

Congleton Partnership Senior Forum

Meeting 7.6.21 – Notes of the meeting.

Attendees:- S.Firkin, M.Smith, D.Ritherdon, G.Williams, D.Morris, A.Bignell, , K.Wesley. and P.Aston

Apologies:- S.Jacklin,J.MacArthur and L.Pinto

Theme of the meeting was to review work that had gone on around our major objectives/aims:-

1. **Telephone Buddy and Befriending Scheme.**
2. **Talking Newspaper offering to a wider audience.**
3. **Wellbeing Fayre, Tuesday 12th September.**

Telephone Buddy and Befriending Scheme.

Since the last meeting Suzy Firkin and Mike have has contact with various organisations running similar schemes that lined up with our aims. Most had little or no involvement in Congleton the average being around 12 clients each.

After discussions with them two organisations came out as worth following up in terms of cost and operational capacity.

- (a) Changing Lives Together – They have a large number of clients and volunteers across Cheshire, but very low numbers in Congleton.
- (b) AgeUk CE – Smaller numbers in total, really early on the journey with this project started with Covid. They do have everything in place to build on.

Cost were pretty similar ranging from £3500 to £4000 per year.

This included recruitment, training, pr and some staffing costs.

This was based on gaining 15 to 25 new clients plus similar number of volunteer.

After discussion it was felt that we needed more about the organisations, what they could offer and some protection for us around paying out and getting little in return.

It was agreed that we go back to them with specific questions and once we are satisfied with the answers a discission can them be made as to how we progress.

The questions are:-

1. Would it be possible to establish a Congleton telephone number (redirected to their Main number)
2. We have a bank of volunteer contacts that we can provide to you – would this help reduce costs?
3. Are you able to offer any digital support – helping people get online or use an iPad for example?
4. Are volunteers allowed to offer additional services – f2f meeting, running errands?

5. Security of project. Can you just confirm the status/duration of your long term funding (Changing Lives)

Once we have this information it will be forwarded to this group and we will look to make a discussion as to where we go. The budget has already been signed off by The Executive it is down to us to make it work for us.

Talking Newspaper – broadening distribution.

David Morris briefed us on the current situation with the Talking Newspaper. Currently they have between 20 and 30 regulars (down from a peak of 100) and they would welcome our involvement. They are finding content somewhat of a challenge as their main source (Congleton Chronicle) is not providing as much content/articles as it did in the past.

At present they operate a memory stick (posted out to members) and a playing device. If our requirement was in the low bracket range (20 to 30 clients) then they could handle this with the only costs being postage and some volunteer time setting up in the individual homes. Anything above these sort of numbers would require new equipment being bought.

Longer term they are looking to go digital in some form or other, then a requirement for an internet connection would come into play. After setup training then costs of this system would be very low.

It was suggested that if we got the befriending scheme up and running then the befriender could then discuss the talking newspaper opportunity to their client.

Diane advised the group that Bear Necessities had proved invaluable in getting the message out and responses back for the current Dementia / PCSO Gift Pack project.

Anna suggested that a good way to get the message (of both schemes out) could be via The Carers Hub Newsletter.

<https://livewellservices.cheshireeast.gov.uk/Documents/Download/615/Carers-Hub-Newslette>

It was felt that we should set up the buddy scheme first, by which time The TN should have a clearer understanding as to which system they would be using.

Wellbeing Fayre – Tuesday 12th October.

MS advised the group that we have currently 26 Exhibitors confirmed, it would appear there is some reluctance for people to commit so far ahead, we have the same issue with the Green Fayre. Mike will recontact the exhibitors from the last fayre and circulate the group with the current booking situation. The confirmed exhibitors are indicated by a **mauve colour block** if anyone can suggest or chase up new exhibitors that would be welcomed.

AOB.

AB - Congleton Library Reading Friends Project.

https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/media_hub/media_releases/reading-friends-libraries-project-to-combat-loneliness.aspx

This is a government sponsored scheme to support people through Covid, well worth looking at.

KW – Active Congleton – Rickshaw Scheme.

Kay advised the group that Active travel are developing a rickshaw scheme to get more of the older generation out into the fresh air. I have copied a report they gave to CSG last week outlining the project for your information.

ATC are well advanced on the Rickshaw Project to offer rides to the residents of care homes and sheltered accommodation. We carried out a survey of the majority of homes in Congleton and received an overwhelming level of positive feedback. In fact one home sent a message back to say that 100% of their residents were in favour of the idea and could not wait to feel the 'wind in their hair'!

Peter Hall and Ant Bolding are going to see Cycling Without Age in Trafford in a couple of weeks to see their rickshaw and to find out how they organise the operation vis a vis recruiting and training volunteers, making bookings, insurance etc etc etc.

If anyone in CSG is interested in helping out as a volunteer pilot, sponsor or maintenance person, please contact us. We are working through how our trips might be organised and one thing we are contemplating is to invite cafes to sponsor the project and in return we will take 'customers' to those cafes where they can meet friends or family.

Any constructive ideas are welcome!

The meeting closed at 2.35pm, the date of the next meeting tbc.

MS 8.6.21