

North Yorkshire County Council**North Yorkshire Area Committee for Harrogate****15th March 2018****Stronger Communities Progress Report****1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1. To update Harrogate Area Committee on the work of the Stronger Communities programme.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Since the last Area Committee report the Delivery Manager has continued to work with community organisations interested in the Inspire and Achieve programmes of the Stronger Communities Investment Prospectus. Work continues to support Harrogate's Community & Hybrid Libraries and a range of projects delivering Stronger Communities' outcomes.

3. Community Library Programme

- 3.1. The Delivery Manager continues to provide support to the five community libraries (Bilton and Woodfield Community Library, Starbeck, Boroughbridge, Pateley Bridge & Masham) and two Hybrid Libraries (Knaresborough and Ripon), this includes attendance at management meetings as appropriate, support with Business Planning, financial assistance for legal fees and sharing of information on the new General Data Protection Regulations coming into force May 2018 and signposting to relevant support organisations. Boroughbridge Community Library was awarded 'Library of the Month' in December 2017. Masham and Boroughbridge Community Libraries received certificates of recognition for the increased number of children participating in the Summer Reading Challenge compared to summer 2016.
- 3.2. Library Service staff are undertaking the first reviews of Service Level Agreements with new community libraries. This is an informal process to identify any areas where support may be required from either side of the agreement.
- 3.3. The Stronger Communities Team helped to facilitate the Community Library Conference that took place November 22nd 2017 at Harrogate Pavilions.

4. Stronger Communities Projects

- 4.1. **Inspire** - Since the launch of the Stronger Communities Investment Prospectus this summer, three Inspire projects are underway in the Harrogate district:

- £1000 to support a celebration event hosted by Dementia Forward to show appreciation for the four newly opened Wellbeing Cafés provided by volunteers across the District. 52 individuals attended the event at Ripley Town Hall. The NYCC Living Well Team waited on the Volunteers who were joined at the event by County Council Chair Cllr Helen Swiers and Cllr Michael Harrison. The event provided the opportunity to network, share good practice and following the event groups have linked together to support each other.
- £1000 to Opening Minds' Confident Conversations end of project event. Confident Conversations is a Big Lottery funded project centered on working with a group of 10 disabled people from across the district to develop their confidence and skills to talk to others about disability and the impact it has when accessing the community and engaging with others. The end of project event will provide the group with the opportunity to positively share their messages with a wide audience.
- £1000 to Harrogate Lions 'Message in a Bottle' project, which provides a simple, effective way of keeping basic personal and medical details where they can be found in an emergency. Volunteers distribute bottles to suitable locations across the community and these are then given to those who are vulnerable in some way, living alone or have communication problems. The initiative is supported by Paramedics, Police, Fire and Health and Adult Social Care Services.

Applications at the drafting stage include an intergenerational project, marketing support for a community transport solution and development of social activities.

4.2. **Achieve** – time is being taken to assess opportunities to work with voluntary & community sector groups to develop Achieve projects with one Achieve grant awarded to date:

- £15,000 towards the total costs of £46,478 to Orb Community Arts based in Knaresborough, to support the organisation in increasing the impact of its work across a broader area of North Yorkshire. The project will see the development of a partnership with Pioneer Projects in High Bentham to establish joint management processes and a closer alignment of working practices. The aim is to develop consistent services to a broad range of vulnerable individuals across the Craven and Harrogate Districts. Both organisations are well established and well respected Creative Arts & Well-being organisations.

Possible other achieve projects include:

- Development of Community Hubs
- A strengthened volunteer offer in Ripon
- Development of Men's Sheds

4.3. **Other support** – Support is continuing to organisations delivering projects or activities funded previously or which support the aims of the Stronger Communities programme. Five significant examples are given below:

