

Alcester Town Council Health and Wellbeing Working Group

Meeting on 20th October 2022, 2pm at Globe House

Present: Cllr Kathryn Cargill (Chair), Cllr Alison Leask, Wendy Sherwood, Vanessa Lowe, Rev Alison Mackay, Ivy Hemming, Jen Hopkins

Apologies: Ali Mainey

1. Welcome

The group welcomed Jen Hopkins as the new Children and Families Worker from Alcester Minster

2. Notes of Previous Meeting

There were no matters arising from the notes of the previous meeting.

3. Terms of Reference

The draft Terms of Reference were agreed without change.

4. Christmas Toys/Gifts

There was a wide-ranging discussion about how we could target Christmas children's gifts to families that need them, potentially targeting to individual wishlists so that well-intended gifts are not simply thrown away. The biggest single issue is that people traditionally like to give gifts rather than money. One suggestion was to attempt to draw up a list of desired gifts, similar to a wedding list. Local charities such as Moorfields Trust and Church Street Properties might be prepared to underwrite any shortfall from public donations. This will take a huge amount of effort, outside the scope of this group. Jen and Alison M will look at how the churches can progress this together.

Action JHOP & AMAC

We reached the conclusion that there simply is not time to put a targeted gift scheme in place before Christmas this year. The suggestion was to encourage monetary donations that could be used to purchase Waterstones vouchers. These could then be distributed by schools and possibly health visitors, both of whom are aware of the families most in need.

5. Money Advice Market

The event is booked out for stall holders, which is fantastic news. In addition to the stalls there will be kids activities and cookery demonstrations. Ali has a number of slow cookers to give away, the suggestion being via a free raffle for all those attending. There may also be some other items to distribute including heated blankets.

6. Warm Hubs

Funding is potentially available for both new and existing projects that provide warm venues for hot drinks and potentially meals. This is proving a popular initiative, with churches and a number of other organisations already making plans or starting schemes. It was agreed that the Town Council would take on a coordination role of identifying all such Warm Hub projects, attempting to agree an overall schedule to avoid duplication and publicising all the various groups in one place. Publicity would not just be via social media, but also using the town's notice boards and the Town Council newsletter.

Action WSHE

7. Menopause Project

It was agreed that Wendy would organise an initial awareness session, potentially run by Aline Boblin. The objective of this session is to increase awareness of the impacts of perimenopause and menopause on those experiencing it, their friends, colleagues, and families, so that people can approach this time in their life with confidence and make choices based on current evidence. We will ask participants if they wish to take part in further support groups in Alcester after the initial session.

Action WSHE

8. Drugs Awareness

Families really need help with this, as many are possibly unaware of the reality and closeness of drugs to school children. Key to any project here is listening to try to understand the issue and helping to create a support network. Key players to involve in future discussion are our local school heads, Becky (Youth Club leader) and the police. It was also suggested that Orbit could be involved and we could initially involve Susan Juned who has regular dealings with Orbit.

We agreed that Wendy and Vanessa would set up a meeting, hopefully an evening in January, to explore ideas and options. Alison M will speak to her contacts in schools about this initiative and about the drugs awareness procedures already in place in schools. Kathryn to identify the best initial contact from our local police.

Action WSHE, VLOW, AMAC, KCAR

9. Any Other Business

WLWS Household Support Fund – one-off payments are available for projects and targeted help (such as Tesco vouchers).

Central Government recently extended the Household Support Fund grant to support those most in need to help with rising living costs specifically food, energy, and linked essentials. WCC is continuing to distribute its Household Support Fund grant allocation via the Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme. This includes an extended welfare offer, countywide utility voucher campaigns, cost of living support for families/carers of children eligible for benefits related free school meals, a further grant to Act on Energy, and welfare grants for community-led groups and initiatives, including schemes led by district and borough councils that meet the funding criteria. ATC previously applied for funding for Tesco vouchers for both primary schools and will ask the schools if they would like our support with this again, or something different. Alison M and Jen H could also apply, and Wendy gave out details of the grant. To meet DWPs specific grant conditions, the projects will need to meet immediate needs, and help those who are struggling to afford food, energy and water bills, and other related essentials. Funding will be for one-off payments only and must be committed by 31 March 2023.

For information, the average amount awarded in previous funding rounds has been between £2,800 and £5,300.

School uniform swap – Alison M has the uniform stock for local schools and will work with Jen on options for distribution. A swap event for kids clothes, including uniforms, was suggested.

Action AMAK & JHOP

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday December 8th, 2pm at Globe House