**MEETING OF THE ROYSTON COMMUNITY NETWORK**

**WEDNESDAY 12th FEBRUARY 2020**

**AT THE**

**COOMBES COMMUNITY CENTRE, ROYSTON**

**PRESENT**

Robert Smith - RCA and Joint Network Co-ordinator

Lindsay Davidson - RCA, Naturally Royston and Make Lunch. Joint Network Co-ordinator

Richard Williams - Royston Health Walks

Rosemary Bateman - Royston History Society

Peter Morgan - Royston Arts Society

Cate Hall - Trinity Life Church

Tracy Aggett - Home-start Royston & S. Cambs

Ivana Pakozdyova - Coombes Residents Group

Richard Parussel - Burns Road Heroes

John Davies - Friends of Royston Healthcare

Michael Young - Corvus Amateur Dramatic Society

Gillian Boyd - Royston Speak Out Club

Richard Julian - Compassionate Neighbours

Carl Filby - Creative Royston

Cllr Fiona Hill - Herts County Council. Cllr Tony Hunter NHDC

**Apologies** received from: Trudie Harrington(Age UK), Susan Thornton (Brian

Racher Trust), Ray Munden (Rotary), David Wherrall (RCT), Sarah Hillman( (Royston Community Health), Diana Barker (Melbourn Community Allotment)

1. **Ellen Nowak from Kettles Yard University of Cambridge** gave a short presentation on her work with the Royston Cave project, which is part of an East of England initiative funded by the Arts Council. She told us that this involved a short film being made, workshops held for young people and a group being formed of 10 local residents who were meeting in the Cave to look at questions sent to them by local people. The idea was to celebrate the unique value of the Cave and draw on its history to answer 21st century issues, using a collective technique of unconscious reasoning. She left us with question cards which she invited members to send to her by email to [ellen@kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ellen@kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk) or leave in the box in the lobby, and also invited members and their groups to come to a meeting being held in the Town Hall on the 9th March.

2. **New Members Introductions: Richard Parussel** told us about his project called the **Burns Road Heroes,** which he and a small group of local residents had started some months ago. They were trying to bring the local community together at a local level to help each other either with practical needs or just with friendship. They had received some good responses so far and hoped to bring an increasing number of people together in this way.

**Richard Julian from Garden House Hospice who has set up a Compassionate Neighbours Scheme**  which currently runs a support group in Stevenage and also recently set up one here at the Community Centre. Julian told us about the weekly drop-in sessions they were running at the Centre for sufferers or carers who have a life limiting condition and were in need of support and advice. He had also formed a group of 15 local residents who had had two days training to become “Compassionate Neighbours”, who offered friendship and a listening ear to elderly/frail people or who had life limiting conditions. A minimum commitment of an hour a week was required for a visit to a matched resident and he was looking to recruit more people as the need had proved so great across North Herts. Social isolation was a big issue for this sort of person and the help that the Compassionate Neighbours could offer was invaluable.

**Cate Hall from Trinity Life Church**, told us about the community work that they do through Make Lunch, Food Bank etc. She also told us that TLC will be moving into the building in Market Hill that was formerly known as the House Youth Drop in Centre and that they hope to turn it into a Community hub as well as a base for themselves. The Evangelical Church will be taking over the Food Bank, hopefully in March, but in the meantime families can access food from the Letchworth Food bank via the CAB in Royston , where food is being sent on request from clients.

**Rosemary Bateman from the Royston History Society** told members that her group met on the 1st Thursday of every month at 8pm in the Town Hall. It was one of Royston’s oldest groups and was also heavily involved in the Royston Museum and used to manage the Cave until quite recently.

3. **Volunteer Skills training and Development.** Discussion took place aboutthis issue and members shared their individual methods and procedures for helping volunteers to feel valued, supported, trained and also motivated, as well as helping them to develop relevant skills. An information sheet was handed out to those present, giving some tips and advice on how best to work with their volunteers in this respect.

4. **Herts 2020 Year of Culture and the Plastic Free Royston 2020 project.** Lindsay explained to members what these two initiatives were about and handed out relevant flyers and information leaflets about them. She asked that members would pass on this info to their members and encourage them to get involved, especially the Plastic Free Royston project, which is encouraging residents to give up three non-recyclable plastic products this year. Naturally Royston who are running the project, will also be approaching Businesses, Schools and Community meeting places such as the Library etc to become partners and sign a pledge to carry out the objectives. This a national initiative being run by Surfers Against Sewage and many of our neighbouring towns have already signed up to take part.

5. **Information/News Updates from members.**

**Ivana Pakozdyova from the Coombes Residents group** said she was settingup a new web site called the Royston Hub in which she hoped to display groups who needed volunteers or publicity about their events and work etc and asked everyone to contact her (see her email address in the mail out) if they wanted to be on her web site. She would also have links to other web sites like Herts Help etc.

**Richard Williams from Royston Health Walks** said that he had set up a non-walking group which met for a chat and a cup of coffee at 1.30pm in the Heath Sports Club on the same day and time as the walkers met up. He had 6 members for this so far and it was proving very popular. He now had a total of 170 members for his group.

**Tracy Aggett from Home-Start** explained that as they now had to raise £159,000 a year to fund their work, since losing all their statutory funding a few years ago, they had to hold many fund raising events throughout the year. She mentioned a Race Night being held at Meldreth Village Hall on 22nd February at 7pm and tickets for this were £13 which included a Ploughmans Supper and also a Ceilidh evening on Saturday14th March at 7.30pm at King James Academy Senior Site. They were also starting a new Volunteers Training Course on Tuesday 25th February which would run for 5 weeks.

**Carl Filby from Creative Royston** said that the theme for this year’s Arts Festival in September would be “ A Question of Balance” and asked members to channel anything they did that was Arts related, through Creative Royston as they wanted to help Groups as much as they could in this area.

**The next meeting is now set for WEDNESDAY 17th JUNE 2020 10.30 am at the Coombes Community Centre.**