



Amersham Community Board Project Updates

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Amersham Youth Council:

Amersham Town Council were granted £500 to launch a Youth Council in the area. Local Youth Councils represent the views of young people. They are run by young people in the community and provide an opportunity for them to engage with decision makers and influence decision making in local councils.

Local schools in the area were contacted towards the end of 2020 and there has been some response already from young people wanting to be involved, however until the National Lockdown is over the project will remain on hold.



Chesham Bois VAS:

Chesham Bois Parish Council were granted match funding of £3001.15 towards the cost of purchasing and installing a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) to enable them to address the problem of speeding along the A416 southbound (from Chesham to Amersham) where the speed limit changes from 60mph to 30mph.

The equipment order was placed with the supplier (Swarco) in November. TfB are producing work programmes and assigning all community board schemes to project leads for works to take place in 2021 and 2022.

Chiltern Citizens Advice Bureau:

Chiltern Citizens Advice were granted £8,755 by the Community Board to provide a trained debt case worker who would provide one to one help to local people with severe debt in the Amersham and Little Chalfont area.

Our debt advice caseworker started work at the beginning of January. She is advising clients in Amersham and Little Chalfont on the phone with their money issues, identifying priority debts, maximising income, checking their benefits, helping with Universal Credit applications and budgeting. Unfortunately because of the latest lockdown we are not able to give face to face advice but will be able to offer as soon as it is safe for our caseworkers and the clients. The caseworker is based in our Barn Hall office building just around the corner from King George V council office.

In her day as a debt caseworker she will progress with on average 2/3 client cases. She will have cases running concurrently - some new, some in progress. She will have scheduled phone appointments with clients, spend time working on clients behalf liaising with third parties (such as creditors, DWP, housing associations etc.), complete debt assessments, work out the priorities to resolve the debt. All the casework has to be accurately written up in our system for quality, case checking and client progress purposes. Casework is time intensive and usually takes 4-6 weeks to begin to resolve client's issues and help work through their debts. The ideal outcome following the resolution of debts is that they have a budget they can realistically work to for a more sustainable future.

For interest, below is an overview of the type of clients with complex needs that need this level of debt Casework.

- Clients have historically accessed services due to a specific trigger such as the arrival of a bailiff; threatened eviction; other crisis event.*
- Clients are currently presenting later in the advice process, with more complex cases involving multiple, inter-related issues,*
- Clients require advice rather than information and hence cannot self-serve*
- Clients generally need casework support and find administrative tasks difficult*

- *Clients may be unable to process and consume large amounts of advice at once and may need multiple sessions or specialist support*
- *Clients may have mental health issues that can cause difficulties in engaging with a prescribed process*
- *Clients are likely to also need support from a number of services in relation to housing, food support, benefits.*

Chiltern Dial-a-Ride Crisis Fund:

Chiltern Dial-a-Ride were given £500 by the Amersham Community Board towards their services which now include providing transportation for vulnerable residents to and from Covid-19 vaccination appointments.

CDAR work closely with Buckinghamshire Council and the local support hubs, helping with essential food parcels, assistance with prescriptions and medical appointments and regular keep in touch calls. We contacted all GP surgeries and health centres in our area of operation offering help primarily for patients needing to attend medical appointments. Our services during the pandemic have been free of charge for food distribution - and also for all first time users who have been referred to us. A good number of practices have been referring their patients to us for much needed help and support using our safe and caring transport service.

Our trained drivers (all DBS checked) are strictly following PPE guidelines, including wiping down surfaces between each passenger journey and of course wearing face masks at all times. Physical distancing of 2 metres is being maintained during journeys and contact minimised when for, example, a user needs help strapping in or is using and needing a wheelchair. We are using our larger minibuses so that the 2 metre distancing can be maintained. Our smaller minibuses have Perspex screens to separate the driver from the single user in the back. We have a minibus and driver available every day of the working week - our service is scheduled and we need a minimum of 3 days' notice for booking a trip.

Now, with the arrival of the Covid vaccines, and the vaccine programme rolling out, there are and will be those will have difficulty finding safe transport to clinics and designated points for vaccination. We are extending our free service to help provide transport for Covid-19 vaccine appointments to the elderly and all adults who have mobility problems.



