

# BIG HEADS OF FROME

## *Home in Frome* Carnival Project, 2011

Over 100 people took part in the Big Heads carnival project this year and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Workshops were held in Victoria Park, the Key centre and Sun Street Chapel and 25 fabulous Big Heads were created for this year's Carnival night on 24th September.

Of the people who took part many were families who wanted to be involved in Carnival but didn't have the resources to make an entry themselves. There were also a number of individuals, some of whom were new to Frome and happy to be part of a community activity in the town, and there were people from several local organisations including Open Storytellers, Sustainable Frome and Flourish Homes. The free workshops offered skills, materials and ongoing assistance and encouragement for everyone to develop their creative ideas.

The idea was to make a Big head of a Frome person, a friend, relation, a famous or not so famous local character or a Big Head that represented a local organisation. Most families chose to make a Big Head of a member of their family and others made Big Heads that were connected with Frome, such as Benjamin Baker and the Mayor, however there were no limits put on people's creativity and some extraordinary characters and creatures emerged as well.

We were lucky to be given the use of Sun Street Chapel for a month leading up to Carnival and it was a very social, friendly environment where people could work at their own pace with support from experienced makers and under the expert guidance of lead artist Mel Day.

Feedback from people on carnival night was very positive with participants enjoying being part of the carnival and playing to such a large audience from whom they got a brilliant response. Some of Big heads were recognised by people in the crowd and many said afterwards how much enjoyed the whole effect of the huge illuminated heads and the entertaining way they interacted with the audience. The upbeat music of the Frome Street Bandits added to the sense of fun, the only thing was that the procession went past too quickly! The week after carnival night the Somerset Standard wrote: 'One of the most popular entries was the Home in Frome Big Heads which caused gasps of amazement among the crowd'.

People are curious to know what happens to the Big Heads now and it seems that they are to be welcomed into a number of community venues in the town, so we haven't seen the last of them yet! There is also a lot of enthusiasm for creating an entry next year, so watch this space. Home in Frome would like to continue to support Frome Carnival by encouraging local people to create human scale entries that in some way celebrate and reflect life in Frome.

Finally, congratulation to everyone who took part – we won the Oasis Carnival cup!

Annabelle Macfadyen 4.10.11

The Home in Frome Big Heads project was funded by Frome Town Council, Frome Community Lottery, Flourish Homes and Active Citizens.

### **The kind of comments we had during the process of creating the Big Heads were:**

*'It's fun, there's a real sense of community'*

*'I think its brilliant to do something very creative and it is lovely that it is a free community event.'*

*'It's a wonderful opportunity for us, we never manage to make a float ourselves but we've always wanted to be part of the carnival'*

*'It gets the children involved with adults working together.'*

*'I've never done anything like this before, they're looking great!'*

*'I found the project captivating, fulfilling and a very positive experience.*

*I loved the way that it brought together so many people of different ages, backgrounds and abilities; the sense of community and helping each other out;*

*the opportunity to be creative and expressive; the chance to learn from and work with experienced, creative and inspirational people; the wonderful venue;*

*the expert organisation; the accessibility of the project (informal, welcoming and free!) and the divine influence over the weather!'*