

Corsham Community Area Status Report

Spring/Summer 2021

Background and context

The overarching aim of this document is for Corsham Area Board and its partners to obtain a better awareness of the issues within the Corsham Community Area. This in turn will inform our understanding of how to support local responses from communities, businesses and organisations and link this to the work of Wiltshire Council, its partners and agencies, so that collaboratively we can tackle these issues including those arising from COVID-19.

The Corsham community area has seen an incredible response to the COVID19 pandemic with volunteers leading the response and strategic partners working collaboratively to support our communities. Residents living within the area had access to support from one of the community groups that were set up, some of which have gone on to offer additional services for the community. This builds upon a foundation of strong partnership working between the community and supporting organisations.

As we now look ahead, this short document provides a summary of information that can be utilised to help inform the local community response. It brings together the differing data and information sources from across the community area that will help us to understand the state of our community and some of the impact of COVID-19.

Over time this document will be regularly updated in response to changes, new information and actions undertaken. Whilst the impact of COVID-19 in some areas is considerable, it is recognised that many of the issues identified in this report were existing ones.

Whilst it is natural to focus on the negative impacts of COVID-19, it is important to recognise and build on any positives that have occurred. These include the closer working between organisations, increased community cohesion, new volunteers and the wider use of the internet / social media to enhance communication between agencies and users.

The Corsham community area comprises the town of Corsham as well as the parishes of Lacock, Box and Colerne.

A key requirement is to ensure that all within the community area have the same opportunity to engage with this work and the consultation that has begun will continue to ensure that this report will be as inclusive as possible.

Community data and information

Local data is being collected from a range of sources to provide an overview of the current situation within our community. This is being combined with the outcomes of discussions on the impact of COVID-19 to inform the key issues emerging along with decisions on where resources should be focussed.

- [JSNA local data sets](#) – (collected in winter 2019)
- JSNA 2020 – Demography and overarching indicators
- [Children and young people mental health needs Assessment](#)
- [Gypsy, traveller and boater populations health needs assessment Wiltshire](#)
- [Office for National Statistics](#)
- COVID19 support group survey – (June 2020)

- Wiltshire CAJSNA 2020 'Your Local Priorities' Community Survey Results for Corsham community area. Total number of respondents 298.

Top priorities identified:

1. Climate change and renewable energies 33.2%
 2. Waste and recycling 32.9%
 3. Anti-social behaviour and crime 31.2%
 4. Highway infrastructure and maintenance 30.5%
 5. Public Transport 29.5%
- Corsham Area Board and working group discussions (including meetings with COVID-19 support group leads) July 2020 – March 2021.
 - JSNA Population, Indices of Deprivation, Life expectancy, Mortality (Oct 2020)

Context for this report

It is important to read this report with the following in mind:

- The process of identifying and agreeing the key concerns is not an exact science and both statistical and anecdotal evidence can be misleading. No two people will completely agree on what should be included so the author has looked for trends, commonality and correlation when deciding what to include. This report should therefore be viewed as an informed indicator to the state of the Corsham Community Area.
- The Corsham Community area is an excellent place to live and work. It is recognised that a tremendous amount of good work has taken place over the past few years due to the dedication and hard work of so many within our community.
- The JSNA data indicates that the Corsham community area is consistently performing amongst the top places in Wiltshire. However, the remit of this report does not include capturing these examples and the focus is upon those issues identified by the community as being the most important to focus on.
- Some of the areas highlighted from the JSNA data where the Corsham Community area seems to not be doing so well, needs to be looked at in the context of when and how it was collected. The variance between JSNA data in all community areas may sometimes be very small and not of any great significance. Wiltshire is also a great county to live in and sometimes we are comparing good with excellent
- Further investigation will be required with some of the data as they may not tell the whole story. E.g. who particularly is being affected? Are there differences between local communities and minority groups? Is the issue located in a particular geographical area? Equally in some cases the most recent data available is a few years old and the situation may have altered.
- It needs to be recognised that due to COVID-19, some of the issues highlighted are not just a local problem but of concern nationwide. Debt and financial challenges are examples of this.
- Limited conversations have taken place with some sectors so further consultation, data and intelligence gathering is required to inform the setting and monitoring of local priorities.

