Warminster Community Area Status Report
February 2021

Background and context

The overarching aim of this document is for Warminster Community Area Board to understand how to support local responses from communities, businesses and organisations and link this to the work of Wiltshire Council, it's partners and agencies, so that collaboratively we can tackle issues including those arising from Covid-19.

The Warminster community area saw an incredible response to the Covid-19 pandemic with the community groups and the various parish councils in the surrounding villages coordinating volunteers leading the response and strategic partners working collaboratively to support our communities. This effort combined with significant help being provided by individuals for neighbours and friends and smaller volunteer schemes not affiliated to any particular group, as well as other existing support groups for example the Warminster Foodbank meant every person within the area has access to support from one source or another. Some of these groups and individuals continue to offer additional support.

As we now look ahead, this 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 the impact of Covid-19. It also highlights communities that may have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and it considers how the actions, projects and plans that are emerging will be collated and supported.

Over time this document will be regularly updated in response to changes, new information and actions undertaken.

The Warminster Area Board ultimately aims to establish and work closely with a Warminster Community Area Recovery Group. This group will aim to engage with key local partners, business and community stakeholders to work together to rebuild our local community. Whilst the impact of Covid-19 is considerable, it is recognised that some local issues already existed and that these will need to be tackled as well.

The Warminster Community area consists of the town of Warminster as well as the parishes of Bishopstrow, Boyton, Chapmanslade, Chitterne, Codford, Corsley, Heytesbury, Horningsham, Brixton Deverill, Kingston Deverill, Knook, Longbridge Deverill, Maiden Bradley with Yarnfield, North Bavant, Sherrington, Stockton, Sutton Veny, Upton Lovell and Upton Scudamore. A key requirement is to ensure that all within the community area have the same opportunity to engage with this work.

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.

Community data and information

Local data has been 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 and where resources should be focussed.

- JSNA local data sets – (collected in winter 2019)
  https://www.wiltshireintelligence.org.uk/community-area/warminster/

- COVID19 support group survey – (June 2020)

- Wiltshire CAJSNA 2020 Community Survey Results (Warminster)

- Series of themed meetings held with partners and community members in December 2020 attended by: Wiltshire Councillors, Town and Parish Councils, partners from Health Services, Police, Community Groups, Faith Groups, Army Welfare Service, Local Businesses, Local Schools, Charities and others

- Public online survey hosted on www.Slido.com in December 2020 and January 2021

- Additional Partner organisation data
    I. Link scheme data
    II. Wiltshire Money
    III. CAB
    IV. Town and Parish Council plans
    V. Local business forums / Inspire for Biz Chamber of Commerce

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 trends, commonality and correlation have been looked at when deciding what to include. This report should therefore be viewed as an informed indicator to the state of the Warminster Community Area.
- The Warminster Community area is an excellent place to live and work. It is recognised that a tremendous amount of good work and substantial improvement has taken place over the past few years due to the dedication and hard work of so many within our community. 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.
- Some of the areas highlighted from the JSNA data where the Warminster Community areas seems to not be doing so well will need looking at in the context of when and how it was collected.

- The variance between JSNA data in all community areas may not always be 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 it 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 specific geographical area?
- This will be a "live" document. As of February, we are still in the pandemic and its effects on our communities may change over the coming months and this will be reflected by changes to this document where necessary.
- The remit of this document is to identify the emerging issues due to the pandemic, not to identify solutions or actions to be taken to tackle these issues – this will be for the Covid-19 Recovery Action Plan to identify. The Recovery Action Plan will be informed by the contents of this document

Understanding the emerging themes and the impact of COVID-19

Analysis of the data so far suggests the following issues are emerging. This list may increase and change after further consultation and as new data arises

Issue and impact of COVID 19 pandemic	Supporting evidence source
Young People	
Spike in children suffering from anxiety and developing mental health needs for various reasons including:	
Lockdown has particularly impacted children in year 7 in 2020/21 educational year as they did not receive full induction programme when transitioning to secondary school	Discussions with local schools
Young people developing anxiety due to missing out on learning due to constraints of remote learning	Discussions with local schools
Lack of extra-curricular activities has impacted mental and physical health	Discussions with local schools
School community ethos has been lost – no whole school events	Discussions with local schools
A number of family break ups have taken place	Discussions with local schools
Pandemic has exacerbated isolation already felt by young people in rural areas	Discussions with local schools and Parish Councils
Gaps have formed between friendship groups who have not seen each other	Discussions with local schools

