



## Brampton Village Hub Report for Brampton Annual Assembly

The Hub and its member organisations are all volunteer based. The Hub Board includes representatives from 13 organisations which between them have more than 100 volunteers offering more than 20 services in non pandemic times. In addition our Parish Council Chairman and our County Councillor are Board members.

This unique organisation was the brainchild of Peter Downes, our County Councillor, who recognised the benefits which would accrue from community organisations working together and in tandem with the 3 levels of local government and health services. On behalf of the Hub I would like to thank Peter for sharing his experience, wisdom and advice with us. As a consequence we have become a 'Recognised Organisation'. This has entitled us to grants and has led to referrals from Brampton Surgery; Hinchingsbrooke Hospital; Cambridgeshire County Council; Huntingdon District Council; The Alzheimer's Society; and The RAF Benevolent Fund.

Many thanks are also due to Brampton Parish Council and their Chairman, John Chitty, who have supported the Hub and been instrumental in making the Hub model work and develop. The Hub operational costs are provided by the Parish Council and meeting rooms made available for the range of activities that the Hub provides.

What has become clear since the pandemic started is that Brampton is a wonderful example of a caring community, with significant numbers of younger volunteers coming forward with offers to provide support during a very challenging period.

In March last year, Kye Liddle set up the Brampton Community Services Network (BCSN) recruiting around 50 volunteers to do the shopping / prescription pick up for vulnerable residents who were unable to do it themselves because of Covid lockdown. The Hub provided a kitty to support BCSN and volunteers to man a Helpline 5 days a week. A leaflet advertising the service was arranged by Peter Downes and was delivered to every household in Brampton. From the beginning it was recognised that loneliness would become a big factor and so efforts were made to ensure that volunteers got to know the people they were supporting, were local to the resident needing support and were allocated to be that household's support person for the duration. Over time volumes of calls for help dropped even though volunteers started to go back to work and the number of calls decreased. We are now down to a very few calls a week, almost all are referrals from external agencies. However support is still being provided to significant numbers of vulnerable residents.

During the whole of the past year **Diamond Hampers** led by Lianne Simpson, have done enormously important work, delivering food, donated by supermarkets or purchased with money raised, to families and individuals in Brampton who have had difficulties putting food on the table. The value of their work has been recognised by the County Council. During the year 140 households have benefitted from the service including 83 families from the service and 8800 meals have been delivered utilising Brampton volunteers.

As a consequence of Covid many Hub services have had to close down or provide support in different ways. Those managing to offer services are :-

**Dementia Friendly Village** - Support for carers of those living with dementia has continued via weekly online sessions. These include :-

- the ‘Singing Together’ choir, which is the subject of a Cambridge University international research project studying the impact of singing on people living with dementia (5 of the 495 couples involved are from Brampton);
- a weekly online session chat session for carers which has also included sessions with St Ives museum;

a weekly online session of ‘Love to Move’ exercise class run by a local representative of The British Gymnastics Association and which is being financed by the Hub; *the ‘Singing Together’ choir, which is the subject of a Cambridge University research project studying the impact of singing on people living with dementia;*

The sessions have been well supported.

A **Friday Club** was planned for last April with the objective of providing day centre facilities managed by Caring Together professional care staff. This would allow people living with dementia to be looked after in a safe environment whilst carers go off for the day and have some time to themselves. Research has shown that having ‘Me time’ has a beneficial impact on carer’s health. The opening of this facility has been postponed because of Covid.

**The Good Neighbour Scheme** whilst restricted in not being able enter the houses of people that they support have tried to continue the companion role by making regular telephone calls. Whilst requests for Blue Badges, Bus Passes and Benefit Applications support have sunk to very low levels there has been doorstep support for those that have requested it. Administration support for existing Scheme members has continued.

The **Social Health Walks Group** have continued with their weekly Thursday morning walks when the Covid related rules have permitted it. The after walk coffee and cake after the walk has had to be discontinued.

**The St Mary Magdalene church** have continued to provide support as best they can.

Those organisations **not able to continue services** during Covid are :-

- **ALBRAM**, which provides lifts to and from surgery and hospital appointments had to close down operations during the lockdown but is now intending to start up from 1 May using volunteer drivers who have been vaccinated.
- The **Befrienders Social Group** which meets on Friday mornings and provides an opportunity for a chat over tea and cake;
- **Brampton Community Library** normally open 3 times week and offering an inhouse stock of approximately 3,000 books; access to County Library Service books, audiobooks

and DVDs and access to Libraries at Home Scheme for those who cannot make it to the library;

- **Brampton Events Group** which organises village events. For example the Summer Fete; Christmas lights on the Green; Movie Afternoons; quizzes etc;
- **IT Mentoring & Support** Solving your computer problems and demonstrating how to use technology;
- **Huntingdon District Council Falls Prevention Exercise Sessions.** (Hub Financed)

There are two ongoing new services currently being planned. These are :-

- **The Brampton Jobs Club** The objective of the Club being to help people back into employment. It is being set up with support from Huntingdon District Council in anticipation of increasing unemployment rates. The District Council will specify the role of Jobs Clubs and make expert advice available.
- **The Brampton Men's Shed** The objective of the Shed is to provide a social environment and the opportunity for people to feel they are doing something useful. There is ample research showing that there are significant health benefits, particularly to older men. Brampton Surgery have issued a statement of support. Nearly 50 people have registered an interest in joining. The Shed will take in furniture in need of refurbishment brought in by residents or from local recycle centres and also provide a bicycle maintenance service. Training will be available for members and during sessions specifically designed to attract young people. Brampton Parish Council have provided a site on the Memorial Playing Field and a grant. Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdon District have also provided grants. Planning permission has been granted. More funding is required to make the Shed a reality and applications for grants are in the process of being prepared. We will not know until August / September whether we have been successful with our bids.

I would like to thank David Pickavance the Hub Secretary and Trevor Stone the Hub Treasurer for their support and hard work during the year.

Peter Menczer

Chairman Brampton Village Hub

