Report of Parish Council Summit

17th October 2018

"It is really up to us all to work on solutions, not highlight problems"

(Feedback from 17th October Summit)

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Contents

1. Summit purpose and aims

The first of an ongoing series of parish council summit meetings designed to share collective knowledge and experience and identify practical ways in which together Herefordshire Council and parish and town councils can promote both prosperity and wellbeing, work together to achieve more and strive to provide the best for our citizens.

72 parish council representatives attended (covering 50 parish councils), plus Herefordshire Council cabinet members, management board and officers. A limited number of partners were present as part of the market place, with some staying on for the summit.

2. Feedback on the event

Out of 31 completed feedback forms:

*   28 people found the event either useful or very useful and 27 said their expectations were met.
*   Most generally found talks informative and with a significant number (14) stating that they will report back / share learning with parish council and consider further action.
*   Many were previously unaware of information available through the council's Intelligence Unit and website and intend to make better use of data sources to research local information.
*   The most useful part of the event was the discussion / workshop opportunity (11), the question and answer session (7), the stalls at start of the event (3) plus sharing information, new contacts and possible solutions.

![Herefordshire Council logo]

- Some found the talks/agenda too long, many found video sound quality poor and screens hard to read but venue otherwise good. There were also some comments about the limited refreshments on offer, given the time and length of the summit.

3. Summary of presentations

- The Leader outlined the purpose of the summit which was to:
  - o provide an opportunity to better understand the challenges within local communities;
  - o share opportunities and good practice which already exist;
  - o Improve joint working between parish councils and Herefordshire Council, leading to better communication and co-operation to deliver the best for local communities.
- Information from the council's Intelligence Unit raised awareness of population growth, levels of dementia, frailty, falls, loneliness and fuel poverty, with headline data, drilling down to a more local level where available.
- Karen Wright Director of Public Health provided examples of existing good practice to build resilient communities, utilising the assets within those communities.
- Presentations by Weobley Parish Council and Leominster Town Council highlighted their approach to improving the lives of their residents.

4. Workshop summary

a) Social challenges identified:
  - Changing demographics, including an increasingly ageing population and a reduction in numbers of young people.
  - Significant challenges due to lack of /reduction in local services, including statutory, e.g. health services and police. Lack of transport cited many times.
  - A number of issues related to planning and housing policy, in particular the lack of affordable housing.
  - Lack of community, with issues identified such as newer residents not getting involved.
  - A shared concern that many of the challenges identified above had an impact on village viability and sustainability.
  - Several responses reflected on whether the parish council had sufficient understanding of the needs within its community.

b) Sharing good practice:
  - Many local clubs and activities were identified, some aimed specifically at older people or young families. Some activities also fundraise for local projects.
  - Assets were recognised as essential for activities to take place, both the people in the community, their skills, energy and enthusiasm, as well as buildings such as the pub, shop, church or village hall.
  - Services were valued, protected and community projects developed locally to maintain them.

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c) Working together:
- Recognition of the need to all work better together, work differently and in collaboration. Combine all knowledge, experience, best practice and resources to best effect.
- Improve local co-ordination, commitment and leadership and provide more information on practical examples of what can be done to support people in local communities, to aid joint working.
- The need to emphasise a pro-active, can-do approach by both Herefordshire Council and parish and town councils.

5. Commitment to follow up actions by attendees
- Almost half of those who completed the feedback forms said that they would report back to / share the learning with their parish council and various local groups and consider points for further action. (14)
- A number also made a commitment to build a more informed picture of their local community, to include exploring data sources on council website and contacting the council's Intelligence Unit for more information.

6. Identification of specific projects / actions
These included:
- Development of joint working and networking across parish councils.
- Initiate positive discussions within the parish council and wider community on understanding the needs of the local community, with greater emphasis on community involvement.
- Work with Herefordshire Council to help identify what parish councils can do, emphasis on the positives, not putting barriers in the way.
- Support vulnerable within the community – such as community conference on supporting vulnerable elderly / setting up a good neighbour scheme.

7. Next steps
a) Support better joint working through:
- Commitment to 24th January 2019 summit with a programme of further summits during the year.
- Liaise with partners i.e. Balfour Beatty Living Places, to ensure that their events and parish council summits are effectively co-ordinated during the year and give adequate opportunity to cover all subjects of working in partnership.
- Send out links to further information on items shared at the Summit plus a copy of this report, with appendices from the evening, to all participants, all parish councils and ward members.

b) Develop and maintain an ongoing, two-way conversation:
- Develop communications and sharing of information between events to keep momentum going, to include what parishes and Herefordshire Council have done since the summit.

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c) Areas of focus for future engagement:

- Share information on schemes / issues which might be of interest to parish councils and between summits, develop a programme of support, such as themed workshops.
- Improved working together to include where appropriate, ward level focus and support a collective approach amongst neighbouring parish councils, myth busting and remove barriers.

