Herefordshire Council

Report of Parish Council Summit

24th January 2019

"We can't mend roads, but we can mend lives"

Herefordshire Council

Contents

Parish Council Summit - 24th January 2019 recording

1. Summit purpose and attendance

Introduction by Jonathan Lester, Leader of Herefordshire Council (HC) who explained that this was the second summit, continuing the theme of improving dialogue between parish councils and HC, recognising that this is a journey with the need for ongoing discussions if we are to address the challenges faced by local communities. HC presence at meeting included leader, deputy leader, cabinet members, chief executive, directors and other senior officers. There continued to be good attendance from parish councils:

- 24th January 2019: 77 representatives from 58 parish councils (43% of PCs in Herefordshire) compared to previous summit
- 17th October 2018: 72 representatives from 50 parish councils (36% of PCs in Herefordshire).

In response to the last summit, presentations were given on local housing by Herefordshire Centre for Local Community Housing and on Talk Community by Herefordshire Council, an approach to enable how communities to support local residents (with help and assistance from HC).

2. Feedback on the event

Out of 27 completed feedback forms:

- 24 people found the event either useful or very useful and 25 said their expectations were met.
- Most found talks informative. A few commented that the likelihood of their parish council taking a role in developing community led housing was unrealistic.
- Many saw the potential for Talk Community in their area. A number felt that there were options for their local area, which included getting both the parish council and ward members involved, as well as individual commitments to progress in their local community.
- There were some general comments about getting more involved with the local community, as well as picking up specific actions around neighbourhood development plans and contacting community brokers.
- The most useful part of the event was the discussion / workshop opportunity on Talk Community (12), followed by the question and answer session (5) and the stalls at start of the event combined with the networking opportunity that it provided (3).

- Some commented on practical issues, such as not being able to hear speakers, not being able to read presentations on screens, needing to keep to time. Overall attendees felt that the venue was satisfactory (25) with a number of comments about the high quality of the refreshments.

3. Question and Answer Session summary

Planning
Question: clarification requested on the weight being given by the local planning authority to NDPs due to new national guidance and the lack of a local five year land supply - Mike Wilson, Bartestree and Lugwardine, vice chair of HALC.
Example given of planning determination contrary to NDP as well as ongoing discussion of settlement boundary with planners at variance with adopted NDP boundary - Rod Barker, Weston under Penyard.
Answer: 47 NDPs now adopted for Herefordshire. Issues have arisen due to introduction of new policy from central government for NDPs older than 2 years and if there is insufficient land supply i.e. less than 5 years (currently 4 ½ years for Herefordshire). It may be advisable to refresh NDPs – further information is being provided by council officers. If a parish can show sufficient land supply at NDP level i.e. 3 years or more, this should be taken into consideration for planning applications. Planning officers are aware of concerns and NDPs still stand scrutiny at planning - Cllr Price, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure.

Transport and Roads
Question: comment made on the poor quality of roads in Leominster town centre and just outside, with particular reference to A44 (Bargates and Barons Cross Road) potholes and sunken drains causing noise nuisance as well as damage to vehicles. Filling potholes is not the solution - when will the road be resurfaced? Clive Thomas, Leominster Town Council
Answer: there has been a focus on A44 over the last year as part of the improvements to overall condition of highways network, but with £100M investment needed for all the county's roads, there is insufficient funding - Clive Hall, Acting Assistant Director for Highways and Transport

Question: Need to be more proactive in ensuring roads dug up by utility companies etc are reinstated to an acceptable level. Series of inspections required – possible role for parish councils, if they took that on, which could also be an income stream. Frank Myers, Chair Walford Parish Council 2
Answer: Utilities have a statutory right to dig up roads but this will introduce weakness into the physical condition of the road structure. Currently looking at a number of options to include supervision and inspection of works - Clive Hall, Acting Assistant Director for Highways and Transport
Further comments: Scrutiny committee set up a task and finish group to review state of local roads and issue of potholes. Consultation went out to all parish councils. Pot holes are very significant issue for PCs. County's roads are suffering with more traffic, particularly lorries plus length of roads network, with not enough money to repair - Peter Jinman, Ewyas Harold PC chairman, plus ward member for Golden Valley South

Comments made both positive and negative about the quality of response from Balfour Beatty LP, with particular reference to Speed Indicator Devices and road signage.

