

HIGH WEALDEN COMMUNITY NETWORK WELLBEING IN WADHURST

23 people attended the eighth High Wealden Community Network at Wadhurst Manor Care Home. We are very grateful to the Home, and to Stacey Gardiner, who hosted the meeting.



We talked about what supports people in communities

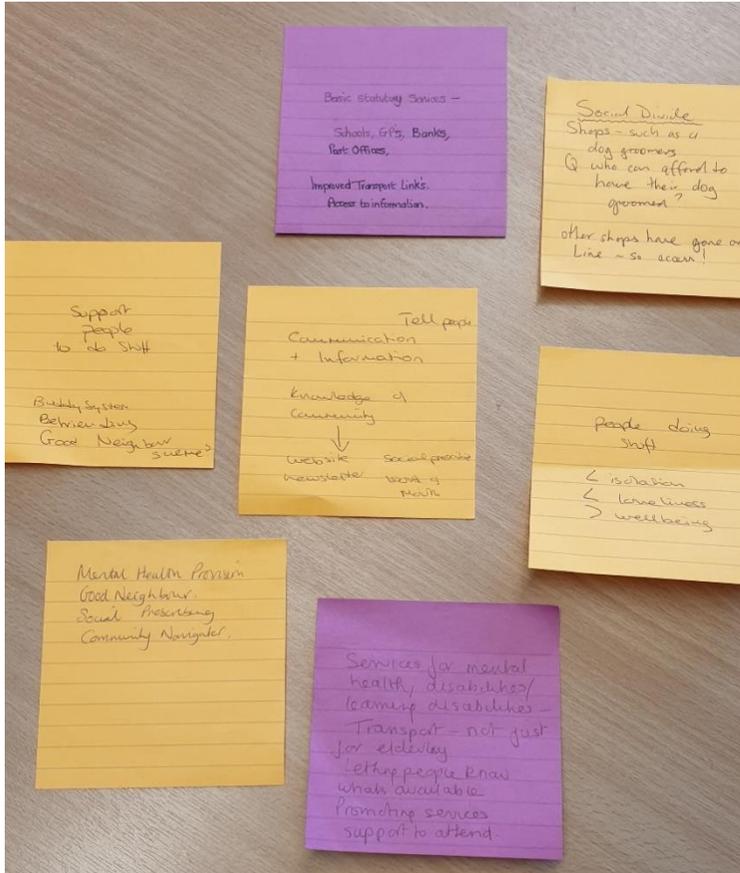
Reponses included:

- Good neighbour schemes
- Pub – somewhere to meet
- Churches
- Access to services
 - Local clubs
 - Transport
 - Access to opportunities
 - Knowledge of what is out there
 - Active engaged community
 - The people!
- The need to look across the range is important
- Best places to live (Dorset the worst)
- Change news, especially stereotyping with Children's Centres
 - Does no have to be your grandchild
 - Grandparents as volunteers – very welcome
 - Knowing you are welcome
- Vast difference between people
 - Opportunities – app
- Richness of ideas
- Access to outdoors
- Basics in place – housing, food, money
 - Basic needs are being met
- Being accepted in a community, included
- Specific services in Wadhurst

What is going on in Wadhurst? What is missing?

- Wadhurst residents include a lot of retired people. There are lots of different groups supporting these people, but they do not work together.
- Mayfield has no bank and no secondary school. The children are bussed to different schools outside the area.
- Residents in Wadhurst do not all have internet access, and therefore cannot use internet banking. Library services have diminished.
- The ability of people to claim universal credit could be impacted by the lack of internet, computer literacy, and literacy in general.
- Transport is difficult if a car is unavailable or a person cannot drive – transport needs are concentrated on the elderly.
- There have been successful Dad's Groups in the wider area, but nothing for men locally.
- Mental health services are missing





Deciding Priorities – Helen Preston

Helen spoke to us about future meetings. The group decided on a meeting on social prescribing in Crowborough. The group also decided to have a meeting on the impact of poverty, and a further one on transport and other infrastructure.

Mapping Assets – Laura Heales

Laura introduced an activity to discuss mapping assets in Wadhurst and the surrounding area. The group picked up on a social divide that is getting bigger, exacerbated by the closure of local shops. The groups also discussed how to contact people with mental health problems and discussed social prescribing.

