

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FORUM HELD AT/BY BY
REMOTE VIDEO CONFERENCE (SEE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW) ON WEDNESDAY, 12
JANUARY 2022 COMMENCING AT TIME NOT SPECIFIED**

PRESENT

Chair

COUNCILLORS



Meeting ID: 2201

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr John Boyce

John Baraclough (Leicestershire County Council)

25. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

R Levy noted that the previous meeting was held under a different staff team at Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and was held pre-pandemic. To this end, this meeting was viewed as a chance to kickstart afresh the Community Engagement Forum.

The minutes of the meeting of the CEF held on the 5/11/2019 were read, confirmed and signed (virtually) by the Chair.

With regards to the previous meeting's discussion regarding Plastics in the Community, S Measures volunteered to promote further GoLearn!'s work in this area.

26. INTRODUCTION TO ACTIVE OADBY AND WIGSTON

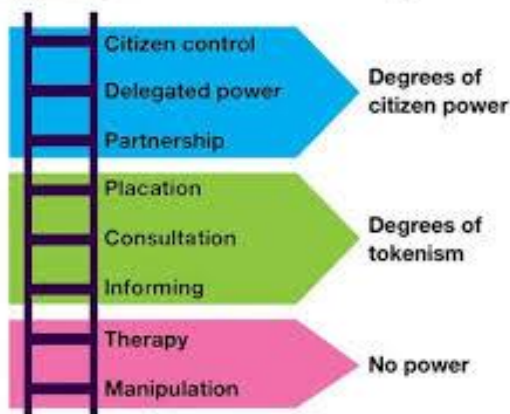
R Levy introduced the Forum to the work of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's Community & Wellbeing team, branded as Active Oadby and Wigston. The team offer several health, wellbeing and physical activity programmes across the Borough, from group walks, Couch to 5K, to Walking Football. These programmes offer opportunities to engage with communities, and achieve Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's Corporate

Priorities, in particular RE:

- “To improve the health of our residents, targeting those groups who have been identified as having health inequalities...”
- “To improve the health of residents through bespoke health campaigns and interventions”.

Using Arnstein’s (1996) Ladder of Citizen Participation (see below, left), R Levy noted that Active Oadby and Wigston’s programmes do not merely represent a tokenistic engagement with the community. Rather, Active Oadby and Wigston’s programmes and campaigns are co-produced with communities themselves, with listening exercises such as pop-ups (see below, right) and surveys used by the team to determine the needs of communities.

Arnstein’s Ladder of Public Participation



Our Work...

August – December 2021

- 13 Group Walks
- 9 Community Health and Wellbeing pop up events
- 3 Facebook Lives reaching over 600 people
- 6 community programmes established
- 5 health campaigns promoted and supported



Visit: www.activeoadbywigston.org.uk/ for more details about upcoming programmes for 2022 and up to date health and wellbeing information



Key ways to get involved with Active Oadby and Wigston’s programmes involve:

- Searching for, and following Active Oadby and Wigston across social media
- Visiting their website: www.activeoadbywigston.org.uk

B Gohil asked what inclusive offer was available through Active Oadby and Wigston’s programmes. R Levy said that programmes such as our recent Inclusive Tennis sessions for adults with disabilities demonstrates that team are keen to ensure as many people as possible are able to participate in programmes. R Levy agreed that more could be done to ensure that in marketing and communications of programmes, it is made clear that programmes are accessible and inclusive.

Action: R Levy to communicate to Active Oadby and Wigston team to ensure that inclusivity of programmes is made clear to audiences.

Cllr J Kauffman asked how what was being done besides using social media to promote Active Oadby and Wigston's programmes. R Levy said that pop-up sessions in the community allow for conversations to be held with community members themselves who may not otherwise use social media. Posters and leaflets are also displayed in prominent areas.

Foqia discussed access issues at Uplands Park, in Oadby. In particular, access to toilets was mentioned, and how they were locked, and this is a barrier to using the park. Further, it was noted that loose dogs pose an issue to those of certain faiths. For instance, if dogs approach and touch those wearing religious garments, it means individuals have to change their clothes before praying. Thus, promoting messages around responsible dog ownership was suggested.

Action: R Levy to inform colleagues in Community Safety of this and for relevant signage/campaigns/messaging to be instated regarding responsible dog ownership.

Foqia also mentioned recently introduced parking charges as a barrier to accessing green spaces and health and wellbeing programmes across the Borough, and transportation in general around the Borough. The location of Brocks Hill Country Park being roughly 0.2 miles off the main road means it is further to walk to access, which can also be a barrier to accessing this green space.

Cllr J Kauffman responded to the comment about the location of Brocks Hill saying that there used to be a signpost meaning you don't have to follow the access road round to the park, yet can do a cut through. It was asked whether this signpost needs to be made clearer.

