NENE VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTION

1918-2018 “Then & Now”

Evaluation Report

November 2018
Introduction.

1918-2018 “Then & Now” was the project conducted by Nene Valley Community Action during the year leading up to the centenary of the end of the First World War. We created intergenerational groups to explore the changes which have arisen over the 100 year period in four main topics – food and cooking, clothing, schooling and toys. We also paid tribute to the men (and woman) from Rushden who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The project provided the opportunity for local people to share their memories and experiences of times past and present, of the town in which we live and the chance to interact with those from different generations. It was important for the project to be intergenerational so that the different generations could learn from one another, find common ground and also gain a greater understanding of each other. The work generated by these groups helped to form an exhibition that was open to the general public in November 2018. We also participated in the Rushden’s parade of Remembrance on 11th November 2018. We captured the work of the groups, the celebration of the project and the exhibition in a film that can be shared with other groups wishing to undertake similar projects.

The Groups.

To set up the groups it was decided that it would be best if we initially secured the younger participants and this in turn meant that we needed to contact the local schools. Two schools had already expressed an interest in participating in the project during the application process so these were contacted first and as a result we were able to secure a school to participate in the food and cooking group. Sadly the other school were now no longer able to take part.

It was difficult to get the schools to commit to the project. It may have been beneficial to have got the commitment from the schools prior to the new academic year starting so that the groups could have been incorporated into the planning for the new school year. Opportunities to link the groups to the curriculum were almost missed due to this – South End Junior School were coming to the end of their toy topic when this group was finalised however we were able to join in with their last couple of lessons.

In order to get older participants to volunteer we publicised the project in a variety of ways:

- Created a dedicated Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/RushdenThenNow](http://www.facebook.com/RushdenThenNow)
- Created a dedicated page for the project on the NVCA website: [https://www.nvca.org.uk/projects/qcommunity-actionq-activities-a-opportunities](https://www.nvca.org.uk/projects/qcommunity-actionq-activities-a-opportunities)
- Press releases were included in a number of local and free newspapers (Appendix 5).
- Posters were created and distributed around the town (Appendix 1).
- Posts were included on a local events Facebook page.
Rosemary Hadaway (NVCA CEO) was interviewed on local radio.

Various groups were contacted, either by email or in person inviting their members to join the groups:
- Local WI
- Rushden District Heritage Society
- Rushden Family History Society
- Local U3A
- Local retirement homes/ sheltered housing
- Serve
- Rushden Branch of the Royal British Legion.

Those older participants who volunteered to join the groups came from a range of backgrounds but were all able to travel to the schools and scout hall independently. Whilst we tried to make connections with organisations such as Serve or local care homes we found that the clients and residents wanted to be visited by the children whilst the schools wanted the groups to take place on their premises.

Each group had on average 6 older participants, in addition to the school staff members etc. In total we had approximately 33 older participants, with 5 who participated in more than one group. In total we had approximately 255 younger participants take part in the 4 groups.

**Food and Cooking.**

We worked with Rushden Academy, a local secondary school to create the food and cooking group. 8 year 7 pupils were invited to join the group and we had 9 older participants join us. The group met for 6 hour long sessions at the end of the school day.

Our first session provided us with the opportunity to get to know one another and to introduce the topic. We discussed our food likes and dislikes and had a fun game of trying forgotten food such as bread and dripping, brawn and tapioca. This helped to act as an ice breaker for the group as well as become the starting point for conversations. Further discussions in a later session focused on the way we shopped for food, how technology has impacted on how we cook and what we choose to eat. This in turn opened up the
conversation to talk about changes which had taken place in other aspects of people’s home life such as washing, looking after children and technology in the home.

We used the services of a heritage baker, Ria, who came and gave the group a talk about food and drink during the First World War. Tea and coffee blends from the period were sampled along with a selection of cakes. Ria returned for the final session, providing refreshments for the small tea party we held to mark the end of the group.

The group undertook 2 cooking sessions using a range of recipes which had been sourced to reflect the changes across the decades. From fish sausages and chocolate spread to spam fritters and vegan pasta all were cooked and tasted, with young and older participants working together. We put the recipes together in a booklet which those who took part in this group took away with them and which we were also able to give away to those who visited our exhibition.

What worked.

