

Report from Peace Cottage Project to Area Meeting - March 2022

Work on relaunching Hoddesdon meeting house as the Peace Cottage Community Hub is continuing. After some delays during the winter due to COVID, we are very much looking forward to spring and some new activities starting.

Building Improvements

A small group of volunteers are continuing to help with decorating the rooms in the cottage. We hope to hold more working party days during the spring and summer.

Work is also underway to source financial support to allow us to install a new heating system. We have been encouraged by the planning department at the local council to apply for Section 106 money, which our community architect, Will Hudson, is helping with. The application will likely take some time and effort, but we hope to be able to make our approach to the council this spring.

We have recently appointed a new cleaner who will be cleaning the kitchen, community hall and toilets regularly as needed.

In the coming months we are hoping to get some new signage printed which can be installed in the display box at the front of the site.

Activities

On 5th March we held a gardening session and open afternoon. It was a lovely event, with a great team of volunteer gardeners and we had the opportunity to meet a number of new people and local residents.

In March we also launched our Memory Cafe project, working with people with dementia and their carers. These sessions are being run by local Social Prescribers who work for the local NHS primary care network. The sessions will run monthly at first.

Our regular Wednesday morning well-being walk has had to be paused as the organiser needs to recruit a new volunteer, but we're hoping this scheme will be resumed later in the summer.

We also have a number of potential activities which are currently in discussion:

- The local Citizens Advice Bureaux are interested in using the site for meetings with clients, potentially half a day per week, ideally starting late spring or early summer.
- A local Mental Health First Aid trainer has enquired about booking the site to deliver her training courses.
- A funding application with Mangled Yarn theatre company has been submitted, which if we are successful will fund a small theatre project at the site in June 2022.
- The local Churches Together group has also recently discussed ways of supporting the local Ukrainian community and any Ukrainian refugees who may be housed nearby. We intend to discuss ways in which the Peace Cottage project could support local front-line workers at our next steering group meeting.

Fundraising, Governance and Project Development Matters

Our steering group continue to meet monthly to discuss and develop our project. Recently discussions have included the following topics:

- Mangled Yarn are keen to continue their relationship with the Peace Cottage project. In exchange for using some spaces in the building this year, they have offered to make a donation to the project and support us with future fundraising events and funding applications.
- As mentioned in my last report (January 2022), we are continuing to attract small grants and donations from different sources. As this continues it may be that the project requires some temporary paid administrative support to help us manage this, particularly work relating to making purchases and managing our budgets.

Any Friends who are interested in getting involved in the project would be very welcome to join us. We are also keen to find volunteers for our community garden and working parties. If you are interested please email Zoe.

Zoe Hudson (Project Coordinator)

<https://www.peacecottagehub.org>

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/peace-cottage-community-hub>

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Any questions or comments? Please email Zoe on: peacecottagehub@gmail.com