Some necessary changes in childcare arrangements has caused tensions in some situations	Discussions with local schools and Parish Councils
Financial stresses due to parents work situation has caused anxiety among young people. Pre-covid, 13% of young people in Warminster were living in poverty, compared to Wiltshire average of 9.4%. This will have been exacerbated by the pandemic with more parents being made redundant or self-employed people seeing work opportunities reduce	Discussions with local schools and JSNA data 2020
Social gaps have widened because of lockdowns especially for those children without siblings	Discussions with local schools
Access to mental health support and counselling for parents, young people, school staff is currently insufficient	Discussions with local schools, parishes and Army Welfare Service
Impact on educational attainment	
Full impact on educational attainment of lockdowns and home learning cannot be fully assessed yet but academic gaps have already been identified	Discussions with local schools
Lack of access to internet has affected some young people and results in an inability to access remote learning – this causes an ever-widening academic gap for those without this facility	Discussions with local schools
Impact on young people in Military Families	
Transition of two regiments has caused difficulty in assessing the impact on young people from military families	Discussions with local Army Welfare Service
Restrictions on came at the worst time for the Army Welfare Service because of the face to face nature of their work	Discussions with local Army Welfare Service
Impacts on Physical Health of Young People	
Lack of school-based activity reduces the opportunity for young people to exercise: • No after school clubs • PE lessons very difficult to effectively deliver remotely	Discussions with local schools
Local sports clubs have been unable to run their youth activities due to restrictions	Discussions with local partners and clubs
Mental health issues identified above can be a barrier to participating in exercise	Discussions with local partners
Other issues identified	
Some families still struggling with the basics – food, utilities and internet access	Discussions with local schools and community groups
Increase in the number of domestic violence incidents being reported	Discussions with Warminster Community Policing Team

Unemployment in young people is rising and there are fewer apprenticeship opportunities – pre covid 82 apprenticeships per 10,000 16 year-olds compared to Wiltshire average of 139	JSNA data 2020

Older people

Mental health

Social Isolation and loneliness – a problem at all times, not just due to the pandemic – has been exacerbated by lockdowns reducing social contact	Conversations with community groups and charities
Social contact via remote options – zoom etc – not possible for many who are not connected to the internet	Conversations with community groups and charities
Remote contact via zoom etc is difficult for many older people, even if they are online due to hearing problems	Conversations with community groups and charities
Many older people rely on group worship for social contact – this opportunity has been removed during strict lockdowns	Conversations with community groups, faith groups and charities
Loss of confidence • many older people remained reluctant to go out while restrictions were eased and will remain so even when pandemic is over • translates to driving as well – many older people have not driven for some time and will lose the confidence to use their car and therefore lose some independence • Some older people are becoming dependent on their support networks	Conversations with community groups and charities and online slido.com survey
Volunteering often provides the opportunity for a social interaction – not currently possible in many cases e.g. working parties at Grovelands have currently been suspended	Conversations with community groups and charities
Other opportunities for social interactions have been lost with clubs, groups, cafes being cancelled	Conversations with community groups and charities

Working age people and families

Anxiety/Mental Health

Anxiety is high among families around employment status – has furlough and other govt support just "delayed the inevitable" in terms of businesses closing	Conversations with community groups and charities and online slido.com survey
Reduced opportunities for social interaction	Conversations with community