- **The North Yorkshire Dementia Strategy** ‘Bring me Sunshine’ was launched in the autumn of 2017 and it is hoped that a local district action plan will be developed to support the roll out of the strategy. The Harrogate Public Services Leadership Board (PSLB), has agreed that a local implementation action plan be developed in collaboration with partners building on relationships already established during the Systems Leadership- Local Vision project. The Stronger Communities Delivery Manager is leading on bringing partners together.
- **Bilton Youth Centre** is now the base for North Yorkshire Sport who intends to develop the building as a vibrant community facility that will serve the wider community. Initial refurbishment work is underway whilst a long term vision for the centre is developed.
- **Masham Lift-share scheme** offers a free online journey matching service, making travel easier in a rurally isolated area. The scheme links those travelling out of the area on a regular basis by car with those who don’t have their own transport. This enables people to access work, college, health appointments and leisure and social activities.
- **Girl Guiding North Yorkshire West** who are planning for the future and have undertaken a project to redevelop the Birk Cragg Centre. The project costs are estimated to be £1.2 million and the group has secured a significant proportion towards this cost (as of Dec 17). The Project is being led by a team of volunteers and supported by Girl Guiding units across the district and beyond. The project will benefit Girl Guiding organisations and the wider local community, offering a community facility, residential centre, outdoor space and a sensory garden.
- **North Yorkshire County Council’s staff volunteering scheme** has contributed ~54 volunteer days across the district, with individuals and teams taking on practical tasks including; DIY, cleaning and gardening or using their professional Information technology skills to support an organisation.

4.4. **Investment** – The Stronger Communities programme has invested £51,887 directly in the Harrogate District this financial year to date; this includes Inspire, Achieve and organisational development and capacity building grant funding.

5. **Strategic Projects**

5.1. The Stronger Communities Programme is currently undertaking a number of county wide strategic projects that will benefit communities across the Harrogate District:

- **North Yorkshire Connect** - the new community directory for North Yorkshire was launched officially at the Wider Partnerships Conference on 3rd November. North Yorkshire Connect has been developed in a partnership between the 2020 Customer Programme and the Stronger Communities Team, and built in house by the development team within Technology and Change. The directory will make it easier for people to find information about support and activities provided in their area by a range of voluntary and community sector organisations and should help to reduce social isolation. It is designed to make it easy for organisations to update their information and, we hope, attract more people to access their services.
- **Physical Activity** - commissioning began in early 2017 for a new community based physical activity service on behalf of Public Health to provide age and physical ability appropriate activities across North Yorkshire for adults who are at risk of falls, increasing frailty, or loneliness and social isolation. A joint bid by North Yorkshire Sport (lead) and REACT was the preferred choice of the evaluation team. North Yorkshire Sport and REACT will engage with health and care sector colleagues, map existing universal provision in the county, establish a referral pathway and begin to advertise and market the service.
- **Online Induction training for volunteers** has been developed specifically for those volunteering within NYCC projects or partnering with NYCC this includes library volunteers. Four online modules are now available covering Health and Safety, Data Protection, Equalities and Customer focus. The courses were designed in consultation with volunteers who were invited to attend one of three focus groups held across the county. Feedback has been very positive.

6. Events & Networks

- 6.1. **My Neighbourhood Partnership** – The Delivery Manager is involved in this partnership approach being led by the District Council and involving Public Service partners and community organisations. She attends the local My Neighbourhood meetings in; Ripon, Granby, Pateley Bridge and Woodfield on a rotational basis and is a member of the steering groups. The Delivery Manager becomes involved in projects as appropriate, with a current focus on delivering a youth engagement session at Harrogate High.
- 6.2. **Connecting Ripon Network** – The Network includes voluntary, community and faith sector organisations from the Ripon area. The Delivery Manager is a member of this group and is working with them to strengthen volunteering in Ripon.
- 6.3. **Community Showcase** – The Stronger Communities team has organised a series of visits for County Councillors to community projects across the county. The visits provide an opportunity for members to see the positive impacts of the programme at a local level. In late January the Chair and members of the County Council and representatives of the Stronger Communities Team joined ‘Keep Moving Masham’ regulars for an exercise session. This group is led by volunteers with 28 regular

participants.



Clare Watkinson, secretary of the group, added: “It is not just a fitness group; it is a social group as well. We go for a coffee afterwards. We look after each other. If people can’t make it, we support them and make sure they know we are thinking about them.”

7. Recommendation

7.1. It is recommended that the Area Committee notes the contents of this report.

Liz Meade

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5th March 2018