

# Spennymoor Reflections

*A Heritage Lottery Funded Project*

*- Brian Wise*



## 1. Report summary

The Spennymoor Reflections project set out to bring together young people, adults and the elderly, archivists and a photographic artist to establish a living memory focusing on leisure and pastime activities in the late 1960s Spennymoor, Co Durham. The main focus was on the Spennymoor Youth and Community Centre, which was opened in 1969, just over 50 years ago.

The project was impacted by the global pandemic and subsequent national and local restrictions, including the closure of community buildings, group and individual isolation throughout 2020-21. The implications meant changes to the original plan, such as research visits that were not possible and developing remote group sessions. The team also made a decision to take our final exhibition launch online using social media. Beyond the pandemic the project exhibition and materials will be sited in the community centre, Spennymoor for

the public to come along and view them. A living memory.



Despite restrictions, project participants from the local community were able to explore, contribute and research life in the late 60s. This was achieved by remote interviews, use of social media, creating a facebook group called Spenny Reflections, and some face to face engagement through interviewing people who would have been aged between 10- 19 during that period. The latter was during the Summer of 2020.

The project delivery team consisted of a coordinator, local community photographer, advisory historian, and 2 youth support workers. A group of young participants, working towards their Duke Of Edinburgh Award, were involved from the start of the project and took on the role of research team.

The practitioners were impressed with the young people's enthusiasm to lead the project. One observation from the project photographer, who commented "*Everything has come from them; the ideas, choosing locations, costumes and shooting set up.*"- Keith Bailey

The younger people taking part in the project were very clear they wanted to make an exhibition of the 60s that is fun and attractive, they were very concerned that 'not everybody is a history person'.

Through interviews with the younger group it was clear to see the wealth of knowledge and skills developed in photography and intergenerational community event production. They were able to carry out research in and around Spennymoor, the Bessemer Park developments of the 1960s and the historically relevant Old Tudhoe Iron Works. They were aided by an

online session delivered by Durham Archives & Records Office and guidance from a local historian.

## 2 Report Methodology

Using the logic model of evaluation the following have been measured:

1. Inputs - The resources employed to make the project happen.
2. Outputs - The final exhibition.
3. Outcomes - Achievements as a result of the outputs.
4. Assumptions - How the outputs have lead to longer-term outcomes.
5. External Factors - Negative and or positive influences on the project as a whole.

The methodology used in measuring the above was quantitative and qualitative research. Evaluation was carried out at the planning stage, project delivery and project conclusion. Methods used were:

Online Survey for young people: Over the course of the project 2 were uploaded, return rate was 50% and 100%.

Interviews with young people, partners (Spennymoor Youth & Community Centre, youth leaders) and project delivery practitioners

Observations (workshop sessions): 2 Sessions were observed.

Review of the exhibition

Collating data

## 2:1 Have the aims of the project been met?

Taking the aims originally set out at the beginning of the project we have analysed if they were achieved(outputs) and how they were achieved (inputs).



<b>Aims (a,c,d,g, selected in the original funding application)</b>
a.) A wider range of people will be involved in heritage
c.) Heritage will be identified and better explained
d.) People will have developed skills
g.) The funded organisation will be more resilient

### **a.) A wider range of people will be involved in heritage (mandatory outcome)**

#### Inputs- Workshop sessions

As outlined in the summary above, there was an impact from the pandemic on the project that limited face to face involvement. Local (including individual isolation), regional and national restrictions meant severe limitation on these sessions. Remote and online engagement helped in working with the 6 core youth members. During the summer these were augmented by-

-4 members of the community in live sessions.

-A virtual local history Zoom session from Durham Archives. Photography sessions, interviews with people who attended the youth club and lived in the adjoining flats.

