

Melksham Area Board Health and Wellbeing Group

Note of meeting held at the Town Hall on Thursday 1st August 2019

Introductions:

Councillor Pat Aves, Melksham Area Board/ Melksham Town Council (Chairman)

Julie Brown, Healthwatch Wiltshire

Sue Brown, Healthwatch Wiltshire Volunteer/ Melksham Town Council

Jon Berridge, Carers Support Wiltshire

Martin Elson, Contact the Elderly/ Art House Cafe

Chris Pickett, Melksham Older Persons Champion/ Mens Shed

Sheila Pickett, Melksham Dementia Friends Champion

Matt Billingham, Melksham Local Area Co-ordinator, Wiltshire Public Health

Becca Higgs, Healthier Communities Project, Wiltshire Council

Debbie Bentley, Community Engagement Officer, Melksham Town Council

Peter Dunford, Community Engagement Manager, Wiltshire Council

Apologies: Councillor Martin Pain, Melksham Town Council/ Seniors Forum

Ruth Randall, BoA and Melksham Health Partnership

Sue Mortimer, Melksham Community Meals

George Brown, Melksham Community Transport

Louise Clapton, Dorothy House Hospice Care

Emily Edwards, Health Trainer

Paul Bentley, Repair Academy

Project Updates

Peter Dunford explained that the HWG had not met for several months due to a changeover in staffing. Whereas the group had previously met mostly to consider funding bids to the Area Board, the Chairman had now agreed to a wider remit for the HWG, to monitor the range of health and wellbeing issues and projects locally and to look at gaps in provision and opportunities for collaboration. Working in this way, the HWG would be able to better target its limited revenue funding of £ 7,700 per annum and, where more appropriate, access to its capital funding of £ 48,511 in 2019/20.

Healthier Communities:

Becca Higgs described the Sport England funded 3 year initiative that aims to increase physical activity amongst residents aged 16- 74 years, who currently do less than 30 minutes activity per week. The project is targeted at some of the more deprived housing estates in the town at Forest, Berryfields and Queensway.

Free and low cost activities include:

Walking Netball on Mondays at River Mead School

This Girl Can (female only sessions) on Wednesdays at the Scout Hut

Led walks on Fridays from the Forest Community Centre

Walking Football coming soon to River Mead School

Boot Camp coming soon to Forest Community Centre

Seated sports coming soon (venue TBC)

The aim is to spread the word about these opportunities and to encourage a wide range of residents and community groups to engage in these physical activities. The Multi Faith Forum has already signed up to participate and the Seniors Forum is another group that would like to get involved.

ACTION: Follow up interest from the Seniors Forum in walking sports and table tennis at the Riverside Club

“Recycle Wiltshire” bike project:

Debbie Bentley (on behalf of her husband Paul) described a 6 week project organised by the Repair Academy (based in Calne) but to be delivered in community venues in participating towns. Designed for groups of 6 – 10 people aged 14+ the sessions will cover how to build a bike from its parts. The course will start with all bikes in a dismantled state. Each week the students will learn about the parts and how the bike is constructed. They will also learn about maintaining the bike as they put it back to its original state. On the 6th session, once all bikes are fully restored and in full working order they will take their Cycling Proficiency test, ensuring that they are safe to ride on the public highways. Students get to keep the bike along with a helmet and lock!

Beneficiaries of a more active lifestyle could include the unemployed, isolated adults, young offenders etc. 4 schools have already signed up to run the project.

Recycle Wiltshire is being trialed in Calne and Trowbridge and discussions have been held with a view to bringing this project to Melksham in Autumn 2019. Funding bids have been made to the Town Council and the Area Board for consideration in September towards course costs of £3,900. The project

could be linked to the Healthier Communities project and could be funded, in full or in part, through the Area Board Local Youth budget which has a larger revenue fund of £20,753 in 2019/20.

Make a Friend, Be A Friend:

Jon Berridge reported back on an initiative led by Carers Support Wiltshire and funded by the Melksham Area Board in 2018/19 as part of a wider project that has also included Trowbridge and Corsham.

The Make a Friend, Be a Friend project (MFBF) aims to connect residents who may be lonely or isolated with local organisations and groups which can offer support or social inclusion. The key audience is older people who may be feeling lonely and/or isolated and this may or may not include those who are also carers. The project reaches out to local communities by advertising a new telephone service via residential mailings, posters in key venues (e.g. Libraries and GP surgeries) and through personal referrals (e.g. GPs). This approach was chosen as the audience are less likely to use the internet. Callers were asked about their interests and the issues causing or adding to their isolation. People were matched to local community groups, clubs and support services who have signed up to the project. Mailings went out door-to-door across the whole town of Melksham in January and February 2019.

Community groups were asked to commit to:

- call those who have expressed an interest in their group or activity, to ensure they can support and encourage the first visit, and to check that both parties have all the information that they need;
- provide contact details and commit to respond to any new enquiry within 1 week of notification;
- provide feedback after the project has been running for a while, to ensure we capture successes and key learnings.

