual who came along to one of our sessions, and joined in with heart and soul.

Sadly the disclaimer 'I'm not very good at art' is one we've heard many times before, and this piece of work was no different. We heard many stories from people in their later years who hadn't done anything creative, just for the joy of it, for a long time... and sometimes ever.

You have inspired us as much as we hope we have inspired you.

The following pages are a journey through a selection of our mini Crafting Relationships projects over the last couple of years to accompany a more detailed report. If you would like a copy of the report, to know more about our work, or talk about a project, please get in touch via the website.

Many of the people we work with ask for no photographs, so we concentrate on busy hands and artwork.

The majority of community members we worked with did not speak English as their first language. Quotes have been kept as made.



An introduction to bookbinding and printmaking with Mandeep, older community members and young people from Focus Charity on the EXPLORE leaders' programme, who supported with some of the organising tasks.

Each of the sessions led creatively towards making up individual accordion books with pockets to hold their mini artworks. Older community members and young people from Focus paired up and shared conversations as well as supporting each other to make handprinted bookcovers, origami stationery holders and drawing self portraits.

How did taking part make you feel?

**more confident**

**challenging and fun**

**happy**



Mandeep followed these sessions with a group of ladies at emh homes Scarborough Court, exploring the journeys they had taken from India or Africa over to the UK and finally Leicester.



## Citizen Street with Kate, older community members and Jame'ah Girls Academy

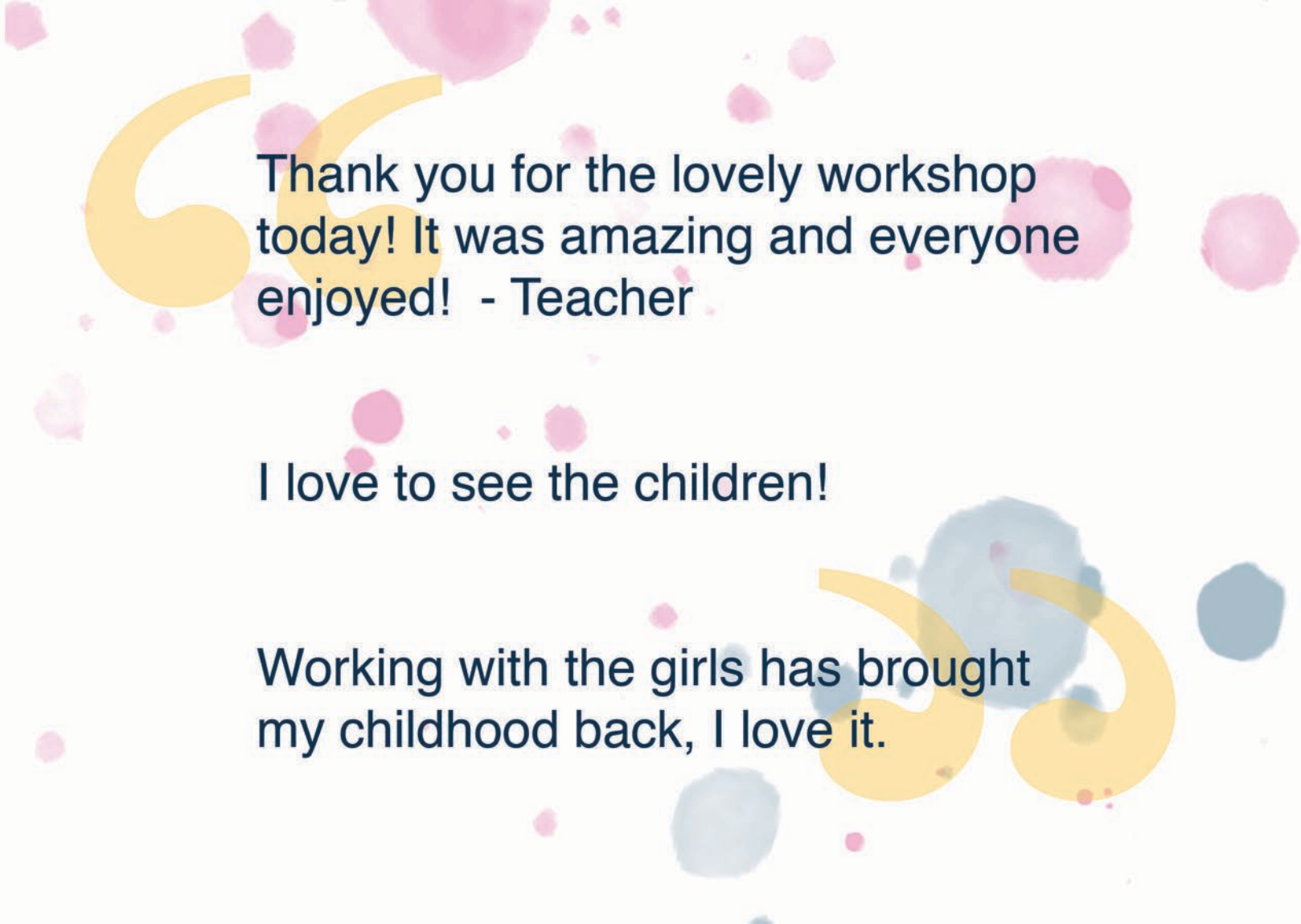
Using British Values as a starting point, Kate worked with pupils and guests to think about what makes up our street for all the community.

