



Voluntary Sector Forum

Wednesday 9 September 2020, 10:00 – 12:00

Microsoft Teams

Notes of the meeting

1. Welcome

- Cllr Michael Wilson (Cabinet Member for Equality, Communities and the Voluntary Sector) welcomed attendees to the first ever virtual Forum.
- Cllr Wilson said a massive thank you from himself and on behalf of the Council to the voluntary sector for their efforts during the Covid-19 outbreak. He also thanked the officers at the council for their help and support.

2. Carers and how we can support them during the Pandemic

Melissa Wilks (Chief Executive, Richmond Carers Centre) and Steve Shaffelburg (Commissioning Manager, Richmond Council) spoke about unpaid carers and how the voluntary sector can support them during the pandemic. Their main points included:

- Richmond Carers Centre are a well-established organisation supporting 1,500 adult carers and 500 young carers.
- The council have written a carers strategy pre Covid-19 which was published in April. All the priorities written in the strategy are still relevant now.
- A lot of people don't consider themselves as a carer, just as helping a family member.
- The council are drafting a document on how to have a conversation with someone who is an unpaid carer which should be published by the end of the year.

See slides for details

Questions:

- *Will the Council do more to publicise informal telephone link groups for residential streets, particularly to carers and the housebound? - Cllr Wilson said he will look into whether this is possible and the practicalities of it. He is working closely with the corporate communications team to look at how they can get messages out to the public and these informal groups.*

3. Council update on Covid-19 – what has happened so far and what next?

Jon Evans (Assistant Chief Executive, Richmond Council) gave an update from the council on Covid-19. His main points included:

- The Council worked with Richmond CVS to match 2,500 volunteers have helped in some way, with over 1,000 starting a new role with an organisation. Jon Evans thanked Richmond CVS for their help with providing data.
- The Council webpages have been kept regularly updated with all the funds that are available for the voluntary sector:
https://www.richmond.gov.uk/covid_19_support_fund
- The Council's Community Hub received hundreds of calls every day at the beginning of lockdown which went down to 30/40 calls a day towards the end of lockdown. Most calls were related to food.
- Lots of communications have gone out in paper form as well as online.
- Heather Mathew (Richmond CVS) thanked the Council's finance department for working with Richmond CVS to give out businesses grants that could be accessed by some voluntary sector groups.

See slides for details

4. Voluntary Sector Response to Covid-19: Challenges and Opportunities

Paul Banks (Commissioning Officer - Prevention and Wellbeing, Richmond Council), Heather Mathew (Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Strategic Lead Manager, Richmond CVS) and Julie Gavin (Capacity Building Manager, Richmond CVS) spoke about the voluntary sector response to Covid-19. Their main points included:

- Paul Banks thanked the voluntary sector for their exceptional work during the Covid-19 outbreak.
- Contact Julie Gavin if you are interested in support around fundraising during Covid-19. Tel. 020 8843 7945 / julieg@richmondcv.org.uk
- New services have opened during Covid-19. Richmond CVS are working closely with the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children's Partnership to make sure that groups safeguarding policies are up to date.
- Contact Angela Ivey (angela.ivey@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk) if you would like assistance with re-opening your business and ensuring that you are Covid-19 secure.

See slides for details

5. Community Heroes and Black History Month

Effie Lochrane (Communications Manager, Richmond Council) and Fenna Maynard (Media Officer, Richmond Council) spoke about the Community Heroes Awards and Black History Month. Their main points included:

- The Community Heroes Awards will launch on 21st September 2020. The deadline for nominations is 9th November.
- You can nominate someone through a [form](#) on the Council website.
- The categories have changed this year. They will be: Business contribution in the community, Trustee of the Year, Community Group of the Year, Community Project of the Year, Outstanding Volunteer, Environmental Award, Outstanding Sporting Achievement, Young Person Achievement, Lifetime Achievement and Helping Hands.
- Depending on the number of nominations received, there may be a Covid-19 related and non Covid-19 related award for each category.
- The awards will be given at a virtual event in December.
- To commemorate Black History Month later this year, the Council is appealing for Black people who live, work or study in the borough to share their stories and experiences. For more information or to get involved please visit https://www.richmond.gov.uk/black_history_month_get_involved
- Contact Effie Lochrane (effie.lochrane@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk) or (fenna.maynard@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk) for more information.

See slides for details

6. Energy Advice Programme

Justin Webb (Manage Your Money Coordinator, Citizens Advice Richmond) spoke about Citizens Advice Richmond's Energy Advice Programme. His main points included:

- They offer one-to-one support for vulnerable customers.
- Sessions can cover switching supplier, tariff or payment method, getting financial support, how to be more energy efficient in the home and assistance with complaints against energy companies.
- You can refer people to Citizens Advice Richmond with one of the following links:
 - Partners referral link - <https://www.citizensadvicerichmond.org/referral-page/>
 - Customers can contact them by phone / email /online - <https://www.citizensadvicerichmond.org/contact-us/>

See slides for details

7. Open Forum

- The pandemic has highlighted the inequalities between those who can access the digital world and services and those who cannot, particularly those who are older and vulnerable. Anna James (Richmond Council) is trying to start mapping what work is already ongoing to support residents and if there is any unmet need. If you are working on a digital inclusion project that you would like to share or have any ideas to how we can improve digital inclusion in the borough then please contact: Anna.James@Richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk

- Richmond Talking Newspaper provide information on statutory and voluntary services for vulnerable people is of interest to visually impaired people in the Borough who listen to Richmond Talking Newspaper by memory stick or on the website. Articles of about 500 words or recordings lasting about 5 minutes are best. <https://www.rtn.org.uk/>
- The Richmond Mind helpline remains open for emotional support and signposting: 020 3137 9590 / <https://www.rbmind.org/our-services/helpline/>
- If you would like to arrange a home fire safety visit, please go to the LFB website or contact your local fire station. <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/book-a-home-fire-safety-visit/>
- Please email info@visitrichmond.co.uk if you would like any of your events (online or in person) added to www.visitrichmond.co.uk for free.
- Here is the link to Richmond CVS's returning to work resource <https://richmondcvcs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Resource-Returning-to-Work-Safely-Updated-30-Jul-2020.pdf>