Living Well Meeting 4th December 2024

1. Dr Sarah Williams, GP Combe Coastal Practice (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Charmain gave an update on the One Ilfracombe and ITC projects since the last meeting in November.

Cultural Town Team – We had our second meeting of the Culture Team on 3rd Dec. The turnout was even larger than the first so will possibly have to look at moving the meeting to downstairs in the Lantern! This second meeting was more about the set up of the group and how it will function going forwards. We have moved away from the idea to have lots of smaller sub-groups as there was so much overlap for many of the individuals, organisations and businesses so we will focus more on creating Task and Finish groups for ideas generated through the group. We also will give floor space each time for a person/organisation to explain more about what they do in order to share expertise and raise more awareness of what they can offer other team members.

Watersports Project – Some great news as we received notification from the Children's Alliance that we have been awarded £15,832 towards the youth watersports project "Into The Blue". Coupled with the Fullabrook funding of £5,429 this means we now have over £21,000 to deliver the project which will engage with 400 local young people to provide the opportunity for them to learn about swimming safely in the sea as well as taking part in water based activities such as coasteering and stand up paddle boarding. The next step is to engage with the schools and the activity providers to work up the project ready for the 2025 Spring term.

CPP Funding – I have been in meetings with Jon Vernon and Louise Adam from North Devon+ who are leading on the Creative People and Places funding application. This is a funding pot via The Arts Council and North Devon Council are supporting the application which is for a 3 year funding pot of between £750,000 - £1,000,000 which will start in Ilfracombe.
There is an initial meeting with the Arts Council, North Devon Council and North Devon+ on the 5th December and then the application needs to be submitted by Jan 17th 2025. At the moment I am supporting them on creating the current picture of Ilfracombe including the positives as well as the negatives and just trying to portray to the Arts Council that Ilfracombe has a lot of potential to deliver a brilliant project where the learning can be shared and used.

Ilfracombe Future Forum – We have had another Community meeting this month which once again produced really, productive conversations. We heard from Space that they have been in Ilfracombe on Friday nights engaging with young people and we look forward to seeing the results of that engagement. It was highlighted that there are quite a few teenagers in Ilfracombe who are supposed to be home-schooled (for whatever reasons) but are spending most of the day walking up and down the High St and around town, so a discussion was had about what can be provided in Ilfracombe to support them more. They are supposed to go into Barnstaple to study at the Wave, but a lot don't go as there are either issues around getting into Barnstaple and for some they know that other attendees are disruptive and they don't want the aggravation. The idea of using the Link Centre as a youth hub for both a youth centre and a community learning space was raised and will be looked at.

Northern Devon Community Developers Forum – I went along to the first of these meetings in November. This is a gathering of all of the community developers across Northern Devon and it's the first time this has happened as previously the community developers meetings have been limited to the One Community's CDs. It's a great opportunity to network and share ideas and knowledge and will be a quarterly meet up going forward.

Poverty Truth Commission – I attended the first meeting for the Poverty Truth Commission that bought together the Community Commissioners (residents with lived experience of poverty) and Civic Commissioners (people working for or leading organisations that could be of influence in some way in the community commissioner's journey). It was a really insightful and emotional event and I think as Civic Commissioners we were all truly humbled by how open and honest the Community Commissioners were with us and how they were prepared to share their experiences with a bunch of strangers. This is the first of a series of monthly meetings and I think everyone who attended is looking forward to the next as some really good bonds were made and there was a lot of positivity around how we can create change collectively.

Singing for lung health – Dr Sarah Williams has raised the idea of having a Singing for Lung Health group to support people with COPD. I was invited along to a meeting with Sarah, Joanie from the Wellbeing Team (who already runs some singing for fun session at Wellbeing Wednesdays) and a lady who runs a similar group in another area. We are going to look for some funding so that Joanie and other members who support the project can receive the necessary training to be able to safely run these sessions.

3. Presentation – Sophie Read – Salvation Army – The Ilfracombe Mental Health Mycelium Network

Sophie, who runs the North Devon Salvation Army with her husband Mark, spoke about 'Welcome to the Village'. They arrange activities, which they run for families in Ilfracombe. She also spoke about the mental health Mycelium network and explained its meaning:

The theory behind a mycelium network is that it's a complex, interconnected system that allows trees and fungi to share resources and information, which helps keep forests healthy and resilient. The Mental Health Mycelium uses this same way of thinking and explains how the network encourages growth, sharing and understanding. The theory is based on the following ideas:

Mycelium is a fungal network

Mycelium is made up of fungal threads that form a vast underground network that connects plant roots.

