

**LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL**

**OLDER PERSONS TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

**THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER 2020 AT 1000 HOURS**

Present: Councillors S Owen (Chair)  
R Goodchild  
M Freeman  
G Perham  
T Morris  
K Cursons

Also in attendance: V Cannon, Head of Cultural & Economic Services  
S Jewell, Older Persons Project Co-ordinator  
M Jahn, Committee Officer  
Gina Croxford Community Action Beds  
Sharon Rogers, Carers in Bedfordshire  
Penny Carmen, Community Wellbeing Champion (social prescriber)

**05/OP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies were received.

**06/OP DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

**07/OP PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no questions from members of the public.

**08/OP MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

(a) The Committee received the minutes of the Older Persons Task and Finish Group meeting held on 1 October 2020.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Older Persons Task and Finish Group meeting held on 1 October 2020 be approved as a correct record and would be signed at a later date, when safe to do so.**

(b) Further updates would be covered by the agenda items to follow.

**09/OP OLDER PEOPLE**

(a) Three guest speakers were welcomed to the meeting and invited to speak regarding their group involvement in community projects.

Gina Croxford, CAB, informed the Group that her organisation provided

community projects such as Jazz up your Life, work clubs, Café Connect to try and combat loneliness for older people. Many people did not have digital access and during the present climate this caused isolation for them. The ability to connect digitally as well as 1-to-1 would greatly enhance their lives.

Sharon Rogers, Carers in Bedfordshire, informed the Group that her organisation provided support for unpaid carers living in Central Bedfordshire. This was achieved by 1-to-1 support, telephone befrienders, walking groups, carers cafes, peer support and they also provide grants of up to £300 which carers can use to enhance their daily life.

Many were not digitally included as they did not have access to equipment or knowledge of how to use it. Digital inclusion was an important issue to alleviate loneliness, but it was important to ensure users were advised how to do this safely.

It was felt, however, that telephone contact with a regular person was a great way to keep all included if using digital equipment was too involved for the user.

Penny Carmen, Community Wellbeing Champion, joined the meeting but was unable to retain access so could not speak.

(b) The Task and Finish Group received an update report setting out how the project had progressed and what the next steps would be.

Key areas which were highlighted at the previous meeting included lack of digital inclusion, a gap in the groups being accessed by men causing loneliness, the need of a central hub to access information, connectivity between older people and the influence of Covid-19 on delivery options and plans.

Members agreed in the short-term technology support/workshops could be run via telephone and a page added to the Town Council website listing activities and services. In the medium-term technology workshops could be run face to face via befrienders, in community centres or libraries. Also an on-line directory of organisations could be set up and these organisations could have their own password to update the information on a regular basis.

In the longer term a tablet loan scheme in partnership with libraries, local companies and community organisations could be set up to allow more digital inclusion for older people. A question was raised regarding how people who were shielding would access the equipment and it was agreed that the Yellow Book for Older People would still be needed. An updated version should be looked into and then distributed to as many older people as possible. This should include local villages if possible. Councillor Owen asked if there was a need for more telephone befrienders and should this idea be included in the plan. It was agreed there was a huge need for telephone befrienders especially in the current climate.

It was suggested that local IT companies could offer technological support and

a helpline when tablets are being used. It was suggested the Library could deliver tablets as they do books to isolated people, or local groups like Leighton Linslade Helpers could assist in deliveries.

The Group agreed the next steps should be

- (a) Research telephone befriending services
- (b) Distribution of an updated Yellow Book for Older People and research costs around an online directory of 'services/activities'
- (c) Support to set up a website for Helping Hands to assist people in locating the service
- (d) In the medium to longer term – set up of digital inclusion helpline, training and a tablet loan scheme

Councillor Freeman informed the Group that Inspiring Music were looking into a project to address loneliness through music and contact details were shared to look into this. Sarah J confirmed she had contacted the group and would continue to follow up the work.

Gina Croxford and Sharon Rogers were thanked for attending the meeting.

**10/OP DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Older Persons T & F Group 29 October 2020 at 10.000 am

Cultural & Economic Services Meeting – 7 December 2020 at 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 1117 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2020.

Chair

29 October 2020