8. Useful links:

a) Recording of the summit on the council website
http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1039&MId=7054&Ver=4

b) Team Leominster presentation on video
https://youtu.be/N-aPoSSLte8

c) A guide to effective partnership working between principal and local councils, mentioned at the summit.
Below is the link to the event presentations on LGA website
https://www.local.gov.uk/principal-and-local-councils-working-partnership-16-may-2018-london

5.25 One Community_v04.1.pdf

d) The presentation slides at the summit on 17th October.

17 October Summit 2018 Presentations.pdf

e) Link to Herefordshire's Facts and Figures website
https://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk/

f) Link to local statistics based on 2011 census searchable at parish, settlement, ward and county / local authority level
https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea

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9. Appendix - workshop notes

Responses to Question 1.
What are the social challenges in your community and how do they get identified?

People
Demographics
- Do we really know who is in our parish? (2) Isolation - how do we know
- Ageing population (Older demographic (3)) but understanding the community
- No young people left (3) inc (Orcop). Younger people time constraints
- Isolation (5), transport, lack of employment (Brilley), (2)
- Remoteness

Sense of community
- Transient community, rentals
- Ending up living with family
- Divided Communities (Do not talk with each other)
- Peoples' lives do not centre on village
- Friendship Club - linking residents
- Good Neighbour Scheme - unofficial

Availability of volunteers
- Age increased before entitled to pension has an impact on volunteering
- Retaining volunteers
- Only a small number of people who do or can get involved
- Need greater recognition of retired people who can do stuff

Role of parish council
- Relevance of parish council, young do not see it!
- No idea, the PC never discusses these issues!!

Attitudes
- Lack of response/professionalism/obstructive
- Lack of enthusiasm to do anything
- Cannot see the "social" problem – busy lives
- Country people sometimes do not like to share problems
- Self-reliance but so reluctant to ask for help/getting people to ask for help earlier
- Newer residents not getting involved

Bureaucracy
- Greater clarity - Do the right thing, rather than hide behind process
- Red tape blocking progress
- Lack of trust to provide information
- Shifting Social Fabric - Myth busting, Negative mind set

Health
- Health and wellbeing - getting worse because lack of resources
- Lack of co-ordination (social care)

Economics
- Self-employed people with uncertain income

Place
- Villages becoming dormitories (2)
- Getting information - who or what is out there, Accessible Data (2)
- Off radar

- ASB (3)
  - Resolve Vandalism and Anti-Social behaviour (Peterchurch)
  - Vandalism, ASB, (Withington)
  - Speeding
- Sustainability / viability of village
- Sustainable assets now but will they be in the future?
- How to do things for children if only a few in a village
- Churches take role in community to identify people who need help
- Preventing people on edge of care getting dependent on care

Reduction/lack of services
- Loss of services for particular groups, eg reducing bus services and closing pubs
- Meals on wheels gone
- Postman / Milkman
- Local police
- National Health dental treatment / diet
- Support for older population
- Lack of statutory support - police, parking, Highways
- Lack of, or limited access to shops / shopping
- Lack of Facilities, no hub (Brockhampton and Much Fawley)
- Connectivity between IT systems (Firewalls/IG)
- Lack of meeting places (village hall does NOT meet need)
- Don't know social care exists
- Facilities limited – church or village hall only
- Loss of post office
- Amenities

Village sustainability / transport / housing
- Planning law as it stands skews development away from social provision, eg the CIL 10 + homes
- Housing / property
  - Retirees pricing locals out of housing leading to lack of support network as they age, Issues of people have property but living alone (2)
  - Not enough affordable/social housing (3) or lack of suitable housing for downsizers/FTB
  - Poor housing/overcrowding
  - Homelessness increasing
  - Empty property stock e.g. above shops rectify through pump priming loan/ increase empty rate charge
- Public transport
  - evenings
  - lack of public transport (3), issues with bus links to Hereford (Withington),
  - pick up losses vis dial a ride/uber, (1 bus a week)
- Appropriate infrastructure not attached to developments…S106 not consulted upon
- Local council knowledge link not there, missing opportunity to feedback during timeframe

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Responses to Question 2.
What activities are already taking place in your parish to address social challenges?

