



Report to:	<i>Community Engagement Committee</i>
Tabled on:	<i>7<sup>th</sup> January 2020</i>
Agenda reference:	CE19/047 Update – Community Engagement Programme
Report by:	Liz Carroll-Wheat, Community Projects Officer

### **Overview:**

This report outlines our project delivery from November to January. It includes information on special events and an update of ongoing activities and networking/planning with partner organisations.

### **Events Update:**

**1.1 East Hunsbury Remembers** – Our community remembrance event was held on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November at Grange Wood Park – the memorial bench. The event was the culmination of a 4-month long community arts project.

The project itself grew from community requests for support with arts projects. We were approached early in the Summer by East Hunsbury Rocks Group, to support the creation of “Poppy Rocks”, as a way of marking remembrance in the area. Our input was to provide workshop space (our activity room and in main Library) for workshops (for children, families and adults), plus also to assist with promoting the idea to other partners.

We brought together the following groups, who created 500 plus rocks over a period of 4 months:

- EH Youth club
- EH Seniors
- Simon de Senlis preschool
- Wootton Park School
- 100th Northampton (Abbey Centre) Brownies and Guides
- Members of East Hunsbury Rocks
- Plus – over 50 individuals in our community

On the event day, we created a display of rocks in front of the memorial bench, including rocks which featured names of the fallen, from Northamptonshire. Members of the public also brought their own rocks, to add to the display. The rocks remained in place for the weekend, then becoming part of the hide and find ethos of the group. Every week, pictures are being shared on social media, by people of all ages, who are finding and hiding the poppy rocks.

Feedback has been impressive, with more groups asking to be part of Poppy Rocks for 2020. We are in discussion with the group leaders, to talk about development in to 2020.

The group now also book our activity room, once a month, for a session which attracts young mums and acts as a social networking group, as well as arts project meeting.

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Our other arts project, related to this event, was our Crafting Poppies activity. We approached Hunsbury Library Crafty Bees, to be partners in this. Using their first poppies, we then promoted the project via our social media and with direct approach to groups, subsequently attracting many participants. Again, this attracted a wide age range of participants who have not previously engaged in activities. Groups included:

- Library Crafty Bees
- The Crafty Sessions Group (started by our volunteers)
- Preschool groups
- WI's – East Hunsbury and The Martinis (younger WI group, some members live locally)
- Individual crafters – engaged via Facebook event

People shared their photos of their work on social media and day by day, people arrived at the parish office, to donate their poppies. As a result of the number of poppies created, we were able to create an impressive display at Hunsbury Library and to engage an artist, to create a commemorative wreath. This formed a key part of our event. Feedback from the public was very positive, both to our office and to Library staff.

On the event day, people who had made poppies for us, came to take part in our first memorial event – East Hunsbury Remembers (see 1.2 below).

## **1.2 East Hunsbury Remembers - Remembrance Event – Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November**

Our participants were keen to see an opportunity to share their work with the wider community, leading to our first community remembrance event for the parish. Our event was incredibly well supported, with an attendance of around 300 people, including many young families.

The location of Grange Wood Park memorial bench was chosen due to logistics, with car parking available at Library and Abbey Centre and Tesco. The hardstanding path to the bench was important in case of bad weather. Being close to our Library base, also allowed for people to come to move the rocks on the morning, without having to transport/carry a long way. Finally, the Library could have provided a base for an indoor activity, in case of bad weather.

Wreaths were laid by Cllr Claire White – as Chair of the Parish Council and by Cllr Maggie Allen – as Chair of Community Engagement. A Cross, made by East Hunsbury WI, was laid by their Chairperson, Val King.

The event was kept secular and simplistic, focussing on the people who had taken part in creating the installations, with a short reading and moment of silence.

Feedback to the event has been very positive:

- “Thank you – it was wonderful to have a place to gather together”
- “We normally go to the town centre event, but this was so much more meaningful for the children”
- “We aren’t religious and don’t attend church ceremonies – this was a perfect way to remember”
- “The rocks are an amazing idea – my children loved them”
- “Great to see the Tommy statues and the lamppost poppies, joined by these lovely poppy rocks and the knitted wreath display”
- “It felt like we are a real community”



**2020 ideas and planning** Feedback from partners and participants has been received and will be shared with this committee. All partners wish to be involved in 2020 project and event, plus new interest from:

- Abbey Centre community and user groups
- Local schools are interested in an outdoor poppy-project (possible cascade)
- East Hunsbury WI interested in creating another aspect to the event – with memorial crosses
- Adopt a Tommy – creation of additional Tommies, for local communities

### **2.1 Hunsbury Festive Fair – Sat 30<sup>th</sup> Nov**

This year we joined forces with Hunsbury Library, to organise a joint community festive event. Following meetings with other local organisations and schools, a joint event was promoted between EHPC and the Library.

Over 1000 people attended the event throughout the day.