Outcomes:

- Referrals - 37 total / 15 Melksham
- Sign-postings – 57 total / 18 Melksham
- Groups - 43 total / 20 Melksham
- Callers - 27 total / 10 Melksham

The project has been the most successful in Melksham where there was a longer lead in time and two separate launches made. Groups were also signed up to the “Make Someone Welcome Campaign” by WCIL. The

response rate for the postcard – which has been the main form of promoting the programme - has been very disappointing and is clearly not working. However, the response from groups and people who have called is very positive, so CSW would like to keep the phone number going and find other ways of promoting the service such as working 1:1 with clients (e.g. LACs / HTs / Care Co-ordinators / Churches / other social prescriber roles etc). Other communication channels discussed included a calendar to keep on the fridge; GP messaging services; inserts with WC documentation such as Council Tax and bin collection leaflets; regular pieces in the Melksham Independent News and parish newsletters; also in magazines from statutory authorities such as Wessex Water and Selwood Housing/ Green Square/ Sovereign housing associations; and through other door to door services.

ACTION: PD to provide contacts for the Melksham News and parish newsletters

Local Area Co-ordination:

Local Area Coordination is a long-term evidence-based approach to support people in their local community. Local Area Coordinators will support people to obtain information, make practical and local connections and live the life they would like. We do this by taking time to get to know people, their families and carers, helping to identify people's strengths, skills, talents and abilities. In short, we will take the time to get to know people and build a trusting relationship. We will support people of all ages (including disabled people and people with mental ill-health), their families and carers to:

- Access information, advice and support at the right time
- Stay strong, be heard and in control
- Develop plans for how they would like their life to be
- Build their own local networks
- Find practical ways to resolve problems
- Become more connected and more actively involved in their communities
- Identify their personal strengths and goals

Local Area Coordination is free, supporting non-service solutions wherever possible. There are no assessments, referral processes or time limits – and we can meet people in local community settings or where they live, work or learn.

Matt Billingham reported that he now has a case load of 35 clients and is supporting these individuals through a range of issues which include: accommodation, Universal Credit, family breakdown, social isolation, mobility, food poverty and money issues. He is signposting clients for specialist support from a range of professionals such as GPs, dementia advisers and training agencies.

Dementia Friendly Communities:

Julie Brown from HealthWatch Wiltshire presented the findings of a recent report which shows that Wiltshire is a dementia friendly community which is greatly valued by those living with the condition and their carers. The report [How Dementia Friendly is Wiltshire?](#) gathered the views and experiences of more than 100 people in the county who are affected by dementia focuses on two elements: how local dementia friendly initiatives are working to make their area more dementia friendly; and how much those living with dementia feel they benefit from them.

HWW visited 15 community groups across Wiltshire and invited people to take part in a survey or a 1:1 interview to gather their feedback. Two thirds of people living with dementia and their carers (66%) reported that their community is dementia friendly and they feel a part of it. People also said they valued greater dementia awareness, understanding from others, and community groups that they could get involved with. The attitude of others in helping people to feel included, understood and given support was seen as more valuable than changes to physical environments to make them more dementia friendly.

The report shows that the effects of dementia friendly initiatives can be positive and wide-ranging, including improved physical and mental health, wellbeing, independence and community involvement. Those running dementia friendly initiatives said that they would like more support to publicise themselves so that people could find what help is out there for them more easily. Some initiatives said they needed more help to work better for the people they wanted to reach.

Some people said that there was still a need for more dementia awareness in their community, while many thought transport to enable more people to attend groups could be improved, particularly if they lived in a rural area or could no longer drive due to their dementia.

Sheila Pickett reported that the Dementia Action Alliance in Melksham was currently dormant due to volunteer fatigue. There had been little help forthcoming from the Dementia Friends regional office. Officers from HealthWatch Wiltshire offered to provide support. There remains interest in running dementia-friendly projects such as a church service, pantomime or film show locally.

Becca Higgs stressed the benefits of exercise and how the Healthier Communities project would like to support dementia-friendly initiatives in Melksham e.g. through walking sports activities.

Contact the Elderly:

Martin Elson reported that Melksham CTE is part of a national network (shortly to change its name) and runs very popular Sunday afternoon tea parties for their small group of elderly and isolated individuals. They are planning a canal boat trip from Devizes in August for a group of 8 individuals and their carers, for which they have received grant funding. The group is always on the lookout to recruit more clients. Care agencies such as Somerset Care and Mears Care, as well as Age UK and Carers Support Wiltshire were suggested as potential referral agencies.

Art House Café:

Martin Elson helps to run this community café on behalf of the Rotary Club of Melksham. They are a busy café with 2 paid cooks and a team of volunteers (more needed) running the operation between 9.30am and 3pm, Monday to Saturday. They host an Alzheimers Club on Monday afternoons and the premises are available for use by other charitable groups after 3pm. Owing to its success, the kitchen now requires an upgrade. The landlord (Melksham Town Council) has agreed to fit a new 3 phase electricity supply and grant applications are also being prepared for a new kitchen and front door.

Leg Club:

Ruth Randall was unable to attend but had sent a case study (attached) of the very successful Melksham Leg and Wellness Club held at the Spencer Moulton Sports centre on Thursday mornings.

Any Other Business

Sue Brown reported that she had not been included on the meeting invitation list this time and would like to be involved in future meetings in her role as a Healthwatch volunteer.

Future meetings

It was agreed to hold future meetings on an approximate quarterly basis to update on issues and projects and to consider any applications for funding to the Melksham Area Board Health and Wellbeing budget. Next meeting Autumn 2019, date to be advised in due course.

Note taken by Peter Dunford