

Note of Melksham Area Board Health and Wellbeing Group

Monday 25 January 2021

1. Attending:

Councillor Nick Holder, Melksham Area Board/ Melksham Without Parish Council (Chairman)

Councillor Jon Hubbard, Melksham Area Board/ Melksham Town Council/ Age Friendly Melksham/ Young Melksham

Councillor Pat Aves, Melksham Area Board/ Melksham Town Council

Councillor John Glover, Melksham Without Parish Council

Mat Billingham, Local Area Co-ordinator, Wiltshire Public Health

Emily Edwards, Health Improvement Coach, Wiltshire Public Health

Miriam Zacarrelli, Community Development Officer, Melksham Town Council

Chris Pickett, Melksham Older Persons Champion

Martin Elson, Re-engage/ Contact the Elderly

Phillipa Huxtable, Age Friendly Co-ordinator

Moira Conroy and Amanda Stuart, Community Connectors, Centre for Independent Living

Mark Andrews, Trust Fundraising and Project Development Officer, Carer Support Wiltshire

Dawn Whiting, Young Carers Service Manager, Youth Action Wiltshire

Peter Dunford, Community Engagement Manager, Melksham Area Board

2. Apologies: Louise Clapton, Dorothy House Hospice

3. Notes of HWG meeting held on 12 October 2020: Noted

4. “Cook an Extra Portion” Christmas meals initiative and COVID Lockdown #3 response

Phillipa Huxtable reported on the work of Melksham Community Support since the pandemic started in March 2020 including statistics on the number of people supported; phone calls received; food parcels delivered; prescriptions delivered; shopping trips made; dogs walked; friendly phone calls made. See slides attached.

The Christmas dinners project was so well received – with 51 beneficiaries and great feedback - that consideration is being given to running a Sunday lunch project in the future.

[With love from Australia to Atworth on Christmas Day! | \(melkshamnews.com\)](#)

The Face2Face project to help older people make video calls to friends and family is currently on hold due to the lockdown.

Support is being given to refer individuals with creative interests into the “Creative Conversations” project being led as part of the Celebrating Age initiative.

An Age Friendly Action Plan and baseline survey are in development, as is a Steering Group to guide this work.

5. The Community Connectors project and grant application for £ 1,000 to facilitate connections between people in Melksham

http://services.wiltshire.gov.uk/areaboardgrants/grant_detail.php?gid=4015

Moira Conroy and Amanda Stuart explained their roles working within the Melksham Primary Care Network as Community Connectors. Manda supports the 18-75 year olds while Moira focuses on the over 75 year olds.

The aim of the service is to support people to re-establish an active life in their communities. They support frequent attenders at GP surgeries or those who attend for primarily social need, through referrals from the GP surgery team.

By asking questions such as: “What does your good life look like?” “What is already in place?” “What do you need?” they then will walk alongside that person for as long as it takes to support them back into the community.

Their posts have no operational budget so a grant application was made for a health and wellbeing grant of £ 1,000 to provide a resource pot for projects such as forest bathing, nature walks, creative sessions, games and cards groups, as well as sundries such as equipment, room hire and refreshments.

6. The work of Carer Support Wiltshire and grant application for £ 2,500 towards counselling for unpaid carers

http://services.wiltshire.gov.uk/areaboardgrants/grant_detail.php?gid=3961

Mark Andrews gave some facts and figures about carers in Wiltshire, the impact of COVID-19 and the services provided or adapted to cope by CSW. See slides attached. The issues they face include isolation; impact on physical and mental health; financial hardship; juggling care/work/relationships; and anxiety about the future.

In Melksham it is estimated that there are 3,146 carers – that is 11.1% percent of the total population (2011 Census). There are 668 carers living in Melksham who are currently registered with CSW.

A recent survey showed that 90% of carers felt tense, tearful, stressed or anxious, 84% feel low and 70% struggle to feel positive about the future. Counselling can provide: Relief from depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions; increased confidence; greater ability to manage stress effectively; more self-acceptance and self-esteem; better expression and management of emotions and builds resilience.

CSW has provided 100 carers with a counselling since the pandemic. However the need is much greater. A health and wellbeing grant application for £ 2,500 has been made for a project in the Melksham area:

- to offer a total of 40 sessions to 6 – 12 carers (each lasting for approximately 1 – 2 hours) over the duration of 6 months.
- Sessions would take place online or by telephone unless it is safe to do otherwise.

In discussion it was established that, based on an average cost of £ 30 per head, the grant could pay for 13 Melksham carers to benefit from a course of 6 counselling sessions each. Councillors liked the project, and supported the grant award in principle, but questioned whether the service could be procured at a more favourable rate.

ACTION: Cllrs to ringfence £2,500 for counselling services for carers. Cllr Hubbard to work with the applicant to procure a better value deal.

7. Support for Young Carers and proposal for end of lockdown event/s

Dawn Whiting gave details of the Young Carers service provided by Youth Action Wiltshire and outlined some national trends. See slides attached.

Young Carers care for relatives with physical disabilities; chronic, long term or terminal illness; learning disabilities; speech, sight or hearing loss; drug or alcohol dependency; or serious mental health problems. They provide support with support with household chores, beyond what would be expected for their age; shopping and paying bills; support with communication; safety and helping with mobility; and emotional support.

Common challenges that young carers face include: feelings of being different to peers; isolation; anger; concerns for their safety and the safety of family members; problems interacting with their peer group as their situations can demand more responsibility than those children of similar age; increased anxiety; poor mental wellbeing; low confidence; lessened engagement in education, attainment and future aspirations.

There are nearly 900 Young Carers registered in Wiltshire between the ages of 5-19 years; YAW works with 3 groups: 5-9 years, 10-13 years, and over 13 years.

There are currently 48 open young carer cases in Melksham, 13 of which have engaged in YAW services in the last 12 months.

Services “during COVID” include: welfare checks; advocacy including for school places, FSM’s, IT equipment, CAMHS support; fun, online group activities; walk & talk 1:1 mentoring & coaching; face to face support groups; onward referrals to counselling; extended 1:1’s

Councillor Nick Holder commented that these young people have a pretty tough time in normal circumstances, but lockdown has been even worse for them as they have not been able to have much, if any, contact with people of their own age. He wishes to make a Cllr-led funding bid for an “end of lockdown party” and plans to use the bulk of the funds to pay for Agency staff to cover the time duration of the event, so that the young person can relax for few hours in the knowledge that the person they care for is in good hands. He also suggested the idea of approaching local businesses to see if any of them are prepared to provide sponsorship for a gift for each of the young carers.

The expertise of YAW would be welcome but the funds should go directly to the event not towards staff management charges. In this spirit, Cllr Hubbard offered the free use of the Canberra Centre and suggested a free taxi service was also provided to the event.

ACTION: Support was expressed for the project, in principle, with further details of the event delivery to be scoped and agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Group in due course

8. Recommendations to the Melksham Area Board, 3 February 2021

Attendees were thanked for their participation in the discussions. The elected members remained on the call to discuss the respective merits of the grant applications and to agree funding recommendations to be made back to the Area Board.

9. Any Other Business:

In her absence Louise Clapton asked to report that Dorothy House and WHY... (We Hear You) have come together to offer a virtual support group for anyone in the local area affected by a life-limiting illness or associated bereavement. This group is an opportunity to connect with other people in a similar situation and chat to the team from the comfort of your home. The virtual get together is **FREE every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday** where you will see some familiar faces, our team and others, with a cup of coffee or tea in hand. Each session lasts around 45 minutes.

Everything required to join is in this link [The Coffee Connection - Dorothy House Hospice Care](#)