

Forest Row Parish Council

Clerk: Mr David O'Driscoll
Email: parishclerk@forestrow.gov.uk



(Office Hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

Community Centre
Hartfield Road
Forest Row
East Sussex
RH18 5DZ

To: All members of the COMMUNITY SERVICES
COMMITTEE:
Cllrs. Lewin (Chair), Christie, Cocks, Jaffay, La Djoï,
Rainbow, Scott & Volkers

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Dear Sir/Madam,
You are required to attend a meeting of the
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE to be held on
TUESDAY 30th JANUARY 2023 @ 7:30 pm
in the Community Centre

Date: 24 January, 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D O Driscoll'.

Mr David O'Driscoll
Clerk to Forest Row Parish Council

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – the meeting will start no later than 7.45pm.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS/REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION
4. RECORDS OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31ST OCTOBER 2023
5. CHAIR'S COMMENTS
6. CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION
 - 6.1 Attendance
 - 6.2 Interaction between working groups & committees
 - 6.3 Thermal 'camera'
 - 6.4 Community service administration
 - 6.5 Current financial position
7. TRIAGE OF OUTSTANDING ITEMS FROM THE 'ISSUES & IDEAS' LIST
8. REPORTS ON CURRENT SERVICES
 - 8.1 Gages
 - 8.2 Thursday Club
 - 8.3 Library volunteer service
 - 8.4 Market
 - 8.5 Youth service (including youth forum)
9. REPORTS/DECISIONS ON PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT
 - 9.1 The 'shed' project: report on progress.
 - 9.2 Road safety/reduced speed limit; report on progress
 - 9.3 To consider a proposal for a subsidised counselling service
 - 9.4 Environmental support; possible council engagement
 - 9.5 Cooperation with East Sussex IT4U project
 - 9.6 Cooperation with Forest Row Festival 2024
10. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY THIS COMMITTEE OR FULL COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
BACKING PAPERS FOR MEETING 30th JANUARY 2024**

Agenda Item	Description	Page nos
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6.2	Excerpt from Minutes of 15 th August 2023	3
6.4	Financial printout to end Q3	4-5
	Community Services agreed budget for 2024-25	6
7.	"Ideas & Issues" for Community Services Committee: original list	7
	Edited & annotated list for this meeting	8-9
8.1-8.4	Report on existing services (Sandra Sameiro)	10
8.5	Report on youth service (Mel Rey-Mesher)	11
9.2	Report on 20npph speed limit proposal (County Cllr Taylor)	12-13
9.3	Proposal for a low-cost counselling service	14-16

**COUNCILLORS' BRIEFING FOR THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES
COMMITTEE TO BE HELD ON 30th JANUARY 2024**

1. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – none so far notified
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – none so far notified
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/ DISPENSATION REQUESTS** Members who have a financial interest in any of the items covered by this agenda may wish to declare a personal interest. But Members need to be realistic and observe a sensible 'de minimis' judgement, otherwise the provision becomes trivialised.
4. **RECORDS OF MEETING**
Meeting of 31st October 2023.
5. **CHAIR'S COMMENTS**
6. **CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION**
 - 6.1 Attendance. I entirely appreciate that many of our current Members are in employment or have other daily responsibilities, and this adds a very positive dimension to the Council's profile. But attendance at Full Council & Standing Committee meetings has been a bit patchy, and the Community Services budget meeting had only 50% of its members present. I intend no reproach to any individual, but we do need to be careful to give committee attendance its due priority, as it is where the actual decisions are made.
 - 6.2 Interaction between working groups and committees. There seems to have been some doubt about how suggestions gleaned from the public would find their way to discussion in Committee. It may therefore be helpful to revisit the proposal put to and voted on by Full Council in August last year (attached).
 - 6.3 Thermal Camera. We now have a thermal 'camera' (voted for as long ago as February 2023) , which can detect hot and cold spots, particularly in buildings, and may help people to better insulate their homes. It will be available on loan to community members, but a deposit should be charged. For Committee to decide how much?
 - 6.4 Current financial position. A printout is attached to the end of Q3. Income is just under forecast at 73.9%, despite the expected hiatus in market income. Expenditure is in excess of forecast, but the market budget was drafted before its change in status. *Gages* is covering its costs successfully despite extra expense on equipment.
Next year's budget (printout attached) has seen a significant increase in resources. The market code now allows for the contractor's fee, *Gages* food bill has been uprated for inflation, and there are new codes for the Shed project, the youth forum, environmental support and the preliminary stages of major projects.
ACTION: to note, and resolve where required
7. **TRIAGE OF OUTSTANDING ITEMS FROM THE 'ISSUES & IDEAS' LIST**
Two printouts are attached. The first contains the raw data from the ideas collected in community meetings and directly or indirectly related to the Community Services remit. The

