

For decision: Recommendations from the Wellbeing Panel

Author: Ali Barclay and Kate Hellard, Community Projects Officer

Summary

The Wellbeing panel meetings have been well attended and a wide cross section of community and statutory groups have been represented.

There was agreement that the panel had a role in inspiring, coordinating and facilitating projects and initiatives, which engage local people in actively affecting positive change in their immediate and wider communities, leading to the enhanced wellbeing of local people.

Whilst the subject of wellbeing is broad and far reaching, the initial public meeting identified specific areas of focus and subsequent meetings refined a series of recommendations which include to:

- commission a baseline study,
- coordinate and deliver a series of street level events,
- increase access to information for residents at a street level,
- create a central information base,
- create a volunteer base to support, coordinate, train and signpost volunteers
- continue the Wellbeing Panel.

Background

The New Economics Foundation has identified and researched five areas that need to be in place for the wellbeing of an individual:

- CONNECT – with people at home, work, school or in your local community
- LEARN – a new skill or renew an interest in a skill or hobby
- BE ACTIVE – find a physical activity you enjoy that suits your mobility and fitness
- TAKE NOTICE – be aware of the world and your feelings – savour experiences
- GIVE – join a group, volunteer, smile

Remit of the panel

In the first two meetings the panel of Councillors and Kate Hellard agreed that the remit of the panel would be to engage with local organisations and individuals. This will enable the community to have a better understanding of the issues facing Frome and to co-ordinate and develop the community in order to connect and affect positive change.

Because of the width of the subject of wellbeing there was an inevitable cross over of all the other panels.

Membership

Core membership of the panel consisted of the following:

Frome Town Cllrs:

Ali Barclay - Chair and Spokesperson for the panel

Shelia Gore

Peter Macfadyen

Jean Boulton
 Tim OConnor
 Heather Wride

And Community Projects Officer, Kate Hellard

Meetings were held at various times and in accessible venues. In addition to general promotion to the public, targeted invitations were sent to key groups and organisations to encourage their representatives to attend and participate in discussions. The following groups and organisations were represented at the meetings alongside a group of 15-20 of interested individuals:

Knightstone Housing Association	FACT
Fair Frome	Frome College
Open Story Tellers	V4F
YMCA	Active and In Touch
Vision For Frome	Frome children's festival
Mendip CAB	Frome medical practice
Mendip Community Credit Union	Frome's Missing Link
Health Connections Mendip	Edventure
Creative Health and Rehabilitation	School of Experiential Education
Get Set Services (Children's Centres)	

Discussion

The first public meeting was very well attended by a wide range of practitioners, councillors and a number of service users and members of the public. They identified the following actions that would improve the wellbeing of individuals in Frome through a number of practical activities grouped under the following headings:

Leadership and overview (22)	Spreading the word (20)	Communication (17)		Street level (17)	
Communication and strategy forum	Extended community champion, beyond health services	Connect people and services with a phone line	Inform / empower front liners (people who are caring for family members etc.)	Bring groups together to look at participation	Encourage community gatherings (e.g. sport etc.)
Accessibility (physical and language)	Champions spreading information	Directory of resources	Street activities, central point of contact for neighbours	Free mini classes in self care	Inclusion in sporting activity
Audit provision / groups / local offer		Grow community and street dining	Collate and coordinate up to date resource information	Increase participation: don't tell people how, ask	Local community forums (ward areas)

Research needs: case studies		Improve communication			
Participation and inclusion (12)		Wellbeing outdoors (7)	Transport (7)	Town events (6)	Targeted projects (4)
Increased nutrition by shared gardening	Use one central resource for referrals (not necessarily one place)	More participatory events / forums	Easier connections – transport and access	Annual wellbeing event	Teach English as a second language (free courses)
Awareness and use of open spaces	Central directory information	An intelligent database that can be searched	Volunteer driver scheme (electric cars)	Wellbeing corners around town	Frome wide scheme to support carers / single parents
	Community noticeboard. Place to put what people want / are interested in	Mobile information centre (town hall on wheels)	Community transport scheme		Young peoples' literacy group – supporting adults/ children and support for young men

These areas were prioritised and explored in more detail over the next three meetings to identify what was already happening and what would be useful to develop.

During the course of the panel it was acknowledged that although there were areas in the community that needed attention and development e.g. 'The targeted projects' there was an equally important role in co-ordination of projects and collation of information that would be beneficial to Frome's wellbeing.

The following areas from the table above were discussed in more detail and recommendations were made.

Street Level

Some themes that emerged in the discussion:

- There are already a number of projects and activities that are supporting individuals within the community
- Building community at a local level enables people to be aware of what is going on in the wider community, to highlight need and to increase a sense of belonging and pride
- There is a need to explore ways that engage at street level and some of the assumptions made about communities within Frome
- Increasing street level activities may help identify particular communities and groups and act as a catalyst to engage local people
- The council's role as enabler and co-ordinator is key in moving this forward

Recommendations (these are tabulated at the end of this report)

- Baseline Study – to conduct a study, as a pilot, in three different communities (made up of one or two streets) within Frome. This project will consider how information is shared, the gaps in information provision and inform the development of appropriate interventions which build communities with a sense of belonging.