Role of Parish Councils

Question: request made not to remove grant for public rights of way (PROW). Footpath scheme delivers on healthy living, volunteer involvement as well as resource input from parish councils and local landowners. It is a good example of joint working and delivery on wider agenda - Emma Lewis, parish clerk Shobdon and Yarpole parish councils

Answer: Agreement that getting exercise fits with health and wellbeing. However, if the local authority invests in PROW, it will need to cut elsewhere, with 75% of council tax money going on vulnerable individuals – Cllr Rone, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

Comment: Potential for parish councils to consider local cluster approach, where there is a good reason to do so, for instance community transport, PROW that cross PC boundaries - Richard Gethin, Bridstow PC, Chair of HALC.

Delivery of Services

Question: Is it more efficient to have a contract with an external partner than internal team? Could this be considered when the public realm contract comes up for renewal? Wendy Swallow, Bartestreee and Lugwardine.

Answer: How a service is delivered will be part of the option appraisal when a contract comes up for renewal. When considering going out to the market or in house delivery, value for money will be a key consideration. As part of the existing contract, HC is constantly looking at performance and BBLP is challenged / rewarded on the basis of their performance. Richard Ball, Acting Director, Economy and Place.

4. Housing – Herefordshire Centre for Community led housing

James Murphy – Chair of Steering Group
Nancy Winfield – Project Development Manager
Background: May 2017 – HC put on event to promote Community Housing Fund (£503,000 in Herefordshire) awarded by central government. Welcome to our Future as accountable body secured some of that funding to support the Steering Group to set up the Centre. Centre currently serves Herefordshire, but longer term it needs to be sustainable and therefore may need to be part of an organisation which covers a wider area – there is a proposal for a West Midlands rural hub.

Role of parish councils: key issue for local communities – affordable housing in the places where it meets local needs. This is reflected in many Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs). PCs can have a major role in supporting the successful delivery of local affordable housing, as well as securing community assets such as orchards, playing fields, allotments and other assets such as the local pub. Most NDPs have stated policies on affordable housing to meet local need and what local developments might look like. So for instance some communities might identify accessible housing for older residents, others self build plots for local families or a mix of both. Community led housing can be secured for future generations through covenants and local people can input into the design, often meaning the result is more environmentally friendly.

Help and support available: there is funding now for local groups to get together to do housing surveys; site feasibility studies; grant funding to support some of the build costs. The Centre can provide advice and

guidance, drawing on expertise from specialist national networks. It is also delivering engagement and training events as well as signposting groups to partners and specialist advice.

Summary: parish councils can support community housing through policies in their NDPs; helping at the scoping stage; hosting public meetings to encourage local engagement; supporting groups getting started by acting as an accountable body in the early stages. In rare cases parish councils might own a piece of land which could be used for housing.

5. Talk Community

Stephen Vickers – Direct of Adults and Communities
Maria Bradbury – Community Broker
Introduction: HC continues to find limits placed on its budgets, restrictions placed on it by legislative eligibility, challenges in work force development, together with increasing demand, service delivery in a very rural county and an ever increasing aging population. Formal care is of good quality but cannot always offer true meaningful relationships which individuals need and which communities and networks are so good at providing. There is a need to work together to enable adults and children to be supported to live in their local community.

Talk community: one of a number of approaches being offered, it is a "hub" within a community – place for someone to come, chance to meet people and find out what's going on. There are 7 hubs in existence operated by community brokers. Target of 20 hubs over next year with potentially 50 after 2 years. Working with communities and parishes, HC is looking for community leaders to take this forward, supported by HC.

Support on offer from HC: formal and informal training; start up package of essentials; online access to support and information; development of a peer network; local data to help target resources; seed funding for new ideas to help meet local needs.
Opportunity for HC and local communities to work together, to support residents. Strength based, focusing on local assets and developed through co-production. Important that it is led by community leaders and activists.

Case study – Cyril's story –seeking support from community broker – making links to support Cyril through significant life changes, helping him cope better and move on with support from family, neighbours, and links made to access local activities/ facilities. Building on his strengths, Cyril became involved in local community garden, where he could share his skills and experience. The community broker was able to link him into support networks, without recourse to statutory services, which would not have been able to offer the same services and support.

Herefordshire Council

6. **Workshop on Talk Community Hubs** (see appendix for detailed notes)

Attendees discussed at their table the potential for Talk Community hubs in Herefordshire, and addressed three questions, with comments made in response grouped under a number of headings.