This was the smallest of the groups and as such was the one where the relationships between the older and younger participants appeared the strongest. There was also an almost equal balance between older and younger participants which helped to create the feeling that they were all equal within the group. The conversations flowed and there was definitely a two way sharing of information. The older participants stated that they enjoyed working with the young students and felt that friendships had been formed. This was also mirrored in the feedback given by the students.

The cooking and being able to taste examples of the food was a great way to bring the topic to life and give all the participants a very clear understanding of the changes. These activities also brought the different ages together and created a more informal atmosphere that encouraged them to talk.
The group also enjoyed having the heritage baker come and give a talk, bringing in a professional gave the group another dimension.

The students learnt more about the past than just how the food had changed. Conversations which began about food and shopping moved on to changes in technology and society in general. One student brought in a little suitcase which they had kitted out with things an evacuee would take with them, including a letter from her mother.

What didn’t work so well.

As the group was outside of the school day there was a slight fluctuation in the number of young participants who attended each session.

At times the group conversations could go a little off track or the information being shared could be a little one sided. Whilst it was important to let the conversations flow naturally it was necessary on occasion to bring it back to the original focus and to ensure that everyone got the opportunity to talk and to be heard.

Group breakdown and feedback.

![Food Group - Ages](image_url)
Feedback received from evaluation forms:

90% enjoyed taking part in the project, 10% didn’t respond.
90% felt that they learnt or experienced something new, 10% didn’t respond.
90% agreed that it brought them together with new people, 10% didn’t respond.
90% enjoyed taking part with others in the community and those of different ages, 10% didn’t respond.
80% definitely found the project valuable, 10% only partly and 10% didn’t respond.

Comments from participants:

“It brought back many memories of wartime and the small quantities of food issued. It was great to talk to younger people and see their reaction to new food to them.”

“Very enjoyable working with 11-12 year olds, learning what they think of times past and modern times. They were all very enthusiastic and courteous.”

“Loved the food and learning about the war and thanks to everyone who made me feel welcome.”

“It was a great experience working with young people.”

Feedback given from Rushden Academy:

“A big thank you on behalf of our school for organising such an amazing project for our small group of selected year 7’s. Each week the children looked forward to it tremendously, it initiated conversations with their grandparents and great grandparents and made them think about how food has changed over the years. Having the more mature members of the group as an addition worked so well, it was lovely seeing the different age groups laugh, and learn, from each other.”

“It is so important to remember what people did for us in the war times, and to really understand what they experienced. It was a fantastic opportunity for our pupils to cook like they did in the war and to appreciate how ingredients that we take for granted were in such short supply. The rations of butter were commented on; a week’s supply would go onto one crumpet now! I hope that more pupils get involved next year; it is a very worthwhile project and lovely to finish with a typical tea party. Thank you for organising.” – Head teacher

“It’s amazing to see our students learn so much about the history of our society and local area in such a practical and hands on way. They were truly engaged in the learning they had been doing about rationing, evacuation and war time experiences. It was a joy to see members of the community also contributing to their learning with their real life experiences. I only hope that we can grow this project in the future so more students can have the opportunity to be involved.” – History co-ordinator.
Clothing.

The clothing group was created by working with pupils from year 4 at Denfield Park Primary school. The younger participants totalled 60 children aged between 8 & 9 years old. 7 older volunteers attended the group plus the 4 school staff members.

The group ran for five sessions, each lasting around 1 ½ hours. Our first session introduced the topic and enabled the children and adults to interact with one another. Photographs from across the years showing the changes in fashion were on display – some having been brought in by the older participants themselves. The children were able to work alongside the older participants in a simple game of matching the fashion trend to the name, leading to discussions about what the older participants used to wear. In addition to this we had a local history re-enacting group in with a display of clothes from the Second World War, providing us with the chance to explore clothes rationing.

Over the next 2 sessions the group split into two. Each week a group stayed at the school and transformed plain white t-shirts and caps with their own designs. They aimed for their designs to depict a decade from the past 100 years. The other group visited a local shoe factory for a tour. It was important that the project included looking at the shoe industry as Rushden is historically a boot and shoe town. The groups swapped the following week to ensure that all participants did both activities.

We used our 4th session as an opportunity to research the changes in fashion in more detail. Working in small groups the children picked a decade and looked through books and used the internet to gather information. They were also able to talk to the older participants about what they used to wear.
This group finished with a special assembly which took place in front of the whole school. The children modelled their t-shirts and hats and told the story of fashion in the UK since the end of the First World War. Family at War, the historical re-enactors, also returned in vintage clothes from the 1940s and talked about the items they were wearing.