Groups / activities / local venues

Clubs / groups by theme:
Hobby clubs / activities
- Walking groups
- WI - monthly
- Film club
- Craft club
- Garden club. Gardening/leisure clubs (2)
- Carpet bowls
- Table tennis
- Bowls club
- Rifle club

Social
- Community action day
- Quizzes
- Dementia Café Leominster
- Shows
- Befriending group in one village
- There is a village association who run events/meals/annual fete
- Community events
- Mens Sheds group
- Brilley: coffee mornings, flicks in the sticks. Coffee mornings (2)
- Friendship club (monthly - village hall, pub) (2)
- Church
  - A lot of non-Parish Council activity - Church, Probus, Knitting group, Orchard group
  - Churches - coffee mornings, wider use
  - Brilley: Strong Church community

Older people
- Lunch Clubs
- Over 60s lunch at Peterchurch; library, church, village hall (older group use village hall for events, bingo, flicks in sticks
- Monthly coffee morning (older people) Bring books/cakes. Coffee mornings/tea parties (2)

Families
- Orcop Mother and child supper groups.
- Events in the fields for children
- Youth club charity and church support

Venues
- Well used parish halls
- Clubs and Societies at Village Hall
- Exercise / church
- Brilley: village hall,
- Ross library inclusive social events

- Brockhampton with Much Fawley: Village hall (range of activities) walks, community integration from long term residents. Brockhampton court provides some employment but housing issue prevents younger people moving in. H-Art in Church.
- Withington: H-Art, community gatherings, Preston Wynne –split village…Withington split into 3, social housing area, issues with social integration. Fish and Chip shop has just opened in village.
- Envirobility

Local assets
- Pub
- Playing fields
- Play equipment
- Benches
- Support for community buildings from PC
- Defibs in communities
- Pub - cheaper lunch on Friday, links with community transport
- Peterchurch doctors surgery, fire station
- Brilley - Newcomers to the village set up new ventures.
- New residents have enthusiasm to set up and the original residents use the service (benefits of connecting community)
- Yarpole: converted church into village hub
- New housing created but no infrastructure.
- Community Pub
- Ad hoc rather than strategic led by individuals
- Peers in the community already volunteering
- Active Village Hall
- Overall PC nothing except support for a village hall!!

Services
- Village Warden (Red Cross)
- Youth clubs, community transport, Halo run library
- Orcop: Good neighbour scheme and transport. Fundraising within community
- Brilley - Local resources directory (2010) – update has fallen foul of GDPR
- Café (voluntary)
- Good Neighbour scheme
- Good neighbour scheme (Whitchurch)
- Speed watch
- Community food bank
- Good neighbour scheme
- Limited bus service and route
- Area litter pick

Working together
- Link with local shops to re-distribute unsold goods
- Care home taken over age concern activity

Communication / celebrating
- Tarrington Tatler
- Civic awards "Community Champions"

- Bromyard Awards
- Bi-monthly village newsletter
- Information sharing with other groups/networking opportunities
- Community newsletter

Ideas to develop:
- Community payback - need to increase
- Foot paths - different approaches
- Kington - CCG led
- System to support clearing snow in local areas
- Issue of resources / drive
- Does know people locally - Extra charge of passing persons to knock on door
- Make activity relevant to people to draw them out
- Better communication with local PC
- Use interest groups to get engagement
- Financial incentive to drive behaviour
- Pilots eg training individuals to start preventative conversations support behaviour change
- Community development trust, bodies including health working together – launching in Ross next year, allow access to additional funding routes
- Business rate local intervention/policies
- Rough sleeping campaign, real life experience
- List of volunteers shared to know who to contact in emergencies
- Co-ordinating support required
- Use community building to outreach staff

Responses to Question 3.
How can we combine efforts and work in partnership to address social challenges and develop opportunities?

Work together
- Make better use of resources
- Work with national - integrated
- Come to the parish - social issue
- Common sense approach!
- Reduce red tape
- Engagement
- Involvement in NDP
- Need leadership!!. Need small number of leaders/energy (2)
- Commitment
- Representation
- Co-ordination
- BBLP - local rearrangements
- Health professional
- Police

Resources
- CIL
- Limited budget needs to be managed well
- Use parish Precept

- Course and classes - pay?
- Seed corn funding for small projects
- Co-ordinated subsidising of bus routes
- Ignite – subsidise community sessions eg pilates/yoga
- Source what grants are available

Two way communication
- Better communication - HC - PC – Residents
- Highlight best practice in villages countywide / countrywide
- Much more co-ordinated
- Sharing information between parishes / towns, need a platform to do this please. NDP/HC sharing of intel. More information and leadership from Herefordshire Council. Local intelligence/ statistics (4)
- Development caused engagement
- Identifying individuals that are vulnerable
- Sharing conference details that Anthony attended
- Parishes need to be informed/empowered
- Council officers to consider role of parishes in services
- More summits… themed?
- Need for Ward summit, collective approach - Wards to get together re common themes
- Better website easier to use/research facility
- Telephone numbers for Council officers Good Neighbour scheme

Actions:

- Protection of existing assets (library, Post Office etc)
- Gates instead of stiles - landowners not keen, but would allow access for people with restricted mobility
- Directory of parish community contacts
- Council wide insurance policies
- Outreach from market towns to rural communities
- Co-ordinated approach to e.g. dementia café – town councils working with parishes to make this happen
- Grit bins – towns and parishes working together
- Train people in villages to cut toe nails
- Community champion from supermarkets
- Litter pick on an individual basis