

WERRINGTON COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER ACTION GROUP (WCVAG)

This is the first **"State of our Enterprise"** report which shows where we are and how we can develop. The purpose is to be open and transparent and so will be generally circulated to our full contact list – if you know of anyone else who would be interested in joining us please pass on.

When reading please remember that many people help to achieve the things we do and I would in particular mention – Hayley Goodwin, Trevor Latala, Barbara Hughes, Pat Hughed, Michael Fair, Kenn Griffiths, Deb Hefferon, Carla Williams, David Gray, Ross Ward, Gemma Keiher-Knapper and last but by no means least Dame Karen Bradley our MP who has supported us from day one.

TIMES ARE ACHANGING

In preparation for our future, I have spent some time having focus meetings and generally reviewing the voluntary sector and listening to people's comments. Sometimes you need to step back and take a **cold eye reappraisal to move forward**. Much of the feedback substantiates the need for a proper Care at Home service, something we have been pushing for in conjunction with Patients Participation and latterly with Support Staffordshire.

So, what do the findings indicate has evolved? – on one side **the old volunteering spirit is not the same.** On the other youngsters now have financial **worries with little spare time and see volunteering as "something other people do".**

Our population is getting older and ageing and so **some volunteers of the past now need help themselves** – for some life has turned full circle. It is reckoned that as many as **20,000 people in the Staffordshire Moorlands need care and help at home** – that is roughly 20% of our population which is a mind focussing statistic which cascades down to Werrington.

One thing is apparent - there will have to be a **complete reappraisal of many volunteer-based activities** to cater for those who not only cannot attend or do not have the will or ability to do so and embracing different tastes and needs. **Just as we are doing, many will need a new marketing strategy.**

We have to be mindful that there is also **a change in funding assessments** as we saw recently with the closure of a large charity in Biddulph and more recently the major downsizing of North Staffs Carers and the closure of Home Start (we have offered help to maintain their children's services) and Home Link **for which no replacements are available and which will impact on Care at Home which is already not fit for purpose.**

VILLAGE LIFE IS OUR UNIQUE PROMOTER

Many need changing approaches. An example would be On the Horizon Counselling who cover wellbeing health. They organise meetings where a handful of visitors turn up, **they are now writing home-help in each issue of Village Life** where they will reach many thousands of people with the magazine plus the highly successful

web version kindly arranged by the Parish Council – **and they can do it all from home** without room rental costs.

VILLAGE LIFE SUCCESS STORY SO FAR

Spring re-launch issue SOLD OUT – Summer issue at printers SOLD OUT – Autumn issue 86% SOLD OUT – Winter issue already over 58% booked and SELLING OUT FAST. Each issue makes a profit – and we are hitting our targets for pre-pay advertising - to top up the Village Life Sunshine Fund to support local volunteers.

A NEW HOME HELP PROJECT

With Village Life we are **uniquely based to take advantage of this society change** because we can contact everyone involved directly with home-based services which we can constantly evolve and expand starting with a page of simple one-liners to begin **developing a register** with more pages. We could have a second line which breaks down what they do such as in Hairdressing shown below – we can add to this as time goes on to make it all embracing – maybe with health professionals, shopping and just to pop in for a chat.

HAIRDRESSING – Marcel Wave – 0000 00000
Hair Washing – Styling – Setting

GARDENING – Bert Figgins – 00000 000000

ODD JOBS – Gridpipe Thinn - 00000 000000

HEARING – Listen with Mother – 00000 00000

CLEANING & LAUNDRY – Suzanne -00000 000000

It would carry a disclaimer – we have no responsibility etc which I will get legally done. **As a safeguard we will only include people we have experience of** or professional bodies. All must have insurance.

I propose to provide this – under the heading "Care@Home" - as a **free advertising service** for four reasons. 1 - we could get together a greater number of entries more quickly for the August Issue, 2 - cuts down our volunteer time organising loads of invoices, 3 - it will add kudos to Village Life which is already financially sound and 4 – it may just add a wakeup call to Staffs County Council who should really be doing this.