What worked.
Working with an entire school year group meant that we were able to engage with large number of young people.

The older participants were aged between 40 to 92 years old and therefore the experiences of fashion of all those involved in the group spanned almost 100 years.

The introduction session was relaxed and friendly; participants were able to move between activities which ensured that they remained interested and could interact with each other.

The factory visit was a success, in particular with the older participants.

The children engaged with redesigning the hats & t-shirts. It helped to bring the topic to life and created opportunities to talk to the older participants about the design choices they were making. The feedback forms indicated that the children enjoyed the creative elements of the project.

What didn’t work so well.
The downside to working with such a large number of young people was that the group was not balanced. The older participants had to support the younger children more and although they got to interact with younger people the connections which were seen in the food group did not occur here. With a large group it did feel at times that the older participants were there to facilitate the children’s learning and that the interactions could be one way.

A seamstress was organised to come and give a talk to the group as well as produce an outfit that was to be worn during the remembrance parade. She had to cancel at the last minute and as a result we had to restructure the sessions slightly and were not able to produce the outfit.

Group Breakdown & Feedback

![Clothing Group Ages](Image)
**Responses from the children’s feedback forms.**
The younger participants were given a more simplified feedback form to complete:

- 64% of the children selected 😊 when asked how they felt about the project.
- 20% of the children selected 😊 when asked how they felt about the project.
- 9% of the children selected 😞 when asked how they felt about the project.
- The remaining 7% did not select a response.

When asked what was good about this project responses included:

- “I loved designing my very own t-shirt and going to the shoe factory. I liked learning about the 1950s”
- “The first week was amazing they introduced themselves and we did some fun things”. “When we went to the shoe factory and decorated t-shirts”
- “It was good because we got to know everyone”

When asked what was not so good about the project responses included:

- “researching”
- “I wasn’t interested in making the Ella dolls in week 1”
- “The shoe factory”

The children were asked to select words from a list to describe the project.
**Responses from the adult feedback forms.**

100% definitely enjoyed taking part in the project. 
100 % felt that they learnt or experienced something new. 
100% agreed that it brought them together with new people. 
100 % enjoyed taking part with others in the community and those of different ages. 
100 % definitely found the project valuable.

**Comments from both adult and children’s feedback forms:**

“The children were very interested in all we did. They were a delight to work with. They found all we did interesting. Especially the trip to a factory. They asked questions that were relevant to each subject we covered”.

“It would have been lovely to have the talk from the seamstress. Shoe factory was great – a new experience. Children very enthusiastic, engaged and helpful. The school made me welcome”.

“I enjoyed the assembly. Children had worked hard obtaining information to tell us about. Happy afternoon”

“I loved it! The children were great and you had researched and resourced well”.

“We thought this afternoon’s session was very good.”

“Well done for all the hard work you put into preparing this”.

“I will never forget this - it was a great experience and a lot of fun”. “It was fashion-tastic!”

“I wish that the project didn't end now!”

![Image of school assembly](image_url)

Schooling.
The schooling group was organised in a different way to the other groups. Instead of working with a school we approached 1st Rushden Scout Group and The Prince’s Trust. They both agreed to participate and we created 4 sessions, 2 with the scouts and 2 with The Prince’s Trust.

30 scouts between the ages of 8 and 13 along with 5 older participants took part in 2 sessions as part of the scout’s normal meetings. In our first session we wanted the participants to learn from one another about what school was like in the past and in the present. We began the session with the scouts experiencing “drill” – a P.E. lesson from the early 1900s. The all participants were then given a list of questions that to answer they had to speak to someone who went to school in a different decade. This was followed up by smaller groups working together to answer questions such as:

- I think the worst thing about school in the past would have been...
- I am glad that I go to school now because...
We shared the answers to these questions as a whole group.

Our second session with the Scouts focused on the games which were played during playtime. The Scouts were shown by the older participants how to play marbles, jacks, French skipping and yo-yos. This was a loud and fun session.
The sessions with The Prince’s Trust involved 4 older participants being interviewed by 3 members of the Prince’s Trust about their school days. These interviews were captured on film and in a couple of cases were quite lengthy. The other 8 members of the Prince’s Trust interviewed one another on film about their experiences of school. We also aimed to get PowerPoint presentations of the changes which had taken place in education created. However this was not achieved for reasons outlined below.

