

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Wem Urban held on Thursday, 17th May 2018 at 7 p.m in The Roden Suite Edinburgh House, New Street Wem.

Present:-Councillor E Towers (Town Mayor) and 22 members of the public present. Mrs P O'Hagan (Town Clerk).

The Mayor welcomed all present and outlined the purpose of the meeting.

1. To hear presentations on the following initiatives

Compassionate Communities in Rural Shropshire - Paul Cronin, Chief Executive, Severn Hospice.

Paul explained that the Severn Hospice is a community organisation working with all communities across Shropshire and that they didn't only provide end of life care spaces in the hospice itself they in fact they nurse more people at home for end of life care that they do on their wards.

The Compassionate Communities initiative arose from the identification that patients often got into crisis when the professionals left. From speaking to patients, it was identified that the crisis was not due to a lack of service provision but often came about from social isolation which was made worse by a lack of transport. Unfortunately, the hospice cannot be a friend to all, that is the job of the community. However, it was decided it could help the community by providing support in finding and training volunteers, something that it has a lot of experience in. The Compassionate Communities project started in Church Stretton with a pilot project which asked for volunteers to visit socially isolated people to help them to reconnect with their community.

The Hospice worked with the local doctor's practice to identify those in need and match them with a volunteer. In the beginning the hospice supported the project by recruiting, training and deploying volunteers.

The project started in 2010 and now 21 communities are running the project with their own volunteer networks which are linked with local GP surgeries. Once the project is well established the hospice then withdraws but is always in the background should help be required. Paul explained that the role of a volunteer is to visit the person and help them reconnect in whichever way they can e.g. take them to the bowls club, trips to cinema, help with shopping or just a quick phone call.

Research undertaken since the start of the project has found that contact with medical services reduced dramatically in nearly every person who was referred to the project by a doctor's surgery which provides proof that the project does make a difference to the lives of people living with long term conditions and the medical services that support them.

Wem Macular Society

A representative of Wem Macular Society gave an outline of the history and work of the group. He reported that there were significant numbers of people in the community and surrounding area with macular degeneration. The Wem Group was established in January 2018 to support the people struggling with the condition and its aim is to give those people someone to talk to so they do not feel so isolated. Currently up to 30 people meet on a regular basis (2-4pm on the last Wednesday of each month).

Wem Good Neighbours Project

The Chairman of the group gave a short presentation outlining the background to the project which aims to bring together volunteers and those in need of a good neighbour of any age. The help that volunteers can offer is very varied from as little as a morning telephone call to dog walking and accompanying to doctor's appointments. Volunteers are asked to commit a maximum of 1 hour a week or it can be much less frequent.

Wem Carers Group

An employee of Carers Trust for All who run the carers services for Shropshire outlined the work of the trust. She explained that care advisors are employed covering different areas of the county. The advisors offer 1-1 support in the community and aim to take the pressure off the carer where they can. She explained that if a carer falls ill then the person they care for can go downhill very quickly. To address this the trust is able to provide an emergency response service so that care is provided if the carer is not able to do so.

One of the projects the trust has been trying to establish is a carers group for Wem. The group has now been running for 15 months and meets monthly in The Castle for coffee and a chat and also in the Methodist Church for activities.

A user of the group outlined the benefits of the carers group and gave examples of the activities that are run. She explained how difficult it can be being a carer as the role is so stressful and isolating, however the trust have been able to offer support on a wide variety of practical issues.

Wem Food Hub

A representative of Wem Food Hub outlined the work of the food hub which has been set up to collect and redistribute food that is within 3 days of its best before date. Food is currently being collected from Sainsbury's and Lidl in Whitchurch. Currently the food collected is being given to four different groups in the town. Food usually comprises of vegetables, fruit and bread, volunteers never have any idea of what they are going to collect from one week to the next or the amount of food that is going to be collected. The food is collected on a Sunday afternoon and sorted at a local collection centre, it is then delivered to the organisations that make use of it on a Monday morning. The Wem group is currently a subsidiary of Shrewsbury and covered under their insurance, however if the group were to grow then it could become a stand alone food hub. It was explained that all volunteers are trained to have a level 1 food hygiene certificate. The hub has been in operation for 5 months and it is hoped it can grow if more organisations are willing to make use of the food on offer.

Wishing Well Home Care

The owner of Wishing Well Home Care, a new care organisation established in the town offering care services to local residents, she explained that the organisation has now expanded employing over 20 staff. As well as providing care the staff also run a number of outings and are organising a coffee morning and funds raised from this will be split between an Alzheimer’s charity and to help subsidise the cost of trips for clients.

All attending the meeting felt that there were so many initiatives that have started in the town it would be useful to create a Town Care Committee to give everyone the opportunity to meet on a regular basis and to share ideas and support.

RESOLVED:- to request that the Town Council consider the establishment of a Town Care Committee.

2. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th March 2017.

RESOLVED :- to approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9.3.17 and they were duly signed as a true record.

3. To consider any Parish matter.

None raised.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending what had been a very informative meeting.

Meeting ended 20.30.

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TOWN MAYOR