

Protecting and renewing community assets: project update

Following the decisions taken at the last meeting we set up a focus group meeting with key community organisations in the town on 15 July. The meeting was chaired by Sarah Harvey, the chair of the Abbey Physic Garden and attended by the chairs of the Swimming Pools, Alexander Centre, Assembly Rooms, Faversham Society, Market Cooperative and West Faversham Community Centre. I, the Mayor and the Town Clerk also attended.

There was agreement in the meeting about the desirability of working together rather than competing, but organisations are concerned about their own renewal and didn't feel they had the resource to develop a partnership campaign supported by the Town Council. They were however pleased that the town council wanted to engage with their futures and would welcome our support in terms of contributing to fundraising efforts, a more coordinated approach to events and promotion of their service offer, particularly with working age groups and younger people.

Following the meeting I have discussed with the Town Clerk where we could add value as a Town Council to organisations' own efforts to revive activity following the pandemic. As a result of this discussion we want to propose that we do some research in relation to:

- Fundraising, in particular setting up a Town Lottery and engaging with local charities and the Rotary Club over holding and distributing funds.
- Encouraging volunteering through talking to mutual aid organisations about how they could support the return of events and activities in the town, through stewarding and other support.
- Developing publicity which makes the public aware of the full range of organisations that need financial support and the efforts they are making to raise funds
- Developing the leisure alliance – coalition of sport facilities and clubs through Active Faversham/Sports Council.
- Promoting the town's service offer to local village communities
- Developing a revised youth offer, which takes account of the constraints resulting from the pandemic and lockdown.

As part of this research we intend to hold a further focus group involving a different set of organisations including organisations running the main events in the town

We would then expect to come back with a final proposal for a Town Council 'town revival' campaign at the September meeting of the committee.

Cllr Julian Saunders 19 July 2020