Working in small groups, lists were made and sketches drawn.

Everyone's ideas then went down on to a giant roll of wallpaper to make a beautiful road anyone would be happy to live on, bursting with inspirational quotes.







Thank you for the lovely workshop today! It was amazing and everyone enjoyed! - Teacher

I love to see the children!

Working with the girls has brought my childhood back, I love it.

After impressing with their creativity, Katherine launched a competition at Jame'ah Girls Academy asking them to design a new logo for the Crafting Relationships project.

There was a clear winner and we use the new design all the time now!





Mandeeep has run several introduction to, and follow up sessions on printmaking with tenants at emh homes, Wakerley Court.





In Summer 2017 writer Katie Sone worked with elders at the Highfields Community Centre and pupils from Al Aqsa school, writing and recording a radio play.

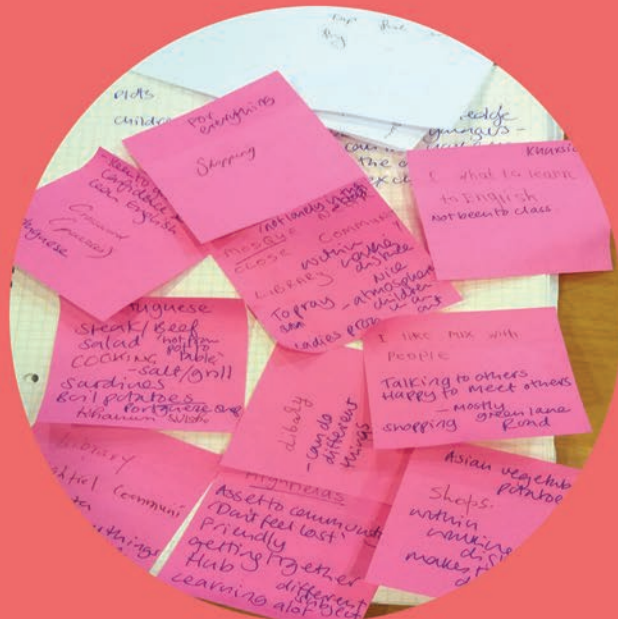
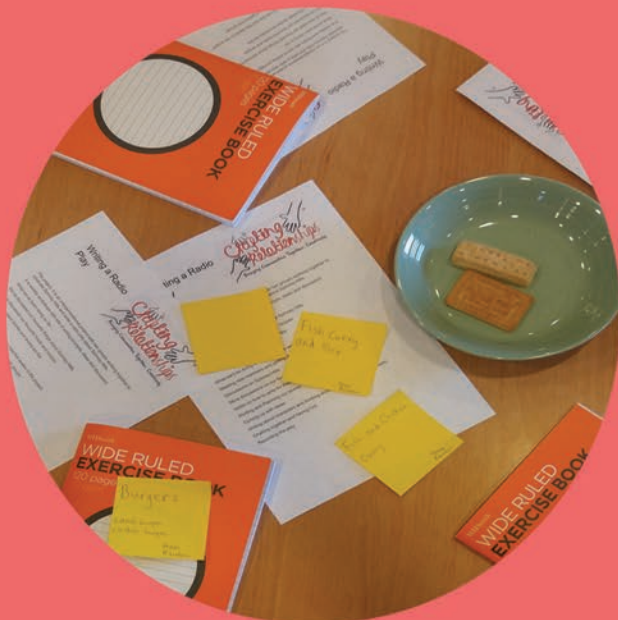
When the groups first came together they found a love of food was something they all had in common, but quite different kinds of foods.

