

Report to the Community Committee

5th September 2022

Faversham Town Council's Response to the Energy and Cost of Living Crises

1. Introduction

We know that many residents will be facing a financial crisis this winter with the huge increase in fuel bills, coupled with general inflation which hits those on the lowest incomes the hardest.

In recognition of this a number of larger councils are already working with community organisations to open a network of welcoming spaces for residents to access warmth, social interaction and advice over the autumn and winter. Services could include access to recharging electronic devices, use of Wi-Fi or computers and food provision.

2. Considerations

The fuel crisis is likely to affect a diverse range of residents, including the elderly, parents with toddlers and disabled people. There will be decisions over food or fuel, so a response to both the energy and cost of living crises will need to be considered.

The Town Council is not able to offer a regular location for warm banks, but should look to identify other locations.

A Faversham-based pay it forward (PiF) scheme could be considered. These schemes have been around some time, largely aimed at the homeless, where there is an opportunity to pay for a hot drink and in some cases a meal for someone else you're never likely to meet. They are now being extended to cover those likely to be affected by the crises.

There are a number of local organisations offering assistance with food and fuel bills and the Town Council should look to signpost those in need, either through social media or via the website. We would also be able to host drop in advice sessions with the Fuel and Water Advisor and Community Warden.

3. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- Set up discussions with local community and voluntary sector organisations with a view to establishing warm bank projects with the aim to offer a range of sites, activities and times across the week during the coming winter.
- Set up discussions with local hospitality businesses with a view to establishing a Faversham PiF scheme.
- Collate information on available support.
- Agree a program of social media posts and articles for the newsletter.
- Call on Swale Borough Council and Kent County Council to support initiatives to provide warm and welcoming spaces with appropriate funding.

Louise Bareham
Town Clerk

