

**Notes of the South Staffs Strategic VCSE Forum
Held on Wednesday 15th September 2021 10:00-
12:00**

Present:		Apologies:	
Anne Ross Yvonne Priest	Support Staffordshire Staffordshire Library Service	Val Chapman	South Staffs work clubs
Helen Heywood Scott Barnes Sonja Oatley Jade Gough	Kingswood Trust Kingswood Trust Community Connector Severn Trent Community Fund	Jayne Reynolds Maz Kull Maggie Quinn Rob Sharratt John Pike	SCVYS Compton Care SSDC SSDC Wombourne Parish Councillor
David Knowles Annette Lloyd Caroline Bradford Eunice Burke Keith Elder Helene Elder James Battrick Scott Barnes Carole Bagnall Mike Davies	Forest of Mercia Friends of Bilbrook SPLW for SuS Brighter Futures Community Connector	Jackie Turner Ann Richards	Cheslyn Hay Community Choir Brewood Dementia Support Group SCC
	SAGE Kingswood Trust CAB County Councillor	Lucy Gratton Kate Tomson Raynor Gillian Wilshaw Nick Kelly	Staffordshire Children's Centres Beat the Cold Sporting Communities

1. Welcome, introduction and Apologies

Anne Ross opened the virtual Forum, welcomed everyone.

Introductions conducted

2. Presentations

- **Yvonne Priest – Staffordshire Library Service – Yvonne.priest@staffordshire.gov.uk
*Autumn Activities and Updates***

In September there was a Rediscover your Library Campaign, to encourage people after COVID to reconnect with their local libraries. There is an Order and Collect service available, computers for use with printers, local activities and events. This month is the start of the Annual Staffordshire History Festival. It will take place mostly online. It can be found on Staffordshire Libraries Facebook/Twitter pages. South Staffs Work Clubs are back on – Codsall & Bilbrook are open on Wednesdays at Trinity Methodist Church, Wombourne is open on Tuesdays at Wombourne Library Community Centre, Featherstone is on Fridays at Featherstone Community Centre, Great Wyrley is on Fridays (fortnightly) at Great Wyrley Scout & Guide Centre, Huntington is on Tuesdays (fortnightly) at Create Community Hub, Penkridge is on Tuesdays (fortnightly) at Penkridge Methodist Church, Perton & Pattingham is on Thursdays (fortnightly) at Perton Library. The Codsall Library when it moves to the Codsall Community Hub will be open on Monday 11th October. It will be closed from Thursday 23rd September until the new library opens. A Libraries & Arts Project has started at Perton running through October on Thursday mornings 10-12 with a Creative Hub at Perton Library.

In addition, at Perton Library there is an exhibition about the excavations of the RAF Perton Site during 2019 and 2020 on 5th October – 7th December.

There is going to be a free 5 week Family History Course at Perton Library from 5th October – 2nd November.

The Community Development Team at Compton Care are reopening the Bereavement Information Hubs at Perton and Wombourne Libraries. Perton – Second Friday of the month – 2pm – 4pm. Wombourne – First Monday of the month – 1.30pm – 3.30pm.

- **David Knowles – Forest of Mercia (david@forestofmercia.com)**
Trees Project & Updates

Trees For Climate is a £12million government funded scheme to plant trees to fix carbon across England. Currently 13 Community Forests in England. Forest of Mercia have been going for over 30 years. The funding will allow to plant over 1300 acres of woodland across England. The trees that will be planted from roughly November 2021 into March 2022 will store over 100,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide which will also impact on wildlife and people's wellbeing and environment.

Areas that Forest of Mercia cover is Staffordshire and the Black Country. Intend to plant over 25 hectares by March 2022. Looking for local private and public landowners who would be interested to get involved in the tree planting. They can offer funding towards the trees, materials and maintenance. (trees@forestofmercia.com) They work with schools in the area, this season they are involved in planting 5 orchards for community use.

Forest of Mercia also deliver community and education work. Based at Hilton Green, Essington. It's a 7 ½ acre site. Community work mainly deals with the maintenance of the site and projects. They recently completed building an outdoor kitchen. Projects available to all ages and all abilities. Programme of training courses available on their website and Facebook page. Pre COVID, they did some work with crafts groups at local libraries including Codsall Library.

- **Presentation available:** www.supportstaffordshire.org.uk
- **For Further Information visit:** <https://www.forestofmercia.com>
- **Helen Heywood – Kingswood Trust (helen.heywood@wolverhampton.gov.uk)**
(Scott.Barnes@wolverhampton.gov.uk)
Nature Connections Project and update on services

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund has gone a long way to support schools with their environmental curriculum. Has supported volunteering activities and helped bring younger volunteers and older volunteers out of isolation. Schools are now coming back for residential stays after COVID, includes an educational experience which is adventurous and helps them learn life skills. A 9 - acre site which includes ponds, meadows, orchards and a range of animals. Takes place

throughout the calendar year and is available to all abilities. Other groups can book in as well to stay over at Kingswood such as organised groups or families/friends. They also have day visits available for schools and community groups, to include bush craft activities, garden growing, camping events, music festivals. A full calendar event diary will be available soon.

