

Proposal outline for Creative Community Champion project with Wye Valley River Festival

Fiona Taylor
11th January 2024

Overview

- **A collaboration between words and music**
taking poems and words about the River Wye
as inspiration for musical responses
- Delivered through music workshops, events and
performances (in the Forest of Dean)

Four possible strands of work (please feel free to choose)

- Soundscapes
- Recording
- Song-writing
- Live performance

Opportunities for...

Community
engagement

Self-expression,
empowerment, mental
wellbeing

Creative collaborations

Environmental focus

1. Soundscapes

- Improvised musical responses to poems about the River Wye
- Not necessarily a finished shareable product
- For example, MindSCAPE

We still have the forest

a MindSCAPE collaboration with Liz Bell

We put our arms around the trees; listen as
life rushes up to the top, watch sunlight
sparkling through green freshness.

Each one has its own design:
the shape of the trunk,
the texture of bark.
And you,

hands full of
rocks and leaves;
pockets full of grit and dirt.

You see fractals in the forest,
stained glass windows in the trees;
you see a pretty stone and pick it up,

put it in your bag. You make me look at things
differently - the way a colour would be on a hedge;
a special beech tree split into a sculpture of a holy trinity.

And then, lightning strikes, and it all changes.
At the funeral, birdsong fills the church.

But although we lose trees,
we still have the forest.

Like an etching
- what's left is
what matters
in the end.

2. Song-writing

- Co-creating songs using poems about the Wye
- Bringing in local musicians to help perform
- A product, recording or performance
- Foxes Bridge (not recent)

Centre musicians strike a high note



•Great fun...members apply themselves to newly-learned instrumental skills



•The group get in tune for their recording with help from Drybrook choral singers.

A GROUP of adult service-users at Foxes Bridge Centre have enjoyed music lessons with Drybrook and District Ladies' Choir and are getting out and about in the community to entertain.

The group have called themselves Foxy Music and they have played and sung to acclaim at the Forest of Dean Community Church in Cinderford and local residential homes including the Euroclydon and Townsend House.

"It is great fun. None of us can read music but people have been helping us to play our instruments by number and we are getting quite good," said one of the group.

"We'd like to carry on but could do with some help to get instruments and continue the training."

The training project ran from September until March thanks to grant funding under the Social Transformation Fund.

Music facilitator and project manager Fiona Taylor has helped to shape the group but may now move on.

"If anyone who is musical is interested in helping to facilitate the group on a voluntary basis please contact us 01594 825484," said a spokesman for Foxes Bridge.

Foxy Music are presently recording a song written by one of their members which begins:

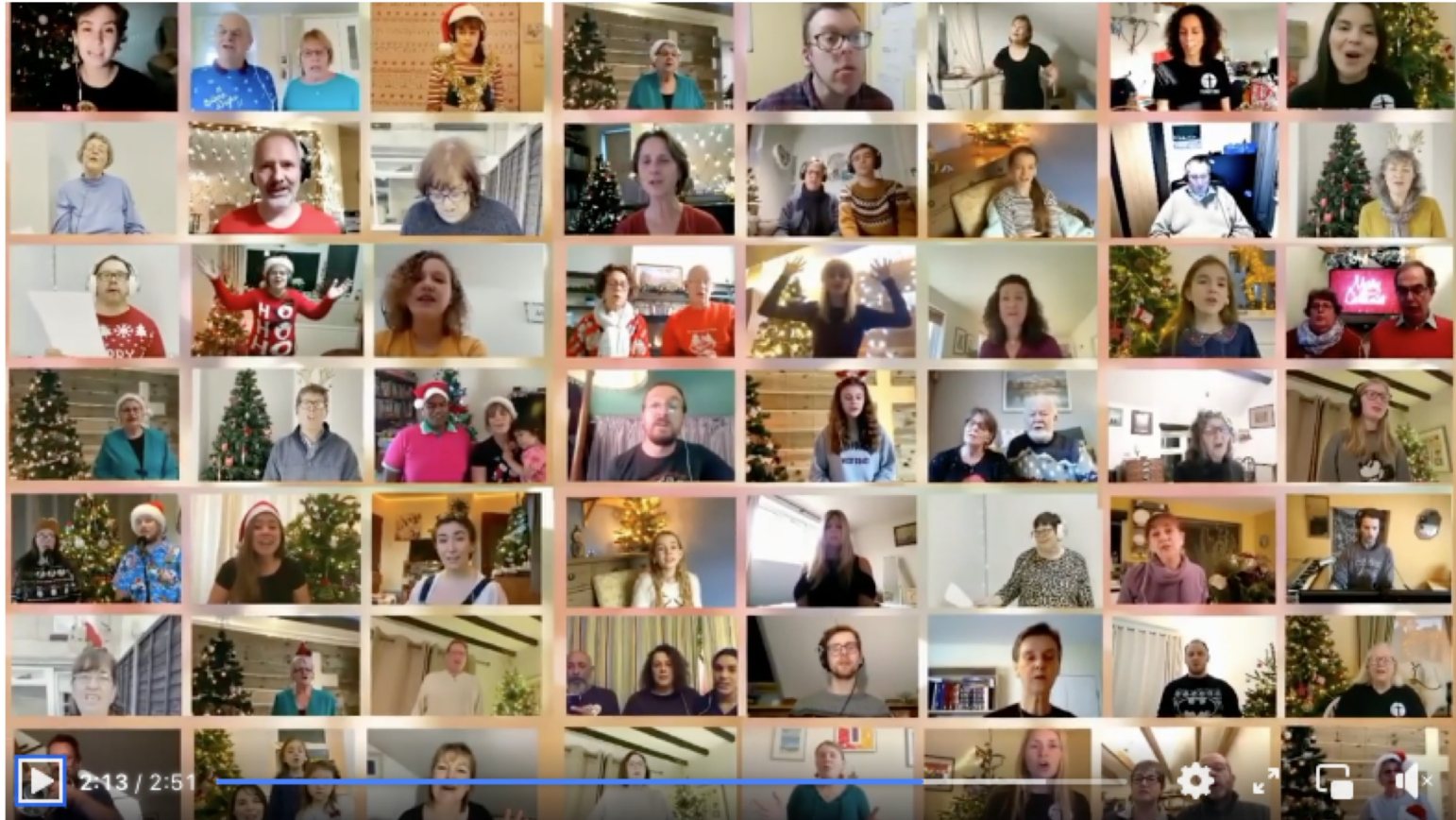
"With our feet a-tapping and wheels spinning round
Come and join our circus, Foxy Music sound
Music's our expression of joy we have found
That keeps us together in Cinderford Town."