The members of Prince’s Trust came together for the final session of the group to discuss how they thought school, work and life in general would change over the past 100 years.

What worked.

The Scout sessions were always lively and the group, which was made up of Cubs and Scouts engaged in the activities we carried out.

The members of the Prince’s Trust who carried out the interviews with the older participants commented that they found them to be interesting and how they were lucky to have gone to school in more modern times. They seemed genuinely interested by what they heard and one student was particularly moved by some of the stories because she was able to relate to them on a personal level. She was also able to receive reassurance that times have indeed changed.

What didn’t work so well.

This was a very difficult topic to find groups who wanted to participate in; schools typically focus upon the Victorian era and schooling.

Working with the Scouts meant that we were working with a much wider age range which led to issues regarding how to keep the different ages engaged in the activities.

Similarly whilst working with the Prince’s Trust we had a group of very mixed abilities. Those involved in interviewing the older participants were engaged but those creating the PowerPoint presentations were less so and as a result we decided to put that activity to one side and instead had a discussion about what we thought the future would hold for young people in 100 years time.
It was also a topic which was difficult to present in a way which would engage those involved. The flow of information did at times appear very much one way, from the older participants to the younger members of the group. If we had been able to work with a school there would have been more opportunity for older participants to have experienced modern schooling.

This group highlighted that some topics could bring up uncomfortable feelings and memories. Discussions of corporal punishment and living in care all arose as part of this topic and impacted on those who were sharing the memories as well as those who were listening. For a number of the members of the Prince’s Trust school had not been a happy or easy time for them and as such not all of them found this an easy topic to discuss. It was a reminder that regardless of the topic being talked about that we had to be mindful of people’s feelings and potential issues that could be raised by revisiting old memories.

Group Breakdown and Feedback.

Responses from the adult feedback forms – Scouting sessions.

100% definitely enjoyed taking part in the project.
100 % felt that they learnt or experienced something new.
80% agreed that it brought them together with new people. 20 % partly agreed.
100 % enjoyed taking part with others in the community and those of different ages.
100 % definitely found the project valuable

“Thanks for the work you have done I think the scouts enjoyed it and learned a lot”- Scout Leader.

Responses from the children feedback forms – Scouting sessions.

55 % of the children selected 😊 when asked how they felt about the project
20% of the children selected 😊 when asked how they felt about the project.
5% of the children selected 😁 when asked how they felt about the project.

5% of the children selected 😞 when asked how they felt about the project.

10% of the children selected 😞 when asked how they felt about the project. The remaining 5% did not select a response.

When asked what was good about the project the responses from the Scouts included:

“ I learnt how to play marbles and French skipping”.
“Learning how to play marbles”
“I liked it – it was great. You made learning about it fun.”
“I learnt what it was like in the past and what they played at break time”
“I was happy because I like playing games”

When asked what was not so good about the project the responses included:

“We had to talk about school”.
“The Drill”

Feedback from the Prince’s Trust interviews.

“Thank you Hannah. I actually enjoyed the experience. They seemed like nice young people. I actually found myself becoming quite emotional when I told them about one memory I had regarding corporal punishment as a 5-6yr old for forgetting my PE kit which was accepted then. I'm so glad the sadistic element of teaching has now gone. I look forward to chatting with the scouts and sharing memories”.

“The Young people did thank me, I quite enjoyed the experience. Unfortunately I managed to upset the young girl I spoke of my not too pleasant experience in the Orphanage where I was brought up and me not knowing she had been brought up “in care” and telling of my experiences brought back memories of her experiences, I feel I was able to help her before I left, I hope so anyway as she was such a nice girl”.

Toys.

We ran the toy group twice, firstly with South End Junior School and then with Denfield Park Primary School who asked if we could do the group with their year 2 pupils after having taken part in the clothing group.

Both times we ran the group for 3 sessions and followed similar outlines although some adaptations were made due to the difference in the ages of the younger participants. We worked with approximately 90 children aged between 9 and 10 years old at South End and approximately 60 children aged between 5 and 6 years old at Denfield Primary. Both schools had been studying the topic of toys in lesson time.
The first session with both groups was organised to give them the opportunity to see a selection of toys from the past. A local toy retailer kindly loaned us a selection of toys from the past and their modern equivalents so that we could see whether or not the toys had changed. We also supplied some classic playground games for the children to try such as marbles, jacks and diablos. As the pupils of South End were coming to the end of their study of toys our first session was combined with the opportunity for their parents to come in and view their work. The children were then able to explore the toys and experience playground games with their parents as well as some of the 5 older participants.

