

# Building Community Capacity - Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish Update to Chesham and Chiltern Villages LAF – 2 May 2012

## 1. Background

In June 2011 the LAF allocated £5000 to support Building Community Capacity projects. Half of this provided project management support to Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish. The aims being to enable volunteers to be better equipped to support vulnerable and older people living in their community and to encourage residents aged 50+ to plan for the future.

A report was provided to this LAF in October outlining the background to the project and the activities already launched. This update focuses on activities implemented over the 10 month period and plans for the second year of the project which are contingent on further funding.

During the first six months over 30 new and existing volunteers were recruited to the 'Hilltop Villages Good Neighbours Group' and they identified the Group's priorities. These priorities focused on identifying and overcoming causes of isolation, providing social transport, sourcing advice, and support for elderly residents, carers and volunteers. The overall aim being to encourage independence for older age villagers, so they can remain in the rural community.

## 2. Initiatives launched

To meet the priorities identified above the following initiatives have been launched: -

- a. **Publicise** project to whole community through the Parish Magazine to bring existing volunteers on board and recruit new ones. – **Actioned September 2011**
- b. Form a 'not for profit' organisation, to administer grants, obtain volunteer insurance, secure a bank account, and bespoke telephone number etc – **Actioned October**
- c. Set up a **email discussion group** for volunteers and **website** – **Actioned October**
- d. Create a **volunteer-led 4x4 car scheme** so urgent doctors appointments are kept or prescriptions fetched etc; during extreme weather conditions – **Actioned November**
- e. Publish a **directory** of useful public services functions – **Actioned December**
- f. **Support Digital Switchover** for local residents – **Actioned February 2012**
- g. Identify experts and organise occasional **advice sessions** for older age and vulnerable adults at their monthly social gatherings - **Actioned April**
- h. Organise monthly **Pub Lunch Club** – a daytime meal / social gathering. - **starting May 9<sup>th</sup>**

## 3. Briefing to other Parishes

One of the objectives of the project is to identify how activities might be expanded into other rural communities. Presentations have been done to other parish councils including at a neighbouring LAF meeting. This will continue in year two.

#### **4. Plans for second year**

- a. Organise 'workshops' for the community on topics identified as priorities such as personal/ property security; consumer concerns; health provision; social services etc.
- b. Pick up on district, county and national initiatives which could benefit the target group.
- c. Promote and sustain development of the project across the LAF area and Chiltern District.

#### **5. Thanks**

Alongside the energy and enthusiasm of volunteers the project's success has been possible due to the support from our project manager Maggi McKerron and a grant by Cllr. Patricia Birchley of a £500 Leaders Award.