'Nature for All' project aimed at getting people out into nature, with gardening, nature surveying, etc. Volunteers have been building raised beds which helps them meet other people, learn new skills and benefit from being outside. Volunteering opportunities on Mondays, Tuesdays and Saturdays. Work with a variety of organisations.

Events available on Tuesdays and Saturdays for families to enjoy – Park and Play Tuesdays and Wild Walk and Nature Play Saturdays. Have recently become a Place of Welcome. About to join the Walking for Health Scheme.

Nature Connections Project helps with social interaction and combatting loneliness and isolation. Many volunteers help with the projects, particularly the elderly..

Nature4All Project volunteers are aged 16-24 and work with the older volunteers.

- **Presentation available:** www.supportstaffordshire.org.uk
- **For Further Information visit:** www.discover-kingswood.org.uk.

- **Jade Gough – Severn Trent Community Fund Officer (jade.gough@severntrent.co.uk)**
Severn Trent Community Fund Overview

Fund opened in January 2020 for applications. Committed to giving out £10million over 5 years. For projects that are focused on community wellbeing. Eligible organisations need to be not for profit, with appropriate governance and within the Severn Trent region. Registered charities, CIC's, local authorities, schools, sports clubs have applied. 3 key themes – People close to the environment, Places for our projects to help create best places to live in and use and Environmental projects. Must have a link to at least one theme. For new projects only. Can support with running costs for new projects. Have to apply for at least 51% of the cost that is needed. Three different grant sizes – 2x £10,000, £10,000 - 75,000, £75,000 - £200,000. For over £10,000 the organisation would need to be registered, and would need to contribute 10% to match funding. For the £75,000 - £200,000 funding, all 3 themes need to be met. For the £10,000 - £75,000 funding, not all 3 themes need to be met. Independent panel of customers.

- **Presentation available:** www.supportstaffordshire.org.uk
- **For Further Information visit:** <https://www.stwater.co.uk/about-us/severn-trent-community-fund/>

3. Local news/information

- **Carole Bagnall – Citizens Advice:** Have returned to offices, when they return to face to face it will be by appointment only. Energy Advice Workshops – looking for community groups to show presentations, energy workshops and information for people that need help. Staff vacancies available, part time, don't need a lot of experience but do need some IT knowledge. 18 ½ and 16 ½ hour vacancies. carole.bagnall@citizensadvice.org.uk
- **Annette Lloyd – Friends of Bilbrook:** Friends of Bilbrook are celebrating 10 years this year. <http://friendsofbilbrook.org/>
- **Richard Green – Staffordshire Remap:** Are up and running again, first panel meeting this month. During COVID Remap completed 37 projects - this year 42, as things are more active: Needs more volunteers. Richard has a poster to share which will be available with the minutes to advertise their services and volunteer vacancies - Contact Richard for more information. richardjgreen13@gmail.com Staffordshire.Referrals@remapgroups.org.uk

- **Keith Elder – Community Connector:** In Perton, activities have resumed in all 3 venues. The Place of Welcome at Friends of Perton Library is restarting and will be run in conjunction with Crafting Communities project. Perton Christmas Fair is the first community wide activity since beginning of pandemic. keith.elder@hotmail.co.uk
- **Helene Elder:** South Staffordshire representative for Independent Advisory Group of Staffordshire Police. Also Involved with the craft group in Perton, starting meetings again outside the library. h_elder@sky.com
- **Sonja Oatley – Community Connector:** Opening a new group in Trinity Methodist Church, Codsall 10:30-12:30 called 'We'll Meet Again' 30 people allowed to attend. Group is already fully subscribed with a waiting list. It's a chat/friendship group. Hoping to do days trips and will visit Kingswood Trust. sonjaoatley@gmail.com
- Leanne MacPherson from Staffordshire Community Foundation has shared information regarding available grants. Aspire Fund is grants of £2,000 up to £5,000 supporting communities across Staffordshire, unrestricted. Made by Sport is a charity which raises awareness of sporting organisations which use sport to support young people in the UK. Rural Development Fund. Handout will be shared with the minutes. leanne.macpherson@staffordshire.foundation

4. Support Staffordshire updates

- Supportive Communities Training: Free courses being delivered on behalf of Staffordshire County Council: For people to gain new skills - such as mental health awareness and befriending. See our calendar of events and upcoming training - visit: <https://www.supportstaffordshire.org.uk/events/upcoming-training>
- Spotting the Risks in Vulnerable People is a free awareness session for 90 minutes, various training dates available. Handout included with minutes.
- Funding opportunities are available visit: <https://www.supportstaffordshire.org.uk/whats-happening/funding>
- Consultancy service available: <https://www.supportstaffordshire.org.uk/consultancy-services>
- Volunteer Star Awards 2022 – Launching soon. Event will be held at Rodbaston Hall on the campus of South Staffs College, Penkridge on Tuesday 28th June 2022. Video for previous Star Awards is still available on the website. For more information and to nominate visit: <https://www.supportstaffordshire.org.uk/volunteer-star-awards/submit-nomination-2022>

5. Evaluation

All Attendees are asked to provide any feedback and complete the evaluation form which is online: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScipBJXLPFoLwhVz6vAQe0mn890tNQCSBLO6wtcCmnUQ9fTDQ/viewform>

6. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 8th December 2021 10:00am -12:00 noon