



## Amersham & Villages Community Board minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Amersham & Villages Community Board held on Thursday 2 November 2023 in MS Teams, commencing at 7.30 pm and concluding at 9.00 pm.

### **BC Councillors present**

M Dormer (Chairman) and J Waters

### **Others in attendance**

L Wright, Fay Ewing, R Goodes, Mr P Clarke, Rachel Dineley, Ms D Hulme, Mr P Matza, D Pinkney, MS D C Read, Fiona Broadbent, Marieke Bosman, Susan Masters, Helen Edwards, Shreeyansh Sarkar, Vinny Patel, Sophie Wilkinson (Bucks Healthcare NHS Trust) and David Winterburn

### **Apologies**

T Butcher, M Flys, C Jackson, C Jones, J Barnes, R Newall, D Watson, C Scott and M Roberts

### **Agenda Item**

#### **1 Chairman's Welcome**

Cllr Mark Dormer welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone of the meeting etiquette

#### **2 Apologies/Declarations of Interest and Minutes of the last meeting**

Mark Flys (Buckinghamshire Council)  
Tim Butcher (Buckinghamshire Council)  
Caroline Jones (Buckinghamshire Council)  
Carl Jackson (Buckinghamshire Council)  
Mark Roberts (Amersham Town Council)  
Ron Newall (Amersham Action Group)  
Jane Barnes (Amersham Action Group)  
David Watson (Rotary Club)  
Christian Scott (Chiltern U3A)  
The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed

#### **3 Community Matters**

Roger Goodes updated the attendees on the latest support and upcoming activities from Buckinghamshire Council. This included:

- a drive to increase food donations and volunteering opportunities with foodbanks,

- supporting welcoming spaces locations, such as Libraries and Community Centres, in offering this support to residents again as they had done last year during the winter months. Organisations/venues looking to take part were asked to get in touch.
- The Energy Doctor scheme which provided support to residents on low incomes to insulate their homes.
- Revenues & benefits support

See the corporate update appended to the minutes for further information.

The board manager provided Community Matters which included:

- The Homes for Ukraine Scheme were looking for rematch sponsors to provide space in their homes for Ukrainian nationals to live, who had settled in the local area but who's current arrangements were coming to an end. The team would be joining the Community Board at events to share further information.
- The Helping Hand had warm packs for community groups to distribute to local individuals available at Amersham and other Bucks Libraries.
- The Community Board had been looking for support to those struggling with loss and bereavement, they had connected local venues with Rennie Grove Peace Hospice to consider becoming 'Compassionate Cafes'. They also promoted the Kings Church Amersham Bereavements Matter support service and asked members to help raise awareness of this. They also noted that Kings Church would be distributing Christmas Hampers to local families as they had done last year.
- Community Impact Bucks launched a lunch club to reduce social isolation, and were looking to recruit a new volunteer coordinator to help deliver this, as well as help in promoting the club to older people in the community who would benefit.
- Amersham Owned were hosting a Dementia support group and were looking for help in promoting the session. They requested that guests booked a space in advance.
- Amersham Museum were looking for a new chair of trustees to join the charitable organisation.

The Chairman invited Town & Parish Council representatives to provide local updates.

Vinny Patel highlighted the launch of Café 23 in Amersham following the success of Cafe22 in Little Chalfont. The new dementia café was due to celebrate its official launch soon.

#### **4 Presentations**

Wild Amersham:

Marieke Bosman gave a presentation on Wild Amersham and their progress since the group was set up in 2021. The group monitored local habitats and biodiversity and aimed to work with and strengthen the community. They had held a variety of events and training throughout the year. They were setup under the umbrella of

Sustainable Amersham. There had been lots of local support and enthusiasm so far. Residents interested in getting involved could email ([wildamersham@gmail.com](mailto:wildamersham@gmail.com)), sign up to newsletter (<https://forms.gle/tQoq6JT2KWpbPuuz7>), visit the Sustainable Amersham website to volunteer (<https://sustainableamersham.org/volunteering-roles/>) and book to attend events, such as the wild bird migration talk which was happening the following Wednesday (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/migrating-birds-near-you-tickets-739267247237>).

Energy Doctor Scheme:

Helen Edwards gave a presentation about the scheme funded from the governments levelling up fund until March 2025. There were currently four team members but this was expected to grow. They delivered home visits to those who met certain criteria (which could be found online: [Request a visit from an Energy Doctor | Buckinghamshire Council](#)) and could advise on ways to reduce energy consumption and costs and put in place suitable low-cost easy retrofit resource efficiency measures, which included draught proofing, insulation, LED lighting, secondary glazing film for windows, electricity consumption monitors (which weren't linked to energy providers systems) and more.

Simply Walk:

Fiona Broadbent gave a presentation about the Simply Walk scheme, which linked with the board's health and wellbeing priority, and enabled older adults to take part in physical activity. The short easy walks were in close reach to where many of the residents who took part lived and focused on *"maintaining" rather than "increasing" physical activity in older adults to ensure they remained included in social activity.* There were 360 volunteers across the county and the scheme had celebrated its 21<sup>st</sup> year in July. The team were keen to recruit new volunteers in Amersham so that they could introduce more walks. Fiona described a successful social prescribing pilot project which could be delivered in other locations.

Re-Engage Tea parties:

Susan masters gave an update on a Community Board funded project which provided monthly tea parties for socially isolated older people (hosts). Each host would hold a tea party twice per year with support from volunteers and they would be free to attend. The offer included refreshments, transport (which was otherwise a huge barrier), some games, and most importantly, conversation. The team were organising a Christmas tea party for all hosts and volunteers, they had recruited enough volunteers to run a 12-month rota and had ambitions to get back to having four tea party groups in the area, which had been the case before Covid.

## 5 Community Board Updates

The board provided updates on the Task & Finish groups:

- Volunteering – opportunities were available through the Community Impact Bucks Volunteer Matching Service and the board were helping to promote this. The group were keen to develop a campaign which would highlight positive case studies of volunteer experiences. They were also considering hosting an event in the New Year which would support volunteer groups and

encourage residents to volunteer – they were looking for help with organising this.

- Food & Nutrition - Public Health data showed 25% yr6 children were overweight and so the board were working with local partners to understand what support was available and if something new could be put in place to help tackle this.
- Online Safety – the board were working with local partners to explore opportunities to help raise awareness and provide training and support to residents.

The Chairman highlighted some of the engagement activities, including first Outdoor Cinema event in Amersham which was a huge success and had been supported by local volunteer groups.

Upcoming events were highlighted, and attendees were asked to help promote these:

- Fed Up Men’s Mental Health event on Saturday 25 November
- Self Defence class for ladies and girls aged 12+ – the final of four classes funded by the board to be delivered in Little Chalfont on Saturday 18 November.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and asked the board network to help with promoting the wide variety of activities and initiatives taking place locally, and to encourage others to get involved.

## **6 Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024