

Confirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Community Partnership Board** held in the
Peter Pears Recital Room, Snape Maltings, Snape, IP17 1SP
on Thursday, 8 December 2022 at 10.00am

Community Partnership Board Members Present:

Steve Gallant (Chairman of the Community Partnership Board and Leader of East Suffolk Council),
Chris Abraham (Chief Executive of Community Action Suffolk (CAS)),
Paul Ashdown (Chairman of the Lowestoft and Northern Parishes Community Partnership),
Lesley Beevor (SALC representative),
Chris Blundell (Chairman of the Kesgrave, Rushmere St Andrew, Martlesham, Carlford and Fynn
Valley Community Partnership),
Norman Brooks (Chairman of the Carlton Colville, Kessingland, Southwold and Villages Community
Partnership),
Matt Carney (East Suffolk Policing Commander, Suffolk Constabulary),
Judy Cloke (Chairman of the Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth and Villages Community Partnership),
Julian Cusack (Vice Chairman of the Aldeburgh, Leiston, Saxmundham and Villages Community
Partnership),
Louise Hardwick (NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk Integrated Care Board),
Mark Jepson (Chairman of the Felixstowe Peninsula Community Partnership),
Gary King (Locality Inspector, Suffolk Constabulary),
Michael Ladd (Suffolk County Councillor),
Carol Poulter (Chairman of the Framlingham, Wickham Market and Villages Community
Partnership),
Letitia Smith (ESC Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism),
Roger Wright (Chief Executive of Britten Pears Arts, Snape Maltings).

Others present:

Luke Bennett (Partnerships Manager, East Suffolk Council),
Andrew Cuthbertson (Communities and VSC Lead, Suffolk County Council),
Sharon Harkin (Communities Officer),
Nick Khan (Strategic Director, East Suffolk Council),
Nicole Rickard (Head of Communities, East Suffolk Council and NHS Norfolk & Waveney / Ipswich
& East Suffolk Integrated Care Boards),
Louise Thomas (Communities Officer),
Paul Wood (Head of Economic Development and Regeneration),
Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager, East Suffolk Council)

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Steve Gallant welcomed everyone to the meeting.

All those present then introduced themselves for the benefit of those who had not attended the meeting before.

Steve welcomed Lesley Beevor, who had been formally elected as the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) representative onto the Community Partnership Board, as a replacement for Russ Rainger. He stated that he looked forward to working with her.

Steve then invited Roger Wright, Chief Executive of the Britten Pears Arts at Snape Maltings, to welcome everyone to the venue and give a short update on their current work and plans.

Roger stated that he was very pleased to host the Community Partnership Board meeting and he had laid out a programme of events for each attendee, so that they could see the wide range of events taking place at Snape Maltings.

Roger updated the Board on the work undertaken to support those with Dementia and local schools and it was noted that music had the potential to transform lives. The cost of living crisis was affecting many people and Roger was pleased that Snape Maltings and the Red House in Aldeburgh were able to join the Warm Rooms scheme and offer a warm and comfortable place for people to go during this especially difficult time. He then encouraged everyone to visit the independent shops on the site, as all the profits were reinvested back into Snape Maltings and the outreach work.

Steve thanked Roger for his update and commented that Snape Maltings was a jewel in the East Suffolk district, widely recognised for excellence and well deserving of all the awards that it had won.

Apologies for absence were then received from Bobby Bennett, Tony Cooper, Melanie Craig, Susan Harvey, Rachel Hunt, James Mallinder and Tom McGarry.

2. Minutes

Steve Gallant presented the Minutes from the last meeting of the Board, held on 5 September 2022. There being no comments or amendments proposed for the minutes, it was therefore

RESOLVED

That the Minutes from 5 September 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

3. Focus on Community Partnerships

Letitia Smith invited Board Members to send her their comments and feedback on the latest Community Partnership Newsletter, which was circulated separately to the agenda pack. She then invited the 2 presentations to commence.

Felixstowe Peninsula Community Partnership

Mark Jepson, Chairman of the Felixstowe Peninsula CP, and Sharon Harkin, Communities Officer, gave an update on the progress made by the CP over the past year.

Back in April 2022, Felixstowe CP had reviewed the updated data pack and, as a result, refocussed their priorities. It was noted that the new priorities were:

- a) Supporting the community through the rising cost of living and fuel crisis.
- b) Improving the physical health and wellbeing of primary school children (new data revealed that Felixstowe had highest number of childhood obesity in East Suffolk – The Felixstowe Integrated Neighbourhood Team (INT) also revealed Felixstowe had the highest number of child referrals to Ipswich dentistry).
- c) Increase physical and social activity in adults over 45 and over 70 (due to the number of people working from home, those isolated at home not re-engaging with the community since COVID, which also links in with the Felixstowe INT priorities re frailty in over 70's and falls prevention).

