

## **BRIEFING FOR WARMINSTER AREA BOARD – March 2024**

The Warminster Area Health and Wellbeing Forum comprises nearly 70 members and aims to join together those needing help and support to those best able to meet that need, in an efficient and cost-effective way.

Our aspiration from October 2023 to encourage all 140 organisations listed in the Health and Wellbeing booklet to register on a single platform, Wiltshire Together, has proved singularly unsuccessful with few takers. However, we still **value the booklet and its contents and have placed it – in a flip book form - onto our own site on Wiltshire Together**. This information is a powerful source and we would encourage everyone to access it and to share the link widely. <https://wiltshiretogether.org.uk/warminster-health-wellbeing>

On a cold October Monday, we collaborated with eight groups to offer help with **digital exclusion (from devices to affordability to skills and online safety concerns)** at Warminster library in the morning – and again at Mere in the afternoon. Despite strong advanced publicity, turn-out was disappointing though the few that did attend found it very useful. We still believe that digital exclusion remains a barrier that prevents many people from accessing vital services and information in an increasingly digital age.

Despite several approaches, we have heard nothing from the Army about their Garrison event, provisional planned for July 2024. Plans are well advanced for our own showcase event for 2024 – the **Valuing Volunteering Fair on 1 June**. Its aims are: to identify and publicise the importance of volunteering to organisations, to individuals, and to the community as a whole; to quantify and value the contribution made by volunteers within the community; and to showcase and promote the myriad volunteering opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds and skills. The event is being funded by Warminster Town Council and we expect a high degree of interest, not least as volunteering took a dip during and since Covid.

To extend the benefit of the event, we also aim to invite organisations to a workshop later in the year to help to develop a **Vision for Volunteering in Warminster**. The health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering are well documented and we also want to ascertain any gaps in provision and who may be best placed to fill those gaps.

Finally, we have managed the move over the last twelve months to an unincorporated organisation and placed the Forum on a firmer footing. At the AGM earlier this month, all the Trustees were re- elected and the previous Chair and Secretary both remain in post to ensure continuity. Chair Deborah Gogarty and I stand ready to brief Area Board members as required.

David Reeves

Secretary – Warminster Area Health and Wellbeing Forum

5 Mar 2024