Action: R Levy to liaise with relevant OWBC colleagues to determine if walking signpost needs to be installed.

Cllr Haq addressed that the toilets at Uplands Park has been a recurring issue, and for health and safety reasons, it has not been possible to open them.

B Gohil stated that there is a Community Transport scheme which can offer subsidised transport to and from community events.

Action: R Levy to send round information regarding Community Transport

scheme to attendees.

R Mbedl asked what Oadby and Wigston Borough Council had done to communicate messages about the COVID-19 vaccine, with R Mbedl noting that she had not received any communication about it. R Mbedl stated that it is important for key messages, such as on the vaccine, to be culturally nuanced.

Cllr Haq noted that Oadby and Wigston Borough Council has been using social media to communicate messages on the vaccine, in addition to the work of the Council's Community & Wellbeing team and Leicestershire County Council who have done stalls in the community promoting COVID-19 information and handing out lateral flow tests.

27. HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH OUR PROGRAMMES

,

28. 2022 PROGRAMMES UPDATE

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS UPDATE

Cllr Haq invited community organisations present to provide an update on their current work, in particular during the Pandemic.

V Ghiadli said that his social group at St Paul's Church in Oadby returned initially from the Pandemic in July, and is returning back in February. Active Oadby and Wigston have been to the group twice to host community consultation and health advice.

L Green said that, over the festive season, Oadby Foodbank has provided 35 food parcels to Pupil Premium students and their families who attend the foodbank. During the pandemic, the foodbank was giving out roughly 60 food parcels per fortnight. The foodbank has received several enquiries about fuel poverty/electricity, to which they have referred individuals to Helping Hands. Work has been done with Leicestershire County Council's welfare van to offer support to residents. L Green commended the work of the volunteers at the foodbank.

L Thornton said that Helping Hands are now returning to more face-to-face sessions, yet these are on an appointment basis. Helping Hands has been able to offer phone and internet appointments to service users.

Reverend S Bailey, representing the Anglican Church, said that online services have been offered as much as possible during the pandemic. St Peter's Church offered weekly newsletters who couldn't make online services. The Church has been a collection point for foodbank.

M Barton from LAMP Advocacy: Mental Health Care & Support Leicester introduced the work of this charity. On the basis that access to GPs has been challenging, especially during the Pandemic, LAMP work with service users to dig deeper and provide service users with other options following what GPs may be able to provide. LAMP help service users to articulate their needs and interests, acting independently. LAMP aims to help those with existing mental health diagnosis and ensure that their needs within the community are met. LAMP aims to improve community capacity to support those with ill mental health.

S Renton addressed that a mental health forum is being set up by the NHS for the Borough, this will be in early Spring 2022.

J Cloke addressed that a study of mutual-aid groups during the pandemic, conducted by Hull and Sheffield University will have publically accessible findings. The group in Oadby supported residents with prescription collections throughout the pandemic.

L Green said that work was being done by Plastic Free Oadby and that contact will be made to invite them to next meeting.

Shireen addressed the work of the Muslim Association's Community Plodders, who support individuals by going on daily walks. Classes are now taking place in the building of the Association, in addition to online. Preventing isolation was identified as a key priority.

S Measures introduced the work of GoLearn!, this is Leicestershire County Council's adult learning offer which provide full range of courses on employability, ESOL, independence skills. S Measures is keen to promote these services as much as possible. GoLearn! can offer bespoke sessions for a group with an identified need. S Measures happy to share the brochure but keen to show full range of what we do.

Action: S Measures to share with the group GoLearn!'s brochure.

P Fielden introduced the group to her Nordic Walking group. The main aim of the group is to increase physical activity but have found that the good community spirit of the group is good. Top down information from key services was noted to not always be so strong, and so encouraged more information on events and activities coming from the bottom-up.

Dr Latif, from the Royal College of Psychiatrists, then presented on mental health. He stated that in addition to those with existing ill mental health, the pandemic has resulted in a surge of new cases of ill mental health. Dr Latif discussed the importance of social prescribing, as a non-medication based treatment for mental health, for instance "prescribing" craft groups to combat social isolation.

The top three tips to improve one's mental wellbeing were suggested by Dr Latif to be:

- Keep the mind busy with hobbies- eg. reading, maintaining the things we are interested in
- Physical activity- the release of endorphins being cited as so important for our wellbeing
- Have a nutritious diet- what we eat is inextricably linked to our mental health- 80% of serotonin is manufactured in the gut wall.