Whilst work began on priorities b and c, it became very apparent that the cost-of-living crisis was escalating and as the Ease the Squeeze project was building, the CP decided to focus on priority a. After a cost-of-living workshop in September, £15,000 was reserved for priority a and membership of a task and finish group to approve funding was agreed. It was decided that a network of Warm Rooms would be supported, however, upon further investigation, the funding from the CP was not required in full, as the majority of the Warm Rooms were self-funding.

Therefore, at the November 2022 CP meeting, it was agreed that funding would be allocated to Top Up Comfort Food, Top Up Handy Man Project, x 50 Winter Warm Packs, Top Up Family Cooking Sessions and Top Up Pantry Project Top Up Uniform Bank. It was noted that the grant funding would be reviewed again at the January 2023 meeting.

Lowestoft and Northern Villages Community Partnership

Paul Ashdown, Chairman of the CP, and Louise Thomas, Communities Officer, gave an update on the progress of the CP to date.

The BACT bus service was going well, although feedback had shown that it would be helpful if people were able to use their bus passes on the service, rather than having to pay. This was being looked into further.

There were currently 12 Warm Rooms in Lowestoft, which were proving to be very popular. The Warm Rooms were available every day of the week and people were able to have free tea and coffee, donated by Balfor Beatty, and there had been many donations of games, books and puzzles to help people to pass the time. There was a wide range of people using the facility and Mental Health Took Kit Cards, paid for by Lowestoft Rising, were available at every Warm Room. Thanks were also given to Lowestoft Place Board, who had encouraged some of the network of Ambassadors to be

allocated to each Warm Room to act as Stewards and deal with any queries as they arose.

The Game On event took place at Water Lane, it had been well attended and gave people the opportunity to play a variety of board games. This had helped to reduce social isolation and improve mental health and well-being and the costs of this fun event had been subsidised by Lowestoft Town Council. It was hoped that this event would be re-run in the future, with additional advertising and promotion, to increase participation.

The Board also noted that there were a number of Comfort Food vouchers available and that these could be used in both Morrison's cafés and that children could eat for free. It was acknowledged that there was a huge demand for support in Lowestoft, at this difficult time.

Steve commented that bus passes were issued by SCC and discussions needed to take place to ensure that they could be used for Local Community Transport. It was noted that bus passes could be relinquished for a cash alternative, if requested, however, the sum of money received was very small and would not enable many journeys on Local Community Transport.

Louise Hardwick commented on the high levels of dental referrals of children in Felixstowe, mentioned earlier. She stated that many children had no access to tooth brushes or tooth paste at home. She stated that providing tooth brushes and tooth paste for use at breakfast clubs should be encouraged, instead. Judy Cloke commented that tooth brushes and paste had previously been provided at the Beccles, Bungay and Halesworth CP and had been very well received. Mark commented that the number of children accessing Free School Meals had increased by 50% in Felixstowe in recent months.

4. Report from the Transport Task and Finish Task Group on the Katch electric taxi-bus service trial and the development of a new transport app

Norman Brooks reported that he was now the temporary chair of the Transport Task and Finish Task Group, following the resignation of Alexander Nicoll, and he gave an update on the Katch electric taxi-bus trial.

It was noted that the Katch bus was popular, however, the service was not cost effective and, regrettably, SCC had decided that it would not fund the trial any longer and the service would cease on 23 December 2022. ESC was currently working alongside other providers, to see if it could create a new service, covering a similar area around Framlingham, Wickham Market, Campsea Ashe, Snape and Snape Maltings. Discussions were currently underway with SCC to see if they could provide some officer support for the replacement Katch project, instead of funding.

Nick Khan explained that the Katch bus was a demand-response service, which was booked either by using an app or by telephone. Work would commence shortly on reviewing the routes provided, as well as the number and location of the bus stops. The

additional work would ensure that the future routes were viable, scalable and would also include some multi-occupancy journeys.

Michael Ladd stated that he was Chairman of the SCC Scrutiny Committee and they had recently reviewed rural bus provision in Suffolk. The Committee had decided to write to the Minister for Transport to ask them to create legislation to support rural transport and enable S106 funds to be used for transport purposes. He commented that marketing was crucial, as everyone needed to be aware of the service being provided and it was a case of 'use it or lose it'. He reported that SCC spent £7 million each year providing free bus passes and an information campaign was planned for next year, about how to claim a free bus pass. Some people had been deterred from using public transport due to the fear of catching Covid, however, the information campaign would include that busses were safe to use.

