

Meeting	Full Council
Date	25 th October 2022
Report Title	Warm Spaces
Agenda Reference	9
Author	Caroline Hunt, Community Development Officer

Officer's Recommendation

- 1) To note the contents of the report.

Background/ Purpose

At Community Development Committee on 6th September 2022, it was agreed to proceed with the programme of events aimed at reducing isolation and loneliness within our community. One such event was to make space available in the office for people who are struggling with the cost of heating their homes, and hence to keep warm.

Warm Space Project

The Parish Council officers will open its downstairs meeting rooms for two hours a day, between 11 am to 1 pm, on Mondays and Fridays. During the two hours, hot drinks and snacks will be available free of charge. Cup-a-soups, Mug Shots, sliced bread for toast and other non-perishable items are initial suggestions of what could be offered to attendees. As the project develops the offering may adapt depending on feedback. A rota will be drawn up with office staff and Councillors availability to help prepare the refreshments and engage with the participants, if they wish.

The first date of the Warm Spaces project is due to take place on the Mondays and Fridays between the 7th November 2022 through to 31st March 2022.

Registering as a Food Business

Swindon Borough Council has confirmed that the Parish Council has to register as a Food Business. This may incur a cost in up to £115.

Other Warm Spaces Projects within the Parish

The Haydon Centre is planning on offering warm spaces on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 1-3pm. No start date for the project has been provided yet. Free wi-fi, tea, coffee, and biscuits will also be available.

We have contacted North Swindon Library, the Customer Service Hub, Justin Tomlinson MPs' office, Asda and other businesses at the Orbital via British Land to find out whether Warm Spaces will be offered this winter, but not received a response yet.

The Community Development Officer has registered the Haydon Wick Warm Spaces project with Swindon Borough Council. Eventually there will be a Warm Spaces directory available.

Other Parishes in the Borough

At the Clerk's forum on Monday we received the following updates from other parishes who are providing warm and safe places for their communities:

1. **Central North Swindon** - libraries will be opening for extended hours and advertising in doctors surgeries, and on noticeboards. They have also received a grant to address inequality in their parish. The £165,000 funding pot is to provide a range of services – e.g. feeding Swindon partnership. The funding will pay for an Officer to progress.



2. **Chiseldon PC** – offering a system of anonymous residents' requests for hot water bottles etc.
3. **Wroughton PC** –working with the library trust to open for longer hours and making use of their volunteers
4. **West Swindon PC** – contacting their grants groups to notify them of SBC's warm spaces funding. Their churches are working together to have a full week of warm spaces. They have also grant funded their library to stay open.
5. **Swindon Borough Council** (Helen Robinson) - has a group of officers responsible for community funding and they're working hard to try and gain insights into how to spend their funds wisely e.g. to reach those who need it most in the community. They are also supporting the workforce and giving them training to understand if they identify a safeguarding issue – e.g., their gas fitters who go into homes.

SBC will recommence their partnership group (similar to the pandemic) and work with police, parish councils etc to understand our roles and how best to work together. As a small gesture of thanks to community groups opening up their facilities there is a small pot of funding for groups to apply for. SBC may be able to share data on households that go into council tax arrears etc to identify hot spots in the community – the GDPR implications are still being investigated.

Financial Implications

The budget for this project is £750.00 to be funded from Isolation and Loneliness 4629/402. This allows for a budget of £31.50 for each session. In addition, there will be the cost to register the council as a food business (in region of £100). The Council has received £300 sponsorship from a local business to help towards these costs. There is small SBC grant available, more a gesture to thank community groups for opening their venues, but we aren't eligible as our sessions are less than three hours.