-4 group meeting sessions online

-8 project activity sessions (research, collation of material, working with project photographer to create a 'Then and Now' exhibition

### Outputs - Final Exhibition

Creation of FB and uploads 101 signed up to 'Spenny Reflections' FB page Many were also linked to the 'Bessemer Park Flats' FB page. The latter has 1.2k followers and has played a key part in engaging with people that lived on the estate and used the community centre form the late 1960s

### Outcomes-

Two key outcomes form this section of the project were:

1. Young people gaining DoE award in community service.
2. Local People reunited with their youth through online reminiscing of their time at the youth club in past years.

<b>Inputs</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
1 session	Initial preparation session held April 2020	10 people (including 6 young people) signed up to the project
Durham Archives zoom workshop delivered	Remote Visit workshops- Durham Archives	6 young people engaged. 6 surveyed-100% responded that they could confidently describe change over time in Spennymoor.
8 sessions	Workshop/preparation sessions from April 2020	6 young people became confident in leading on the project research
4 sessions	Review meeting	10 people (including 6 young people). Confidence of participants raised in becoming active in their community
Ongoing	Showcase Exhibition	101 audience online via Facebook exhibition. Greater community coverage and engagement.
Award Accreditation	Duke of Edinburgh Award	6 young people gained additional accreditation used in college applications. Raised self esteem.

Assumptions - How the outputs have led to longer-term outcomes.

The creation of young ambassadors from the Duke of Edinburgh group to take the lead on a heritage film project.

Following the success in linking people through interaction with project social media, there is now a desire for more community events through the community centre.

External Factors

The need to keep community momentum going after this project.

**c.) Heritage will be identified and better explained**

-The research, photography and interview elements of the project and showcase the presentation, of a heritage living memory photographic exhibition would enable people to gain greater insight into their local heritage.

Inputs- 8 Workshop sessions

Limited face to face and remote online engagement helped in working with the 6 core youth members of the project team. During the summer these were also augmented by 5 members of the community in live sessions.

These included a virtual local history workshop zoom session from Durham Archives. Photography sessions, interviews with people who attended the youth club and lived in the adjoining flats (Bessemer Park).

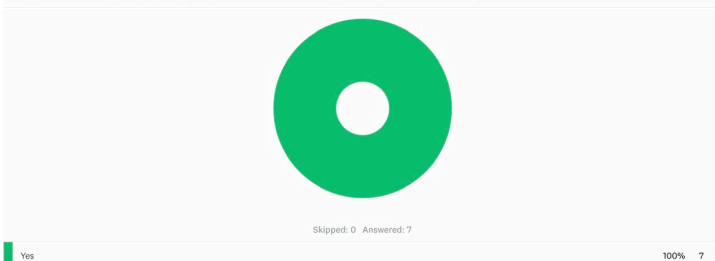
Outputs-Final Exhibition

From Heritage Information and learning the project participants were able to creation a social media page (FB - Spenny Reflections) documenting their progress.

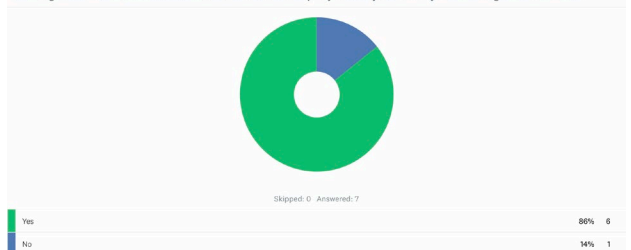
Outcomes-Wider Engagement

Through social media the project became linked to a local group with a much wider range 1.2k followers. This enabled people from across the world to engage with the project.

4. Can you confidently describe some of the activities that teenagers did in the 1969-70 youth club ?



3. Looking back at the Zoom virtual tour of Durham Archives and 1960s Spennymoor can you confidently describe changes and similarities in



Following interviews with local residents and an online workshop with a County Durham Archivist, outcomes for participants responding to a questionnaire showed 100% confidence in describing teenagers' activities at the youth club in the 60s. There was an 86% increase in confidence to describe change over time in Spennymoor 60s to present day. For the young people they were starting from a base level of no prior knowledge of 1960s Spennymoor and the Bessemer Park Flats and Centre development. The project enabled them to expand their knowledge around this.

Assumptions - How the outputs have led to longer-term outcomes.