second is a version edited by Cllr Lewin, which seeks to allocate priorities to those which are more obviously do-able. For Committee to discuss and amend/adopt as appropriate.

ACTION: as above

8. REPORTS ON CURRENT SERVICES.

8.1 – 8.4 Gages, Thursday Club, Library volunteer service (and Market). These services are covered by Sandra Sameiro's report attached to the papers.

8.5 Youth Service Melissa Rey-Mesher has provided a report, attached to the papers

ACTION: to note (unless any item above requires a resolution)

9. REPORTS/ DECISIONS ON PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT

9.1 The Shed project. Cllr Lewin will report orally on progress

9.2 Road safety/ reduced speed limit. A written update for our County Councillor is attached. Cllr Lewin will report on a proposal for a radar speed sign, and an information brochure will be passed round at the meeting .

9.3 Proposal for a subsidised counselling service. This proposal was originally submitted during the tenure of the previous council, but postponed for consideration by agreement until now. A full application is attached: all personnel involved would be members of an accredited organisation, not freelance individuals.

9.4 Environmental support. This has several current strands. The issue is whether the Council wishes to undertake ongoing work, or be associated with organisations (such as Friends of the Medway) and if so, to what degree.

9.5 Cooperation with ESCC IT4U. Cllr Eichner asked for this to be included in the agenda and will speak to the topic.

9.6 Cooperation with Forest Row Festival. Cllr Lewin asked for this to be included in this meeting's agenda to determine the nature and extent of the Council's involvement with this year's Festival.

ACTION: to resolve as required

10. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY COMMITTEE OR FULL COUNCIL

Excerpt from:

“Proposal from To & FRow (Community Engagement and Development Working Group) 17 July 2023” submitted to Full Council 15th August 2023
and “adopted as far as proposal 1 inclusive. Proposals 2 and 3 being deferred to a later date.”

3 Proposals and Questions:

1. We propose to full council that T&F can take on this role, in terms of sending on the line items from the Issues and Ideas document on a monthly basis to relevant committees and also in advising and guiding people and groups when requested to do so.
2. T&F asks that the proposed document regarding process for decision making (written by Adam and Rebecca) is amended to include T&F at the very beginning of the process, as this would often be the first point of contact between community and council.
3. T & F requests to carry out a wider community consultation, using a 3D model for several days of community workshops, and a larger comms campaign. This would be in order to find out what the important issues and ideas are for community at this time and whether more members of the community could get involved in projects and campaigns. The consultation aims to involve all or at least most of the people living in the area. This level of consultation needs some budget – T & F requests to know how much budget may be available. As a guide 3D consultation models cost £6,000 minimum.

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 23/01/2024

Month No: 10

Committee Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
Localism & Community Projects							
206 Community Transport							
2678 Medical Car Scheme Income	131	300	169			43.8%	
4180 Misc Income	27	0	(27)			0.0%	
Community Transport :- Income	158	300	142			52.7%	0
2554 Wealdlink	510	1,000	490		490	51.0%	
2601 Voluntary Medical Car Service	0	200	200		200	0.0%	
Community Transport :- Indirect Expenditure	510	1,200	690	0	690	42.5%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(352)	(900)	(548)				
207 Market							
3184 CC-Market Income	5,404	9,000	3,596			60.0%	
Market :- Income	5,404	9,000	3,596			60.0%	0
3151 CC-Market expenditure	5,928	1,430	(4,498)		(4,498)	414.5%	
Market :- Indirect Expenditure	5,928	1,430	(4,498)	0	(4,498)	414.5%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(523)	7,570	8,093				
209 Localism & Community Proj Misc							
2905 Repair Cafe & Wellbeing Servic	(516)	2,000	2,516			(25.8%)	
Localism & Community Proj Misc :- Income	(516)	2,000	2,516			(25.8%)	0
2603 Emergency Supplies	0	6,000	6,000		6,000	0.0%	
2700 Repair Cafe & Wellbeing	300	4,000	3,700		3,700	7.5%	
Localism & Community Proj Misc :- Indirect Expenditure	300	10,000	9,700	0	9,700	3.0%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(816)	(8,000)	(7,184)				
304 Cafe							
3480 Gages - Sales	18,607	20,000	1,393			93.0%	
4180 Misc Income	100	0	(100)			0.0%	
Cafe :- Income	18,707	20,000	1,293			93.5%	0
3436 Gages-Purchase of Equipment	3,576	2,200	(1,376)		(1,376)	162.5%	
3460 Gages -Purchases Food etc	14,166	13,200	(966)		(966)	107.3%	
Cafe :- Indirect Expenditure	17,742	15,400	(2,342)	0	(2,342)	115.2%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	965	4,600	3,635				