• Families who normally socialise together have been unable to • Parents being encouraged not to gather at school gates • Volunteering opportunities have reduced • Clubs/Cafes/Sports groups not happening or closed reduces opportunity to socialise	groups and charities
Anxiety around housing has increased as employment anxieties increase	Conversations with community groups and charities
Volunteer led groups have not been running e.g. Mums'n'tots	Conversations with community groups and charities
Anxieties over taking time off work when children have to isolate due to positive cases at school	Conversations with community groups and charities
Working from home has obviously increased – pressures on families in villages as broadband coverage is worse	Conversations with parish councils
Financial Impacts	
Children being at home has meant some people have been unable to work from home and homeschool at the same time	Conversations with community groups and charities and online slido.com survey
Reduced opportunities for work for self employed	Conversations with community groups and charities and online slido.com survey
Foodbank use has increased	Conversations with community groups
Some people are out of work already due to redundancy because of the impact of the pandemic on businesses	Conversations with community groups and charities
Some families are struggling to access benefits	Conversations with community groups and charities and online slido.com survey

Impact on Military Families	
Difficult to measure the impact on army families as engagement has been hard due to restrictions	Conversations with Army Welfare Service
Delay of movement of the units has impacted families e.g. stresses around children stating at a new school part way through an academic year	Conversations with Army Welfare Service
In some cases, partners spending more time at home has caused issues	Conversations with Army Welfare Service
Employment opportunities for spouses of incoming families are limited at the moment	Conversations with Army Welfare Service

Local Business

Reduced footfall in Town Centre: • Concern of this continuing once restrictions are eased due to fear of covid • Non-retail workers working for home not spending lunch hour in town centre affects footfall • Shopping habits have changed to online – will they ever come back? • Support required to encourage people back to town centre when it is safe to do so	Conversations with local businesses and Town/Parish Councils
Trade has reduced while expenditure continue, notwithstanding government support	Conversations with local businesses and Town/Parish Councils
Some businesses have been able to change model quite easily e.g. moving to online trading, others have found it much more difficult	Conversations with local businesses and Town/Parish Councils
Empty retail units continue to be filled relatively quickly	Conversations with local businesses and Town/Parish Councils
Shopping is no longer an enjoyable experience with social distancing and facemasks etc	Conversations with local businesses and Town/Parish Councils
Positive news is that reduction in footfall may not be as bad as some other towns due to continued support from military community	Conversations with local businesses and Town/Parish Councils

In the villages the main businesses are public houses and farms – these appear to be surviving having changed business model	Conversations with local businesses and Town/Parish Councils
Other positive news is sport and leisure businesses appear to have survived ok as people look for outdoor activities	Conversations with local businesses and Town/Parish Councils
Hospitality and entertainment businesses have been particularly effected – pubs, hotels, The Athenaeum and others	Conversations with local businesses and Town/Parish Councils

It is important that this is an inclusive process as possible with special attention to ensure that the villages and minority groups have equal opportunity to feed in and partake in this recovery work. However, it is recognised that some may choose not to engage, and that work will take place that is not captured in this document.

How local actions can be supported

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

Warminster 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 a formal body with influence and powers. It has its own funding to help support local initiatives.

Warminster Community Area Recovery Steering Group will be community formed and led. It is free from any statutory or legal responsibilities. It should consist of a range of local organisations, councils and community activists who have chosen to come together to collectively help deliver and support local action. It should act as a steering group bringing together the local work identified by the thematic leads.

Thematic Leads (2 per theme) will network together local stakeholders who are or wish to be active within their theme. Existing groups may be utilised or, where required, a new group may be established. The leads will be responsible for carrying out any further investigation, bringing together work currently happening and identifying gaps. Each lead will also be on the Westbury Community Area Recovery Steering Group and they will link to the Area Board who are able to offer support and financial help where appropriate. The 4 themes are:

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

Warminster Area Board will receive updates of how this work is progressing as a standing item at its meetings. It will formulate its own work plan of short term and longer-term actions that will support and contribute to the local priorities.

Next Steps

    I.   Discuss this document and agree approach at next Warminster Community Area Board meeting (4 February 2021)
   II.   Engage and consult with all Town and Parish Councils (February - May 2021)
  III.   Engage and consult with partner organisations (February - May 2021)
  IV.   Bring this document for discussion and agreement at AB meeting along with proposed AB work plan and recovery group's plan (First Area Board meeting of new council)
   V.   Review this document and Area Board work plan regularly in response to changes and celebrate completed actions (At least every 2 months or as required)