There followed some discussion about how ESC could ensure that the service would be sustainable in the future, as it had been loss making previously. It was then agreed in principle to part fund the Katch bus scheme, using money from 2022/23 and 2023/24 budgets and it was noted that a full business case would be brought to the March 2023 meeting for consideration.

The Board noted that the development of an app to book demand-led transport was crucial for having a viable and efficient business model. Experts from IYJI Ltd had been commissioned to develop the app and once developed, it would be evaluated and possibly used for other rural transport projects in the district. Ultimately, it could possibly even be offered to other Councils to use, for a fee. It was confirmed that an inception workshop had been delivered and officers were now negotiating the scope and legal details for the app development. Steve stated that this was an exciting opportunity, with great potential. Paul raised concerns that some parts of the district had poor mobile phone coverage and reassurance was provided that transport would also be able to be booked via the app or telephone, in the longer term. It was confirmed that the Board had previously agreed funding for the development of the app, however, should that prove to be insufficient, the Board was minded to agree in principle to a relatively small increase, on the condition that a business case be brought to the next Board meeting in March 2023.

The Board then received an update on the Buzzabout Project in the Lowestoft and Norther Parishes CP area. It had been found that many residents in the villages north of Lowestoft did not have access to a car or traditional public transport, which left them feeling isolated and dependent upon other people. Buzzabout was currently operating 2 days per week, with around 60 journeys a month being provided and it was hoped that the numbers of people using the service would increase significantly over the coming months.

Norman took the opportunity to thank Alexander Nicoll for all of his hard work, whilst Chairman of the Transport Task and Finish Group.

5. Social Isolation and Loneliness Task and Finish Group's Plan and Proposal

The Board noted that since the Community Partnerships were formed in 2019, Social Isolation and Loneliness had been the top priority for the Board and was identified as a priority by seven of the eight individual Community Partnerships.

At the Community Partnerships Forum at Trinity Park in March 2022, the Loneliness and Isolation workshop had focussed on key data about the topic, including new data relating to loneliness during the pandemic. This data, along with the ideas generated at the workshop in response to four key questions (below), had been presented to the Board at the September meeting. The focus questions for the interactive part of the workshop were:

- What already exists in East Suffolk to reduce isolation and loneliness?
- What are the gaps – who and where?
- If you had no budget but willing partners, what would you do to support the groups and places identified?
- If you had a magic wand and unlimited budget, what would you do to support the groups and places identified?

It was noted that the headline results were considered at the Board meeting in June and the matter was considered in detail at the September meeting. The top five ideas from the Board votes were as follows:

1. Community Hubs
2. Address Transport issues
3. Designing solutions with communities building on local assets
4. Communication – about what is already available
5. Learning from others and capacity building

Since the September Board meeting, the Government has announced a new stream of capital funding linked to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSP) – the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). A priority for this fund was developing community facilities and hubs, including investment and support for digital infrastructure and circular economy projects in local community facilities. It was therefore proposed that we should try to combine East Suffolk CPB revenue funding and Rural England Prosperity Fund programme capital funding to develop a competitive grant scheme aimed at enabling, developing and supporting community hubs in and serving rural communities. This scheme would bridge business and community needs and provides critical upgrades and improvements to community facilities, so they are fit for modern day, 21st century use.

It was noted that ESC had submitted a bid for £420,000 for this project from the Rural England Prosperity Fund and it was hoped that a decision would be received shortly. It was noted that an outcome proposal was attached as Appendix A to the report, which sought Board funding - £45,000 from 2022/23 and £70,000 from 2023/24. The intention to focus on smaller market towns and rural communities was noted. Developing an enhanced network of community hubs across East Suffolk should play a key role in addressing the first (community hubs) and third (designing solutions with communities

building on local assets) of the priorities identified by the Board at/following the last meeting.

The Board acknowledged the importance of sustainable community hubs for rural areas, which would provide community facilities that would be fit for the modern day and noted the outcome proposal attached to the report. Some of the suggested improvements would include:

- Improved digital infrastructure to enable use of the space as a digital hub by local residents and businesses
- Improved kitchen facilities to enable provision of meals e.g. for a lunch club or cook and share session, use as a Meet Up Monday or for Cooking on a Budget classes
- Building extensions (or adaptations to existing rooms/space to repurpose it) to provide additional space for a community shop or pantry, outreach services to visit (for example health, money or housing outreach from public or voluntary sector organisations), a digital hub, as a co-working space or health and wellbeing activities
- Additional space for circular economic projects e.g. Men's Shed or Makers Shed
- Changes to enable use as a cultural, arts, heritage or events space
- Adaptations to outside space e.g. development of a community growing space or green gym
- Installation of EV chargers
- Net zero upgrades to improve energy efficiency of buildings
- Supporting village halls to help the hyper local economy, local activism etc

Nicole suggested that £45,000 be allocated from the 2022/23 budget and that a further £70,000 be committed from the 2023/24 budget to support this work. The Board members were very supportive and it was noted that providing sustainable community hubs would make a significant difference to many areas. It was suggested that further information be circulated on this matter via SALC, to ensure that all Town and Parish Councils were aware of the opportunities available. Steve stated that there would be a media campaign around this, in due course, to raise awareness.

