

# SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

**Subject** : Community Services Team Update  
**Committee** : Community Services Committee  
**Date** : 9 February 2026  
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## 1. Report Summary:

1.1 This report provides an update on key community services activity and highlights service development areas which recently approved budget bids will support.

## 2. Approved Bids

2.1 The administration's budget adopted at Full Council in February approved bids which will increase community services resiliency and operational capacity namely:

2.2 Addressing pantry operational challenges- the approved bids allow an increase to the pantry manager role from 3 days a week to 1 full time post (currently job shared with two managers). This additional resource allows the managers to not only achieve legal compliance taking charge of pantry preparations and opening hours but also provides one a day a week per manager of much needed development time which is to be spent increasing the resiliency of the pantry by increasing donation bin locations and donation drives carried out in partnership (KPI set of 20% increase), increasing relationships and networks with growers and local businesses, developing grant and funding applications and exploring partner arrangements to increase the wrap around support and funding opportunities to help pantry become sustainable and to support members to get back on their feet.

2.3 Salisbury Pantry has seen an extremely busy 2025 with an overall up-take increase of 64% compared to the previous year. In total, the pantry saw 4,876 visits from the start of 2025, supporting 13,980 shops and 5,410 children. Additional take-up and increased membership levels requires additional stock and much needed approved bid funds will also be used to increase supplies of ambient and frozen food and sundries.

2.4 Thirty volunteers donated 5,700 hours to the project last year which represents an in-kind contribution worth more than £115k. The pantry could not function without this essential support and bid funds to provide volunteer training and finances to cover out of pocket expenses is truly valued by all involved. Volunteers are positive about the support they are receiving with training needs, and they have identified induction, safeguarding, conflict management and emotional resilience as areas for training this year which will support them in their volunteering roles with pantry.

2.5 Bids approved included an increase of 1 additional day a week of Community Development officer time. This time will support work around belonging, identity and inclusion, supporting with project development work with existing and new marginalised communities. This work will increase support and engagement from diverse communities to work collaboratively as active partners with SCC to co-produce the MELA event to take place in Summer this year. Additionally, work will

also be taking place to support the BU LGBTQ+ group with their capacity-building ambitions to become more independent. This work focusses around the group developing volunteer support and their organisational structure and governance to become an independent entity. This is an exciting prospect which actively represents our ambitions for the future direction of our work with our community groups - capacity building to support self-sufficiency and self-determinism.

- 2.6 An approved bid was also granted to create a new business support apprentice who will help provide much needed administration and practical hands-on community centre support. The role will involve welcoming members to the centre, supporting with the administration and management of bookings, supporting with setting up/shutting down of the centre in advance of bookings and supporting with team responsiveness and resiliency as another pair of hands in the event of staff cover for sickness or absence. As a result of this role, additional support will create additional capacity for the Community Centres and Programmes Manager and the Communities Support officer to support the effective delivery of the communities programme, the development of new community grants administration systems and processes, and supporting the Head of Communities with the ambitious growth and development plans for this service as part of the delivery of the Communities Strategy, priorities and associated action plans. Additionally, creating positive opportunities and futures for young people is an essential part of our work and the Council demonstrating this commitment in our communities' staff team with an apprenticeship role is an important step forward in this area.
- 2.7 Our youth work focusses on delivery of our youth provisions at Friary and Bemerton Heath Centres, in response to the high levels of need in these localities. Our contract to deliver youth provision in Bishopdown Farm ceases at the end of March. Work continues in partnership with the You Network and practitioner forums, working with providers and partners across the city (and in neighbouring parishes), sharing good practice and developing collaborative opportunities to support and develop opportunities and positive futures for young people in our city.
- 2.8 We are keen to develop and build upon our community spaces, creating vibrant spaces where people can access advice, guidance, support services and connection to meet their needs. We are seeing ever-increasing demands for partners and community groups to use Bemerton Heath and Friary Community Centres which continue to be very well used assets with income targets at P9 15% ahead of target.
- 2.9 New partner arrangements with external training providers are increasing the employment opportunities offer to local unemployed people with programmes hosted at Bemerton Heath Centre. Skills Bootcamps give opportunities for people to return to work with an intense two-week training programme with a guaranteed interview at the end. The last cohort of health care assistant bootcamp attendees for roles at Salisbury District Hospital resulted in a 90% return to work rate. We are currently awaiting the statistics from the latest bootcamp which took place in January for mental health support workers and exploring opportunities around other potential work fields e.g. hospitality. We are also replicating this partnership approach with offers around health and wellbeing activity with partners providing awareness sessions and health checks for local people e.g. hypertension sessions, cancer, mental health support and more.

### **3. Salisbury Playhouse**

- 3.1 At budget setting, members approved a substantial contribution (£50K pa for 5 years) to Wiltshire Creative for refurbishment of Salisbury Playhouse, enabling them to secure much greater external grant funding for capital improvement works that are essential for the continuation and development of this essential world class cultural venue.

### **4. Splash Park proposal update**

- 4.1 Following a presentation by interested community members to council, it was recommended that communities committee may receive a proposal in future about the development of a Splash Park for Salisbury. The (potential) applicant expressed interest in this project proposal potentially being funded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. They have been advised of the internal CIL working group who will be presenting a report to March Full Council meeting with recommendations on how CIL monies could be bid for / allocated in future. After Full Council, feedback can be provided to the (potential) applicant of the appropriate committee to engage with, along with the criteria and timescales for submissions to be used for consideration of CIL funded projects.

### **5. Recommendation:**

- 5.1 That committee notes the report.

**Wards Affected:** All

**Background papers:** None

**Implications:**

**Financial:** Payroll budget increase to allow for extended and new roles in establishment as approved at Full Council budget setting.

**Legal:** None

**Personnel:** Recruitment processes to be carried out for new roles.

**Environmental Impact:** None

**Equalities Impact Statement:** Improved outreach, engagement and capacity building work will contribute to improved inclusion and inequalities outcomes.