Chiltern Rangers:

Chiltern Rangers were granted £10,000 to provide a wide range of activities for young people in partnership with local community organisations and schools. The projects encourage young people to 'Go Green' by improving their local environment for people and wildlife. The projects provide mental and physical health benefits as well as the opportunity for young people to learn new skills, work as a team, engage in physical exercise and make a difference to the environment.

Lockdown 3 has provided some challenges but much of our work can carry on. We are able to support children of key workers and vulnerable children who are still in school through these projects. This will vary between schools and we are giving them some time to adapt and find their feet.

At the end of January, we made a great start with St Mary's Amersham. We taught seven year five and six students and four staff to coppice hazel and build the first hazel fence to block off unwanted visitors shortcutting through the forest school area. Another added benefit was that we were able to work and do some informal training with the schools new Forest School leader in training. She has not been able to observe any other practitioners due to Covid up to now. We are back to St Mary's Amersham on Thursday 25th Feb to continue coppicing and making fences with the coppiced hazel.

On 2nd Feb, seven pupils and two staff including the Headteacher from Our Lady's Catholic Primary school collected 12 bags of rubbish from Chesham Bois Wood in the morning. 14 pupils and two staff helped cut holly down as part of the management of the woods to create space for other woodland plants and trees in the afternoon.



Chiltern Voice:

Chiltern Voice were granted £5,650 to finance additional equipment and installation work to enable the radio station to launch on FM wavelength in April 2021. The station will have the potential to reach all of the community in the Chilterns and everyone will be able to benefit from local news, interests and services.

So far we have built 2 new studios and a rack space and we have received lots of donations for equipment. We have nearly completed the second studio with the wiring and some of the computers in:



Jubilee Hall 2nd AOH Scout Hut:

The Scouts were granted £25,000 from the Local Infrastructure Fund to support with the final stages of development of the new Scout Hut on Rectory Hill. The state of the art facility will increase provision for young people and provide an excellent space for community groups and other activities.

We got the keys on the 22nd December, all very exciting! The builders still have a few items of snagging to finish but we have started to move our stuff back in, albeit very slowly given the current restrictions. Unfortunately we cannot use the hall until we are able to meet again. We still have some way to go on our appeal but the £25000 from the Community Board has been greatly received.



Oakfield Corner Locomotive Display:

The Town Council were awarded £7,300 towards their ambitious project to install a half size replica Metropolitan 1 steam engine, complete with two carriages, on Oakfield Corner. The project will engage with many members of the community, from school children to those in the third age, and seeks to transform a currently uninspiring community space as well as improving the verge and seating areas to make it more accessible. Once delivered, it is envisaged that the display will be used as an educational tool as well as being a unique addition to the town.

We have completed the build of the locomotive and are half way through construction of the first carriage; the locomotive is being built by the leaders of the 1st Chesham Bois Scout Group, led by Andy Honour, who designed the replica train. The Town Council Depot staff

will, in association with the scout leaders undertake the necessary ground works ahead of implementation. These works will be commenced when we are out of the national lockdown.

Engagement with schools and local groups is expected to take place in the summer term all being well. The Town Council have engaged with historic railway sites, such as Quanton where the Met No. 1 train is stored, and have had a lot of interest in the project.



Radio Christmas:

Radio Christmas received £1,000 from the Community Board to run their annual community radio station which is all about promoting local services and initiatives and raising money for charity. Match funding was provided by The Clare Foundation who also provided in depth support from their comms specialist.

The Radio project was a great success given all the things we had to deal with, particularly Covid.

- *Listeners from 192 countries tuned into Radio Christmas during December*
- *Total unique listeners in December were 64,535.*
- *Our peak listeners to the LIVE feed were on Christmas Day, with a peak of 9,900 listeners from 134 countries.*
- *The UK, Germany, USA, Switzerland, France and Canada were our top 5 countries listening this past year.*
- *The most popular time to listen to Radio Christmas proved to be Sundays from 11am-1pm.*
- *Our internal survey showed that most people want a mix of Christmas and non-Christmas music.*
- *24% listened to Radio Christmas via their computer, 22% via Apple devices, 21% via Android and the remainder listening via other devices and other websites.*

Based on past experience, it is estimated that at least 30% of the listeners in the UK were local. About 80% of the charity donations come from people with local links.