Areas covered:

a. **What is already in place / needs to be in place at the local level for Talk Community to work? (What / Where / How / Who)**

- Location for Talk Community at a local level
- Examples of what is already happening
- Who to involve in organising / understanding need
- Challenges
- Ideas

b. **What can Parish Councils do to support Talk Community in their local area?**

- Resources
- Communication / co-ordination role
- Operate differently

c. **How will we know we're making a difference?**

- Feedback
- Reduction in use of services
- Greater involvement / engagement
- Increased activity
- Outcomes

7. **Market Stalls**

Broadband / Fastershire	Intelligence Team
Balfour Beatty Living Places	Community Brokers
Neighbourhood Development Planning Team	Affordable Housing
Good Neighbour Scheme / Compassionate Communities – Herefordshire Diocese	Healthy Lifestyles Team
Hereford Transport Package Consultation	WISH Information and Signposting

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Appendix - workshop notes

1. What is already in place / needs to be in place at the local level for Talk Community to work? (What / Where / How / Who)

Location for Talk Community at a local level

- Village halls
- Does it need to be physical?
- More local hubs needed. Buildings with capacity e.g. Leintwardine
- Stoke Lacy village hall
- A meeting place – most places have somewhere
- Village hall – but not everyone can easily access / not every community has a village hall
- Sometimes the church is the only village facility
- Neighbourliness and community centre active in nucleated settlement – so much easier to take on – can this be achieved through technology (internet)
- "pop-ups" at GP Surgery, on buses, café / village shop eg. Yarpole
- Village shops
- Areas with social housing
- Schools as a centre
- Existing infrastructure eg. village hall, community facilities, existing groups
- What's already there eg. village hall, pub, library
- Let the community define where
- Informal settings
- Make the most of schools for hubs – say once a month.
- A place / building is a good starting point for people to gather – village shop, church, pub.

Examples of what is already happening

- Stoke Lacy - Friendship club – meets monthly – for over 55s, 35 members, go on outings as well as meet at village hall for talks and presentations
- Good Neighbour Scheme - help with collecting prescriptions, one-offs, hospital appts, changing lightbulbs. Formal volunteers (24). Funding from a number of sources to cover insurance costs (£120), leaflets (£250), phones (£10).
- CARE Pontrilas - taken on many more functions
- Village hall coffee mornings once a fortnight – if regulars not there, someone goes to check they are alright.
- Leintwardine in particular highlighted the good partnership working that already existed in their area as a result of connections between school, GP and church in the area to identify people in need and provide support.
- Lunch clubs
- Pub receives parcels – encourage a pub as a hub
- WI or Young Farmers Group

- Pockets of people "looking out for others" – informal.
- Limited formal things already in place for Talk Community but there was significant variation in the levels of informal engagement depending upon the character of the Parish.
- In Yarpole there is a "community benefit society"
- Shobdon a band of 20 volunteers.
- Sometimes support is informal

Who to involve in organising / understanding need

- People who know the area and know the people
- Those with local knowledge
- Churches should be part of the conversation.
- GP could play a role in being a connector / broker between patients and community helpers
- Make links with schools
- Encourage 16-18 year olds to volunteer
- Tell us where they are now and where they are not
- Knowledge of what is available
- Need to know what community groups there are already in the parish
- Audit local skills available
- Community could be part of the social work offer
- Purpose – in helping others – positive for those who give and receive

Challenges

- Issue re time – people too busy to volunteer
- Availability of volunteers
- Don't know what you don't know
- Don't know who is vulnerable
- Transient communities – no connections
- Can those on the edge of care be delayed needing care?
- Dore Community Transport – reliant on volunteer drivers
- Social care and health services need to work together
- How do you know what people want
- Difficult to know who needs help and what kind of help
- Safeguarding issues – will need to be prioritised and privacy issues understood / managed
- Need broadband – would have a cost to run a service
- Some people don't have computers / don't want to learn how to use one
- Can only help those who want to be helped
- Some people are afraid to seek help – afraid of the consequences / losing their independence
- Some people feel guilty about asking for help "being a burden" on others
- How does a community hub get traction – get enough interest / critical mass
- People at home without a car, rely on their neighbours

- Challenge of non nucleated village
- Reach out to vicar (pastoral care) / PCC; village hall etc / ecumenical networks
- Online addresses won't work for the elderly
- Is there funding to kick start or maintain these?
- How can we access bereavement advice? *(NB info from Cruse is they are currently overwhelmed with requests)*
- Most isolated communities are perhaps the areas that need Talk Community the most and not areas where there is greater population
- How do we define community – identity / self-empowerment
- Insufficient signposting
- Limited bus service – isolated residents and communities

