

## Minutes to meeting - Whittlesey Focus on Community Group

### 12/11/25 Teams Online

<b>Present</b>	Hayley Wynn, Nichola Fosbueary, Julie and Rob Windle, Jakki Racey, Irene Henson, Marija Lysak, Lucille Bingham, Roy Gerstner, Jason Sadler, James Horner, Sherrie Bossett, Deborah Katzenelson, Jane Randells, Debbie Lee
<b>Apologies</b>	Steph Webb, Andy Coles, Carl Suckling, Zoe Dimmock
<b>Agenda Items</b>	<b>Welcome from the Chair</b> – Marija welcomed all to the meeting, short introductions by everyone, and contact details added to the chat for new attendees
<b>Guest Speaker</b>	Deb Lee – Social Enterprise East of England – please see attached slides – if you would like more information or to contact Deb direct her email address is: <a href="mailto:deb.lee@seee.co.uk">deb.lee@seee.co.uk</a>
<b>Community updates</b>	<p><b>Phoenix Youth Group</b> - No representation from Phoenix Youth Provision again this month.</p> <p><b>Rob Windle</b> – Rob suggested partners putting a paragraph together to add to the Sports and Community booklet he puts together so this information can be shared and avoid duplication.</p> <p><b>Julie Windle</b> – WEFA Julie advised that they have contacted Cllr Boden to have discussions and a meeting re the foodbank many times and they are not being responded to.</p> <p><b>Rob &amp; Julie</b> – Remembrance service was well attended in Whittlesey and the surrounding parishes. May be worth partners considering purchasing a wreath for £20 for future services.</p> <p>Christmas extravaganza – Sat 13<sup>th</sup> December , the streets will have rides and stalls, 2pm-6pm , earlier time this year so more light and younger children can stay out longer . Helpers and Volunteers better timing so they are not home late. Change to the pricing wristband system , previous years it has been pay a fee of £5 then they can go on any rides they like. This year Increasing price to £7.50 on the day . Selling wristbands in advance at schools and shops and Libraries, selling early at the old price of £5. Reasonable way forward to pay for more different rides. Exchange token on the night for wristband, cutting down queues and pressure on the volunteers. Covers us for bad weather so people will still turn up as they have already paid. Blue badge disabled parking in a pacific zone so easy access to rides. Still looking out for extra support and Volunteers if anyone is interested in helping on the night please get in contact. Drawing competition at schools, winner will go on front page of the discovery magazine . Santa will be on the Buttercross.</p> <p>Compile list of events for 2026 so everyone can get organised, Volunteers hard to get so trying to organise everyone so events are on different dates. Online version /booklet, so Whittlesey can carry on having great events and most in the area.</p>

Calendar of events is a great idea; active community so encourage people to contribute if they are planning events.

Christmas Tree Festival taking place at St Mary's church taking place Fri/Sat/Sun 9/10/11<sup>th</sup> December.

Fundraising has taken place Rob thanked Whittlesey Town Council for their donation and Cllr Roy Gerstner for his personal donation, and Whittlesey charity. There will be a raffle with 25 quality prizes.

**Rob Windle** – Radio Fenland is at Peel House and fully independent – not linked with the youth radio, having all their own equipment etc, very quick turnaround and transformation of the station.

Rob invited all to go onto the show to promote events etc, timings are 9-10am in the studio at Peel House, and these sessions will go out live and then will be aired again on the following Monday and Wednesday so will be aired 3 times in total for one interview.

**Jakki Libraries** – Jakki reported that Scaldgate users are continuing to use the library. Next year is the National year of reading lots of events and activities will be planned both for adults and youth.

Starting a Crest Science club – these will be taking place on Saturday mornings for youngsters aged 4-6 years, once a month for 6 months.

**Sherrie** – huge thanks to Jakki and the library staff for putting sessions on – Scaldgate is still not a fully functioning venue at the moment. Positive feedback from Barnardo's staff re library staff. AK Retail – was formerly Yours clothing still continuing to support Barnardo's with their Christmas food hampers. This is on a referral basis from professionals. Christmas appeal taking place. 650 visits in October these numbers gone up in November to 700-750.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2026 the 3 South Fens centre's – March, Chatteris and Whittlesey will change back to Cambridgeshire County council Management and not Barnardo's. This is a really sad and distressing time for staff who are hoping to apply for roles. Staff are continuing to do amazing work with the hampers and appeal in full swing. James added huge thanks to Sherrie and the whole team.