Their radio play centred around a recipe competition at an upcoming food festival at Spinney Hills Park.

The radio play can be listened to in the resources section at [www.craftingrelationships.co.uk](http://www.craftingrelationships.co.uk)

Helping me learn English.

Gathering together.



Mixing old people and young generation  
It was a nice atmosphere.

I enjoyed the coffee and learning to talk  
with children.

Making a wallhanging with Mandeep, Clare and Al Aqsa school.



batik



sewing

textile art



painting

printmaking







The complete wallhanging at Scarborough Court

The background of the page is a vibrant, abstract illustration. It features a landscape with several houses in various colors (yellow, purple, pink, brown) and green trees. A large, bright red flower with a green center is prominent in the lower right. The sky is filled with swirling blue and white patterns, suggesting a bright, sunny day. The overall style is artistic and expressive, with visible brushstrokes and a rich color palette.

## Art and walking with Alison

Spinney Hill Park is close by to Wakerley Court, although being close by does not mean it is easy to get to.

On a crisp Spring morning, artist Alison, Katherine and a group of tenants set out on a walk for inspiration, led by Sally from Living Streets.

Up a steep hill and over a main road we went, stopping, pointing, noticing, sketching and chatting.

Some take this walk every day and some have not wandered for the sake of wandering for as long as they can remember.

Some would like to do this more, although the support they receive is more practical – shopping and appointments, rather than this.



The walk sets the scene for Alison's workshops and over the weeks that follow people play with materials including fabric pens, shaving foam, inks, sequins and more. The end results are framed and proudly line the walls of the community lounge, for all to see and admire.



Taking part in Crafting Relationships was thrilling: helping people to come together, be creative, get crafting and express themselves through making was enlightening and highly rewarding.

Alison Chapman, Artist.



## Movement and dance with Louise

In December 2017 a group of ladies from emh homes sheltered housing scheme, Wakerley Court, went along to see a fabulous over 50s dance group rehearsal at Curve theatre.

At the end of the rehearsal, our ladies were invited to do a cool down with the group.

Slowly, slowly, everyone either stood up or stayed seated and joined in.

That was the start of things to come...



## Movement and dance with Louise.

Over a number of weeks, right through until Summer 2018, dancer and choreographer Louise, facilitated sessions with Wakerley Court ladies.

They developed routines inspired by relationships and objects they loved and experimented with a wide variety of dance forms including Bollywood, T'ai Chi and Chinese-style.

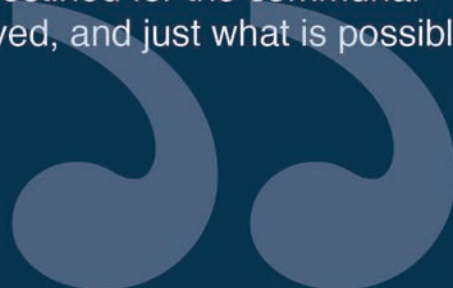
One week the group visited Bridge Junior school, just down the road, and worked with primary school children, sharing everything they'd learned.

## Looking back and looking forward with Katherine




On 18th July, just over two years since the Crafting Relationships project began, Katherine met with tenants at Wakerley Court to reflect back on everything we've done together and what the future might hold.

Anna Geyer of New Possibilities joined us to use graphic facilitation as a way of visually recording our discussions. The end result is destined for the communal lounge space to remind tenants of all they have achieved, and just what is possible from now.










Older people from different communities in the Leicester Ageing Together programme have been enthused by and benefited from Crafting Relationships' thoughtful and skilled approach to building intergenerational relationships through everyday creativity.

Rob Hunter, Chair of Leicester Ageing Together



Emh homes has worked with Crafting Relationships on the Leicester Ageing Together programme, where they have delivered exciting social inclusion projects in our Leicester Sheltered Schemes.

Seeing older tenants learn new things or discover the joy of past interests and possibilities is remarkable.

