Somerleyton Ashby & Herringfleet Parish Council

Report of the Warm Hub Group for the Parish Council Meeting on Thursday 4th September 2025

The Warm Hub Group met on Tuesday 8th July, and agreed that it would go ahead with planning for a Warm Hub consisting of 6 monthly 2-hour sessions starting on 3rd November and concluding on 13th April. The Group welcomed two new members, Jenny Anderson and Deborah Reed.

This report is concerned with the progress made since then in a) applying for funding for the Hub and, b) a programme of activities.

We had been advised by Councillor Paul Ashdown to initially consider an application for the Government funded East Suffolk Warm Welcomes Grant Scheme. We received the Application and Guidance notes on 18th August. We were immediately concerned that the expectations of the level of service this funding targeted far exceeded what we could aspire to, even given some flexibility in the service delivery hours required. We were also 'struck' by the following caveat in the Guidance pages:

'BEFORE YOU APPLY!

If you are looking to apply for some funding to support your existing coffee morning or village social and you wouldn't be looking to do any more hours or do anything in addition, please do look at the guidelines for this scheme and determine if this is the best fund for your Warm Welcome. It might be that approaching your local District or County Councillor for a contribution from their councillor budget may be a more straightforward way to support your project.'

We were also concerned that we would not learn whether we were successful in gaining funding or not from that source would not be until early to mid-October which would give little time to organise publicity and confirm speakers for the early sessions, or seek alternative funding.

We are, therefore, given the advice above, intending to apply to Councillor Ashdown for full or part of the cost of the Warm Hub as set out below. We will also request that the Parish Council meet any shortfall.

We have a provisional list of possible activities for the Hub. These are: a speaker on the Fishing Industry in Lowestoft; a festive cookery demonstration on, perhaps, canape's; a Speaker from the University of the Third Age; an 'event' by our Green and Environment Group, a speaker on the 'work' of Magistrates; Desert Island Discs.

An estimate of the full cost of the Hub this season has been made. This is based on the programme last year, with a cost-of-living uplift for refreshments, and the reasonable requirement to pay for the full time each morning we run the hub, including setting up and clearing away, i.e. 3 hours per session.

This year we estimate that the Hub will cost around **725.00.** Understandably, we have had to rely on estimated costs for most of the expenditure. We will keep a running record of Income & expenditure, and update at each Parish Council Meeting.

We hope that Councillor Ashdown is able to meet all or a substantial part of this sum from his Councillor Budget.
We also request that the Parish Council sets aside a contingency sum from its Social Fund to ensure the full costs can be met.

Sue Read 28/08/25