FINANCES

This is the lever which powers our journey and needs to have the correct checks and balances. We also must use other people's money – we to promote in Village Life – they to deliver.

Where our funds are involved, they should be replenished with **fundraising or applications to ensure retained sustainability**, the ability to help others, donate to good causes and accommodate the unexpected.

An example of the latter would be the Whaley Bridge reservoir breech which flooded the town. We offered funds to help the kids. **Not in our area but kids are still kids and the fact that we offered was well appreciated.**

Group reserve funds in the bank – Village Life £1,589.00 – Young Persons £3,105.33 – Kidz2Kidz £1,776.15. This shows a current total of £6,470.48 with all bills paid. There was a wonderful additional offer of £1,000 seed-corn which we did not take up for Village Life as it makes a profit. There are other promised funds to come to fit in with other schedules.

VILLAGE LIFE – Here we have to remember that newspapers are disappearing – **Village Life delivering more than the combined local media circulation and its free and in colour**!

This means that Village Life is **the only guaranteed way of contacting our residents** and the only way in which local groups can promote what they do.

After only one new issue we have had excellent reports that enquiry levels to some of those featured have increased. **So, if you are not in it you can't benefit.**

Costings - 3k print cost £960, hand delivery £300 – total costs £1,260. At an average page cost of £185 **we need 7 advertising pages to break even.** We had 8 pages in the Spring issue, and we will have 8 so far in Summer. **In a perfect world we would have 9 (getting there in Autumn)** which would provide a profit of £405 for us to use to develop community services. All bills are paid instantly as we have cash up-front.

We have 6 long term pages of advertising at present – add new commers – full page for Little Joes, half page for Pennys Cabin & quarter pages for Bobbys Ice Crean and one other odd shape – and we are up to 8. Pharmacy have promised half page.

With 9 advertising pages we would have 22 pages for editorial. Here we do OK as on balance **19 pages will come in from our stringers** – 2x Church – 3x Schools – 2x Cover/Editor – 2x Wellbeing Health (new) – 1x Surgery – 1x Pet Care – 2x Local History (new), 2x Local Snippets – 2x What's On (new) – 2x Care@Home (new). 19 off 22 leaves 7 to do on the 32-page format.

This means that 86% of pages are supplied by the community - which makes Village Life a true community project on which we can

build to reduce our own volunteer workload and **add variety to the magazine** – we always feature name and a picture and logo if possible.

SUNSHINE VOLUNTEER FUND

A variable percentage of our Village Life profits will be offered to local groups - £200 from Spring - £250 later from Summer. So far £100 each has been requested by –

On the Horizon Wellbeing Counselling

Tiny Tots at St. Philips Church

When Summer issue is out, we can then allocate more donations to other local good causes.

COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

A special thank-you scheme where a framed Community Champion certificate is presented to all those who have helped us particularly those **involved in fundraising and in making Village Life possible.**

KIDZ2KIDZ –

Now in its tenth year this provides funding and toys **to help make Christmas special for disadvantaged children and distressed families**. Here it would be good if we could embrace local businesses to have a collection bucket on the counter. Co-op branches have collected toys in the past. We have contacted Home Start to see if our Kidz2Kidz project can maintain contact with their kids list.

TRENCH ART REMEMBRANCE

This has given Werrington iconic status as it reflects how solders passed time in the First World War. Each year the display expands and there will be more to see this year. **This is kindly organised and**

funded by David and Hazel Gray and resonates a remarkable vision which is supported by the Royal British Legion.

VILLAGE LIFE WEBSITE

Thanks to Werrington Parish Council **Village Life is now available world-wide** on a special website which has already had several enquiries, so it is working well and promoting our good activities – have a click! - https://www.werringtonparishcouncil.gov.uk/news/

VILLAGE SHOT

This was originally done at the Primary School but no more. I would like to see this re-launched possibly embracing all three local schools. It is based upon the – Earth Shot theme - launched by the Prince of Wales

Please comment, add to, change or amend so we get it right – this is just for starters.

If you would like to join in contact David o 01782 302019 or david@dsaimaging.co.uk

David

Werrington Community Volunteer Action Group