Ideas

- Care workers – doing shopping, time lost to providing real care
- Client phone numbers – emailed to all – who can help?
- How do / can they make connections?
- Don't just do the shopping – take the people with you who you're doing the shopping for
- Role for the hubs in signposting / communicating
- A rota
- Get the word out
- Co-ordinators
- Intergenerational opportunities – "adopt a grandma"
- Ideas for talking with your neighbour – popping round for a cup of tea and a chat / asking them to come out for a walk when you walk your dog
- Include schools more – include in the curriculum
- Quality time is short – mum / dad working, so link with older people
- Group of parishes together?
- Young teaching old – schools involvement?
- Co-ordinator role – working across parishes?
- Postmen – checking on elderly
- Voice activated IT for the elderly
- All parish councils have websites that could be used for information
- Not just elderly in crisis / vulnerable, but also families in crisis / children
- CICs – Community Interest Companies
- Linking "well equipped" villages with more isolated communities
- Communicate when – on line / parish magazine / other?
- Community led plan – preceded an NDP
- Understand the issue of "care closer to home" but for all ages.
- Would like to know demographics details for each areas – including interpreting the information
- Use parents' network – some parents can feel quite isolated.
- Need to know what else is going on.

- Don't just need to go through parish councils – the church has a good network.
- Also work through GPs.
- Encourage schools to bring grandparents to read to children – giving a sense of purpose
- "Free" events – people tend to give more than if paying
- Useful to have case studies.

2. What can Parish Councils do to support Talk Community in their local area?

Resources
- Look at different types of volunteering rather than attending meetings. Parish council can start off a group
- Use existing eg. the Good neighbour schemes
- How do we help with things like energy suppliers / utilities
- Looking at what is available already
- Injection of £s to kick start hubs?
- Raise precept
- Raise money to do community projects
- Offer workshops – lifeskills, Marches, CAB
- Identify and encourage volunteers
- Use the agenda at PC meetings as a tool
- Resurrect Red Cross wardens?
- Clehonger – welcome pack for new residents
- Supply or identify champion
- Venue / range of services / identify and encourage people – parish council has local knowledge
- Existing events – look at what you're already doing
- Parish council can provide space
- Share and care – funded by parish council
- Suggestion of raising the precept to pay for a co-ordinator for care – example of Walford - covers three year period.

Communication / co-ordination role
- Parish conference to be convened- identify / spread message / proud people
- Different outlook – get on with it
- Co-ordinate
- Communicate and advertise
- Encouraging existing groups to get together
- Act as a conduit to help
- Communication / facilitation
- Look at methods of communication- different media – social media/website, written etc

- Identify what would bring people to meet "talk community"
- Provide information in parish newsletters even videos

Different way of operating
- Need to agree which organisation in a parish will lead – PCs can start this
- Work together – economies of scale
- Work with neighbouring parishes
- Could see parish council "clustering" to be able to do that.
- For the clerks to work together.
- Local economies of care
- Three way partnership – parish council, Herefordshire Council, community groups.
- PCs could do more initially by adding this to their meeting agenda for a discussion locally as Find different ways of making hubs work
- Challenge the community – do you know your neighbour?
- Promoting the parish council with the council doing more will raise people's interest.
- Use the ward members – give a briefing note on key activity to take to the parish council.
- It was flagged that most PC agendas are dominated by the usual subjects of potholes, planning etc.

3. How will we know we are making a difference?
Feedback
- Feedback from people
- Feedback

Reduction in use of services
- GP – impact on demand
- Social services figures
- Measure figures in terms of use of services
- Less people seeking formal help and assistance

Greater involvement / engagement
- Engender community spirit – how do we measure: number of interactions? Happiness?
- More things happening and more people visible
- Virtuous spiral of activity
- People have more contact with each other
- Bigger attendance at future events
- Feedback on community cohesion and togetherness
- Users could give money – donations

Increased activity

- More community initiatives e.g. flower beds
- More volunteers
- Small groups do a lot of work
- Knowing who is vulnerable

Outcomes

- Outcome measures – financial / visible / GP appointments / ambulance call outs / preventing a crisis
- Look at social impact, economic impact, increase in volunteers, interlinked services, greater age spread of volunteers.
- More case studies, like Cyril