The second session was about making toys. We made gliders from toothpicks, a spinning toy, a dolls house room and a soft toy from a sock. This session gave the children the chance to work with the older participants more closely. We decided due to the age of the pupils at Denfield to only make the simple sock toy as this was straightforward and quick to make.

The final session focused on teddy bears. At each school we shared information about famous teddy bears and the older participants shared stories about their teddies. The children, along with either a teddy brought in from home or their handmade sock toy, took part in a teddy bears picnic. The younger children had a teddy story read to them whilst they enjoyed a drink. The older children were first asked to get into groups with the older participants and answer some questions about their favourite toys, what they liked about the toys from the past and to share stories of the toys and games they like to play before being able to enjoy a snack and drink in the sunshine.

**What went well.**

The opportunity for the groups to see toys from the past helped to start conversations between the older and younger participants.

Being able to combine our first session with South End’s topic ‘pit stop’ meant that we were able to engage with not only the pupils and older participants but the parents and guardians who came to view their children’s work.
The teddy bears picnic was a fun and light hearted way to finish both groups.

Making of the toys allowed all participants to work together and get creative.

What didn’t work so well.

It was surprising difficult to get this group together. We originally contacted the local schools offering them the chance to participate in the project. This did not result in all the topics being taken up so we then contacted the schools one at a time just offering those topics which were left. We often then needed to chase the school in order to get an answer which delayed us approaching another school. As a result we did not get confirmation that we could run the group with South End until nearly the end of their study of toys.

Both groups were very large and as with the clothing group, there was not an equal balance between the young and older participants.

The making of toys, whilst fun, felt rushed with both groups. The time taken with South End led to us making the decision to reduce what we were trying to make when approaching the group with the pupils from Denfield. The young age of the children from Denfield also meant that it was important to select an activity which was very simple to do as they required a lot more support.

In the final group with Denfield we struggled with the number of older participants

Group breakdown & Feedback.

Responses from adult feedback forms:

100% definitely enjoyed taking part in the project.
100% felt that they learnt or experienced something new.
100% agreed that it brought them together with new people.
100% enjoyed taking part with others in the community and those of different ages.
100% definitely found the project valuable.

100% of those who responded were female
100% of those who responded were British

33% were aged 55-64 years old
33% were aged 65-74 years old
33% were aged 75-84 years old.

66% did not consider themselves to have a disability
24% did consider themselves to have a disability.
Response from the children’s feedback forms – South End.

55% of the children selected 😊 when asked how they felt about the project.
35% of the children selected 😊😊 when asked how they felt about the project.
8% of the children selected 😐 when asked how they felt about the project.

The remaining 2% did not select a response.

![Words used to describe the project](image)

**When asked what was good about this project responses included:**

“I liked it when we made spinners”

“Making all the toys because it was easy and creative”

“I really enjoyed the pit stop as it was fun to have different toys out.”

“I liked finding out what toys were liked in the past”.

“I liked how the project included different activities and experiences

“I liked making toys and also I liked seeing how toys have evolved”.

“We learnt about different famous bears, how to make teddies from socks and about old toys”

“Toys were different a long time ago. Still had toys in the olden days. You can make teddy bears with anything”.

**When asked what was not so good about the project responses included:**

“I found the tooth pick gliders had but I persevered”.

“It was a little bit uninteresting because everything was old”.

“The amount of time we had”.

“Playing with the outside toys”

We were happy with things because... “we interested in learning new things, playing with the toys and listening to the stories”.

Feedback from the participants.

“The children all contributed to the session, they enjoyed the tea party outside. It was interesting to know that not all the children played indoors.”

“The project has been very enjoyable and well organised”.

“ Well organised and well researched. Denfield Park and South End Juniors – delightful children”.

“Thank you so much to you and your team of volunteers. The children loved you visiting and got a lot out of the experience”. – Teacher Southend

“The children had a wonderful time and as teachers we have gained lots of information that we will be able to use next year”. Teacher South End

Family History.