•Fiona Taylor has been bringing the group to concert pitch!

3. Recording

- Lots of different groups all recording the same song
- Mixed together into one vast anthem, uploadable
- Suggested anthem song: Let the river run clear
- Example: Cinderford Sings!



Cinderford Sings

...

4. Live performance

- An event(s) to showcase created songs and collaborations
- Support from local musicians and groups
- Local village halls
- Involvement in Wye Valley River Festival: 3rd – 12th May 2024

The Source

Walking with the Wye, July 2021

we
come
with our
vessels over the
spongey mountain
drenched in mist
saturated
in the Welsh way
to where the Gwy
just begun
greets us with song
along with the
skylarks
and red kites overhead

from a crease
in the land
delicious slow drips
through moss
collecting
a little further down
in a small clear pool:
this, we name – *The Source*
meaning something close and subtle to all
a symbol of all that's pure perhaps?
or love as the mystery and beauty of life

nothing stays still
the water in the pool
tips out and on
and though we mark the place
with stories and song
outpourings from home
source water cupped in our hands
just for a moment with blessings
the moment does not stay
the stream flows on
meandering in miniature her later loops
while we flounder in bog
lizards frogs voles black slugs ghost moths
orchids bedstraw bog asphodel lousewort
if lucky they avoid our clumsy downhill-pointing boots

Jane Spray, 2021

Target groups

- People living with dementia and their carers (MindSCAPE, Open Arms) – Soundscape
- Schools (maybe Jane Evans, or after-school clubs) – Soundscape, recording the song
- Audiences (River Wye concert 29th Feb) – song-writing
- People responding to a call-out (Create Gloucestershire) – song-writing
- Choirs (Longlevens, Artspace, Drybrook and District Ladies, churches) – recording the song
- Local musicians (Micheldean folk singers, Minstrels of the Forest, players from Royal Forest of Dean Orchestra) – recording the song, performances
- Poets (local groups, particularly those involved in the 'Walking with the Wye' pilgrimage) at any stage

Partners who have expressed interest

Artspace (Cinderford)

Gloucestershire County Council (Longlevens Library choir, ACE funding)

Mollie Meager and Jane Spray (poets from Walking with the Wye)

Tracey Dixon (Micheldean folk club)

Minstrels of the Forest

Challenges

- Which areas to focus on
- Publicity
- Getting in touch with schools
- The level of political engagement

Timeline (6 months)

- February – March: setting up sessions for the four strands
- February – July: run sessions in four strands
- April – June: Choirs recording for production
- May: performance at WVRF
- July: performance of finished songs at local halls, with local musicians
- July: mixing and uploading completed recordings

Budget

Spotify upload per track	£10
Travel expenses for musicians and poets	£200
Hire a village hall for an evening	£50
Hire a venue to run song-writing	£25
Small performance fee for musicians	£300
Reproducing poems and notated parts	£40