

Ageing Well wins the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

An Edinburgh project, Ageing Well, promotes healthy lifestyles for older adults in Edinburgh who are inactive, and now it has been awarded a prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS), the 'MBE' for volunteer groups.

This is Volunteer Awareness Week, 1-7 June, and the award is a unique UK national honour, created by Her Majesty The Queen to mark her Golden Jubilee in 2002, and to recognise the outstanding contributions made to local communities by groups of volunteers.



Ageing Well is a partnership with NHS Lothian, Edinburgh Leisure and Pilmeny Development Project and is part of the UK Ageing Well network, which aims to increase the expectation of good health in later life.

Helen McFarlane, Head of the Active Communities Team at Edinburgh Leisure said: "We're delighted that our Ageing Well volunteers have been recognised for all the support they give to this project. It goes without saying that the contribution of our volunteers makes such a vital difference to so many of

the Active Communities programmes that Edinburgh Leisure delivers each week and we couldn't do it without them."

Ageing Well Edinburgh, which is supported by 70 Ageing Well volunteers, who are older adults themselves, has over 15 successful years of making a positive difference to the lives of those who regularly attend the activities. Each week this multi award-winning project helps almost 400 older people in Edinburgh stay active and healthy, with the emphasis being on meeting new people and making physical activity accessible and enjoyable.

Sessions are held in community venues throughout the city and activities cater for a wide range of tastes and abilities and includes health walks, dancing, chair-based exercise, singing, a swim buddy programme, cycling skills and Velo-city free bike loan, a photography group, an allotment project and indoor new age kurling.

Edinburgh Leisure is celebrating the work of the wider group of volunteers with a thank you lunch at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cottage, Edinburgh this Wednesday, 6 June 2018. 119 Active Communities classes are delivered each week, helping participants and volunteers improve their health and wellbeing to live better, longer lives.

A record 250 voluntary groups from across the UK received the Queen's Award in 2018.

Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Civil Society said: "Everyone who has received this award should be incredibly proud. Their service, commitment and care, has a profoundly positive impact on communities throughout the country and I am delighted they have been recognised with this prestigious award.

"The record number of recipients this year is testament to the strength of the voluntary sector and I am sure this trend will continue into the future. If you know any organisations that

deserve to be recognised, make your voice heard and nominate them for next year.”

Any volunteer-led group made up of two or more people can be nominated for the award. Visit the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service website for more details. Nominations for the 2019 awards close on 14 September 2018.