Restore Hope:

Restore Hope were granted £2,000 towards the FoodLife Christmas Hamper project, which aimed to bring joy to families who would not otherwise be able to afford a Christmas meal.

We successfully got 300 hampers delivered for Christmas and have lots of lovely feedback and pictures of Christmas dinners. The YouTube video we did demonstrating how to cook the dinner was very well received and lots said they would use the tips again. We will put together some photos and feedback comments so that I can share that as a thank you to the Board for funding - we really appreciated it!

Thank you for your kind donation. Here is just some of the impact you have had to local families this christmas.

KODAK PORTA 400

KODAK PORTA 400

KODAK PORTA 400

"I just read Lily the Christmas story, she loves the pictures!!! Also the turkey and everything looks amazing! Thank you so much! This is my first year cooking for Christmas so the instructions are so handy! I'm going to put them up for next year too haha!! I can't wait for Christmas dinner now!!!"

KODAK PORTA 400

KODAK PORTA 400

KODAK PORTA 400

KODAK PORTA 400

"A nice kind gentleman delivered me 3 boxes of hope, one had turkey in, one had all the veg and trimmings I will need for a Christmas Dinner, the other box was full of fruit and veg. Thank you Hope Place for your kindness you have given me and every other person you have helped in the area."

KODAK PORTA 400

KODAK PORTA 400

KODAK PORTA 400

KODAK PORTA 400

"The food was absolutely beautiful, loved the turkey and used the herbs & garlic like the video suggested. So flavourful. Going to do that again and again. The turkey did 3 of us on Christmas Day, 2 on Boxing Day, and still had lots left for sandwiches on the 27th & 28th. Thank you Restore Hope."

KODAK PORTA 400

Restore Hope | Latimer Park | Latimer Road | Chesham | Bucks | HP5 1TU
www.restorehopelatimer.org | Restore Hope | 01494 765555 | restorehopecharity

Totally Amersham:

The Community Board agreed funding of £19,735 to develop an exciting new brand in the minds of residents and consumers from the surrounding areas of Amersham and Chesham Bois. The ongoing issues experienced by retailers and businesses due to the Covid pandemic prompted the Community Board working group to focus initially on a tactical campaign to drive engagement in the lead up to Christmas.

To develop the brand, an initial SWOT survey took place to gather the thoughts of members of the Community Board; following this, a full survey took place to gather thoughts from local people and residents. This was publicised on social media. 'Totally Amersham' aims to bring together businesses, retail and leisure, as well as community, heritage and the diversity of the area.



A flier was designed to approach local retailers, offering the opportunity of free advertising on the dedicated Facebook Page 'Totally Amersham'. Over 50 businesses took part providing a total of over 90 posts. A following of over 580 people was achieved on the Facebook page and total post reach of nearly 30k. The campaign provided support to local retailers in the lead-up to Christmas.

'Totally Amersham' branding will be used going forward in the development of future community initiatives and the strategic direction of the project is being discussed.

PRINT ASSETS

RADIO CHRISTMAS

INC. FLYERS TO BE HANDED OUT, IN NEWSPAPER DROP AND YOURAMERSHAM AD

RADIO AD WRITTEN AND RUN ON RADIO CHRISTMAS, AND LIZ PROMOTING ON AIR

Voices and Choices:

Voices and Choices were granted £5,000 to develop a new Community Companionship service which aims to reduce loneliness in older people. Trained volunteers will work closely with service users to understand their interests and needs, and provide information and referrals to local support networks or activities.

We have now recruited 7 volunteers and provided them with online training including extra notes on telephone skills. We are working with Buckinghamshire Council to ensure the volunteers receive enhanced DBS checks. When possible, we will visit clients in their own homes and accompanying them to groups as they open. We have also arranged to book a further room at the White Hill Centre which is currently being refurbished so that we can create a separate library/information service for our volunteers and when this is established we would welcome any information and resources members of the board would like to send us.

We are publicising the availability of the service to local churches, town and parish councils, housing associations etc. and partner voluntary organisations in the areas covered by the Board. We welcome board members to come forward with any referrers they are aware of.