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 23/01/2024

Month No: 10

Committee Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
306 Thursday Club							
3680 TC-Subscriptions	250	400	150			62.5%	
Thursday Club :- Income	<u>250</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>150</u>			<u>62.5%</u>	<u>0</u>
3636 TC-Running Costs	259	1,100	841		841	23.5%	
Thursday Club :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>259</u>	<u>1,100</u>	<u>841</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>841</u>	<u>23.5%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(9)</u>	<u>(700)</u>	<u>(691)</u>				
406 Youth Provision							
4676 YP-Grants & Other Income	1,286	2,500	1,214			51.4%	
Youth Provision :- Income	<u>1,286</u>	<u>2,500</u>	<u>1,214</u>			<u>51.4%</u>	<u>0</u>
4603 YP - Dev costs & General Expen	2,485	3,500	1,015		1,015	71.0%	
Youth Provision :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>2,485</u>	<u>3,500</u>	<u>1,015</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,015</u>	<u>71.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(1,199)</u>	<u>(1,000)</u>	<u>199</u>				
Localism & Community Projects :- Income	<u>25,289</u>	<u>34,200</u>	<u>8,911</u>			<u>73.9%</u>	
Expenditure	<u>27,224</u>	<u>32,630</u>	<u>5,406</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5,406</u>	<u>83.4%</u>	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(1,935)</u>						
Grand Totals:- Income	<u>25,289</u>	<u>34,200</u>	<u>8,911</u>			<u>73.9%</u>	
Expenditure	<u>27,224</u>	<u>32,630</u>	<u>5,406</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5,406</u>	<u>83.4%</u>	
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(1,935)</u>	<u>1,570</u>	<u>3,505</u>				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(1,935)</u>						

**Excerpt from agreed budget for
2024-2025 (Comm.Services)**

COMM.SERVICES		C/S EXPENDITURE	
2678 Medical transport income	300	2601 Medical car scheme	50
3184 Market income	7500	2554 Wealmlink	1200
2905 Service development income	500	3151 Market expenses	7000
3480 Gages sales	22000	3460 Gages food	18000
3680 Th.Club subscriptions	200	3436 Gages equipment	2000
4676 Youth grants/subscriptions	2500	3636 Thursday Club costs	750
4180 Misc.income	0	4603 Youth expenses	3500
TOTAL C-S INCOME	33000	new: Youth forum	500
		new: Shed project	2000
		Emergency equipment	0
		2436 Road safety	1500
		new: Environmental support	1000
		new: Community consultation	2500
		2700 New service support	2000
		new: capital projects R&D	2500
		TOTAL C-S EXPENDITURE	44500

