

**Agenda Item:** 20. COVID RECOVERY EVENTS

**Report to:** Community Committee

**Date:** Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022

**Subject:** 'Happy to Chat' initiative

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**Recommendation:**

To receive the research carried out regarding the 'Happy to Chat' initiative and consider next steps.

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**1. Background**

The Community Committee agreed to investigate a 'Happy to Chat' initiative as recommended by the Covid Recovery working group. The following was decided at the extraordinary meeting held in January 2022:

*00458 The 'Happy to Chat' initiative was discussed and Cllr Baldry reported that several cafes have indicated that they would be prepared to set aside a table and the town council promotes the cafes that are offering a table for people to come along and sit at a table and have a chat. A project plan will be prepared to be considered at the next meeting.*

**2. Project Purpose**

The project is designed to help prevent isolation and loneliness by supporting cafes to allocate a 'Happy to Chat' table at set times each week.

**3. Developing the initiative**

The town council will need to address the risk management issues of creating spaces that encourage public interaction to ensure that they are safe for participants. Further investigation is also required when creating the signage to ensure that advice and guidance given is suitable and protects participants.



#### 4. Costs

The following is estimated:

Design marketing poster explaining the initiative	In-house, print posters £25
Create invite to join letter for councillors to take to cafes to request support	In-house, councillors to work on foot so no cost.
Design and manufacture table signs to be used in café	Cost approximately £30 per sign holder – could be less depending on value
Create welcome pack for business that agrees to proceed including advice and guidance on how to implement	In-house

Total costs are difficult to predict as this depends on the number of cafes that take up the initiative. A total budget of £250 could be allocated from the COVID budget to cover the start up and inclusion of up to 8 cafes.

#### 5. Governance and Administration

The Community Committee has the delegated power to consider the town council's involvement in local events in order to promote the work of the council and strengthen pride in the town.

The power to spend the funds from the Covid Recovery budget on this project would be under the General Power of Competence.

The project plan with more detailed costs will need approval by the Finance and General Purposes Committee before proceeding.

#### 6. Decisions Required

- a) To prepare the risk management plan, designs and templates for the project
- b) To submit the completed plan to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for approval