Understanding the emerging themes and the impact of COVID-19

This section is a summary of the data and feedback that has so far been received to aid our understanding of where improvement may be required. The picture will evolve over time especially when the full impact of COVID-19 is realized. This document is therefore organic and there will be further opportunities for those

who have not yet engaged to do so. What is clear is that some people will feel the impact more than others and they will need additional support.

Education, children and young people

- The public health measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and protect the most vulnerable, whilst they have been a priority, have had a significant impact on young people that is likely to be intense and long lasting. Feedback from the UK Youth Movement 2020 predicts that the impact on young people includes:
 1. Increased mental health or wellbeing concerns
 2. Increased loneliness and isolation
 3. Lack of safe space – including not being able to access youth club/services and lack of safe space at home
 4. Challenging family relationships
 5. Lack of trusted relationships or someone to turn to
 6. Increased social media or online pressure
 7. Higher risk for engaging in gangs, substance misuse, carrying weapons or other harmful practices.
 8. Higher risk for sexual exploitation or grooming
- Young people in the Corsham community area have faced additional pressures through disruption to education and school routine and uncertainty about the future. Restrictions on opportunities to socialise and attend regular activities has caused additional isolation, loneliness, and stress.
- Some children and young people have been affected by the additional pressures that parents have been under during the pandemic such as financial challenges and strained parental relationships.
- Operational challenges have put a strain on our schools and the education community. The feedback received is that despite these challenges schools are managing well, attendance is good and measures put in place are working.
- The Corsham School Year 11s and 13s have endured a turbulent year with disruption to exams and changes to assessment processes, however students have shown great resilience and positivity.
- Further consultation with schools is required to understand the legacy of COVID-19 on education and the work underway to ensure learning gaps created by school closures are filled.
- Early feedback from the school in 2020 highlighted additional pressures on young people's mental health and an increased demand for in house mental health and wellbeing services. In response several projects were initiated through the recently re-launched Corsham Local Youth Network to support students with emotional wellbeing, these have included:
 - Arts therapy with the Portable Wellbeing studio residency
 - Music therapy at The Rhythm Practice, Pound Arts
 - Pound Arts Thrive Wellbeing Project to build confidence through creative activities.
 - Workshops on internet safety with The Stay Safe Initiative (SSI) helping young people prepare for a safe and positive online future.
- There will be a focus on the leavers Y11/13 in 2021/22 with the SSI running a personal safety and confidence building course 'The Prepared Project' to help young people as they prepare to leave in 2022.
- Through the Pound Arts Thrive project, a survey will be sent to all students in the summer of 2021 with a focus on mental health, this will be followed by a 'feel good pack' for every student with art activities which encourage self- expression and practical wellbeing support.
- In the new school year, a survey developed by Wiltshire Council's communities team focusing on positive activities, will be sent to all students, the results of both survey's will provide a robust needs assessment and inform development of a tailored programme of activity, support and opportunities for young people in the community area.
- The Local Youth Network will bring a range of youth organisations and groups together in the Autumn of 2021 to review the survey results, consider local partnership and funding opportunities and collectively agree an action plan of projects and initiatives to take forward. To inform this work a mapping and gapping exercise focusing on the current activities offer and local assets will be initiated in collaboration with local organisations such as town and parish councils.

- Corsham Town Council has established a health and wellbeing group with a specific focus on mental health for all ages and is currently arranging a series of intelligence gathering and fact-finding meetings with relevant organisations.