In addition to creating the intergenerational groups for the project we also set out to tell the stories of some of the men from Rushden who were killed during the final year of the war. We aimed to achieve this by using a family history researcher to trace ancestors of these men and see if they would be happy to share their relative’s story with us. It soon became clear however that this was going to be a much more difficult task for a couple of reasons:

- The men who died during 1918 were often young and without direct descendents, therefore we had to try and trace more distant relatives.
- When family members were traced and contacted, either via Ancestry.com or letter, we did not always receive a response or the family could not tell us anything about their relative.

We had two volunteers who focused on family history and whilst one continued to trace family trees it was decided the other volunteer would gather statistical information about the fallen soldiers and we would use this to tell a story about the men who died in 1918 from Rushden. It was also decided that we would put out a press release asking for stories from relatives. (Appendix 5). This resulted in 17 people contacting us wanting to share the stories of their relatives. Not all those who contacted us had relatives who died in 1918, however we made the decision that we should honour all those from Rushden who died during the war and would include their stories. As a result of this we were able to tell the stories of 26 men who died during the war. The stories of those men who died also gave us the chance to tell stories about some of the men who lived as well as how the families coped when they lost a loved one. The stories along with photographs, press cuttings and postcards formed a display in the end of project exhibition.
We also looked for further ways in which to tell the story of Rushden and the First World War. Using a map of Rushden we indicated where those who had died during 1918 had lived. This was a way to illustrate how widespread the impact of the war on Rushden had been. Participants of the Prince’s Trust helped to research this aspect of the project and then went on to visit some of the properties. This research also helped to bring home to them just how young these men were as many of the Prince’s Trust participants were of a similar age to those who went off to fight.

100 years of Teddy bears.

As a way to include the wider community and to create an interesting display, linked to the topic of toys, for the exhibition we asked local people to share with us pictures of their teddy bears (Appendix 2 & 5). Our aim was to cover 100 years of teddies. We had 88 photographs of teddies sent in, covering the years from 1935 to present day. Some members of the public simply sent in photographs whilst a couple told us the stories behind their teddies which we were also able to share with the public in the exhibition.

Badge Competition.

In conjunction with our School of Life project and the British Legion we helped to arrange a badge competition. The young people of Rushden were asked to design a pin badge to
commemorate the centenary of The First World War. 5 winners were selected and the designs were made into badges which were sold for the Rushden Branch Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2018.

We had approximately 60 entries. It was not possible to know the exact number of entries as the schools who took part were asked to submit only their top 3 designs. Five of the local schools took part as well as children entering individually. The 5 winners were aged between 4 and 11 years old. The badges were sold throughout the town, with some even being sent abroad.

**Project Ambassadors.**

As a way of continuing our engagement with those younger participants who had taken part in the group sessions once the groups had finished we worked at creating project ambassadors. The aim was to meet with a small number of younger participants from each group towards the end of the project in order to get their feedback on some of the exhibition ideas, for them to participate in the Remembrance Parade and attend our end of project celebration. They would also help to promote the exhibition to friends, family and fellow pupils. This had mixed results.

We were able to meet once more with the students from Rushden Academy who took part in the food group and gather their opinions on how we planned to layout the exhibition and
the contents. We also got commitment from them to attend the party as well as the parade, both of which they did.

It was not possible to create any other ambassador groups for a variety of reasons:

- The participants from The Prince’s Trust had since moved on to jobs, further courses etc and were no longer involved with the organisation.
- The nature of scouts meant that they were not able to make a commitment to attend the party which took place during the school day and as an organisation were already taking part in the Remembrance Parade.
- The children who took part in the toys and clothing groups have since moved up a year and it was difficult to organise a time when we could meet. In addition to this it was problematic for the school to release the children and the necessary staff so that they could attend the party. There was also a general reluctance to commit to the parade which of course took place outside of school hours on a Sunday.

The Party

On the 2\textsuperscript{nd} November we hosted a party to celebrate the project coming to an end and as a way to thank those individuals and organisations that supported or took part in the project.

We invited 108 people, including the older volunteers and representatives from the schools and groups who participated as well as those from the local businesses who had supported the project along with local councillors and town officials (Appendix 3).

61 people attended on the day for a lunch and some entertainment. We were able to give our thanks to all who attended as well as pay tribute to one of the volunteers who had recently passed away and who had participated in all 4 of the groups. We also invited those at the party to join us at our building in West Street, Rushden where the Mayor officially opened the exhibition which show cased the work and research the groups had been doing during the past 12 months.
The Exhibition.

