



Buckinghamshire Council

Chesham COVID Recovery

Action Notes

3rd February 2021

1. Welcome - Introductions and Apologies

Chair of the meeting, Mark Shaw, thanked everyone for their hard work and introduced Caroline Green, new Community Board Coordinator. Each attendee then explained what organisation they were representing. Apologies from Emma Burgham. CAB update included.

Wycombe/Chesham Homeless Connection	James Boutlebee
Chesham Churches Together	Tim Yates
Chesham Help for Coronavirus	Michael Rowan/Jeremy Wyman
Chiltern Foodbank	Jill Pye
Paradigm Housing	Elaine Rixon
SB Jewish Community/Covid Volunteer	Toby Friedner
Rotary/Chamber of Commerce	Andy Garnett
Oasis Partnership	Colin McGregor-Paterson
Cllr	Jane MacBean
Cllr	Patricia Birchley
Cllr	Mark Shaw
BC	Caroline Green
Voices and Choices	Barbara Poole
Chesham Town Council	Bill Richards
Chiltern Citizen's Advice	Emma Burgham
Chesham Mosque	Waseem Raja

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Apologies that minutes of last meeting were not included. Please see attached.

3. Second Spike Capacity

Andy Garnett – Rotary/Chamber of Commerce

The amount of shopping trips being processed is not as high as the first lockdown. Rotary are issuing 6 or 7 payments per week, as opposed to 6 or 7 daily as seen in the first lockdown. Andy explained the payment process and how that works, and that they have taken on the Community Takeaway banking requirement for ease of use and speed. Rotary were happy to undertake that and assist Michael and his committee.

Cllr. Mark Shaw

The Chesham Covid group have tried to increase self-sufficiency among people using the service for prescriptions and shopping collections by encouraging children/grandchildren collecting shopping and looking at which chemists where being used for prescriptions and ensured that they used chemists that could deliver their prescriptions.

4. Further Support

Barbara Poole – Voices and Choices

Barbara discussed the funding supplied by the Community Board which was used to develop their Community Companionship service to support people who are lonely. The original idea was to contact people and find out a bit about them and help them to attend any groups or activities that they really wanted to. Barbara explained that the geography of the White Hill Centre can be a challenge and that if a person has been isolated for a long time, it becomes difficult to reintegrate and join groups. The service is there to support people for as long as necessary, not to create a dependency, and takes a step back once a person feels comfortable and more confident. A volunteer coordinator has been recruited along with 7 volunteers, all of whom have references and up-to-date DBS checks. V&C have also started sending out a leaflet, available in paper copy or e-copy. The leaflet talks about all services available and has already been distributed into the community widely. CB coordinator, Caroline, to distribute (a copy also attached).

Bill Richards – Chesham Town Council

Chesham Town Hall is being used as a Covid vaccine centre, which is going well. Bill's office is now being used as a rest room. Steve is still working from the office helping with enquiries related to the Town Hall. The website is still active, and they are signposting any enquiries to the correct places.

Colin McGregor-Paterson – Oasis Partnership

Referrals for employment training and education support have increased quite substantially. All support is still being provided online. Oasis continue to receive many referrals from JobCentre Plus, and also some through One Recovery.

Elaine Rixon – Paradigm Housing

Still getting much higher referral rates than normal. They are finding their main problem is trying to get funding, for utilities (gas and electric, mainly). Another issue is if someone has received a food bank voucher, they then cannot have another for a year. Elaine mentioned how each referral for support that she had put forward to Heart of Bucks had been turned down due to such specific criteria. Elaine also stated that during the first lockdown, people who usually pay their rent on time

suddenly found themselves furloughed and needing to access Universal Credit, which they had not accessed previously – this was a struggle. However, this lockdown, people were used to the systems in place and found it much easier to access benefits and assistance. Elaine highlighted that there has been an increase in mental health concerns and low-level anti-social behaviour as a result of mental health struggles, with this lockdown when compared to the first, and is receiving a large volume of phone calls from residents who are struggling.

Andy Garnett – Rotary/Chamber of Commerce

Andy wondered whether the 40 Rotarians could help with the telephone calls that are coming in and said I could be suggested as a service project. The second lockdown has made normal service projects difficult and suggested that perhaps the focus could be redirected to this and assisting through the St. Paul fund, not to physically speak to individuals but to assist Paradigm financially in order to support. It was suggested that perhaps Andy and Elaine discuss taking that idea forward.

Tim Yates – Chesham Churches Together

Processes of keeping people in touch have become well-established by now. Tim notes that the churches have been more pro-active rather than reactive, with this lockdown and it is important that the churches continue to reach those who may have lost those connections. Tim agreed that connecting people to church services through children and grandchildren, who may be more adept at using devices, has been helpful. The churches have been proactive in signposting to the food bank and community groups.