Youth groups and organisations

- Youth clubs and open access youth provision has been significantly impacted by the pandemic, local clubs such as Corsham Youth Zone and the Green Room in Box have adapted by offering online support throughout periods of lockdown enabling young people to connect socially and by creating activity packs for group members. Some groups are starting to return to face to face activities. Further discussion with groups is needed to understand any barriers to re-starting activities and support required.
- A partnership between Corsham Youth Zone and Spindles created a new group in 2020 – Corsham Cycling Youth Group Network CYGNETS combining cycle repair, cycling skills, campaigning, and mentoring. The initial sessions have been oversubscribed and future courses are being planned.
- The Hub Club has returned at Springfield Campus delivering sports- based activities for young people.
- The Open Blue Bus team are preparing to get the bus back on the road to enable detached youth work in remote areas from September 2021.
- The Rise Trust delivers children’s centre activities in the Corsham Community Area and has provided outreach support, via virtual delivery, to 21 families in 2020/21. A blended approach of virtual and face to face support and activities will be offered from September.
- During the first lockdown the team dropped off supplies to families who were struggling to access items and set up and delivered home learning packs.
- The team established better connections with local agencies such as Poundarts, Corsham Food Bank and Souper Friday, enabling families to access additional support from all parties.
- The biggest need the Rise Trust team has experienced is the impact on parents’ mental health, especially during home schooling periods and where they already suffered mental health issues. Staff have provided more intensive support to help parents with resilience and tolerance to deal with their child’s behaviour.
- Due to families having to spend so much time together, there has been an increase in those accessing Freedom Programme (domestic abuse awareness course) and escalation of parental conflict/domestic abuse.
- Isolation continues to affect many families with some parent/child groups not re-starting. Support addressing financial issues has also increased.
- The priority is to get back to face-to-face delivery and have a physical presence in the community, to offer courses, sessions and to work with other agencies.
- The Rise Trust website has been developed and a RISE Instagram page set up, where information on learning, wellbeing, support, and continuous updates on services is shared.

JSNA and community data

- JSNA data 2018-19 shows that 88% of Primary schools in the Corsham community area have a good or outstanding rating from Ofsted.
- 67% of children in Corsham Community Area achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of primary school. This is higher than the Wiltshire average of 64%.
- 9% of 0-19-year olds in Corsham Community Area are thought to be living in poverty. This is similar to the rate across Wiltshire (9.4%) however COVID-19 is likely to have impacted upon this.
- 80% of schools in Corsham Community Area are engaged with the Healthy Schools programme. This is higher than the Wiltshire average of 56%.
- 13% of pupils in Corsham Community Area have either an Education, Health and Care Plan or Special Educational Needs. This is equal to the Wiltshire average.

- As at January 2021 there were 7 foster carers in the Corsham Community Area and 17 fostered children. A recruitment campaign is underway to increase the number of foster carers across Wiltshire, Corsham has been identified as a priority area.
- During 2019, in Wiltshire, of the pupils eligible for free school meals, 38% reached the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at key stage 2. Variation across Wiltshire was sizeable with 24% in Corsham reaching the expected standard.
- 8% of Wiltshire pupils are entitled to and were claiming Free School meals on the 17 January 2019, in Corsham this was 8%.
- Between January 2018 and December 2019 15 per 1000 under 19-year olds from Wiltshire were accepted into Children and Adolescent mental health services. The Corsham community area saw a slightly lower rate of 10 per 1000 accepted referrals.
- Between April 2020 and March 2021, the predominant presenting issues of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub referrals from children and young people in the Corsham Community Area were:
 - Parental mental health
 - Parenting
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Parental drug/drink use
 - Issues relating to Child with SEND
 - Behaviour of child/young person
 - Child/young person's mental health
- Domestic abuse is a major social problem that cuts across all social, geographic and cultural groups and witnessing domestic abuse can have long-term effects on children and young people. In 2018/19, just over a quarter of all recorded domestic abuse offences in Wiltshire were witnessed by children and/or young people. At 27% the proportion in the Corsham Community Area was slightly higher than the 26% reported across Wiltshire.

Economy and Employment

Response and Recovery

- Businesses have been required to COVID 'proof' themselves and adapt to new ways of working. In some cases that means transformation to home working, moving business online, altering their offer or business environment.
- Some businesses, particularly smaller ones, are looking for support in areas such as business transition and marketing.
- Feedback from some local retail businesses has showed that the loss of business was hurting but through innovation, creativity, loyal and protective customer bases, most have survived quite well. However, some businesses have fallen through the government support gap and have struggled including self-employed and new businesses.
- The impact of COVID-19 on retail and hospitality in the area is uncertain as yet, but there are likely to be casualties which will impact on the economy and potentially cause financial vulnerability. For many pubs it has not been financially viable to open for much of 2020 – 21. Some evidence for this is already appearing in the increased number of people contacting the CAB from the area.
- The impact of COVID-19 to remote businesses is often underestimated as it is assumed that they are already set up for home working. However, issues around clients including uncertainty, cancellation of orders and inability to pay for services have all had a substantial impact.
- Many local businesses feel that recovering momentum will not be easy but that it is encouraging to see increased footfall in recent months with shops and markets re-opening.
- There are also some positives that have resulted from the pandemic. Many businesses have helped others in sharing their knowledge and expertise. Some businesses have transitioned well adapting their offers to suit the new markets and their business needs and many small businesses, especially online, have been created. Businesses have grown in confidence to approach one another and work together.

