

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Community
<b>Portfolio Holder Name:</b>	Cllr Liz Marsh
<b>Full Council Meeting Date:</b>	Thursday 7th December 2023
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	TC2023/104

### **Hamp Community Association (HCA) and Hamp Community**

The ReCreation Community Hub is soon to be open. Launch day will be Monday 11th December and will provide a much needed community space in Hamp.

HCA is arranging and subsidising the cost of a coach trip to Exeter for Christmas shopping on the 14th December, limited tickets are available and cost just £1.50 per person or £5 for a family. More information can be found on the HCA Facebook page.

HCA meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month at 7pm in the Hamp Hub on Rhode Lane and all are welcome.

### **Sydenham Community Centre (SCC) and Sydenham Community**

I attended the SCC Board meeting on the 13th November and it was great to see so many of the local Community present, interested and involved.

The Community Centre continues to run numerous community activities including yoga, boxing, karate, table tennis, dancing groups, a camera club, a pigeon club and runs many events throughout the year such as: discos, quiz nights and will have 4 days of live entertainment over the Christmas period and has its own bar.

The recent Halloween event on Saturday 28th October and this year's Christmas Craft Fair which was held on Saturday 2nd December proved very popular and were enjoyed by all.

It is also home to the East Bridgwater Pantry that now reaches 53 families every week. For more information on the Pantry please visit The Local Pantry East Bridgwater page on Facebook.

### **Victoria Park Community Centre (VPCC) and Victoria Community**

The VPCC Christmas Fair or 'Festive Friday' will be held on the evening of Friday 8th December this year and will combine with their annual Christmas light switch on. The Bridgwater Rock Choir will be in attendance singing all of our Christmas favourites along with the main man in Red himself, no not Cllr Brian Smedley, but Santa complete with a grotto, numerous stalls and our brilliant VPCC Cafe will be serving up Festive Food. More information can be on the Victoria Park Community Centre Facebook page.

Numerous Community events continue to take place at VPCC including free energy-saving advice every fourth Tues 1-3pm, Diversity Voice's 'Come Grow with Us' project for displaced persons every Wed at 10am and the over 55s Roast at 12.15pm followed by the infamous Bingo nights at 7.30pm. More information can be found on the VP Facebook page or online at vpcc.co.uk

This year's VPCC AGM will be held on Friday 15th December at 10am at Victoria Park.

The problems with fly tipping and Anti-social behaviour continue but ongoing meetings between Cllr Mick Lerry and myself in conjunction with local residents, the Police, Town Wardens, Clean Surroundings and the local Housing Association are helping to highlight key areas of concern and strategies are being implemented to bring it under control.

### **General Community News**

Autumn is the time of year when Bridgwater really comes to life with the Carnival, Fireworks, Various Fayres, our Snowflakes event and of course a visit or two from Santa himself. The Snowflakes event on Saturday 25th November proved exceptionally popular this year with numerous stalls, activities and food and drink options along with our big Christmas light switch on and Squibbing on the Town Bridge.

The Bridgwater Town Council Christmas Fayre on Sunday 3rd December also proved a fantastic hit again this year with money being raised for the Food Pantry's which are the Mayor's chosen Charity for the year. The Food Pantry's themselves have done brilliantly well and were recognised for their Community efforts by winning the FareShare South West Social Impact Award for Community and Sustainability at the end of October.

Speaking of charities Age UK Somerset also held 2 free events in Bridgwater for the over 60s in November to celebrate their 75th Anniversary. A free cinema showing of the Film 'The Great Escaper' starring Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson and an over 60s Take over at Palace Nightclub, both proving extremely popular with 240 over 60s in attendance. The Town Council had supported these events through its Grant Awards Scheme.

### **Police Forum**

The next Police and Public Safety Forum will be on **Wednesday 14th February at 2pm** in the Bridgwater Town Hall, all questions must be submitted in advance and a reminder of this will be sent out nearer the time.

Police Forums are well attended by the Police, Town Wardens, the One Team, Council affiliated staff and Town Councillors and have helped improve communications and links between them as well as provided answers to community concerns.

The Police again emphasised the need for all crimes to be reported preferably online via Crimestoppers if non-urgent or by calling 999 in the case of emergencies.

**Recommendations:** (if you are expecting Council to make a decision from your report)

None

