

## **BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **CITIZEN'S ADVISORY PANEL – 3<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 2022**

#### **Item 6 – Library – Community Engagement**

##### Purpose

To receive an update and consider ideas for engaging the community in what events and activities they would like to see in the library and to encourage community volunteers to help with running and supporting projects.

##### Cultural Communities Network Grant

The Town Council was successful in obtaining a grant from the Cultural Communities Network in the sum of £5000 to arrange community events and projects in the library to support activities and projects that bring people together and offer support to more vulnerable residents. The grant can pay for professional fees, equipment, online support etc. and the network can help organise and set up the projects. They can also source volunteers to help with the project and offer training for the volunteers to take over the initiative once the grant money is used.

To date we have run family sessions over the summer holiday for four weeks, with an artist in residence to incorporate music, song, finger puppets and crafts. There were two sessions per day which were free of charge and led by an external organisation to promote craft and classical music to families with children aged 0 – 11 years. All the sessions were very successful and most were fully booked.

We have also purchased a “Friendly Bench” which will shortly be installed in the Memorial Garden at the Civic Centre to encourage communication between strangers and have a friendly chat.

We are currently working on an Intergenerational music project incorporating listening to music on vinyl and discussing various strands from the music including art, yoga and creative writing. The workshops will involve both students/younger people and older residents from the Town. The three workshops will start on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February, 1.30pm – 3pm and will include students from Winstanley School, whom we are working closely with on this project.

We are also running five workshops on Saturday mornings 10.30am – 12.30pm called “Grow and More”. These workshops will involve working outside with nature in various ways including spring bulbs planting bulbs and thinking of spring, “Blackcurrants for Everything” which includes a mindful walk to the apple orchard and crafting in the library after the walk. The third workshop will include making bug/bee homes and considering pollinator plants. The last two workshop ideas will be led by those attending the previous sessions.

These workshops will be arranged and run by an external organisation that has been purchased using the grant money received from the Cultural Communities Network. All the workshops are primarily aimed at adults and vulnerable residents that find it

difficult to connect with the community and join in events but they are open to all residents to attend and all activities are free for everyone. The Local Area Co-ordinator has been working closely on all the events and has contacted vulnerable residents to encourage and support them to attend the events and to possibly volunteer to help run events.

A provisional date of 26<sup>th</sup> March has been set aside for a celebration day in the library to bring all the things learnt into one activity day.

Work is also in progress with the Braunstone Heritage Archive Group to provide display units and notice boards for the library which will be purchased from the grant along with providing Tracing Family Trees workshops to support local residents to trace their ancestors.

### Volunteers

Two community engagement events were held in November/December 2021 where the local community were asked to attend and discuss what activities they would like to see in the library. These sessions were well attended and results collated with the top two activities that residents wanted to see in the library, were the return of the weekly Coffee Morning and Story Time for young children. Work was also undertaken to recruit volunteers to help with activities and we have now recruited several volunteers who have agreed to restart the weekly coffee morning on Wednesday mornings in the library, as from 26<sup>th</sup> January, between 10.15pm and 12pm. All residents are welcome to attend for a chat and a drink and there are plans to expand the activities taking place during the coffee morning once it becomes established.

We have also been able to recruit volunteers to run a Children's Story Time session on Friday mornings between 10.30am and 11am for pre-school children. These sessions will commence on 4<sup>th</sup> Friday and will encourage families to come into the library and provide an opportunity for young children to come into the library and enjoy books, story time and music.

Volunteers are also keen to initiate new projects in the library and several ideas will be discussed once the Coffee Morning and Story Times have become established.