The 1918-2018 “Then & Now” exhibition took place at our building in West Street, Rushden and was opened by Rushden’s Mayor on Friday 2\textsuperscript{nd} November 2018. It was open to the general public, Monday to Thursday 10am to 2pm throughout November as well as Saturday 10\textsuperscript{th} November (Appendix 4).

The exhibition displayed the work created by the 4 groups, to share the information about the changes in the 4 topics and the stories of some of those men from Rushden who died during the First World War. A number of the exhibits had been created as part the group activities and we were also kindly loaned a number of items from local businesses and individuals. We provided visitors the opportunity to take away copies of a booklet of those recipes which we cooked as part of the food group, an information sheet about where they could find more about the topics covered as well as a small thank you of sweets and a reflective poppy key ring.
In total the exhibition was visited by 412 people. We invited local groups and schools to book visits which enabled us to give them more detailed tours of the exhibition. We were visited by groups from Serve, The British Legion and local carers. Two local schools also brought classes to visit, bringing a total of 150 children to view what we had on display.

Feedback from the exhibition was done in an informal manner with visitors writing in a comments book (Appendix 6). It was well received as is illustrated by the numbers who visited, some of whom visited more than once.

Visitors to the exhibition:

Comments from the visitor’s book:

“A great exhibition! Both staff and children enjoyed looking at the artefacts”.
“This exhibition has brought back many memories of my childhood in the 50s onwards. The exhibition reminds us of Rushden’s service to the community throughout the 20th century. Very well done”

“A wonderful show – well done” inspiring to do something along these lines” Ringstead Heritage Group.

“Time goes by, events such as this make it very evident and should not be wasted.”

“Thank you for an informative and memorable exhibition, in which you have included the whole town. As incomers we are impressed by the spirit that drove the town many years ago and still does today”.

**The Parade.**

Representatives from NVCA, 1918-2018 “Then & Now” and 4 school children from Rushden Academy who had participated in the Food group took part in the Rushden Remembrance parade on Sunday 11th November. We walked along with representatives of military organisations, local youth groups and other local organisations.

As part of the service, which took place at the local war memorial, we laid a wreath in memory of the men who did not return for the war.

We had hoped that we would have had a greater presence at the parade. However there was difficult to get commitment from the schools we had been working with to participate in an event which took place outside of the school day.
Conclusion.

The project outcomes have been met, although some changes have had to be made along the way, a reflection of the nature of working with other organisations and individuals.

4 Intergenerational groups were created to look at the topic areas which we stated in our application. Over the year approximately 255 young people participated in the groups along with 33 older people. An additional 2 people volunteered to carry out family history research for the project.

We were able to tell the stories of 26 Rushden men who died during the First World War as a result of being contacted by 17 family members happy to tell their stories. As previously stated we had to change the method we used to gather these stories as we found it difficult to track down ancestors due to the age of the men when they died and whether located relatives responded or were able to provide us with any information.

The creation of the exhibition enabled the general public to see the results of the project and to learn also about the changes which have been seen in the past 100 years. 412 people visited the exhibition throughout the month it was open. Two schools who had not participated in the groups brought down classes of children to view the information and artefacts.

The project also reached the 60+ entrants in our badge competition (the exact number is not known because the schools were asked to only submit their top 3 designs). We were able to take part in Rushden's Remembrance Parade on 11th November 2018. Whilst we did not have as many group participants taking part as we had hoped we were still able to participate in a very well attended parade and laid a wreath on behalf of the project.

The film was created as a lasting record of the project and will be used on social media and our website to promote the need for people to explore and share our heritage as well as the benefits of intergenerational practice.

Throughout all aspects of the project we have displayed the Heritage Lottery logo.

We were able to work with a wide range of schools, organisations and businesses from Rushden with:

- 6 Rushden schools
- 1st Rushden Scouts
- The Rushden branch of the Royal British Legion
- The Prince’s Trust, Rushden
- Family at War, Raunds
- Alfred Sargent shoe factory, Rushden
- DB Shoes, Rushden– archives
- Osbourne Toys, Rushden.
Approximately 860 people have participated in the 1918-2018 “Then & Now” project. We have helped them to engage with heritage in a variety of ways, to discover more about their own and the town’s past as well as passing on information so that they can learn and discover more. The feedback we have received from those who have been involved has been positive and our objectives have been met.