- Town and parish councils have provided assistance to local businesses through websites and social media platforms. The Support Corsham website was created as a platform for mutual support, to encourage business to business relationships and the use of local suppliers. The site included a directory promoting local businesses and encouraging the community to shop local.
- A town business survey has been carried with a good response from retailers, further surveys are planned to help evaluate recovery and larger businesses will also be surveyed in 2021/22. Footfall counts have been completed to create a baseline for further data capture and analysis.
- The Town retailer's forum will reconvene later in the year giving business a voice on key issues impacting the town and surrounding villages, encouraging businesses to share knowledge and contribute positively to the economic recovery and social sustainability of the town.
- The Town Council has developed a COVID-19 Recovery plan with input from local stakeholders and a Town Recovery Team is in place.
- There were many creative and innovative responses to lockdown including the Pound Arts Christmas Activity Trail and 'Together' Arts installation at the Town Hall, encouraging visitors to the town.
- Projects such as 'Busking Saturdays' funded by the Town Council and Martingate and Pound Arts festivals Blue Sky and other public art initiatives, will promote emotional well-being and encourage engagement and footfall in the town. The recent transfer of Martingate freehold from Wiltshire Council will help attract investment.
- Corsham has a thriving community arts scene involving many local people in a range of art forms, the Peacock Arts Trail is continuing in 2021 with a mix of digital and in person exhibits. An Arts sector survey has been carried out with local artists and creative practitioners; a further survey is planned later in the year.
- In total Wiltshire Council has allocated 34,168 business grant awards totalling £165M since April 2020. Further details on the numbers of businesses within the Corsham community area receiving grants will be shared with the Area Board.
- According to a 2018 survey of local businesses, the biggest two employment sectors in Corsham Community Area are wholesale and retail trade and scientific and technical services.
- 1.4% of working people in Corsham Community Area are employed in the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector, compared with 2.5% across Wiltshire.
- Corsham Community Area has a rate of 63 apprenticeships per 10,000 people aged 16+. This is lower than the Wiltshire rate of 139 per 10,000.
- Data from Wiltshire Citizens Advice Bureau shows that the number of contacts from residents in the Corsham area nearly doubled between Q1 and Q4 of year 2020/2021 with the biggest number of enquiries relating to Universal Credit, Benefits and Tax Credits, Debt and Employment.
- It has been suggested that to maintain a viable community, we need to continue to make it possible for all activities and contributors to establish and thrive. The reasons that people choose to live in the Community Area must be supported to maintain the diversity and services that residents and businesses rely on. Hence greater understanding of the inter-dependency of service providers and consumers is to be encouraged.
- Many new networks have been developed and connections made with local businesses as a result of the pandemic. There is consensus locally to build on these new and established relationships to ensure a sustained effort to continually improve the town centre, support local businesses and boost the local economy.

Health, Wellbeing and Adult Care

Feedback from community groups

- There are many activities and clubs for older people within the community area. Some activities were able to operate remotely on zoom and members were kept in contact through newsletters and emails.
- The Celebrating Age project, aimed at reaching isolated and vulnerable older people who are unable to access community spaces, has seen arts and heritage events being delivered in the town and parishes across the community area over the past 2 years. Doorstep concerts in Box, Colerne and at

Wadswick Retirement Village, along with 1-1 creative interventions over the telephone, were organised in 2020/21 and further activities will take place later in the year.