Our role was to engage other community groups. We worked with East Hunsbury WI, to create a pop-up-WI-café (based on our Village Fete model).

We also brought on board East Hunsbury Primary School Choir – to perform at the event and they and other schools have asked to be involved in subsequent events.

Alongside this, EHPC ran a mulled wine and mince pie station – with pop up café area in our activity room.

We used the day to promote our activities to the public.

Thanks goes to our volunteers who helped with planning and running the activities on the day.

\*\*Feedback from participants is being sought and a joint meeting with Library team will follow in due course with information and ideas being brought to this committee.

### **2.2 The Community Christmas Tree**

The finale of the event was the switching on of our first community Christmas Tree by Father Christmas.

Reaction to the tree has been incredible – with postings and mentions on Social Media, emails from residents and with the community decorating the tree with their own baubles.

The installation of the tree now leaves us with the infrastructure (pit, lights and electrical supply) to install a tree year on year.

### **2.3 The Chairs Christmas Lights Competition**

Cllr Claire White launched the first Christmas Lights Competition in November. We used NN pulse & Link magazine, plus our Facebook page to promote the activity. As with the Christmas tree, it soon captured the imagination of the public.

Cllr White was joined by Cllrs Chaggar and Elliot, to drive throughout East Hunsbury, to find the best street and best individual house. On the evening of Friday 20<sup>th</sup> Dec, we presented the awards, to delighted recipients. The feedback on social media was excellent. Cups were presented to the winners, with jars of quality street for the runners up.

Best House – Lee Warren and Best Street – Hodnet Close.



### **3. General Engagement Programme**

#### **3.1 Litter Picks**

Community litter picks have continued, led by individual volunteers. This group have set up their own East Hunsbury Litter Pick FB page – to promote dates for picks. This information is shared via our social media.

Collingtree pub offered a free cup of coffee to participants for the last session.

Schools are also engaging in the programme, with Wootton Park School now holding litter picks (using our equipment). East Hunsbury Primary School will be taking part in picks, once weather improves.

Wootton Park School are also looking to support us with recycling of crisp packets (Library now being a drop off point for crisp packet recycling as part of national initiative led by Tera Cycle).

Meetings to take place in the early part of 2020 to look at how we can further support local litter pick initiatives and look at some key activity dates for the year.

#### **3.2 Crafty Sessions – Library Activity Hub**

Our programme of arts activities progressed in this period, with an increase in our daytime courses. We are supporting local artists to share their skills, by providing either our activity room, or the main Library space, as a free venue. Where the main library is used, we are working with Library management and their volunteer team.

The sessions are delivered to groups ranging from 6 – 30 participants. 10 sessions were held during this period. Sessions leaders include artist Pauline Boler (from EH Seniors) and Sarah Docker (EH Rocks).

Sessions have included Christmas themed crafts, arts for mindfulness and relaxation and rock painting.

These sessions are attended by a varied group of people who are new to parish council activities. These sessions are accompanied by our pop-up-café area.

#### **3.3 Wreath Making Workshop – Evening event**

The wreath making workshop is noted as a separate point, as this was our first evening session – which we organised as a test, to look at the appetite for evening events at the Library.

An overwhelming response led to the session being sold-out in 2 days.

25 people attended the workshop. This session brought a varied group of people who are new to parish council activities.

Feedback was incredibly positive:

- Can we have more of these sessions please
- Great to come to something in Hunsbury for once
- What a great use of the Library

\*\*Because of the success of this event – the Library team have asked for a meeting, to discuss future joint projects and to look at other options for use of the library as an out of hours event space.

\*\*Delivery of evening events does require additional support – to help with set up, hosting and clearing the space. We will need to look at our capacity to deliver any additional events.



### **3.4 The Big Sing – community singing sessions**

In September we were approached by a group of people who were keen to see a singing session promoted locally. Having met with Library Team, we agreed to test a Big Sing session, once a month in the main Library space.

We engaged local musician, Theresa Ellis, who delivers similar activities at Abbey Centre.

Two sessions have been held – 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month, with 30 – 35 participants taking part.

We work with Library volunteers to deliver the event, which is accompanied by our pop-up-café each time. The Café area leads to people staying for greater period of time and interacting.

We are working with Abbey Centre to operate an anti-clash diary, so that both singing events complement each other – Abbey Centre hosting theirs on Fridays. This is leading to people moving between locations, which is positive for both partners.

### **4. Activity Hub Area**

Our reception area is available for use as a pop-up-location for local partners. So far this has been used by our local Policing team, to hold community sessions. We will be looking at how we develop this offer during 2020. This can include promotion of our local Parish Council initiatives and involve local Parish Councillors.

Our activity room is now being offered out to local groups. We already have bookings for the year, for East Hunsbury WI and East Hunsbury Rocks Group, for monthly activities. Other partners have been to look at the room and are looking at hosting more resident/community meetings in the area. Where the room is too small, we are signposting people to the main Library and to Abbey Centre, again working on promoting our local partners and building capacity.