The outputs have led to closer community ties and intergenerational working as people followed the project and were able to link with each other.

**d.) People will have developed skills**

<b>Achieved through (Inputs)</b>	<b>Skills gained (Outputs)</b>	<b>Assumptions (Outcomes+)</b>
-Interviews with local residents, family and friends -Virtual Visit and Workshop with County Durham archives	Extend their understanding of local history and cultural heritage Learn about the impact of the Bessemer Park development on the local community and housing of the late 1960s and the changes that have taken place over the last 50 years	Greater community links between young and older residents. A desire to work towards further intergenerational projects.
-Defining research areas -Web, virtual archives and local history books.	Develop young people's skills in researching, analysing and collaborating information for others to learn from	A desire to work on Duke Of Edinburg Award towards gold level
-working together to decide on research areas -working together to create a community heritage exhibition	Develop communication skills	Use this project to add towards experiences for college applications
-create a community heritage exhibition	Develop project management skills and numeracy skills through budget management	Look to work with younger youth club members as mentors to create further community/heritage events
- skills learnt though research and programme planning	Develop creative thinking and creative skills (exhibition)	A desire to work on Duke of Edinburg Award towards gold level

### Inputs- Workshop sessions



As outlined in the summary above, there was an impact from the pandemic on the project that limited face to face involvement. Local (including individual isolation), regional and national restrictions meant severe limitation on these sessions.



Remote and online engagement helped in working with the 6 core youth members. During the summer these were augmented by 5 members of the community in live sessions.

- Interviews with people who attended the youth club and lived in the adjoining flats.

One observation carried out was with 6 young people interviewing local residents. They set all of the questions themselves and ensured the recording was of a high standard. They even stopped at several points because of noise distraction. The young people were dedicated and put a lot of voluntary time into this project outside of their regular youth club meetings.

*“The older community reminisced through the interviews most of which were very happy memories. The students were able to portray the past to the present with use of photography and teamwork. The team worked well together and were able to evaluate the importance of family life, work time and happiness during this pandemic. The creativity was outstanding with the use of multi point imagery, acting, roll play and time management. I really enjoyed teaching the team, I've taught for over 40 years and I have also learnt a lot from the youth and community centre members; their enthusiasm, knowledge and creativity.” -Keith Bailey*

### Outputs-Final Exhibition

Creation of FB and uploads 101 signed up to ‘Spenny Reflections’ FB page

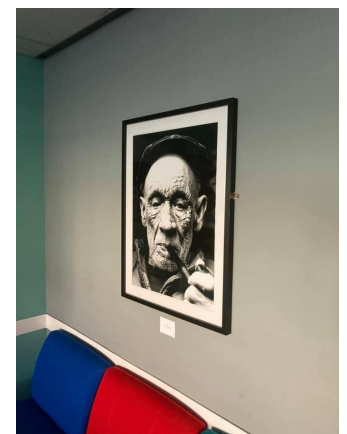
### Outcomes-

DoE award in community service. people reunited form their youth etc.

### Assumptions - How the outputs have led to longer-term outcomes.

Film project, more community events

### External Factors





The need to take the exhibition online with a booking system introduced for live viewing from May 17 2021

**g.) The funded organisation will be more resilient**

Inputs- New External Links

-Through project activities links were built between Spennymoor Youth & Community Association and Durham County Archivists, and Dawn Layland, from County Durham Record Office, The Curators at Spennymoor Mining Museum and Beamish Museum Education Centre.

Outputs-Final Exhibition

Creation of 'in house' permanent and FB exhibition, 101 signed up to Spenny Reflections FB page.

Outcomes-

This has grown the profile of Spennymoor Youth & Community Centre, for local residents and those who lived in Spennymoor during the 1960s, but have moved away.

Assumptions - How the outputs have led to longer-term outcomes.

The improved profile of the centre and permanent 1960s photographic exhibition has increased interest in the venue. The projection is greater footfall with people coming into the centre to view the work.