Mycelium networks are symbiotic

The relationship between trees and fungi in a mycelium network is symbiotic, meaning both organisms benefit from the arrangement.

Mycelium networks distribute resources

The mycelium network allows trees to share water, nitrogen, carbon, and other nutrients with each other. This helps keep trees healthy, especially saplings growing in shady areas.

Mycelium networks detect distress

The mycelium network can detect when a neighbour tree is sick and send it nutrients.

Mycelium networks are resilient

The network's complex structure allows fungi to cope with challenges like competition, damage, and predation.

Mycelium networks are regenerative

The source-sink theory suggests that the mycelium network can increase the regenerative capacity of forest ecosystems.

So far, they have started a mental health drop in at the foodbank which is supported by recovery practioners from Devon Mental Health Alliance and offered de-briefing counselling to the VCSE Sector. They are offering Assist Suicide Prevention training in March.

She also spoke about convivial spaces (rather than use the term hub) such as a library where anyone from the librarian, doctors or homeless people, can attend.

They want to offer their upper hall of the Salvation Army building for free for anyone who wants to start a group, which would complement the mental health drop in on a Friday morning.

North Devon Salvation Army isn't going to be a 'community hub' but they want it to be a 'hubbub of community'.

If you would like to know more or are interested in joining the Mycelium network then contact Sophie Read on sophie.read@salvationarmy.org.uk

4. Updates:

- Christmas opening times:

Ilfracombe Food Bank –
Tues 17th & Fri 20th 10.30-13.30
Tues 24th (Christmas Eve) – 10.00-12.00 (just for food parcels – no community café)
Fri 27th 10.30 – 13.30
Tuesday 31st (New Years Eve) - 10.00-12.00 (just for food parcels – no community café)
The Ilfracombe Centre -
Closed from Friday 20th December to Thursday 2nd January
Belle's Place –
Thursday 19th – Xmas Dinner
Monday 23rd – 10-2
Christmas Eve/Christmas Day – Closed
Friday 27th – 10-12
30th Dec – 2nd Jan - Closed

- Lolly spoke about On the Doorstep. They have had about 570 requests for Christmas gifts, which they think they have been able to achieve. They would like to thank everyone for their donations although they are desperate for teenage boy gifts (but not Lynx sets!) She said everything goes back to the community and it is all about making people feel valued.

- Eric Hayes raised the restart of Combe Coastal's Patient Participation Group (PPG) and asked if there was an opportunity for them to engage with Living Well, to which the unanimous answer was yes. Charmain invited a representative from the PPG to talk at a future Living Well meeting

- Louise Flagg (NDVS) – they have now appointed all the lottery funded community developers – Kim is the Rural Connector looking at accessibility and Paul is the Youth Connector. They are there to support the work across the communities and are available to us to work with us on projects. Kim's email is Rural.connector@ndvs.org.uk and Paul's email is youth.connector@ndvs.org.uk
  Sammi is still in place too as the Volunteer Connector and her email is

volunteer.connector@ndvs.co.uk
They have also employed Jess Twydall as the Lynton and Lynmouth Community Connector
NDVS are supporting the mental health awareness training for the Mycelium Network that Sophie spoke about earlier in the meeting.
They have spaces left on a first aid course in February which is subsidised and they also have some peer support training and difficult conversations training – if you are interested in any of those please contact Louise on cvs

- Sally from Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue service updated us that Home Fire Safety Referrals are open again now. If you want to know more about how you can make a referral please contact her on – Sallie McKay-Roper smckayroper@dsfire.gov.uk

- Natalie from Sunrise Diversity let us know that Bideford Pride is on 31st May 2025 and Barnstaple Diversity Festival and Pride is 21st June 2025 and everyone is welcome ☺

- Gloria Satchwell from the Tyrrell League of Friends shared with us that the League of Friends have a petition that is active to get full MIU services back in Ilfracombe. She is hoping to get 2000 signatures with the aim to hand them to the health minister or the prime minister.
There are paper copies in multiple shops in Ilfracombe and you can pick up blank copies from the Tyrrell League of Friends.

5. The next meeting will be on **Wednesday 5th February 2025** at 12:30pm.

Merry Christmas, Everyone!