

County Council Meeting – 13 October 2022**Question to Councillor Wilson
Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture****By Councillor Hussain**

Question

Small charities, community enterprises and local groups are doing heroic work in this cost-of-living crisis by supporting families through the food bank and soup kitchens and so on. How can the council help them to carry on their fantastic effort, especially in areas like Eaton, Shobnall, Anglesey, Stapenhill, and so on?

Reply

First of all, I would like to join Cllr Hussain in expressing my appreciation and thanks for the tireless efforts of community groups across Staffordshire in supporting residents with a range of issues, including the cost of living. The Council has recently launched a campaign, to highlight the help and support that is available throughout the county to tackle the current cost of living pressures. The 'Here to help' campaign is directing people to support on things like managing debt, paying bills, food and essentials, staying warm and helping others.

The voluntary sector plays a vital role in making Staffordshire a great place to live, where everyone can prosper, be healthy and happy. Across the Council we work in partnership with the voluntary sector and our communities on a wide range of different initiatives and priorities, including the Community Champions Programme in parts of Burton. The Council has recently recommissioned its VCSE Capacity Building Framework to provide vital support to community groups and the voluntary sector to access training and development support, secure additional funding and recruit volunteers. This three-year contract, invests £1.5m into supporting our local voluntary sector.

Through our Community Fund, local community groups have the opportunity to access small grants to help support a huge range of community activities. In 2021 we supported 156 different community groups, with a total of £114,000 awarded. The 2022 Fund is currently open to applications until the end of October.