M Flynn noted the work of Local Area Co-Ordinators, who are there to support the individuals within the community to solve problems. Anyone can have the contact details of LACs who can also support build social capital in communities or signpost to other who can support. If anyone wants to know more contact details are mary.flynn@leics.gov.uk

M Taylor-Rai, via the Chat function, offered this narrative of the work of Buddhi by M: We

provide holistic support for residents and have been part of the hub and support group from the beginning of the pandemic. We have a number of groups for Mental Health, Domestic Abuse, Men's Support Group, Violence Reduction, Alcohol, Drugs, Resilience and Emotional Regulation. We require support with referrals from professional and OWBC, pathways, raising awareness of what we do and funding. Email BuddhiByM@outlook.com

Z Sheikh outlined his interest in opening up facilities for community usage. Z Sheikh also thanked Cllr J Kauffman for his attendance at a recent event.

Foqia discussed the importance of addressing digital deficit amongst communities, and how funding availability was a barrier to long-term programmes.

T Malik, via the Chat function, brought attention to the Sangham ladies group, which does "a lot of different activities and gentle exercise supporting elderly women".

A Dingley noted that the group had a budget of £1,900 to spend before April.

Action: Advice of applying to this grant will be made publicly available.

29. SUPPORTING RESIDENTS OF THE BOROUGH TO LOOK AFTER THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

,

30. SUPPORTING RESIDENTS OF THE BOROUGH TO MAKE GREENER CHOICES

,

31. COVID-19 INFORMATION

Chair introduced Dr Latif who presented key information regarding COVID-19. Dr Latif works for UK Health Security Agency.

Dr Latif said that vaccine uptake in the East Midlands was broadly positive, across the East Midlands, uptake was:

- 82%- 1st dose

- 76%- 2nd dose
- 60%- Booster

The Omicron variant has caused disruption and increased case rates nationally, but a slight decline in case rates is now being experienced across the country. Dr Latif noted a most recent rule change which means if you have a positive lateral flow test, you must isolate immediately, rather than take a PCR test.

Dr Latif mentioned that in the Under 19 age group, case rates are not declining, and in the Blaby district, cases remain particularly high.

Dr Latif's key recommendations were:

- Maintain physical distancing, particularly in crowded spaces
- Wear face masks in indoor settings
- Maintain good hand hygiene.

R Mbedl asked for more local data to be presented. This data can be accessed online.

Dr Latif informed the group of the local Avian Flu outbreak which was also causing a high workload for medical professionals.

J Cloke, on behalf of his work with the Oadby support group, said that he had not heard of a lack of information by the Council to the public on COVID-19 matters. J Cloke mentioned the difficulty was how to get in touch with those who are self-isolating, to be able to offer instant support. J Cloke suggested that an emergency response team who, for instance, have access to a central list of those who are self-isolating, or a greater, collaborative working relationship with pharmacies across the Borough.

Cllr Haq responded by citing the work of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's Community Hub, which galvanised a team of volunteers to support those shielding or isolating during the Pandemic.

A Dingley said that OWBC would not be able to share personal details of those isolating, due to GDPR. OWBC have had to delete personal detail of all those supported by the Hub, as directed by Public Health.

Cllr Haq asked Dr Latif if we are moving from a pandemic to an endemic. Dr Latif said that

it was hard to say, and that no one has a crystal ball. In response to concerns around availability of lateral flow tests, Dr Latif said that this was being addressed by central bodies, and for individuals to go online to order lateral flow tests.

V Ghadiali asked Dr Latif whether someone is more likely to transmit the virus if they are not vaccinated and whether, on this basis, those unvaccinated should not be permitted to attend social events which feature those who are elderly. Dr Latif responded by saying that those who are not vaccinated are more likely to be ill. Protecting the vulnerable remains a recommendation, although vaccines are not mandatory.

Foqia asked whether Oadby and Wigston Borough Council had a Volunteer Charter or a Volunteer Co-Ordinator position to best support volunteers who contribute to looking after residents across the Borough.

R Levy addressed that a volunteering strategy was being reviewed by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, although the authority does not have a Co-Ordinator.

H Katib corroborated that support for community organisations that work with volunteers would be appreciated. H Katib noted that guidance on health and safety for volunteers was an area of particular focus.

A Dingley assured that support would be offered to organisations working with volunteers, and that COVID-19 had been an issue in achieving this lately.

Action: Further support, guidance and communication to be offered to community organisations working with volunteers, in line with OWBC's revised volunteering strategy.

32. THANK YOU AND NEXT STEPS

Cllr Haq and R Levy agree, in the interest of timing, to postpone the agenda item on making the Borough a greener place, and what we can do to support residents to make greener choices.

Cllr Haq thanked everyone for their attendance and celebrated how this meeting was an opportunity for networking, and collaboration.

33. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

TBC

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 15.10 PM.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT Time Not Specified



Chair

Tuesday, 8 February 2022

Printed and published by Community & Wellbeing, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, Council Offices, Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire, LE18 2DR