

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

OLDER PERSONS SUB-COMMITTEE

FRIDAY 19 AUGUST 2022 AT 1000 HOURS

Present: Councillors G Perham
 J M Freeman
 S Owen
 T Morris

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
 S Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk
 Nina Bailey, Cultural & Economic Services
 Support Officer

Members of the Public: 1

55/OP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Goodchild and Kharawala.

56/OP DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations were made and no dispensations had been requested.

57/OP QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Councillor Freeman raised a concern on behalf of a member of the public regarding the use of supermarket loyalty schemes, whereby rewards or discount vouchers might only be available electronically to users of apps on mobile devices. It was felt that this could be considered discriminatory to people not using mobile devices and agreed to write to the managers of local supermarkets and to the local Member of Parliament.

58/OP MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Sub-Committee received the draft minutes of the Older Persons Sub Committee held on 26 May 2022.

Minute reference 53/OP: it was noted that an official launch for the updated Information Booklet for older people had taken place on 15 August. The booklet would be primarily distributed by GP practices and health professionals. Thanks were expressed to all the volunteers who had contributed to the latest update.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Older Persons Sub Committee held on 26 May 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

59/OP LEIGHTON-LINSLADE HELPING HANDS

By invitation, a representative of the Leighton-Linslade Helping Hands group (a "Good Neighbour" scheme) spoke to the Sub-Committee about the work of the group. The group fell under the Good Neighbours scheme under the umbrella of the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) and was intended to help isolated or elderly residents, with people either making direct contact to ask for help or referrals being made by the NHS. Volunteers were DBS checked so could go into people's homes and the tasks they were able to undertake included shopping, light tasks in the house or garden (e.g. changing a light bulb), taking the resident for a walk or out somewhere.

There were currently 44 volunteers and the group was self funding, with voluntary donations requested where applicable to help cover volunteer expenses such as mileage. There were approximately 95 regular clients with other requests received on an ad-hoc basis. For the steering committee this meant a significant amount of administration to be managed.

The Sub-Committee expressed its thanks to the group and invited the group to approach the council for any support it might need.

60/OP PROJECT UPDATES

The Committee received a verbal update on 55UP projects.

The technical support helpline project operated by Citizens Online was building pace, with several new digital champions on board and an increase in learners. Support could be given by telephone or in person at public locations such as the Library or the weekly Chatty Café at TACTIC on a Tuesday morning. A range of promotional activity was being undertaken and it appeared most enquiries were arising from printed literature. Partners were also helping to promote the scheme. A case study example of a recent learner was given.

The Community Agent project was due to launch in September with an appointment made by BRCC. The agent would be working 21 hours per week, starting in early September. The scheme would be operated and promoted by BRCC with council support.

The Sub-Committee heard that the build of the new Marigold House facility was progressing well and it was hoped that a site visit could take place soon.

The Chair referred to day care services provided by Central Bedfordshire Council and asked whether a 2017 paper on the subject was being updated. It was agreed to try to find out more about this for the next meeting.

61/OP TABLET LOAN SCHEME

The Sub-Committee received a presentation on the work undertaken to date in researching existing tablet loan schemes nationally.

There were a number of schemes in operation through larger local authorities or charities and the research had highlighted a range of factors which would need further consideration. These included: what type of device to provide and how these would be managed (especially given data protection and security considerations), whether a data allowance would need to be supplied, how individuals would access tablets, the duration and terms of a loan and how users would be taught to use devices. Discussions had included several local providers of IT support to see whether they could assist with device procurement and management (“mobile device management”).

In the last few days it had come to light that BRCC was operating a scheme called “You can do IT”, with three groups in Bedfordshire providing digital skills sessions and including device loan. An enquiry had come through from BRCC about the potential for joining forces with the Citizens Online digital support project and it was agreed to facilitate discussions between all parties about possible synergy between schemes. An update could be given to members of the sub-committee by email prior to the next scheduled meeting in November.

The meeting closed at 11:16 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 AUGUST 2022.

Chair

17 NOVEMBER 2022