Community Services Issues and Ideas
<i>Please note this list is automatically generated using data from the Issues and Ideas sheets. Do not manually change any data in this column.</i>
Comunity Christmas lunch and fun
Forest Row 'pound' £
Community Food Recycling
Affordable Housing for Young People.
Bring down speed limit to 20mph
Graffiti Area for the Kids
Straw Poll app to get community referendum instantly (Like ANC did)
Biodynamic Restaurant with meat
Biodigester for food scraps to feed into local energy supply
Complete list of services and business in FR including all the out of village businesses
It is important to ensure events are self funded i.e. Cafe, Saturday Market, Car Scheme etc
Re communications - seems central issue - how to deal with wide range of issues, agreement and disagreement. Keeping voices alive and balance so all voices are heard
Find a solution to inappropriate behaviour by some yount people, give them ways to help the situation
Back field benches
Youth don't have a voice, especially 15-18 years - they need a forum
Create a memorial garden at the cemetery as there were a lot of scildren who died during the smallpox
Community orchard and turn apples to create a local cider
Extra goal hoop at other end with rails
Campaign to make people aware of putting rubbish in bins
Local energy from forest waste and gardens
Anti biochar production system also excelent for clear water feature, closed trassic road, river char filter.
Business Xmas
Comms digital and non digital
Bring a plant take one
Email news letter
Cycling event again (volunteers)
Vaping concern for kids esp illegal vapes, what can be done abt it?
Community cafe for Mums with babies or toddlers where they can move around - run by local teens in VENUe
A Lido for the village
Better connecting new families to what's available and happening
A teens fire with space held by local Dads
More friendly culture between teens and little kids at the skatepark
mobile tip service
Community Food Recycling
Have regular drop ins where local people can come and talk about the things important to them and share this with Forest Row Forward
A permanent ideas and issues book available to write in issues and ideas - where?
Local Conservation volunteers
Create an event where 14-17yrs can voice what they want in the village
Community Altar
Gathering place/bandstand? in 'Whele Tail Park' - the big green park space behind the skatepark (down the track)
A natural swimming pool
Connection/listening circles
LGBTQ+ Space

For CS agenda 30/1/24Project progress update – these are only CS items but maybe some overlap with Facils.

FR PC project wish list progress					
Idea/project	Owner	Status	Priority	comments	
Xmas lunch	Angela	Done	Hi	Total success- must repeat	
Youth forum	Alex Y	Done	High	Now happening, follow-up critical	
Graffiti area	TL	Done	Med	Successful, needs more take-up, budget. Repeat!	
Newsletter	JE	Done	High	Awaiting reaction	
Cycling event	TL	Done	Med	Successful, organised by FR school team. Maybe expand to take in wider range? Combine with FRF?	
Affordable housing	All	Research	High	Initial contact with AiRS, follow up needed	
Energy, biodigester	Ben	Research	Med	Lots more work needed	
Extra goal hoop	Alex Y	Progress	Med	Funding?	
Rubbish bins etc	All	Progress	High	V visible – need to escalate this with WDC	
Mobile skip	All	???	Med	Could be private contractor, not WDC	
Plant swap	All	Nice to have	Low		
List of services	All	NTH	Med	Combine with Newsletter in some way? FR database, community calendar?	
Food waste recycling	AJ?	NTH	Low		
20 mph limit	TL	Some progress	Med	Many roadblocks, will cost a lot. What do we do?	
Community orchard	All	NTH	Low		
Vaping	Alex Y	???	High	May be overtaken by govt legislation?	
Café for mums	All	NTH	Low		
LGBTQ+ space	All	NTH	Med		

FR pound/Bank of Dave	All	Blue sky	Low	
Welcome pack	All	NTH	Low	Newsletter/ database/calendar may do some of this

COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT

GAGES

We had a great Christmas lunch on the 14th December with 35 attending and 15 deliveries.

In the past 11 weeks (25th October – 19th January, Closed for 2 weeks over Christmas) we have:

Delivered 306 meals.

Have had 556 customers at the café.

Sold 23 frozen meals.

THURSDAY CLUB

We had our Christmas party and have had tea and chat, and a movie afternoon. We are looking forward to the Early Bird Cabaret on the 7th March and a visit from Guide Dogs in May.

Average attendance is 10.

LIBRARY

The volunteer session is going well with an average of about 14 visitors during the 3 hours they are open. We now have 11 volunteers.

MARKET

The market will start again in March.

Sandra Sameiro
22nd January 2024

Community Services Report

Autumn 2023

VENUe On The Green

In September we had our new intake of year 5 pupils from Forest Row primary school, so our younger sessions have been well attended. We tend to have open play in these sessions, but we have also increased our focused and planned sessions for this group.

These include Arts and Crafts and project focused activities such as a collage and creating group pieces together. We also organised the Skate Park graffiti project which we held as a community Fun Day in collaboration with Julian and Parish councillor Tony Lewin. It was a great day, and it was wonderful to see so many different faces. The older teenagers have taken on roles as volunteers during the younger sessions and help with the set up and activities throughout the session. This has been good for them as it is encouraging them to be responsible and to play a part in the plans and activities for the club. We have discussed as a staff team potentially developing a volunteer role description for committed volunteers with a view to be able to aid in work experience and provide a reference.

