

## **Visit to Alford Community Hub**

Tuesday 16th January 2024

### **Notes**

#### **Present**

Councillors: Chris Parker, Jenny Caitlin, Lynette Corten-Miller, Natalie Tilsley

Residents: David Stonehouse

This is a short write up otherwise it's overwhelming. Set up as Covid hit by the inspirational Lynette Pryke from her living room. The hub is housed in two town centre buildings. It offers a range of groups and services run by 143 volunteers who want to give something back. It works closely with the Town Council, Churches, NHS and many other organisations. They are completely independent and not affiliated to any of the Churches. Through a network of satellite hubs it serves the whole of Lincolnshire.

The projects and groups running are based on social needs as presented locally. When you phone in there are 7 options to choose from Outreach and Wellbeing, Befriending, Ukrainian Support, Uniform and Baby Bank, Citizens Advice, LGBTQ+ and Trustees. They run a range of groups from their street access centre. These include, Ladies Lounge - women support, Men's Group - men's support and practical projects, Menopause, Spoonies, Job Search Advice and support. They offer a prescription delivery service, pre hospital admittance and discharge support. Also workshops and community projects, crisis response and Warm Packs. Their work addresses disabilities, anxieties and mental health issues.

They partner with a myriad of organisations to signpost and refer people on. Adding to the community rather than plugging gaps in service provision. All volunteers are Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked. They note how the working poor and pensioners are struggling at the moment. They are pragmatic and proactive. Listening to people who may be at a challenging time in their lives. The work grows from that and people connect with one another, grow and develop in skills, confidence and actions.

#### Advice from Lynette Pyke

- 1 Target different pockets of funding especially the Shared Prosperity Fund. It is all about community and community is people.
- 2 When seeking help, ask people if they like to do something. Rather than 'our project needs'.
- 3 Set ourselves up as a new independent entity, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation CIO. That would give us the charity number which we need for

funding bids. It needs our own Trustees, our own governance, framework of policies and a skills audit.

4 Do the groundwork first, make our building good for people. Then bring it to life for people and future generations.

5 Our demographic is low BAME, high Eastern European, high disability, high older age groups. Low visibility does not mean non-existent.

In conclusion Lynette P met us with enthusiasm and advice. She has offered to assist with further information, advice and guidance. Given her extensive strategic experience and networking opportunities this is most welcome.

We now have much to consider in paving the way forward.