Paul expressed his disappointment that Lowestoft was not able to participate in this initiative, however, reassurance was provided that some of the smaller northern parishes would be able to.

RESOLVED

- 1 That the priority ideas identified through the September Board meeting (and subsequent survey) for reducing isolation and loneliness in East Suffolk be noted.
- 2 That the outcome proposal attached as Appendix A to this report and the proposal to allocate £45,000 from the 2022/23 budget and commit a further £70,000 from the 2023/24 budget be approved.
- 3 That an update report would be brought to the March 2023 Board meeting.

6 Update on the Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund

The Board received a presentation from Paul Wood, ESC Head of Economic Development and Regeneration. He reported that a national £2.6 billion fund had been launched in March 2022, as part of the Government's Levelling Up programme. It was noted that East Suffolk Council (ESC) had been allocated £2.75 million over 3 years, which was additional to the £3.75 million Multiply element of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which was led by SCC and replaced elements of the EU structural funds.

The primary goal of the UKSPF was to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. It was based around three investment priorities:

- a. Communities and Place
- b. Supporting Local Business
- c. People and Skills

The scheme commenced October 2022 and would end in March 2025 and full Investment Plan approval was received from DLUCH on 5 December 2022.

The Board noted the individual project work planned for the themes of Communities and Place, Business Support Programme, Move to Net Zero, Workforce Capital Skills Programme, Suffolk-Wide Skills, Local Economy Led Skills and Community Skills and the Personal Development Service.

The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) comprised of the rural business investment fund, which would support net zero / green business adaptations, SME investments and diversification and agriculture and farm diversification. The 21st century community and business hub grant programme included a community hub grant programme crossing between business and community needs, provided critical upgrades and improvements to community facilities so fit for 21st century use, open to village halls, churches, community buildings and commercial space looking to have new focus.

It was noted that the Community Partnership Board had an important role in the governance of the Funds. The Board would undertake the role of the local stakeholder group and, as such, would receive annual updates on activity, progress and outcomes. It would also support the development of the economy led skills programme for 2024/25.

The Board were extremely supportive of the work being undertaken and noted the links with other organisations and partners. It was confirmed that the presentation slides would be circulated to the Board and put on the website, after the meeting.

7 Update on the Ease the Squeeze Programme

Nicole Rickard provided the Board with an update on the Ease the Squeeze programme. The Board were impressed by the number and variety of different projects underway. It was noted that the Warm Rooms initiative had received £90,000 of funding and it had made a significant difference to many people who were struggling. The only project that had not been undertaken was the Food Network Co-ordinator role.

It was noted that many people were feeling desperate and lots of people were being affected by the cost of living crisis, who had never been in financial difficulty before. The winter warmth packs, which helped heat the person and not the home, were very popular and made a big difference. Nicole thanked SALC for their help in sharing information widely and enabling more referrals for support to take place.

There followed some discussion about the Warm Rooms and Warm Spaces, which were available across the district, which were often used by people who would not normally engage with the Council or Communities Team. Therefore, they were a good opportunity to share information on the help and support that was available. It was noted that refreshments, games and books were provided to help people pass the time and to mix socially. Reassurance was provided that support was on hand to ensure that the Warm Rooms and Warm Spaces did not get too crowded or too noisy.

In response to the 'future focus' idea to established a mobile community pantry, Louise Hardwick took the opportunity to report that the 'vaccination bus' was currently not being used and she suggested that it could be put to use as a mobile food pantry for rural areas instead. It was agreed that this was a great idea and further discussion about this would take place outside of the meeting.

8 Any Other Business

Julian Cusack reported that at the Aldeburgh, Leiston, Saxmundham and Villages Community Partnership meeting last night, anecdotal concerns had been raised about knife crime and vandalism taking place involving young people. He felt that there was a lack of people willing to be Youth Workers in that area, mainly because it was felt that there was no training or support available to them. He asked if any training was available for potential volunteers? Chris Abraham from Community Action Suffolk (CAS) reported that training and support was available, however, there was a lack of people willing to become youth workers across Suffolk. Anyone interested in becoming a Youth Worker should contact CAS and they would be provided with more information about the training and support that was available.

9 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 15 March 2023 at 2.00 pm in the Riverside Centre, Stratford St Andrew.

The meeting concluded at 12.03 pm

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Chairman