October was busy with Halloween parties and activities.

We have registered 30 youth now for the C card scheme in partnership with the NHS. All staff have been trained to give basic Sexual Health advice and to distribute contraception which we felt as a staff team was extremely important given the statistics on STI and no resource in East Grinstead.

December was an extremely busy month for the youth service. We held a fundraiser in the form of a Table Top Sale on the same day as the Christmas Trail to raise money for our annual Ice Skating Trip.

Christmas parties and secret Santa along with gift making and arts and crafts throughout the month. 14 Teenagers attended the Ice Skating excursion which is an increase on last year 😊

After a much needed and welcomed break over Christmas we started the New year with a Team Planning meeting to Brainstorm ideas and plans for the next couple of months and we have also increased the sessions for the year 5's.

We have lots of plans for focused projects such as -Sexual Health Safety with our older teens.

Race and equality for our younger sessions

Valentines themed sessions-Love in every form

Fundraisers and more collaborations within the Community -MM to update in next report

From: "georgiat@btinternet.com" <georgiat@btinternet.com>
Subject: 20mph update from ESCC
Date: 28 November 2023 at 15:40:28 GMT
To: Tony Lewin <greentonylewin@gmail.com>

Hi Tony,

I finally spoke to the officer who is completing the assessment of the Hartfield Rd 20mph request. I'm afraid it is not looking good. I am waiting for some more information about speed surveys, but for now here is what I've got:

- The officer I spoke to had done the value for money assessment and it scored 66.7, which puts this scheme at number 86 in the queue (most schemes score around 150 – 160, with the highest at 398). They tend to go ahead with the top ten scores for schemes. They also tend to spend more in areas of deprivation and more urban areas.
- They have done a speed survey from 2018, which indicates that the average speed along the whole stretch of Hartfield Rd is 26mph westbound and 27mph eastbound. Around 15% of the cars are going at a minimum of 30mph westbound or 31mph eastbound. This means that the police would not support a "lines and signs" scheme (this means just road markings and speed signs), because there is nothing extra to make people drive at or nearer 20mph, and they cannot enforce the speed limit. The police would want to have extra "speed reducing features".
- The officer suggested that we look just at the section from the roundabout to Ashdown road, which is where most of the shops and the school is. The score for that section is 136, which is still too low. However, for that stretch the speed survey was not much better., though they were only measuring from Station Road. I suggested that the speed of that section is actually lower generally, and that they should have measured from the roundabout to get an average lower speed.
- The officer is checking to see whether there are any more up to date speed surveys. But they should be able to give us the 2018 one if we want it. I will double check to see if the PC can use this one if you decide to go ahead with a community match.
- If you did go ahead with the community match scheme, you may get away with a lines and signs scheme for the first section of the road, which would cost potentially around £25k - £30k or more. If you wanted to try and get a 20mph on the whole Hartfield Rd, you would have to include extra speed reducing

features and the total of that could be as much as £300k - £400k. The community match would only contribute up to £60k, so there would be a massive amount that the PC would have to find. It seems ridiculous, but there you are.

- You could go ahead with the £500 feasibility study, with the current speed survey (so it saves money on the speed survey as you wouldn't have to do it) and ask them to do a full costing of 20mph with speed reduction features. Then put it to the community along with other options for spending money. I really doubt anyone is going to prioritise the 20mph, but at least you would have the information.

I hope this is useful.

All the best

Georgia

Proposal for a low-cost counselling service in Forest Row

The situation.

Waiting times to access mental health support in the form of talking therapy have never been so long. For adults it can take up to a year to get a block of 6 sessions via the IAPT service. For younger people the CAMHS service often an assessment after 4-5 months, if you are considered at risk, and therapy after around 18 months. Clearly these delays in receiving treatment can be highly detrimental to the health and well-being of those waiting.

Private therapy is available, and Forest Row has several locally based therapists, some of whom offer a few discounted sessions for low-income clients. The average fee for therapy in East Sussex is now £50 a session which is beyond the budget of many who need it. With many counsellors already doing pro bono or discounted fees they too are being affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Independently offering low-cost counselling to all those in need is not a sustainable solution.

