

Lowestoft and Northern Parishes Community Partnership

Action Notes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 20 December 2022

at Corton

ESC Councillors – Councillor Paul Ashdown (Chairman), Edward Back, Peter Byatt, Linda Coulam, Janet Craig, Andree Gee, Louise Gooch

SCC Councillors – Councillor Melanie Vigo Di Gallidoro

Town and Parish Councils – Neil Livingstone (Somerleyton, Ashby and Herringfleet Parish Council), Andy Pearce (Lowestoft Town Council), Glenis Soanes (Blundeston and Flixton Parish Council)

Partnership Organisations – Danny Steel (Lowestoft Vision)

Others present –

Luke Bennett (Partnerships Manager), Alli Stone (Democratic Services Officer), Claire Taylor-Haigh (Women Like Me), Louise Thomas (Communities Officer), Steve Thorogood

Apologies – Phil Aves (Lowestoft Rising), Nicki Cooper (Public Health Suffolk), Sarah Foote (Lowestoft Town Council), Karen McCormack (Public Health Suffolk), Emma Ratzner (Access Community Trust), Cllr James Reeder, Cllr Keith Robinson, Cllr Mary Rudd

Item	Discussion
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</p> <p>The Community Partnership reviewed the ground rules. Members were supportive of the way the Partnership was working and no changes were made.</p>
2	<p>Action Notes</p> <p>The Action Notes from the last meeting held on 21 September 2022 were agreed.</p>
3.	<p>Board Update</p> <p>Luke Bennett (LB) updated the meeting on the recent Board meeting.</p> <p>The Board had received a report on transport, in particular looking at producing an app to coordinate booking of the various community transport services in the area</p>

	<p>to help manage demand. LB noted this would be in addition to telephone bookings. The CP commented that this was a good idea to help manage transport demand.</p> <p>A comment was made that the Buzzabout Bus routes could be made more efficient. Danny Steel (DS) commented that they were looking at putting on more formal routes once or twice a week in addition to the booked service to make it more useful for residents and more cost efficient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was an additional issue for those with free bus passes having to pay for the Buzzabout bus. Paul Ashdown (PA) had put some money in to fund these journeys, and there was a need to look at how this could be managed in the longer term. • LC highlighted that those with bus passes, but no bus service, could get vouchers for taxis which could be used for the Buzzabout as well. • There was also an option to look at extending the service to the James Paget Hospital. <p>The Board had also received a project proposal to improve infrastructure in community hubs, focussing on rural areas. Funding had been approved by the Board and an application had been made to the Rural England Prosperity Fund. The project would enable community venues to extend their buildings or upgrade infrastructure to make spaces more flexible.</p>
4.	<p>Project updates</p> <p>Game On</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event held at the end of November with grant support from Lowestoft Town Council. • Around 50 people attended, generally with positive feedback that it should be rolled out to the various parts of Lowestoft. Some warm rooms were also putting out games for use and this could be linked in. • Feedback would be sent round. <p>Planters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 planters were ready to be distributed to Lowestoft schools. • There was a possibility to extend the scheme to retirement and care homes. <p>Warm rooms and Ease the Squeeze</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 10 warm rooms had been set up in Lowestoft • Information posts on social media were gaining traction to help share details • Some more rooms would also be opened in the new year. <p>Louise Thomas (LT) updated the group on other Ease the Squeeze Projects</p>

- Laptops had been provided in more rural areas to enable people to get online and access support.
- Winter warm packs were also being distributed, one pack which contained warm clothes and blankets, and one pack where people could ask for a more expensive item to help (electric blankets etc.). LT commented that there was some difficulty in getting hold of items and that the ones that were available were getting more expensive due to demand. Information on how to access these packs was available in warm rooms.
- Comfort food programme had been set up and had been distributed to food banks and community centres, Morrisons café had agreed to provide food to anyone under the age of 16 accompanied by an adult with a voucher. This programme was not advertised to the general public but as a way of providing an urgent meal.

The Partnership made the following comments on ease the squeeze generally:

- Any Pearce (AP) asked if there was a 'plan b' for in case of local lockdowns due to covid or similar viruses. LT stated that there wasn't and many services were struggling to provide the current plans.
- AP asked how these programmes would continue for next winter if necessary. PA confirmed that community partnerships would run on for the next two years with the same level of funding and would react to the cost of living issues as appropriate. If ease the squeeze projects needed to be continued, they would be, and there would be a review of the projects to see how they could be improved going forward.
- Louise Gooch (LG) asked whether churches were being included in ease the squeeze projects. There was comment that some churches were very involved, and some weren't, depending on the individuals at the church.
- Peter Byatt (PB) commented that there was an issue with communicating what was going on and how information could be shared and asked if the schools could include this in their newsletters and if paper leaflets on projects could be distributed to pantries, warm rooms etc and how these could be targeted especially to people who were living alone and might be more isolated.
- Any communications needed to be carefully worded so that people did not feel targeted or embarrassed by accessing help and emphasised that these projects should be advertised as community creating rather than charity.
- More input was needed from the Councils own communications team to advertise what was being done in the local press.
- The issue with contacting hard to reach individuals was discussed, and how these people could be encouraged to access help. The CP asked that information be shared between agencies as far as possible and local newsletters utilised to share information.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linda Coulam (LC) highlighted the gap in provision for people who were working and were not able to access benefits and other systems of help. • LG raised the issue of energy poverty and residents who could not afford basic hygiene could be engaged with, or who were having to choose between heating, food, and hygiene.
5.	<p>Community Issues</p> <p>PA asked what the Partnership would like to focus on with remaining funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion was made that some money should be held in reserve for Jan/Feb and asked that money that was already allocated but not spent not be moved. • Suggestion was made to allocate money to purchase more laptops for warm rooms, or to allocate the money to the warm rooms/ease the squeeze funds in anticipation of emergency issues coming up in January/February. • Agreed that a task and finish group to determine how remaining funding could be spent for Ease the Squeeze. • LG suggested an event for low cost healthy cooking classes for families in a warm room, based on food that was available to families through free voucher schemes. Claire Taylor-Haigh commented that she was also setting up a project to do batch cooking classes based at the Kirkley centre and suggested this could be extended. LG agreed to bring back a project proposal to the CP. ST suggested extending this to a day which could include more activities and competitions to get children moving. <p>ACTION: CP agreed to fund a project on low cost healthy cooking lessons in principle subject to a proposal and costs being sent round.</p>
6.	<p>Date of Next meeting 21 February 2023, location TBC</p>

The meeting concluded at 6.14pm