Marija took the time on behalf of the whole group to wish Sherrie and James and the whole team the very best in the future.

**Irene Henson – New Queen Street Surgery** – A new ECG machine is looking to be purchased for the surgery – this will be through fundraising via a tombola sale – tickets are available from Irene on the NQSt PPG stall in High Street at the Whittlesey Extravaganza. Just over £600 has been raised from attendees of 3 Flu clinics, along with 240 prizes donated for the tombola.

**Cllr Roy Gerstner** – Following a cabinet meeting it was approved for enhancement of the Manor Leisure Centre. Enhance the swimming pool area – have one building not two – At the Friends of the Manor meeting Cllr Steve Count gave a presentation looking to cost around £18million + costings. This will move to the next stage around July 2026, then planning

will go on to planning. This will be the biggest single investment Fenland District Council have ever done.

**Hayley** - Christmas Golden Age event Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December at the GER in March. Golden Christmas appeal has been launched, huge thanks to fenland libraries who will have donation boxes again. Tesco march and Wisbech Tesco also have donation trolleys. Wrapping session will take place on 1<sup>st</sup> December. Presents given out at Christmas event. Huge thank you for partners who have come on board to help with this especially Jack from H.A.Y. monetary donations from Wisbech rotary, Anglian Water have kindly sponsored the gift bags, and Puzzler have donated 300 puzzle books. Funding has been sourced through the Head to Toe charity to give community groups funding to make items to add to the gift bags.

Information and advice sessions took place on 7<sup>th</sup> November in Whittlesey Library, approx. 45 attendees came to event and feedback from attendees and partners attending found the event very informative.

**Jane Randells** – Pathway Church – Been in the Parish for 6 years, first time attending the meeting, although received previous minutes from meetings. Look after Pondersbridge, St. Mary's, St. Andrew's and Coates.

The churches have received lots of toy donations and offered these to Barnardo's. Jane will check to see what and if still available and contact Sherrie directly.

Marija – Support Fenland – Social Enterprise for East of England , Whittlesey has been chosen for some social enterprise mapping, this is why Deb gave the earlier presentation. Looking for groups who would like to become a social enterprise. No meetings booked yet, CIC small network – deliver training about social enterprises. Trading rather than a charity. Invite organisations, different ways of working and tapping into funding streams. Looking for groups who are interested.

Support Fenland celebration event held Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> sept at Braza in March, really well attended event, was great to showcase the amazing success stories across Fenland.

27<sup>th</sup> November Volunteering groups meeting to be held at the Library from 10am- midday.

**Nichola** – reminded all about the new food poverty Initiative which is offering funding of up to £1000 for community groups , community fridges . Info below :

*This small grants programme is funded from the 2025/6 Household Support Fund (HSF), the rules of which allow for a proportion of the allocation to fund activities which will prevent vulnerable households falling into, or falling further into, crisis.*

*The aim is to support the development of community food initiatives such as social supermarkets and community pantries across Cambridgeshire to*

	<p><i>extend access to affordable, healthy food to more residents, particularly in rural areas, and to reduce food waste.</i></p> <p><i>How much can you apply for?</i></p> <p><i>This is a small grants programme, and we would expect most grants to be under £1,000, but exceptionally it can be more.</i></p> <p><i>All grant monies must be spent this financial year (by the end of March 2026)</i></p> <p><i>Your application must show how this grant will:</i></p> <p><i>Enable more people to access affordable, healthy food, particularly in rural areas.</i></p> <p><i>Reduce stigma and improve dignity</i></p> <p><i>Reduce food waste</i></p> <p><i>Improve health and well-being</i></p> <p>Successful Community Café event held at Whittlesey Library over 2 days on 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> November, this was in conjunction with the Cost-of-living event. The community café involved partners coming along to promote their services in Whittlesey. Leaflets were delivered to homes in Whittlesey, Coates and Eastrea. The café was a friendly social event for residents to get information all about where they live and also give suggestions about what they would like to see put on in their town especially in the Library. Lots of suggestions – baking group, colouring for mental health group, to name just a couple. More information to be shared at a later date.</p>
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Rota/Date of next meeting	<p><b>Organising the next rota and chair –</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> Jan - Jakki to Chair</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> March – Nichola to Chair</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May – Rob to Chair</b></p> <p>Marija thanked everyone for attending, and as this was the last meeting of the year took the time to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.</p>
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