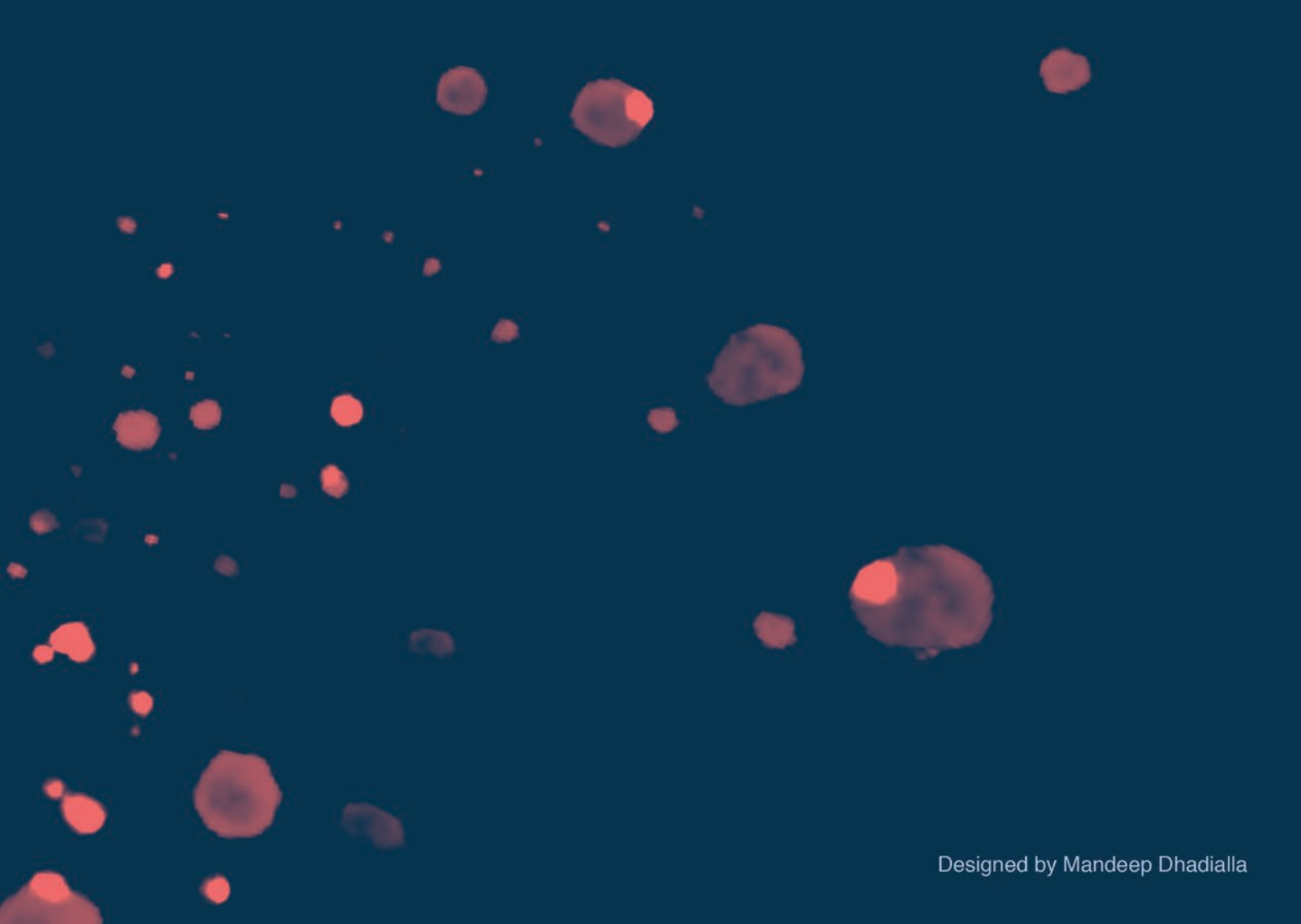
Our partnership, headed up by Katherine, has enabled a wide range of activities to be held at emh homes sheltered schemes including: crafting, sewing & printing art for the walls of the scheme, dancing and intergenerational work with a local school, breaking down generational barriers.

The dance and movement classes in particular had a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of the tenants that attended. Building up muscles and flexibility to prevent falls and reduce pain the positive mental health benefits of laughter and being able to try new things and to be introduced to music from different cultures was enjoyed by all.









Designed by Mandeep Dhadialla