The findings of this study will act as a resource and help to inform future developments for community groups and local organisations. Panel members Meki Nattero and Annabelle Macfadyen have presented a written proposal for this work to be undertaken in the New Year and it is proposed to manage this as a contracted piece of work funded from 2015/16 budget at a cost of £2.5k.

- Develop a calendar of community events throughout 2016 to build a strong sense of belonging within Frome – coordinating current and future projects including the Children’s festival, the youth conference, town centre events, community dining, Frome festival and sports taster sessions. To include the delivery of street parties; particularly focused around the Queen’s Birthday celebrations in June.
- To promote community dining, ‘Playing out’ and other similar projects in Frome and the use of parks and open spaces for events and sport and leisure activity.
- Develop a toolkit for street activities so that people will have a guide to set up their own.

Communication and spreading the word

Themes that emerged in the discussion:

- The panel agreed that access to information about the services, projects and opportunities is a key factor in whether residents participate within the town. Many residents do not have access to and or use social media and other web based technologies and not everybody buys or reads the Frome Standard. A great deal of information can be passed by word of mouth but there are still some who do not currently access information; particularly those who are isolated without networks around them to share and pass on information.
- It was agreed that information should be provided in a range of ways at ‘Street Level’, using a number of methods, with a particular focus on developing a network of people who are equipped to share information with neighbours and friends, building on Health Connections, Health Champion Volunteers, with a view to extending a service across the town.
- The panel identified a need for a central base of information for individuals and groups across the town in order to know what is available.

Recommendations (these are tabulated at the end of this report)

- FTC holds a virtual central information base, pulling together existing databases such as the Health Connections and Frome Active websites as a central resource offering an overview with information about demographics, evidence of need and gaps in provision.
- Use a page in Frome Times to advertise what is going on in the town (this goes to every household)

Volunteers

Themes that emerged from discussions:

- The voluntary sector is particularly strong in Frome and quick to respond to gaps in provision. In order to continue to replenish volunteers and build the capacity of

organisations to meet rising demand the panel discussed the development of a volunteer base which would seek to support, train and encourage people from across Frome to become more actively involved in supporting their community in a wide variety of roles

- It's important to explore good practice around volunteer recruitment and training in other places outside Frome (e.g. Merton and Bath)

Recommendation (this is tabulated at the end of this report)

The panel recommend that further work is undertaken to explore what would best suit Frome, building on the work of Somerset You Can Do and Mendip Community Support.

Transport

The panel discussed the importance of developing better transport in order that wellbeing is improved in the town. It's difficult for some people to get around freely. There was a recommendation for a transport panel but Anna Francis and Jean Boulton have started developing a transport strategy so the panel agreed to support what they are doing and get a report back in a future meeting.

Future of the Wellbeing Panel

Themes that emerged from the discussion:

- People felt that it was important to continue the panel in order to offer an overview of what was going on in the town. The panel itself would have 'themed' meetings such as 'volunteers' and advertised as such in order to gather information and inform strategy. It would also encourage groups to meet outside of the panel to look at specific targeted areas and then report back to the panel itself.
- There was a general feeling that the panel would have a useful information and co-ordinating function across the panels.

Recommendations (these are tabulated at the end of this report)

- The panel meets regularly over the next year with a special effort to encourage district and county councillors to attend
- Links are made with wider local and national organisations to inform and build on what's happening in Frome

Table of Recommendations

	Recommendation	Detail	Resources	Timescale
1	To commission a baseline study	To be delivered this year as a pilot.	£2.5k	Feb – May 2016
2	To coordinate and deliver a series of street level events	To include street parties and a 'how to guide'	£7k	April 2016 – March 2017
3	To increase access to information for	To map the streets and areas that the Health Champions are based in and identify gaps in Frome	Health connections volunteer	April 2016 onwards

	residents at a street level	<p>To install more noticeboards with a process to keep them up to date</p> <p>To explore what a 'mobile town hall' would look like</p> <p>Use a page in Frome Times to advertise what is going on in the town (this goes to every household)</p>	<p>coordinator time</p> <p>Town Rangers</p> <p>CPO/ panel</p> <p>£700</p>	
4	To create a central information base	<p>FTC to create a virtual central information base</p> <p>Gather more information & links more widely. (Increase connections with County and other neighbouring authorities)</p> <p>Collate and provide statistical information both from FTC to community to support fund raising and from the community to FTC</p>	<p>£15k</p> <p>CPO/Cllrs</p> <p>CPO</p>	
5	To create a volunteer base to support, coordinate, train and signpost volunteers.	Further work is undertaken to explore what would best suit Frome, building on the work of Somerset You Can Do and Mendip Community Support.	<p>£10k</p> <p>CPO/panel</p>	May 2016 - onwards
6	To continue the Wellbeing Panel	To meet regularly, hold themed meetings, engage district and county representatives.	£1k	Feb 2016 – bi - monthly