### **5. Joint Activities – with local partners**

We continue to network with our partners, to positive effect. Throughout 2019 we have been attending networking meetings and looking at how we can support other local groups.

- **Abbey Centre** – the Abbey Centre are now using our website for promotion of all their activities and contribute to our printed What's On listings. We continue to meet to talk about their Well Being Sessions, to look at how we might support. We worked with their team to support the Christmas Day Meal and are looking to meet with their Monday Group, to look at how we can help to promote their sessions, designed for those who are more socially isolated and offer a weekly meal. We are also continuing to follow development of their Friendship Café, which will launch Spring 2020.
- **WI** – meetings to take place in early 2020 to talk about involvement in community projects – Summer Fete, Remembrance Activities, Festive Fair.
- **Hunsbury Library** – continued development of joint initiatives – Library team are taking on board feedback from our groups and are looking at potential to support courses etc. Reading Groups, I.T. Classes, English Classes, plus starting to look at the potential for evening events.
- **East Hunsbury Litter Pickers** – continued support to promote litter picks.



## 6. Schools Projects

**6.1 School of Life Intergenerational Project** – 3 sessions were held at the Library, during the autumn – with Simon De Senlis Primary School. This was our first activity with this school. Feedback from all participants was very positive. Alongside this new school, new “Seniors” joined the volunteer group.

33 children attended the sessions, and 30 seniors.

Mrs Deboard – teaching lead – fed back that the project had been an overwhelming success for the pupils and that the effect had outweighed their initial perception of the activity. Children really liked meeting with and speaking with the Seniors.

We meet with the school at end of January, to look at ideas for more link projects. The school are already interested in joining in this year’s Poppy Project.

\*\*2020 School of Life – our project partner school will be East Hunsbury Primary School, with 3 dates already set up. This will be the first time that this school has engaged in our intergenerational programme.

## 6.2 Wootton Park School – Community Leaders

In November we were contacted by Wootton Park School. They had seen social media posts of our youth litter picks and school of life projects. We were invited to attend a meeting of their Community Leaders, which is a specific group of pupils who look at community initiatives. Jenny Evans from Youth Inspired Team attended the meeting with us.

A good session was had, where the current Parish Council initiatives were discussed. We also use the session to ask what interested/concerned the young people themselves. We have asked the group to think about how they might become involved in community projects and will meet at the end of January to hear their initial ideas.

## 7. East Hunsbury Seniors – Coffee Mornings and Get Active Programme

**7.1 Coffee Mornings** - This was a busy period as ever for our Seniors group. We continue to run fortnightly coffee mornings, which are attracting between 65 – 80 people to each session, including the usual mix of talks, quizzes and trips. Taking on board feedback from the group, we know that they like to have meetings which are simply “to chat”, mixed with talks. The social aspect of just getting together is vital to many, who do not get to mix with others on a regular basis.

**7.2 Get Active Programme** - Our focus to expand the variety of activities continued, with the Get Active Programme at Danes Camp Leisure Centre (another 6-session bi-weekly exercise class). Following very positive feedback from participants, the sessions will run again in 2020. In addition to the dance/exercise class, we will be trialling Tai Chi, with 3 sessions being delivered by our local tutor from Blacky More CC. Danes Camp team have closely followed this project, reporting that 25% of the attendees have gone on to register for other activities at the centre. We continue to talk with Danes Camp Team about how we can expand Get Active sessions for the wider community and promote the excellent range of activities on offer at the centre, especially to those who do not feel that exercise is for them.

\*\*Seniors Coffee Mornings – 2020 – all dates and venues have now been booked for 2020. The Seniors Reps meet in January to look at trips and special activities for the group.



## 8. Activities and Projects 2020

Full outline of Activities and Projects will be presented to Full Council on 21<sup>st</sup> January. This will include a look back at our first year our Community Engagement Programme.

Outline dates for key activities for info at this stage:

- Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July – East Hunsbury Village Fete
- Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> Nov – East Hunsbury Remembers
- Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> Nov – East Hunsbury Festive Fair & Tree Switch On
- Dec – The Chairs Christmas Lights Competition

Community Activities – for info at this stage:

- School of Life – intergenerational activities
- Seniors Coffee mornings and activities programme
- Crafty Sessions – at Hunsbury Library with pop up café – plus other venues
- Big Sing Sessions – at Hunsbury Library with pop up cafe
- Get Active Sessions – at Danes Camp
- Community Litter picks
- Wildflower Planting
- Schools Projects
- Remembrance arts projects (poppies, rocks and tommies)
- Celebration of Volunteers
- Walking Sessions

Added to these, will be other activities which we will look to support – ideas in development with Library and Abbey Centre partners and other community groups who approach us for support.