Cllr. Mark Shaw

In terms of the Mosque committee, Mark spoke to the Chairman and two members and they are being very helpful by getting information out to the local and wider Asian community via their app and website to encourage as many as possible to get their vaccines, particularly as the BAME community have a higher rate of infection. Similarly, the Jewish community has been seeing similar infection rates.

Cllr Jane MacBean

Highlighted how great the support has been through the hard work of those within the community and offered further support to Paradigm if needed.

Cllr Patricia Birchley

Thanked everyone for their hard work, Paradigm, Rotary, Voices and Choices, and the churches along with the other organisations. The support is well-established now and this lockdown, people knew where to go for help and how to access the support that is needed. Patricia highlighted that mental health has been a concern for many people, particularly this lockdown. It was also noted that all churches need to rebuild their links due to being closed on/off for almost a year, and the vital role it plays in the community – this has been supported by some funding from the community board but more importantly, the excellent work from all the community groups.

Colin McGregor-Paterson – Oasis Partnership

Oasis, working in partnership Oxford Mental Health Trust and Mind, are currently recruiting mental health workers to assist into crisis, early intervention through funding, however, the NHS funding is staggered. Oasis are hoping to have funding to make the post a full-time outreach worker for the local area. This outreach worker will support local people of all ages to prevent them from getting to the stage of sectioning under the Mental Health Act. Colin to speak with Caroline when plans are firmed, and the board will support.

Cllr Jane MacBean

Health Select Committee recently heard from Oxford Mental Health Trust and the pressure they are under to deliver official services. Jane highlighted that people are reluctant to reach-out to official MH services and is interested to hear more about the plans for the Oasis outreach worker and how that would work in the community.

Tim Yates – Chesham Churches Together

Tim and Colin to discuss the outreach worker project. The churches have close links to Paradigm, and it may be that they can work together.

Andy Garnett – Rotary/Chamber of Commerce

Rotary are looking at how they can support the Council, and other organisations, with access to laptops and online services.

Cllr. Mark Shaw

Mark highlighted that connectivity to broadband via USB sticks is vital to ensure families can get online. Waterside Academy raised over £2500 to support their community. Ivingswood Academy has a challenging cohort, any help for them would be gratefully received.

Cllr Jane MacBean

Jane is a Governor at Elmtree Infant and Nursery School and emphasised that junior schools do not qualify for technology support despite the children having to use them to learn with at home. The school were successful in obtaining several I-Pads for the children but not enough for all families. There is a large cohort of pupils with English as a second language and some with additional learning needs. It has been noted that DfE have many laptops are not being supplied for various reasons and suggested that it might be an idea for Andy to contact the schools.

Cllr Patricia Birchley

Patricia acknowledged the great job the staff at Chiltern Hills Academy are doing at continuing to teach their pupils and suggested that if groups do have access to laptops and devices, they should speak to Headteacher Kevin Patrick.

5. Accessibility: taking down barriers for people to access the support offered, serving diverse or target groups**Elaine Rixon – Paradigm Housing**

If anyone hears of people within the community struggling to pay their rent and being embarrassed to ask for help, perhaps due to never needing financial support before the pandemic, please refer them to Elaine, who is happy to help.

Cllr Jane MacBean

Jane highlighted some feedback she had received from the villages regarding elderly/housebound people being offered their vaccinations and being concerned about how they will get to the vaccination centre and that the Parish Councillors have been able to support as the community is smaller and know their locals. Jane suggested that perhaps Voices and Choices might be a good contact for reaching those who feel they can't access transport.

Barbara Poole – Voices and Choices

Barbara said she had not heard of anyone being unable to access vaccine appointments, but she could ask her volunteers to contact those that might be struggling.

Cllr. Mark Shaw

Mark acknowledged that there is transport available for those who need it to access their vaccine appointments, and it is possible for a home-visit vaccination.

6. AOB**Colin McGregor-Paterson – Oasis Partnership**

Oasis have linked with Amersham Men in Sheds group and are looking at collaborating to turn the second floor of the printworks into Amersham and Chesham Community Workshop and the ground floor into a cafe. The aim is to help people to engage in a wide range of activities, to reduce isolation. Hoping to open around May, in-line with Government restrictions. There is also a converted Luton van which will be used as an outreach service.

Andy Garnett – Rotary/Chamber of Commerce

Rotary are engaging with people through media platforms, Your Chesham is a good way to reach people. Andy asked if there should be any other platforms that could be used to reach people.

Cllr. Mark Shaw

Mark highlighted how well the Chesham Mosque app has worked, 600 members use it regularly. An app might be a good idea to reach a different cohort of people and connect to that part of the community.

Cllr Jane MacBean

Jane mentioned the Chesham app that is in discussion with Chesham Connects and a local digital media company. It is in early talks but might be something for the future.

Colin McGregor-Paterson – Oasis Partnership

Oasis are setting up a technology incubator for disadvantaged youth, working with local IT company, Cloudy IT and Bucks New University. This is aimed at getting young people to develop apps and software.

Cllr. Mark Shaw

Mark thanked everyone for their help and attendance.