- As part of the Celebrating Age Wiltshire project, Wiltshire Music Centre have recorded monthly concerts from the auditorium and sent these to the Corsham network of older people's organisations, individuals, and care homes.
- Despite the excellent community support in place for practical tasks, loneliness and isolation has increased during the pandemic particularly for those unable to participate in online activity.
- Discussions with the Corsham Health and Wellbeing group members has highlighted:
 - Increased demands for befriending and listening ear services
 - Digital inclusion and technology poverty
 - Growing financial hardship
 - Additional support needed as lockdown eases to support emotional wellbeing and reconnect older people with activities and groups.
- The Corsham Link scheme has continued throughout the pandemic with reduced numbers of volunteers, understanding guidance has been a challenge however the scheme is coping with demand.
- Over the past year the North Wiltshire Link schemes have completed 1939 tasks, 77 food shopping, 1414 medicine collection, 448 check in and chat, the biggest challenge for 2021 is managing with reduced numbers for volunteers and capacity to fulfil COVID- 19 vaccination requests, the long term challenge is volunteer recruitment. No link scheme has indicated financial stability as a challenge.
- COVID -19 has had a devastating impact on people living with dementia, not only those in residential care but also those living at home. It has increased isolation, especially for carers, who often relied on these activities for a few hours respite a week. Dementia Diagnosis is likely to have been impacted by the pandemic, further discussion is needed with health and social care partners.
- In March 2020 the Corsham Area Board in partnership with Celebrating Age Wiltshire and Wiltshire Rural Music organised a seniors forum event at Wadswick Retirement Village, this included workshops with a creative facilitator, to help gain perspectives on what support and activities are needed for older people living in the Corsham community area. The event was well attended with over 70 residents in attendance from the town and parishes and an additional 20 representing local community groups and organisations. Group activity focused on a number of themes including outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, social inclusion, participation and communication.
- The key findings from this event highlighted:
 - Activities - demand for more activities for older people across the community area, particularly older men and those with dementia.
 - Communication – improved information and communication of activities and services to residents and across organisations.
 - Engagement – more opportunities for older people's voices to be heard and for inclusion and involvement in community action.
 - Health and Wellbeing – improved health care provision, accessibility and reaching out to lonely and isolated.
 - Infrastructure – better mix of services and facilities (shops, bank etc)
 - Transport - improved services and links (bus and rail), signposting for visitors and improved community transport offer.
- The 7th Corsham Walking Festival was held in June with 279 walkers taking part in the guided walk programme and 35 parents and children taking part in the Treasure Hunt in and around Corsham High Street. This year's Festival saw walkers complete a grand total of 2296 miles.

Feedback from organisations

- The Wellbeing Hub has been contacted by 430 residents from the Corsham area for support and advice since its inception in March 2020. The Wellbeing Hub proactively contacted 866 residents in the area who were identified by the NHS as being Critically Vulnerable or Critically Extremely Vulnerable via letter and followed up by either a phone call or visit. During the first lockdown 37 food parcels were issued to vulnerable residents.

- There are 491 Corsham carer records on the Carer Support Wiltshire (CSW) data base. In the period April 2020 to March 2021 there were 56 referrals for new carers, 38 referrals for carers already known to CSW from third parties and 49 self-referrals for carers already known to CSW. There were 50 contacts made relating to welfare checks, 21 for befriending, 8 for counselling and 44 for a volunteer wellbeing call. Additionally, 4 carers from the Corsham postal district attended a virtual café/group or other activity. The Corsham carer café is re-starting from July at the Methuen Arms.
- JSNA data (2018/19) tells us that across Wiltshire only 13.4% of adult carers aged 65+ feel that they have as much social contact as they would like.
- The rate of people aged 65+ supported to live independently in Corsham community area is 48 per 1000 persons. This is higher than Wiltshire's average of 45 per 1000.
- A 'Community Connector' – employed by Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living is commissioned by the 5 surgeries of Chippenham, Corsham and Box Primary Care Network to provide social prescribing services to support patients who need non-medical help to move forward in their lives.
- Through building relationships with local volunteer groups, community hubs, church groups and charities the community connector role helps link residents with local activities and support groups and is seen as an important link between GP surgeries and the community. Since starting in the role September 2020 to Jan 2021 the connector received a total of 98 referrals

