

LANCASTER MEN'S HUB NEWSLETTER



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Into the New Year

Lancaster Men's Hub entered 2022 with mixed feelings. On the one hand, significant progress has been made since the founding of the organisation in April. Membership has grown, events and activities have been organised all through the Summer and into Autumn with the Elevenses initiative proving a great success, funding has been obtained courtesy of Lancaster Council and the CSV, the Hub was officially recognised as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation by the Charity Commission and fruitful links have been established with umbrella organisations like the Lancaster ICC and individual community groups. On the other hand, significant problems remained. The time pressure on the relatively small administrative group became more pressing, Lancaster Men's Hub still had no prospect of a viable workshop space which could be used for some interesting proposed practical projects and the growth in the membership, though pleasing, was still below target.

Since the beginning of 2022 successful efforts have been made to solve some of these problems. Thanks mainly to the Chair and the Treasurer the management structure has been amended to make more efficient use of meeting and planning time and recruits to the team have meant that responsibilities can be shared more widely and effectively. A huge amount of work has also gone into making sure that the Hub has all the requisite policies and administrative backup required by a properly run and responsible community organisation. There has been a welcome rise in the number of guests that Lancaster Men's Hub caters for, largely owing to the very successful expansion of the Elevenses model to include a substantial meal and training opportunities for our guests; this initiative is summarised elsewhere in this newsletter.

As we move into the new year the outlook is positive. The main outstanding problem of a

dedicated space that Lancaster Men's Hub can use for practical and social activities will be a priority this year, since so many of the plans and projects that are in the pipeline to improve our links with community organisations and an increasing membership can only be fully realised once we have our own space.

Snookered!

Thanks to the cooperation of Lancaster Methodist Church, Lancaster Men's Hub runs a regular programme of meetings and talks in the Cornerstone on Sulyard Street. However, the aim of facilitating men's meeting together for mutual support can, and should, be met in a variety of social and practical situations and Lancaster Men's Hub recently ran a snooker afternoon for members and guests at Squires Snooker & Sports Bar on Church Street. Although the standard of



play was unlikely to cause Ronnie O'Sullivan or John Higgins to lose much sleep, the participants had a pleasant social experience of mildly competitive snooker and good company. The afternoon was a great success and Lancaster Men's Hub would like to thank Squires for its support in trialling this new activity and providing the necessary facilities and refreshments.

Evolving Elevenses

When Lancaster Men's Hub moved into its Autumn programme, in conjunction with the Band of Brothers, it was decided that a regular social drop-in on a Friday would be an excellent way of providing a meeting space for our guests, a collaborative venture with Band of Brothers and a chance to raise the profile of the organisation. Gradually the initial drop-ins



expanded in scope from coffee and biscuits to making a fuller use of the kitchens until a burst of creativity between our Treasurer (David Smith) and Murray Cuthbert (a professional chef working with BoB) came up with the idea of using the kitchen to provide a substantial meal for guests, promote the idea of cooking affordable, healthy meals for those not used to cooking for themselves and training some guests in simple professional kitchen techniques.



Unfortunately Omicron intervened to scupper the proposed Christmas dinner but January saw the start of what looks like being a very successful initiative. The Hub has now run two sessions with more planned. Murray and David plan a meal, with a target price of 50p per portion. The meals are simple and nutritious, and David publishes a simple recipe which can be collected

and is also published on the website. Murray then supervises two trainees who have thoroughly enjoyed learning real kitchen skills from a professional chef and the meals have been served to up to 30 guests who have been most appreciative. Thanks are also due to Simon for the use of the Cornerstone kitchen and to Janet Entwistle for her help and support. Future menus include a filling, healthy soup and a spicy (not necessarily hot!) vegetable curry.

It is planned that 2022 will see an expansion of the practical projects that have already started with groups like Claver Hill, the RSPB and Moorland Community Group. At present this will involve participants using their own work spaces to fabricate and assemble and we would appreciate any help members can offer with this. The next issue of the newsletter will detail some of these projects, but, in the mean time, if you can help, John will pass your offers on to a member who will be coordinating this; contact him on 07842 826482

New trustee

Lancaster Men's Hub is delighted to announce that Keith Carman has agreed to become a trustee for the organisation. As mentioned earlier in the newsletter, the Hub needed to recruit additional members who could take a share of the responsibilities of running a growing organisation and Keith fits the bill perfectly. A retired English teacher in Barrow and then Morecambe, Keith has run the Band of Brothers which offers social and educational opportunities to refugees and asylum-seekers under the auspices of Lancaster's City of Sanctuary. His energy and enthusiasm had already helped to create a symbiosis between the Lancaster Men's Hub and the Band of Brothers and we are grateful that he has now committed to assist both organisations; he and John Ganley have already organised a trial of walking football as an activity for both partners!



Don't forget that we have Elevenses every Friday from 11.00 pm at the Cornerstone on Sulyard Street. Free coffee social drop-in. Everyone is welcome.