

Notes from September's meeting

We started as always with some updates on One Ilfracombe/ITC wellbeing projects:

- Two of the bigger meetings were
- We have been meeting with Alison Mills from North Devon Council around replicating Barnstaple's Cultural Plan in Ilfracombe, following a successful funding bid from NDC to be able to employ the company who created Barnstaple's plan
- FAT Club is going well and we have planned in a few activities already including open water swimming, strength/balance/movement courses and badminton
- DCC have highlighted Ilfracombe as an area of interest, so we have been having "taskforce" meetings which is bringing together high level management/officers from a large number of organisations to see how we can identify areas to focus and then how we work collaboratively on it. At the moment Housing has been identified as a priority area but there are a few other areas that may also be highlighted. DCC have approached government directly for some Levelling Up funding for Ilfracombe in the hope that we can be used as a case study.

Presentations

Thank you to Claire from Devon Carers and Amanda from Age Concern for their fab presentations!

It was great to hear what both organisations are up to and how they are looking to support people in Ilfracombe; Devon Carers through a week specifically based in Ilfracombe and aiming to identify carers in the community and get them registered with Devon Carers so that they can access all the resources and benefits that it brings to be signed up, and also focussing on local businesses to make them carer aware – this is planned for the first week in November;

and Age Concern through the expansion of their services into Ilfracombe including the exciting opportunity to launch a befriending scheme (a huge gap as we all know) here in Ilfracombe, which we can all hopefully support them with in terms of recruiting Ilfracombe-based volunteers and then also referring clients for the programme. Amanda also told us about their Elder Day (which happened to happening on the same day), but she has updated us since to say how successful it was and that there is another this coming Wednesday 4th October. The day is designed to support older people to access Barnstaple High St and facilities through support from designated volunteers and making access easier through initiatives such as a North Devon Council pop-up stand where people can speak to someone face to face.

Both organisations also have a number of other schemes that may be of benefit to Ilfracombe, so please do look through their attached presentations to see how you/your organisation/your clients could get involved/benefit.

Contact info:

Claire Cowen-Brown – Devon Carers - Claire.Cowen-Brown@devoncarers.org.uk or 07936 957901

Amanda Howard – Age Concern – Amanda@ageconcernnorthdevon.org.uk or 01271 324488

Ladies Peer Support Group for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Ciara Shine and Christine Gill came along to tell us about their fantastic Peer Support group for ladies with a focus on health and wellbeing.

The group runs from the Baptist Church on Ilfracombe High Street fortnightly from 11am – 2pm. (I've attached their poster if you wanted to print/publish on your socials).

The group is inspired by a group that Ciara used to run in London that was associated with the integrated psychological therapy service and for is for women with a MH diagnosis. Currently, participants include people suffering with bereavement, childhood trauma, learning difficulties and people coming out of long hospital stays.

They are clear that it is social group, not therapy as fundamentally they are supporting people with social isolation.

They spend 3 hours together and they have a check in section to see how everyone's doing. They then have a discussion based on a wellbeing model followed by tea, coffee and biscuits. They then have a craft session followed by homemade soups, fruit and hummus as eating together is a bonding experience and a lot of people may not have that opportunity. Chris explained that there is a wide age range (24-75) who attend and it sparks some really interesting conversations. Chris creates the craft activities for the group and they find it works really well as a catalyst for conversation, and also it's nice for participants to go away feeling proud of something that they have achieved that day. This all helps in people feeling safe and in turn builds their confidence to open up more.

They are looking for referrals and are hoping to work more with the wellbeing team.

You can contact Chris on chris.gill.ibc@gmail.com

Louise Flagg said that it would be great for Ciara and Chris to add their group on to Devon Connect so that the wellbeing team will be able to see it via the Joy app that they use. www.devonconnect.org

Any other business:

Cllr Terry Elliot

- The Link Centre The Link Centre has had a temporary reprieve as there was a legal challenge to the consultation. It looks like there are plans for additional consultation, however they did manage to secure MP Selaine Saxby and Cllr McGuinness for a site visit where they met with people who attend the Link Centre and it was an eye opener for them as to actually who actually use the centre as they were under the belief it was more of a cuppa and a chat sort of set up and they

almost didn't realise the extent to which they supported centre users. Whilst all of this is all happening, the level of need is still growing.#

- The Homelessness Prevention Fund - The decision was taken not to carry on with the fund that impacts all of Devon, including North Devon as it part funds the hostel in Barnstaple to the tune of £113k but it also funds support of people who do go into accommodation. This impact will see a rise in homelessness numbers again. They had over 1000 responses to the consultation as well as lots of face-to-face representation which has made them stop and reconsider the removal of the fund, so they are now working with the district councils and other organisations to see if they can put it in place.
- Housing – As we are all aware there are many issues with Ilfracombe housing, but some positive news is that there is a Community Land Trust who have been working to secure land and funding to create 16 units at Biclescombe nursery site for social rent in perpetuity.
- Telling Our Story, Finding Our Roots – a new project that coming to Ilfracombe. North Devon is often shown as a monoculture, but this isn't true as there is actually a lot of diversity (both currently and historically) and this project is looking to identify people who will tell their story about how they ended in Ilfracombe, and also looking historically at the past and how minority ethnicities shaped where we live.

Louise Flagg (NDVS)

- Louise wanted to raise awareness of Qwell. Qwell is an online service for mental health support for people 18+. Qwell is the only digital mental health service accredited by the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists, and offers anonymous and professional support, peer support, and self-directed support for adults. There is no waiting list, no minimum criteria to access support, no referral is required and the service is free to use. The service is accessible via www.qwell.io.
- Louise also introduced us to Sammy who is a new Volunteer Connector. One of her jobs is to highlight the Devon Connect platform especially to the smaller groups/clubs
- Community Developers - Money has been drawn down through the local care partnership to support community development, but the voluntary services have put in a bigger lottery bid to extend/support further with a focus on supporting more of the rurally isolated villages are supported
- Memory Café Consortium – people who run memory cafes can be members and receive training/support. They run a quality mark system to show service users that they are doing what they should be and to the correct standard. Please contact Louise for further information – cvs@ndvs.org.uk

Sophie Read – Salvation Army

- Delta (Youth Support Group) has reopened, open to anyone in secondary school and runs every weekday from 3.30-5.30pm (earlier on Friday).
- Their family space has reopened on Tuesday from 11am-1-pm at the food bank
- Space to Grow is open Fridays 1-3pm at the Children's Centre (also open to anyone home-schooling)
- For more information on any of the above please email Sophie on Sophie.Read@salvationarmy.org.uk

Clare Fowler – Clarity

Clare has asked me to send out the attached posters for Links (support for people with neurodiversity) and Let's Talk which are two of the programmes that they offer.

For additional information, please contact Clare on Manager@claritynorthdevon.org.uk