- Age UK Wiltshire have provided a summary of activity 2020-2021 (April 2020 – June 2021) for the Corsham community area:
 - 3 of 134 Corsham residents applied for and received a Surviving Winter Grant
 - 5 Corsham residents registered for the Meals+ service (of approximately 500 throughout Wiltshire and Swindon).
 - 1 Corsham resident accessed the Click & Connect service.
 - 69 Corsham residents of 3961 were supported through the Information & Advice service
 - A total of 241 I&A contacts with or on behalf of the 69 residents.
 - 3 Corsham residents, of 175 total clients receive a weekly social telephone call from an AUKW telephone befriending volunteer.
 - In addition, 6 further residents received a weekly reassurance call during the peak of the pandemic April-August 2020.
 - 15 Corsham residents have been supported through the Home from Hospital service
 - 12 Corsham residents are registered with the Corsham AUKW Fitness & Friendship Club of which 10 attended the first session at the re-start of the club on 24th June 2021.

- Wiltshire Council Health improvement Coaches have maintained commitment to business as usual while also supporting the COVID-19 response effort across the council. This has included the Wellbeing hub, testing in schools, and delivering the local COVID-19 Contact Tracing service. The team has also supported the mobile vaccination programme in low uptake areas and in the boating community
- The service has also evolved to support the mental wellbeing of our residents through the lockdowns and beyond. They have worked with 764 clients across Wiltshire to improve their health and wellbeing - 213 of which either have or are at risk of developing diabetes. 193 clients have been supported to stop smoking and 399 are working towards a healthier weight. Many of these clients have also been supported to improve their emotional wellbeing.
- In addition to supporting local clients the Corsham Health Coach has also delivered a Connect 5 Practical Wellbeing Course aimed at helping and supporting people to have constructive conversations about wellbeing and supporting strategies.
- As well as continuing to provide excellent service virtually, the Health Improvement Coaches are looking forward to supporting Wiltshire residents face-to-face when it is safe to do so.
- Corsham does not have a Local Area Co-ordinator.

- The purpose of the sports development and physical activity service at Wiltshire Council is to increase sports and physical activity levels amongst all Wiltshire residents, but specifically those that face the greatest barriers to participation.
- Before the pandemic Sport England's *Active Lives* survey (May 2019/20), which presents information on three levels of activity for adults aged 16+, showed Wiltshire's participation figures at **64.3% Active** (at least 150 minutes a week); **14% Fairly active** (an average of 30-149 minutes a week) and **21.7% Inactive** (less than 30 minutes a week).
- Since March 2020 Sport England have been reporting on the negative impact of the pandemic, finding that regular adult physical activity had fallen, resulting in fewer people enjoying the wellbeing benefits associated with being active.
- Sport and physical activity can play a positive role in supporting recovery, especially amongst audiences that have been disproportionately affected. Sport and physical activity and programmes in the Corsham community to support and address priorities include:
 - **Increase physical activity levels in lower socio-economic groups** – Get Wiltshire Walking, Walking sports
 - **Increase physical activity levels of people with a disability and those with long-term health conditions** – Active Health referral programme - for individuals referred by a medical professional. Services include aqua classes, supervised gym sessions, falls prevention, exercise after stroke, long-term neurological conditions and cardiac rehab classes.
 - **Increase levels of physical activity across the Wiltshire population through the delivery of a universal county offer**
 - Get Active Holiday programme: Delivery of sporting activities during school holiday periods including sport specific holiday camps, free coaching in rural locations and activity days for individuals with a disability.
 - Wiltshire Gymnastics school: Delivery of weekly gymnastics school sessions at Springfield Community Campus, Corsham, designed to engage participants aged 2-14 years old.
 - Club, coach and volunteer development: Support for the community sports club, coach and volunteer infrastructure in areas including continual professional development (CPD), facility development, funding and safeguarding.
 - Running Wiltshire: A programme of 'Beginners Running Courses' and school gate runs delivered throughout the year to assist individuals looking to take up running. The Run Activator also works with local running clubs and groups to ensure there is a beginner offer to get people back into running.

