

Newton Longville's Warm Space Initiative.

Briefing to the Community Board Winslow 25th April 2023

National issues such as Covid and now the energy crisis mean we all have to look to solve these problems as best we can.

Covid allowed us to call on volunteers to aid those who could not get out for essentials supplies. Our Help Heroes - call for volunteers (March 2020) produced 70 people, (a fantastic response for our village). Volunteers were allocated to a specific person or couple, as and when needed, this approach produced a bond which is still in place today.

The Warm Spaces initiative has been the same, the suggestion on using libraries or other venues to allow people to meet was fine in principle for large areas or towns. N.L has none of these and the nearest library is in Bletchley, outside of Buckingham.

N.L along with 5 other villages in the North of the county are not served by the Bucks, in our case we are served by the Beds/Luton/MK ICB, so health care services are in MK or Bletchley and public transport is very limited for residents who need to attend appointments.

In November the PC along with the two churches and village hall group looked at how we could support our residents with our existing resources, over the winter period until the end of March. It was realised that the only venue available was the Free Church on a Wednesday, it also runs a coffee morning on Tuesdays. The church has disabled facilities, easy access, a meeting room and kitchen.

It was decided the sessions should be covered from 10am until 4pm and the PC agreed they would fund reasonable costs and so "Warm Wednesday" was born.

Volunteers were found, along with donations of soup, rolls, biscuits, tea and coffee were obtained. - Attendees and villagers bring in various items, including books, cakes, biscuits and fresh baked rolls each week, I can confirm we have some very good cooks in the village.

The session gives support to all ages that need it and provide activities such as bingo, word search, raffles, sing along sessions, knitting and crocheting groups. They are currently knitting Post Box toppers and bunting for the Coronation. This gives those who would be alone company, an interest and a chance to meet new and old friends.

The event has gone from strength to strength with over 40 people attending each week. We even have the Lord Taverner's from outside the village with their young person's who drop in some times.

There has been a bonus for residents, when a regular attendee fails to attend for an unknown reason, fresh soup and rolls are delivered as a check to ensure all is well. One couple who are both 99yrs old, Nell fell and Bill her husband stays in to look after her, they both look forward to these visits and the soup.

Sue Sparling of the Free Church is fantastic ensuring everything runs smoothly, Cllr Val Coeshall holds regular health checks and personal interviews on a number of topics, while Cllr Tim Welch runs computer and media awareness for those who have limited or no knowledge of the internet or mobiles.

We have also invited Fairhive's neighbourhood manager Jane Wedderburn to attend, so she can meet with her residents to discuss issues and the progress these in person.

The Community Fridge and Helping Hands are due to attend soon, with dates provisionally agreed.

I would like to thank Sophia for her help in obtaining the grant and the board for authorisation, which covered the running and heating costs from November until March. This was very much appreciated by ourselves and has made a real difference to the community and our villagers.

The event is such a success that we (PC) have agreed to continue running this throughout the year, and an open invite is offered to you all, who would like to visit and meet the team.

In fact this "Warm Space" initiative has given the village, a "Community Hub" we never had, which we hope will continue for all our residents.

Thank you

Ian Whipp
Chair Newton Longville P.C