

## **Interim Report to Macclesfield Town Council November 2024**

Supporting MTC to develop a VCFSE network for Macclesfield by way of:

- Supporting Macclesfield groups with their development and income generation and income diversification
- Creating a bank of Volunteers to work with the Town Council and associated groups in the community
- Supporting the Town Council Grants programmes to organisations that deliver services in Macclesfield and provide assistance to those organisations
- Assisting VCF organisations to become more environmentally sustainable

As part of this agreement, CVS Cheshire East will produce summary reports for the Finance Committee on progress made as well as a year-end report. This summary outlines the work carried out between June and August under the general headings below.

### **Supporting Macclesfield groups with their development and income generation and income diversification**

CVS provides a staff member dedicated to Macclesfield, to whom the Council signposts groups needing additional support. In the past three months we have provided support to five Macclesfield based organisations:

#### Disability Information Bureau

The trustee board signed a service level agreement with CVS to support the DIB until the end of March 2025, with Aoife Middlemass as acting Manager, together with support from other members of the CVS team. The DIB was awarded a £10k grant to support individuals and groups with IT classes and a further £10k to support volunteering in terms of management, training and events. The DIB has also been increasing its income via room bookings and donations and is currently working to streamline work processes in the organisation.

#### Speaking Up Speaking Out

Following its unsuccessful application to the National Lottery, CVS is working with SUSO to provide any support needed as the charity works to streamline its services in the wake of funding cuts etc.

#### Macclesfield Community Artspace

CVS met with Cheshire East Council's cultural economy development manager to discuss a small pot of £10k their department still had to allocate. CVS suggested Macc Artspace as a good recipient for such a grant because of the relationship it has with the Town Council and local community, and how much it can contribute to town events and activities with such a

grant. Lucy Thomson-Smith from the Council met with Jane Griffiths from Artspace to discuss the brief.

### Elov

The cargo bike delivery service met with CVS in September to discuss setting up a charitable arm of the business. We discussed the different forms that could take and the business decided to apply to be a Community Interest Company, which it did successfully. They will be in touch in the near future to discuss organisational strategy.

### Make It Macclesfield

CVS met with Lauren Pears and Lynne Jones in October to discuss the acquisition of the old M&S building in Macclesfield. Make it Macclesfield received a grant from the Community Energy Fund to carry out a feasibility study around the building and its usage. They have a year to carry out market research and create a strategy for the building and CVS put them in touch with Cheshire Community Action who have expertise on this type of building acquisition and social enterprise. CVS can support with organisation strategy and consultation within the community.

### Additional CVS support in Macclesfield

Although not directly funded by Macclesfield Town Council, CVS has been supporting other organisations in Macclesfield. Graham Brown, Cheshire East Food Co-ordinator, has been working closely with the food banks and food pantry in the town, signposting them to sources of funding and working hard to promote more collaborative ways of working. Estelle Worthington works one day a week with Refugees Welcome, supporting the volunteers who are helping refugee families to settle in the town. Previously the role was funded by CEC, but that has ended and Refugees Welcome have retained Estelle to assist them. Refugees Welcome is in the process of merging with Congleton Area Ukrainian Support Network.

### **Create an active bank of volunteers to work with Macclesfield Council and associated groups in the community.**

Work is also continuing to promote volunteering generally in Macclesfield via the CVS volunteering hub. As part of the general management of the DIB, more volunteering opportunities have been created to support people not in employment, who need to develop new skills and confidence. The DIB now has three new volunteers and one in recruitment.

### **A robust community grants programme**

CVS participates in the Council's grant giving programme by reviewing applications and successful recipients have been contacted with offers of support. CVS provides help with grant writing and with monitoring and evaluation of projects to all recipients and additional guidance to unsuccessful applicants to enable them to apply again. In the latest round we have reviewed applications from Puss Bank Primary School, P3 East Cheshire Eye Society and Upton Youth & Community Project. Puss Bank School and P3 have been contact with offers of support.

### **Environment network established for VCFS organisations**

CVS continues to keep in contact with and support environment groups in Macclesfield where needed and asked.

End of report.