

## **Report for Watton Town Council AGM 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

The application to Watton Town Council from St Mary's within Watton Churches Together, is for £500.00. This is for further funding to continue working in partnership with Watton Sure Start Children's Centre, in providing a monthly After School Club at The Blenheim Centre, Watton. Parents are building their trust in this relationship, to the extent that they have requested this to be fortnightly rather than monthly. The funding pays for the venue which is £12.50 per session. The Children's Centre provide the activities and the church provides the refreshments.

In addition, St Mary's within Watton Churches Together, would like to continue being faithful to our monthly commitment to provide Café Stop, formerly called Café Church on Sunday afternoons. This hopes to strengthen our relationship both with families in the immediate and the surrounding area, linking across the parish boundary with Blenheim Grange, Carbooke. This is an opportunity to meet across the generations for friendship, craft, games, refreshments and a significant story based on the Bible. Again, this has only been possible through the funding Watton Town Council granted us to rent the premises from the MoD through the favour gained as a result of my connecting role as Padre of the Air Training Corps and Army Cadet Force, which both meet there. However, we'd need to work out how best to use any funding to support these current activities and maybe reduce one to facilitate an increase in the other. We'd like to have a sign to display clearly we're welcoming people into The Blenheim Centre, which we can put up and down and the quote for this has been £100.00. This in addition to the annual costs of hire would reach £515.00.

Loneliness has been widely reported as a considerable concern in today's society, and is not exclusive to any one generation.

There is less community cohesion because of people being disconnected from each other by reason of the technological advances that either mean people are continually attached to their computers and mobile devices, or maybe not included at all, because they do not have access to or experience in the internet.

There is less engagement as people are hard to reach, due to their location, especially if at the far Carbooke end of Watton, set apart from all infrastructure and amenities, also due to language or other difficulties including low confidence and general mobility.

Recent reports from the Children's Sure Start Centre Watton including the 'Norfolk Story' indicate that for Early Years, Watton is the most deprived area of Norfolk.

Building on the experience we have gained so far, we'd like to develop the provision based on the same number of hours of availability reaching out to families of all ages at this critically important time within Watton and the surrounding area. Thank you.

Revd Gerry Foster

Vicar St Mary's Watton

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