The proposal.

With a small number of local counsellors already on board with finding a solution we have approached the parish council with an idea to try and help those in need in the village and surrounding area.

Asking clients to pay what they can afford for sessions and then the council effectively “topping up” the fee would enable the counsellors to reach more people on low incomes as well as enabling the same people to begin working with a therapist without enduring the long waiting lists via the NHS.

All these counsellors are fully qualified and insured. Clients would contact the service via email and the head of service, Owen Morgan, would reach out to arrange an initial triage session. The service would be able to offer a choice of male or female counsellor and according to preference that counsellor would then arrange the assessment and following up would either offer 8 sessions or signpost them onto other services if required.

There would be the possibility of extending sessions to 10 or 12 if necessary. A waiting list could be managed by the counsellors and a date offered for starting therapy if not actual sessions would be manageable.

The clients would be contracted by the counsellors with each one sending a monthly invoice to the council. We believe we could offer sessions this way to up to 6 people a month depending on budget.

The council would only act as an intermediary with all client contact being managed by the counsellors whose own insurance arrangements would provide cover. In effect the responsibility for client care and management would be undertaken by the counsellors individually.

All counsellors involved in the service have their own supervision requirements and extra supervision could be provided by the head of service if required.

Logistics.

As explained above the logistics of management would be handed by the head of service and counsellors attached to the service according to BACP ethical guidelines regarding confidentiality and client care.

There would be no additional charge for the management of clients, only the top fees. These would be up to the discretion of the team and that aspect would be explained to potential client and on any literature.

Once signed off we believe some posts on the local Facebook page, at the GP surgery and on notice boards and with the parish magazine would be enough to advertise the service as well as letting contacts like the team at the youth club and in the office know about the offer.

Again we would offer our time for free for this part of the scheme.

We would aim to respond to any emails within 24 hours and suggest a parish council email address is set up and emails redirected to the head of service.

If numbers on the waiting list become too high, there is the possibility of recruiting other local counsellors to the scheme, but we feel it is important to see how the scheme evolves and at the start limit numbers so we can learn about the levels of responses.

Counsellors would offer sessions online or in person. If there is a possibility of using a room at the council offices for those in need of wheelchair access, then this could be arranged.

The service would offer sessions for 18-year-olds and above at first and hope to offer via parents or guardians a version of the service to local young people from October. All counsellors offering services to younger clients will be DBS certified and have experience working with young people in the past.

Costs

Potential clients will be asked to contribute what they can for counselling, up to £25 with the fund from the council ensuring therapists receive a minimum of £25 a session.

While many counsellors already offer low fee sessions (for example I have 6 clients who pay a lot less than my usual £55 fee) they don't advertise this. Our hope is that the council being effectively the "face" of the low cost counselling service means far more potential clients will get in touch and will be able to get help.

I now have 4 qualified counsellors who are willing to take on new clients via the scheme. I am also offering them free supervision for these clients if they want. Supervision is an ethical necessity for counsellors and an additional cost.

If we are offering 10 sessions for clients from January at a cost of the council at say £20 a session then each client comes at a cost of £200.

However not all clients will take up all 10 sessions and some clients may contribute a lot more than £5. At this stage we don't know this will add up. Six months of running the scheme would allow us to make a more educated guess for the rest of 2024.

With a minimum contribution from clients all taking 10 sessions I propose we look at offering sessions for 5 clients in the first half of 2024 with a cost to the council of £1000.

Any shortfall from this would be used to pay for sessions for other clients.

Mid-year we would then be able to provide feedback from these clients when asking for further funding for the second half of the year. This would demonstrate the effectiveness of the scheme.

We would then be able to suggest a cost from a place of better understanding.

Jan to June £1000

June to December £1000

Counsellors would effectively invoice the council each month with the number of sessions they have offered through the scheme and receive payment from the allocated fund. These communications would be managed by Owen so there is just one point of contact.

Conclusion

By offering this service we believe we can help many local people who might otherwise have to wait a year for counselling support, as well as those that NHS assessment deign to be low priority and who might not even be added to a waiting list.

By doing so we believe we can make an impact on the problems many face with mental health or lack of adequate support and make a real difference to our village's wellbeing.