**Interim Report to Macclesfield Town Council**

**August 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

In May the DIB held an emergency members’ meeting to pass a resolution that would close the charity, due to financial difficulties. CVS and Macclesfield Town Council both separately offered support to the CEO and Board before the meeting was held, to explore ways of saving the charity, but this was not taken up. The meeting was not quorate however, so the resolution was not passed, but the Board did agree to meet with Macclesfield Town Council, CVS and Cheshire East Council who offered support in an effort to keep Shopmobility and if possible, the DIB, open. A further meeting held with trustees and CVS resulted in the appointment of CVS to manage the charity through the redundancies which had been made, and also to discuss the reprofiling of the Welfare, Wellbeing, Work project funded by The National Lottery. That has been carried out and the project will continue, enabling the DIB to continue employment of four members of staff. Shopmobility is also continuing its invaluable service to the community with its staff member and volunteer support. CVS has also put a fundraising plan together to apply for more funding and also to generate income in order to keep the charity sustainable. CVS is also in the process of preparing a service level agreement to keep Aoife Middlemass as interim manager in place until the end of the financial year. By that time, it is hoped the DIB will be in a better position to attract a full-time manager.

Speaking Up Speaking Out

CVS provided assistance earlier in the year with the follow up questions from the National Lottery, around the application submitted by SUSO in January. Prior to the Lottery advisor coming to visit the charity in June, SUSO asked for more advice on additional information requested by the Lottery. They are now awaiting a decision.

Cre8

CVS met with the new Manager of Cre8 Jonathan Aiken, to talk through their fundraising plan. They did not attract much funding last year and are now running a grocery in three locations which is costing them money to stock. Their lack of funds is affecting their core work eg their music project but the grocery does provide valuable volunteering opportunities and apprenticeships. We suggested an application to the National Lottery’s Reaching Communities Fund that would cover all of Cre8s projects, including the grocery. Otherwise they could apply to Macclesfield Town Council for immediate grocery support whilst they look to hand over the groceries in Bollington and Hurdsfield to a more local community group to run.

Save Danes Moss Community Group

The group contacted CVS for advice as they are a constituted group but are unincorporated. They wanted advice on different forms of incorporation as may want to begin legal proceedings against companies in the future and need to protect themselves. They also have plans to run a nature restoration project. Several options were presented to the group for consideration and further support will be given in reviewing the draft application for CIC or CIO.

Citizens Advice Cheshire North

CACN had a meeting with CVS to discuss the different Community funding pots from Cheshire East Council and it was decided that the Cost of Living Resilience Fund was the best option for Citizens Advice to develop their support at Macclesfield Hospital for patients, both pre and post-discharge. The charity is also applying to the National Lottery’s Reaching Communities Fund and sent CVS its draft application for comment. A further follow up meeting is planned.

**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 will be created to support people not in employment, who need to develop new skills and confidence.

**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 to them to apply again. In the latest round we have reviewed applications from World Harvest Festival, Macclesfield Juniors FC, Tytherington Juniors FC, Cre8 and Upton Youth & Community Project.

**Environment network established for VCFS organisations**

CVS continues to keep in contact with and support environment groups , both in Macclesfield and in a wider context and it will feature in the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Alliance in Cheshire East, whose conference will be held on October 15th in Crewe.

End of report.