ENCLOSURE 10

Lapworth & West Kenilworth Division County Council News November 2021

WCC launches new loneliness campaign

Warwickshire residents who feel lonely or socially isolated are set to benefit from a countywide campaign which looks to provide advice about health and wellbeing, signpost to local support services and offer tips and advice on beating loneliness and isolation.

According to research, loneliness is said to be as harmful to health as other well-known risk factors such as obesity and smoking cigarettes and substantial evidence shows that having a lack of social connections can significantly increase the risk of premature mortality, so finding ways to help residents suffering from isolation is one way we can improve overall health for everyone.

In a recent survey undertaken across Warwickshire, half of respondents reported experiencing loneliness. A figure which is echoed on a national level, with research conducted by the Campaign to End Loneliness finding that 45% of adults – the equivalent of 25 million people - feel occasionally, sometimes or often lonely.

Those in need of help and support can look out for resources and help on WCC's social media channels (Twitter @Warwickshire_CC, Facebook @WarwickshireCountyCouncil or Instagram @bestwarwickshire) or visit the website at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mental-health-wellbeing/talking-loneliness

Fair Chance Employer scheme to be launched

The Fair Chance Employer programme is designed to work collaboratively with education providers and employability groups, helping employers to "level up" their opportunities by offering Warwickshire residents with supportive needs equal access to careers.

The scheme, which will launch in November 2021, aims to promote and celebrate inclusive employment and will call out to employers who would like to become a Fair Chance Employer and engage with high-priority talent pools keen to access work opportunities.

The programme aims to unlock more than 200 jobs to jobseekers who experience mental health, disability and learning barriers, as well as women and Armed Forces veterans returning to work, young offenders, young care givers and care leavers.

The Fair Chance Employer programme will be led by a dedicated Warwickshire County Council Business Skills Advisor who will work with employers to increase awareness of inclusivity and diversity in the workplace, whilst creating opportunities for work experience, internships and apprenticeships to support progression into full time employment.

The Warwickshire Skills Hub, home to the Fair Chance Employer Programme, will also launch a digital jobs board, creating a platform for Fair Chance Employers to list their jobs and interact with potential candidates in a less formal way. If you are an employer who is recruiting and would like to explore how the Fair Chance Employer programme could help your business then contact the Warwickshire Skills Hub team on skillshub@warwickshire.gov.uk

A tree for every resident in Warwickshire

A leafy Warwickshire for all residents to enjoy as Warwickshire County Council commits to extensive tree planting.

With the 2021/22 tree planting season underway, and as world leaders gathered in Glasgow for COP26, WCC has ambitious tree planting plans for coming years that will see a tree for every resident planted across the county.

This tree planting has been strategically planned to restore parts of forests and wooded areas that have been long lost to time, such as the ancient Forest of Arden, which once covered most of the county and beyond into Staffordshire and Worcestershire.

To this end, the Council has been successful – along with partners in the District and Borough Councils – in their bid for £212k from the Forestry Commission's Local Authority Treescape Fund to plant 2000 standard trees. These native trees will be restoring hedgerows on local authority-owned farms and public open space in the more rural areas of the county.

Warwickshire County Council produces plan to improve bus services

Warwickshire County Council has reacted to the government's National Bus Strategy by producing the county's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

The plan sets out the improvements that are needed to transform bus services in Warwickshire, as well as being a document which will support the council in its bid to central Government for a £150million share of the £3bn funding available to local authorities to help boost bus travel over a three-year period (2022-2025).

The plan has been developed collaboratively with local bus operators following engagement with the local community and other partners. This included a county-wide survey with a total of 1,563 responses, engagement with user groups and interviews with stakeholders. Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

New look Local SEND Offer set to make a difference in Warwickshire

The Local Offer is a one stop shop for parents and carers and families of children with SEND up to the age of 25 to help them to access clear and accessible information on education, health and social care, training and employment, leisure and support in preparing for adulthood. It aims to provide information and support from early help through to more complex needs.

The new and improved site - https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send has been produced in collaboration with parents, carers and children whose experiences and opinions have helped shape the new look and feel to ensure that the site is easily accessible and has the right information and advice. Warwickshire County Council would welcome any feedback to fis@warwickshire.gov.uk.

WCC unveils Children and Young People Strategy 2021 – 2030

Warwickshire County Council Cabinet has approved a new Children and Young People Strategy which outlines the council's commitment to ensuring children and young people have a voice and are supported to be the best they can be. The strategy's goals and ambitions were shaped by feedback from

a survey completed by over a thousand young people across Warwickshire and will be the council's approach to working with partners, families and communities between now and 2030 to help youngsters reach their potential.

The strategy reflects the exciting new Child Friendly Warwickshire programme which is bringing the county together in a collective effort to ensure our children and young people are heard, safe, happy, healthy and equipped with the skills to lead the best lives they can.

To find out more about Child Friendly Warwickshire and to get involved visit https://api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-1642278725-5117

New website helps to highlight Adoption

Adoption Central England (ACE) - the regional adoption agency for Coventry, Solihull, Herefordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire – improved their website to make it easy for people to understand the whole adoption process and offer a useful resource for everyone including birth parents, adopted adults or prospective and current adopters.

ACE is the first adoption service to become a certified Dyadic Psychotherapy Practice (DDP). ACE apply the principles of DDP within all relationships, inviting open and engaged conversation so that everyone feels heard and their experiences validated. This is also replicated on the website which highlights that ACE treat everybody who needs support with empathy, acceptance and respect.

The new resource allows for easy access of information and navigation around the site, key features include:

- Steps to adoption
- Family Connexions – a service for birth family members
- Clear signposting to support
- Information about step-parent adoption
- Information for adopted adults

More info at https://www.aceadoption.com/

Help for residents to meet household costs through winter

Central Government recently announced that a new £500 million Household Support Fund grant will be made available to local authorities in England, as the country continues its recovery from the pandemic.

Warwickshire's allocation is £3.47million to cover the period 6 October 2021 to 31 March 2022. The funding will be distributed via Warwickshire County Council's Local Welfare Scheme.

Priority support is being offered to families with children eligible for benefits related free school meals during school holidays as it is recognised that some families who are struggling financially have difficulty covering these periods. Those eligible and registered children will automatically be receiving support towards food costs over the October half term via Huggg supermarket vouchers.

ENCLOSURE 10

Cllr John Cooke November 2021