

Agenda item 6

For information – an update on community development projects

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Summary

Following on from the last report at Town Matters on the 4th June 2018 this report provides a summary of the ongoing work in the Trinity area of Frome and an update on the general support provided for community groups in Frome.

1. Background

Community groups, schools and other statutory organisations are feeling the impact of funding cuts and the subsequent loss of services on their students, patients and residents. Supporting local organisations to identify and work together to fill some of these gaps through town wide projects and on a neighbourhood level is therefore key to building a strong, resilient and healthy community. Community organisations can play a vital role in enabling strategic development from the bottom up, particularly in addressing issues of anti-social behaviour, loneliness and isolation, mental health, financial poverty and food poverty amongst others.

FTC agreed to pilot a community development project in the Trinity area to support the growth of the Trinity Community Group and enable residents to build local projects which address local issues and build on the strengths and skills of local people.

2. Trinity community development update

Trinity Street Party

The community group organised a reasonably well attended street party in August; providing food, playworkers, activity stalls and inspiration through a junk gardening initiative to cheer up the area. Residents who attended said that they welcomed the opportunity to get to know each other and share ideas for the future. Many raised concerns around issues and were pleased to be able to meet Cllrs (thank you to all Cllrs who attended, helped set up and clear up afterwards).



We also harnessed support from various businesses who sponsored the event; supplying old wellies, paint, plants and printing. We learnt that whilst Milk Street and the school playground offer a great space and a chance to build on the relationships with the school and parents' association and attract the attention of passers-by, it has few immediate neighbours; we lacked the engagement from local people that a more traditional street party harness.

Anti-social behaviour and arson

There has been a recent spate of arson attacks in the area including bin fires and car / van fires. Residents are reporting concerns that these pose significant risk to property and potentially life.

In addition, residents have noted drug related issues and incidences of anti-social behaviour. We are in contact with Sergeant Rachel Clark and are looking at ways to reassure residents whilst promoting the need to report any crime through the correct channels with the police.

Litter

The Trinity Community Group would like to thank Frome Town Council for the installation of the two new bins in the area. There remains an issue of litter in the street, however, and the group are keen to build on previous initiatives to reduce the amount of litter using the posters produced by pupils at Vallis school.

FTC are hosting a broader Rubbish Meeting on the 15th September to explore new initiatives for Frome; to include a Litter Warrior scheme which has been suggested by residents in Trinity and other areas of the town.

We are supporting the Trinity clean up with a Bin it For Trinity campaign.

Gardening

At the street party we provided painted tyres and plants which staff at the school are keen to adopt and use in the space immediately outside of the school. We are looking to continue to build this project with a view to building a group of residents interested in a more substantial community garden. Several residents have now expressed a desire to be involved in this project and we are looking at it as a slow build.



The core of the community group is small and meets on a regular basis. They are currently looking at new ways to increase their numbers to deliver new projects in the area.

3. Support for community organisations

There is a growing number of street-based community groups coming together and they are facing similar issues of support and capacity to get their projects and initiatives off the ground. We are looking at bringing members from these groups together and are keen to hear from others forming in Frome. Since April, we have supported four new groups: Trinity Walk, Egford Park, The Old Nurseries and Nunney Road and are looking at ways that they can provide peer support for each other.

Underpinning all our work in communities is a programme of support and advice for community groups and larger organisations in the town, which complements the various funding mechanisms that we deliver. This support has been developed to ensure that new and

existing groups develop sustainable models of delivery and fund raising. We encourage diverse income streams and a business-like approach to the running of organisations so that they can continue to increase their service delivery in response to the continuing decline in local authority funding and direct services.

The advice and support that FTC offer includes:

Community Groups Newsletter

This is a regular e-bulletin which we use to share upcoming training, events, funding news and other information relevant to third sector organisations in Frome. It is open for anyone to sign up for so please let us know if you would like to be included on the mailings.

Responsive advice and support

Since April this year, 19 organisations have benefited from individual meetings to identify specific support that has included: referrals to fundraising support and advice, networking and groups, projects and organisations, advice and support on being 'grant ready', and other general support.

In response to an increase in individuals looking to develop community arts projects we are looking to facilitate a network of support and inspiration through the Arts Panel which due to meet on the 20th September.

Feedback for this service is generally very positive:

'I just wanted to thank you for your creative ideas, honest candour and help at our meeting this week. It is really amazing to receive the funding from the council, but your help is as valuable (maybe more valuable in the long term) as the monetary aspect of the grant.'

Facilitation for trustee and management groups

Enabling organisations to create a clear vision and series of tasks which will enable them to fulfil their purpose. These sessions are tailored around the individual needs of the organisation and are aimed at creating clear, sustainable structures and delivery objects for growth.

Fundraising support and advice

This service is commissioned and is currently delivered by Rebecca Morland. She continues to work on a one to one basis with local organisations to identify potential funders and complete applications and delivers a training programme to support the work. We will report separately and in more detail on this contract at a Town Matters meeting in due course.

A shed full of resources

We have several resources available for community groups to borrow including; large and small gazebos, tables and chairs, bean bags, a smoothie bike, litter pickers and more. The information staff in the town hall manage the bookings and we continue to build the bank as we become aware of gaps. Groups, large and small, have commented on the value of these resources in delivering events and maximising storage and best use of funds.

4. Conclusion

Demand for local services continues to increase and this is reflected in the increase in demand for our own support and advice services. In addition, groups continue to look to FTC to provide a strategic steer in the growth and development of new services in the town. There is a growing sense that issues of drug use and anti-social behaviour amongst young people are disrupting cohesion within communities but also putting increased pressure on schools and other statutory services. Thresholds for reactive services such as social care and CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health) continue to increase whilst earlier interventions decrease.

Community development initiatives provide inclusive and universal opportunities for individuals and families to participate in positive activity, which enable them to affect positive change in their immediate and wider communities. There is an increasing demand for this work, especially in the light of the proposed cuts and our capacity to meet this demand; particularly the provision of staff resource to support communities, is an area for further consideration.