Friends Across Wadhurst – Lesley Thompson

Lesley realised there was a need to support people living alone as Wadhurst had an above average number of individual households. With help from AirS, she set up a scheme to befriend local people. She had no problem in finding volunteer befrienders, and very quickly, 50 people were helped. Now in their fourth year, Friends Across Wadhurst has helped befrienders to become real friends.

Carillon Cottage – Toni Buckley

Carillon Cottage is the oldest building in Wadhurst. It was purchased by the Parish Church who needed an office and a space for their Sunday School. 18 years on, it has now become a hub and an information centre run by 40 volunteers. Carillon Cottage produces the Wadhurst Welcome Pack, which lists local shops and businesses, clubs and societies. It also distributes a monthly magazine, offers tourist information, and sells tickets for events. The Cottage has around 60 volunteer drivers and can call on these to provide transport to appointments and so on.

The Cottage is entirely self-funding, but doesn't charge for its services, so is reliant in donations, revenue from renting rooms, and village open gardens. They have grown in response to the awareness of local needs and expect this to go on changing, including developing a new website.

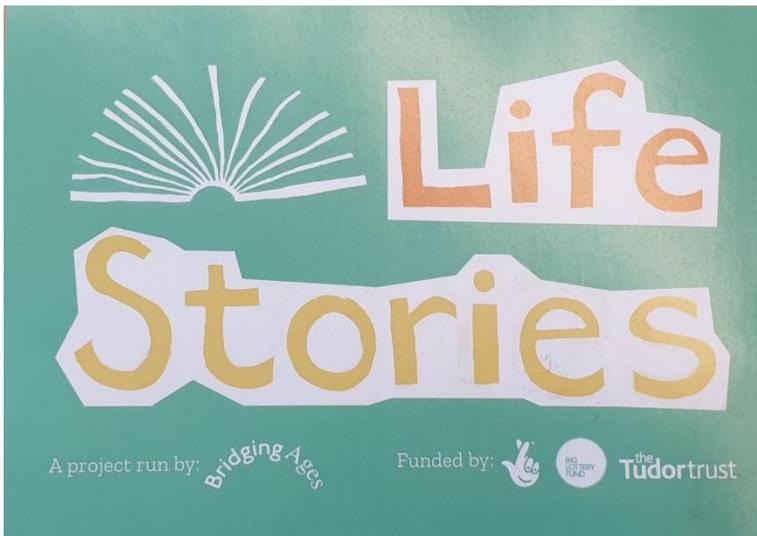
How to Cost a Bid – Alan Stevens, 3VA

Alan spoke to the group about how to best write up costs in order to win a funding bid. The key point he made was that the bid writer needs to cover exactly what they need, including unexpected costs such as staff overtime, or time off in lieu, laptops, travel costs, and so on. Alan also reminded the group that costs over time need to be looked at, for example the break down of a mobile phone and website updates. He also advised that staffing costs aren't always considered a direct cost but can be under some circumstances.

Bridging Ages – Charlotte Harvey

Bridging Ages was set up four years ago, in October 2014, by three friends who wanted to work with older people. It aims to pair teenagers with older people who then interview the older people and produce a short hardback, professionally printed book containing the life story of the older person. The scheme helps to combat loneliness and isolation, whilst offering the young people a chance to learn, commit to a project, get a sense of fulfilment, change how they perceive older people, and continue their relationships.

Bridging Ages was funded by the Lottery, amongst others, to develop the project and a toolkit for use by others.



Feedback

What do you think went well at the meeting?

- Loved hearing about Bridging Ages. Fascinating project.
- Good timekeeping. Variety of information.
- Nice to hear from so many different people.
- Mostly the networking and finding out what services are available.
- Networking. Hearing about local projects.
- Topics covered.
- Small group work with AirS.
- All of it.

What didn't go so well at the meeting?

- Arrival – not too sure of directions.
- Possibly needed a little bit more time for networking.
- Financial section.
- Parking.
- I thought that info on bids was perhaps not full thought through. I totally agree with costing out whole project but there was not enough understanding of current landscape for grant applications or understanding that many groups present are very small teams with possibly only 1 or 2 people.

As a result of the network I have...

Some examples of actions participants intend to take:

- Really thought about how I can promote what I do through other volunteer services.
- Made new contacts which I will follow up and also caught up with old colleagues I have worked in partnership with previously.
- Learned more about how to apply successfully for fundraising.
- Made new contacts and learnt of organisations locally.
- Met organisations I will be able to work with in the future.

Thank you