Additional JSNA and community data

- JSNA data shows that there are 12,246 persons aged 18 and over in the community area who are estimated to be overweight or obese.
- In Corsham Community Area, 10.1% of homes are considered to be in fuel poverty, compared with 9.3% in Wiltshire
- There is plenty of evidence that mental health difficulties are increasing across the board and particularly in some groups such as older people and younger people as discussed above. JSNA data from 2018/19 indicates that the area has slightly lower numbers of persons diagnosed with depression at 8%, compared to the Wiltshire average of 10%. During the Pandemic, those adults suffering from some form of depression or mental health issue has doubled nationally, so it is likely to have increased within the community area. Younger people, women, low income families, and those already living with a disability are proportionately more at risk.
- In 2018/19 the proportion of persons diagnosed with dementia in the community area at slightly higher than that reported across Wiltshire.
- Excessive alcohol consumption has consequences for both an individual's health (in the form of liver or cardiovascular disease, accidents or injuries, poor mental health) and can negatively impact on wider society by contributing to family breakdown and anti-social behaviour. One measure that can be used as an indicator of the extent of alcohol misuse is the number of alcohol related hospital admissions. In 2017/18, the rate of alcohol related hospital admissions in Wiltshire stood at 1,827 per 100,000 persons, significantly lower than the rate of 2,227 per 100,000 persons reported nationally.

Rates of alcohol related hospital admissions were higher than that reported across Wiltshire in the Corsham community area (at 1,911 per 100,000 persons).

- Further consultation with health and social care partners is needed to understand these indicators post pandemic.

Community Resilience and minority groups

Voluntary Community Sector

- COVID-19 -response groups quickly mobilised in Corsham town and in all parishes across the community area in response to the pandemic to deliver food, prescriptions and help with many other tasks as well as providing emotional support.
- Support and guidance were provided to volunteer groups through the Communities team at Wiltshire Council and local councils. There was positive sharing of information across social media groups such as the Corsham Coronavirus Info Group.
- Regular situation reports from the town and parishes were communicated via the health and wellbeing group.
- A number of groups and volunteers wish to continue to offer support and help to rebuild their local communities recognising there are still people that need support. The Corsham Health and Wellbeing group will continue to provide a role through initiating a conversation between community groups, helping groups articulate their ambitions and exploring what the next steps could be to continue the process of strengthening, connecting and enabling community action.
- A strong theme that has emerged from local conversations is that a fresh approach to volunteering may be required. Volunteers are vital for a resilient community, but they need to be valued, achievements celebrated, and opportunities offered that are appropriate to modern life.
- Most of the villages have a community hall and the indication is that they will all re-open once they are able to.
- Corsham Our Community Matters platform along with town and parish websites will play a key role in promoting clubs and activities as they begin to re-open helping residents to take up activities and socially connect with one another. There were 11,923 visits to the Corsham Our Community Matters platform in 2019.
- There are around 2000 charities registered in Wiltshire. Wiltshire's VCS provides vital services, core to our communities' resilience and sustainability, our health, wellbeing and economy.
- As of December 2020 Wiltshire, VCS Impact Survey shows that:
 - 32% of those VCS who continued to offer a service saw a 32% increase in demand with the biggest demand being around Befriending support / supporting peoples mental health and wellbeing.
 - 45 % of services remained partially open; 31% fully open and 20% still temporarily closed and 4% permanently closed
 - 75% have stated they have changed the way they are delivering their core services
 - 73% stated they are operating at a reduced level of service delivery
 - 44% of the VCS said they will need more volunteers to meet the increased demands for their services

Corsham Churches

- Corsham Churches foodbank distributed 424 food parcels in 2019, this increased to 663 in 2020. So far in 2021 the foodbank has assisted 216 clients.
- Souper Friday started off as a small team running a soup kitchen out of Corsham Baptist Church with the aim to grow ties with the surrounding community with the offer of a bowl of soup, conversation and fellowship to some of the more vulnerable and isolated people. The offer ran throughout lockdowns to continue the relationships the team had built up. Through the food share programmes with supermarkets the group developed partnerships with the Co-op in Corsham, Allington Farm and supermarkets in Chippenham and continues to collect fresh produce and frozen foods. The Souper

Friday initiative is generously supported by the Corsham churches foodbank with donations of dried and tinned produce to complement the fresh food.