External Factors

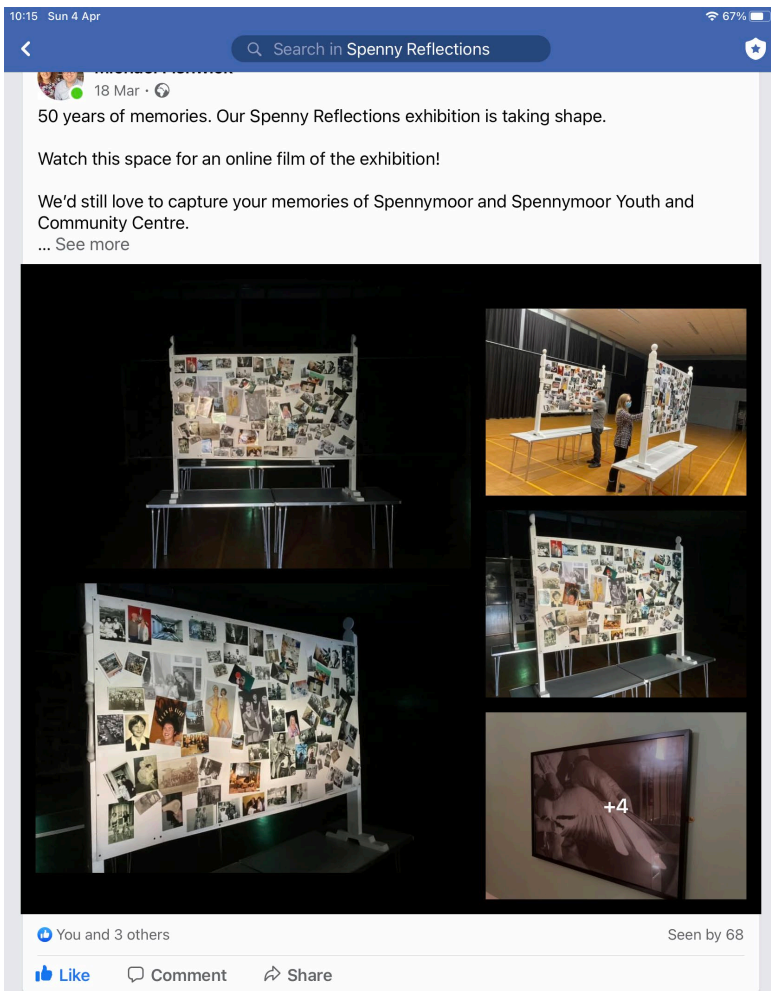
The assumptions outlined are seen as a positive external factor and worthy legacy of the Spennymoor Reflections project.

### 3 Conclusion

Despite the enormity of the pandemic and associated restrictions, the project was delivered to budget and on time. Monitoring procedures were carried out. The partners in this project kept good communications and responded to the participants' needs.

The young people taking part wanted to lead on every aspect, however balancing their needs and the project timescale was always difficult. This would have required more workshops but there were time constraints. Most outputs were delivered. The project originally set out to engage 20 people throughout the





programme. This was partly achieved, although 10 people did not partake in the whole process, mainly because of the pandemic, some were unavailable during the school holidays during summer 2020.

*“When we were producing the photographs it didn’t feel like we were learning history at the time it was so fun.” -Young participant*

*“I felt it was good doing the project and we learnt a lot of stuff, met new people, got closer to other people who where different ages.” - Young participant*

Despite COVID, a successful project was delivered in terms of inputs, outputs, and outcomes.

### The future

- seek opportunities to create a local Bessemer Park history community group to sustain the project and keep up the momentum of local interest generated.
- develop an after-school community activities club working with North Park Primary School and Whitworth Park Academy, Spennymoor.

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**Michael Fishwick**  
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More photos from our Spenny Reflections exhibition!

A display of photos around the Centre representing people, work and play over the years since Spennymoor Youth and Community Association opened its doors in 1969...

The display includes people who have used Spennymoor Youth and Community Centre then and now, including our Duke of Edinburgh group of girls who have made t... See more

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