

Witney Forum, Tuesday 6th February 2024 9.30-11.30
Upper Hall, Witney High Street Methodist Church

Attendees

Emma Fox	Age UK Oxfordshire
Lucy Price	OCC
Fiona Ruck	OCC
Kate Austin	OCC
Jan Chrystal	Home Start
Jason Huffadine	The Station Detached Youth & Witney Community Church
Katie Gamble	CAP
Lou Murphy	Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire
Faye Carrick	Witney Baby Bank
	Witney Food Bank
Lindsay Phillips	Aspire
Lorna Jones	Cottsway Housing
Asma Marshan	DWP
Annie Hathaway	Witney Town Council
Polly Inness	Witney Town Council
Justine Robinson-Bartlett	Oxfordshire Mind
Sonia Duraturo	Town Chaplains
Danielle Coram	WODC
Jenny Bennett	WODC
Martha Holland	WODC
Tamsin Gaskell	Apollos Clothing
Sally Heath	VLU
Barry Beadle	VLU
Emma Teasdale	Reducing the Risk of Domestic Abuse
Jo Edgley	Adult Social Care

Apologies

David Bates	Madley Park Residents Association
Amy Beasley	Locality Community Support Service, OCC
Helen Murray	PCSO
Angela Conlan	Oxford Health Arts Partnership
Kerry Hyatt	Dementia Oxfordshire

Community Insight Profile – presentation

Kate Austin & Fiona Ruck from Public Health at OCC took us through a presentation about Community Insight Profiles.

10 wards in Oxfordshire identified in the top 20% of the most deprived areas in England, including wards in Oxford City and Abingdon.

Looking for 4 other areas. From the data available it seems Witney would be a good area to do a profile on.

Kate & Fiona covered the aims of a Community Insight Profile and that it uses a community asset approach.

The following areas make up the content of a Community Insight Profile:

- Quantitative data
- Community insight
- Community assets
- Recommendations & Action Plan

The completed report will sit on OCC website.

We have around 11 months to complete the Profile for Witney, it will be published in 2025.

Would like to form a Steering Group from interested Witney Forum members to take the work forward and consider if others might want to be involved.

The purpose of a Community Insight Profile is to address inequalities and to find what the issues are.

There will be funding available for community grants (around £25,000) for projects to be taken forward. What support is needed in the community for health and wellbeing? The ownership is then rooted in the community.

There are 3 areas in Witney found to be the most deprived. Witney Central is in the top 10% most deprived nationally on some markers. This is using IMD data published in 2019.

Data from the 2021 Census shows a high percentage of social rental housing in Witney Central. Also, a high % of those who have never worked or long term unemployed. Self-harm amongst young people also higher than national average in Witney Central.

When talking about deprivation we are looking at the following 4 characteristics, where an area is deprived in at least one of these:

- Employment
- Housing
- Health
- Education

Community Insight Profile – discussion

It was confirmed that BOB ICB sit on the Health & Wellbeing Board where the work will be presented.

Our Community Builder working on the Windrush Valley/Smith's estate commented that this estate would be a good area to include in the Community Insight Profile. Sanctuary Housing manage the social housing properties on this estate.

Reducing the Risk may have some statistics about areas where domestic abuse is prevalent.

Citizens Advice asked about whether there would be a deeper dive into specific demographics in these areas, such as ethnicity and cultural barriers.

Home Start runs a group on the Smith's estate every week and commented on the effects Covid has had on education, speech & language, isolation.

Apollos Clothing noted the numbers of people arriving and leaving the area and felt it would be good if the quantitative data showed us how long people live in the area to get a feel for the movement of people.

Cottsway Housing would like to share the Community Insight Profile information with their Neighbourhood group.

Citizens Advice talked about the data they have on why people have been referred which may be useful for this work. The Food Bank also has this data.

ASC wondered how the Community Insight Profile work plan to target Hard to Reach groups. OCC will be running health clinics in the Witney area and this could be a good way to reach people. Chatterbox, WOCT buses and PCSOs were also mentioned as opportunities to reach people. Kate commented that their community researchers will visit groups and attend activities to reach people.

VLU noted that the social housing in Witney is not just concentrated in one area and that there is an amount of social housing on new housing developments.

The Town Council noted that it would be good to talk to schools to get an insight into family's needs and issues.

It was felt that Turning Point, social prescribers, Healthwatch Oxfordshire and Oasis church (based on the Smith's estate) would all be useful to engage with on this work.