- A strong volunteer force of 30 volunteers are involved in the scheme, phoning around households with a shopping list of food available, boxes are then put together and distributed. Whilst this was a doorstep only service during lockdown volunteers were encouraged to have a chat with families and build relationships. This identified several residents who were needing additional support with personal situations such as mental health and financial hardship. When welfare concerns have been identified the volunteer team have signposted to relevant agencies.
- The souper Friday project continues to regularly supply approximately 30-35 families each week either by way of deliveries or collection. To date the scheme has supplied in the region of 2800 food parcels to local families since March 2020 and there are 45 households currently on their database. A further 28 households that have been helped have said they are 'back on their feet' and no longer require the support. As Lockdown is easing a collection system is being introduced to enable families to collect the specific items they need, future plans involve providing a coffee shop in the Church hall.

Digital inclusion

- The Pandemic has acted as a catalyst to remote working, meetings, and service delivery. This trend seems likely to continue after restrictions are lifted.
- The benefits are enormous as it negates some of the need to travel and opens opportunities to those who had difficulty accessing them previously. However, this shift also excludes a percentage of our community and importantly these are often the people that need support the most. Assistance is therefore required to help those who can't afford the equipment as well as those who do not know how to or are fearful of using it.
- Libraries have offered digital access when sites have been open, digital support has also been offered through various schemes such as Age UK Wiltshire Click and Connect service and Wiltshire Digital Drive.

Corsham library

- JSNA data collated in 2018/19 shows that 41% of residents in Corsham Community Area are members of the local libraries compared with 34% across Wiltshire
- Corsham and Box libraries were closed on 21 March 2020, partially re-opened in August 2020, an order and collect service was offered during the second lockdown in November 2020 and January 2021.
- There were 4790 active users of Corsham and Box libraries in March 2020, this number dropped to 1712 in March 2021.
- Registered membership is currently down 10% at Corsham library and 20% at Box library.
- Between November 2020 and March 2021 there were 660 order and collect visits and 332 public computer access visits, these services were a lifeline for many, particularly older residents, and those with young children.
- There has been a marked increase in the number of e-book, e-mag and e-audio downloads across the county.
- On average the library service delivered 30 online events each month from Oct 2020 to Mar 2021. Corsham library delivered 6 live rhyme times during this period.
- The Home Library Service continued during lockdown with books regularly delivered to 5 clients by 2 volunteers, 6 vulnerable/shielding customers were also supported throughout the year and during the initial lockdown the libraries team rang vulnerable residents to identify needs and refer to the Wellbeing Hub where appropriate.

How local actions can be supported

The local response within the Corsham Community Area is one of co-production recognising that to rebuild our communities, it is important that we work together, sharing information and resources where appropriate.

The Area Board covers the whole community area and is responsible for this document. It links local delivery to Wiltshire Council, the Police, Public Health and other partners. It is an accountable body with influence and powers. It has its own funding to help support local initiatives. The Area Board will use this document to support local recovery and also encompass issues that were existing prior to COVID-19.

Wiltshire Council's thematic approach to the county's recovery is structured around the same 4 themes identified within this report.

- I. **Economy and employment**
- II. **Health, well-being and adult care**
- III. **Community Resilience**
- IV. **Young people, education and children**

Other themes such as **Transport, Community Safety, Housing** and the **Environment** will be picked up in action plans and presented to a future meeting.

The Area Board, working with existing and new sub groups, leads from town and parish councils, community groups and organisations, will carry out further investigation on the community issues, themes and priorities identified above, bringing together work currently happening and identifying gaps.

Next steps

- (1) That the Area Board approves and adopts the Community Status report
- (2) That the Area Board produces a rolling action plan including up to 5 priority actions at any one time to demonstrate where it will contribute to addressing the identified issues.
- (3) That the Area Board will prioritise its resources including funding upon those issues identified in the status report.
- (4) That the Area Board requests the Community Engagement Manager to work with key partners, agencies and community groups to encourage them to consider where they are best placed to take actions around the priorities identified.
- (5) That regular updates are submitted to the Area Board on progress made in relation to its own action plan.
- (6) That the Area Board expresses its thanks to those who gave their time to help bring this report together.