

Update on BPC's role as host for the Buckden Making Memories group

Report prepared by Sue Ashwell, Lead Volunteer

In September 2023 BPC Councillors approved a proposal to host the Buckden Making Memories group as part of its ongoing support for the Buckden Village Hall Trust (BVHT).

The support for BVHT is provided in two ways through this group:

- To enable a grant application to be made seeking almost £40,000 in capital funding to install solar panels, LED lighting and better roof insulation to make the village hall less expensive to run
- To provide a regular income stream to BVHT through the hire of rooms to accommodate the group.

The group provides support for people in the village and local areas who have concerns about their memory. It is accessed by referral through local GP surgeries.

The group offers tea-and-chat, access to NHS-provided/funded advice on help for these people and their partners/carers and Love-to-Move exercise sessions. All these activities have been shown to improve cognition and personal well-being. Similar groups are run in other areas including Brampton, as part of 'wellbeing hubs'. The existence and activities of such groups is promoted by both District and County Councils to help people live independently at home for longer.

The group began meeting on 01 February when 9 people attended and this is expected to grow to around 20-25 per session as referrals are made by local practices. In preparation for the sessions 8 volunteers have been trained and there will be 2 or 3 volunteers scheduled to attend each session, to support the activities. The NHS provides 'Social Prescriber' input at each group session and District and County Council support is through the availability of grants.

BPC's role is to host the governance of the group. This is principally to account for the funds as separate, restricted Earmarked Reserves from which invoices for group costs are paid for room hire and Love-to-Move sessions. The number of invoices is expected to be about 3 per month and Safeguarding reports are extremely rare in such situations. All costs/invoices will be reviewed by the Lead volunteer before being added to PFS list. Any substantive Safeguarding issues will be referred directly to the County multi-agency team for any necessary investigation and action. If any incidents are reported BPC will be notified but need take no action.

The local NHS has provided funding and two grant applications have been submitted, one to HDC and one to CCC. The fact that invoices are being managed through BPC (though not affecting BPC's own funds) was a critical step in securing funding for this group.

The group is important to the village as we have a higher-than-average proportion of older people. The group was made possible by BPC's support and the documentation created for and learning from its establishment will be useful as BPC investigates the potential for a wider 'wellbeing hub'.

In January for three volunteers' training sessions and for some initial printing the Clerk has assisted, but this input will be minimal going forward, as it was only necessary as the new systems were set up. All queries about the group and its volunteers are being managed by the Lead Volunteer.