Next steps

- Kate & Fiona to send a proposal, based on what the Forum members have said, on what the Community Insight Profile might look like. Martha to share.
- Set up a subgroup/Steering Group of Witney Forum members – next meeting will be in March to keep momentum going. Will use Teams as well as F2F for Steering Group meetings.
- Community Insight Profile produced by Feb 2025
- Action Plan created to take forward recommendations to try to reduce inequalities.

To note: the MSOA data suggests focussing on Witney Central area. Smith's sits outside the MSOA Witney Central, however, the team want to include it in the Community Insight Profile.

Updates

ASC – setting up several health clinics in Witney.

Reducing the Risk – raising awareness of domestic abuse. Working as a Community Friends Officer. Brand new post started 1 year ago. Has had contact with 1200 people in 10 months. There to listen, link and lend a hand. Carries out F2F visits as well as two online sessions a month. Would like to link into Faith groups to raise awareness.

VLU – continue with their volunteer driving and befriending services. Increased number of clients using their services and as a result they need more volunteers. Sally joined VLU in Aug 2023 to relaunch Witney Land Army. Working hard to set up community litter picks and a sensory garden next to Oxfordshire Mind offices. Looking to do some joint work with Carl, ranger for the Town Council. Sally also does some work with the Asylum Hotel linking hotel users with services, such as English tutors, Home Start, Apollos Clothing. It was noted the vast number of skills inside the hotel. Many are keen to volunteer but barriers to them doing so, such as getting a DBS check.

Apollos – used clothing charity. They are desperate to find a space. They would like their HQ to be in Witney. They are connected to around 12 organisations who refer and distribute the clothing. They have provided clothing for 250 individuals in Witney since October 2023. They distribute the clothing in bags made from curtains and bedding, all sewn by local volunteers.

Home Start – work with families where at least one child is under 5. They have 50 volunteers working 1-1 with families. Run groups as well – their 1-1 support feeds into the group.

Age UK Oxfordshire Community Links team – carry out Home Visits, phone calls, Chatterbox group in Witney, community buses, chatty table. Reaching out to rural communities. Holding a West Oxfordshire Partnership Meeting on 6th March at Carterton Community Centre.

Witney Community Church – starting detached youth work. Funding from Town Council. Youth workers will be out and about engaging with hard-to-reach young people. Calling it The Station – making connections to get the support they need.

Citizens Advice West Oxon – main office is in Witney. Do outreach in Chipping Norton. Case workers do Home Visits. Work with Cottsway. Need more volunteers. 70 pre-Covid, down to 35 now. Take referrals from ASC, the Food Bank.

Baby Bank – have been a registered charity for 18 months. Set up March 2020. Can be referred or self-referral. Supply nappies, wipes, sanitary products. Healthy supply of volunteers. Use a WhatsApp group to manage their volunteers. Volunteering is flexible - you don't have to be available at the same time every day/week. Did 51 deliveries in January 2024.

Food Bank – 53 parcels go out on average on a weekly basis. Faye works at the Food Bank W, T, F as well as a Trustee of the Baby Bank.

Witney Grief Support – peer to peer grief support. Meet at the Edge at Fat Lil's on the second Thursday of each month.

Aspire – based on Church Green, Witney. Appointment based. Offer counselling sessions, 1-1 sessions. Looking to run workshops. Busy networking. Provide housing benefit advice. One FT member of staff currently.

Cottsway – community investment in West Oxfordshire. Laptop loan scheme, organise litter picks, summer fun days, Storytime. Community Link Worker role – looking for Cottsway customers to apply.

DWP – helping people to find work. Attending Jobs Support Fair on Thursday 8th Feb 10-1.30 at Banbury Town Hall, together with Cherwell District Council. Helping young people find work. Attend stakeholder meetings. Keen for Witney Forum members to share their email addresses.

Oxfordshire Mind – can self-refer. Do not have to have a Mental Health diagnosis. Run peer support sessions, some specific, e.g., targeted at women, art based, evening sessions. Run short courses in assertiveness and communication skills, self-esteem. Safe Haven is their out of hours service. Open 365 days a year. This is in Oxford & Banbury only.

Witney Town Council – Skatepark going in. Open end March 2024. Running the Schools in Bloom wheelbarrows again. Donate to care homes afterwards. Town Council is turning 50 this year. There will be 3-4 events across the year to mark this. Hopefully running their 50 grants of £50 for groups. Community Window – if you would like to display something contact info@witney-tc.gov.uk