

Parent and Toddler Group

Summary

Early childhood development is a fundamental aspect of building a prosperous and healthy community. By investing in a Parent and Toddler group at a local level, we can ensure that our youngest residents have the best possible start in life, leading to long-term benefits for our community. The Council could allocate grant funding to support a start-up group.

Recommendation

To consider allocating £500 - £1,000 of the unspent CTC Grant monies to establish a new Parent & Toddler Group, to increase socialisation and support for new parents and children.

Background

Parent and Toddler groups are essential community-based projects that offer a range of activities and support for local parents and their young children, typically aged 0-4 years. Early childhood development directly affects the future of our community. The experiences children have during their early years significantly impacts their readiness for school, social interactions, and long-term success. By supporting a Parent and Toddler group locally, we can ensure that our youngest residents receive the basic resources to help obtain optimal development.

Our local group will provide much-needed support and information to both parents and toddlers in our community. This support can help local parents develop positive parenting practices, reduce stress levels, and strengthen family bonds. It also empowers parents to actively participate in their children's growth and development.

The group will also foster a sense of community and belonging within our area. Encouraging socialisation among the children helps them develop essential skills for interacting with their peers. Additionally, a group can create a support network for local parents, reducing isolation and promoting mental well-being within our community.

Investing in the group at this local level, we can enhance school readiness among our children. Research indicates that children who attend these groups are more likely to excel academically, display positive behavior in school, and have improved prospects for their future education.

There are also various economic benefits in supporting early childhood development. A well-prepared workforce begins with strong early education, which can ultimately reduce the need for costly intervention programs and SEN education services in the future. Additionally, promoting community engagement and reducing crime rates can contribute to a safer, more prosperous locality.

The number of these types of groups in and around Coleshill has significantly decreased since Covid 19. Coleshill parents, and the children who were born in the town, have, since the

lockdown/pandemic, been disadvantaged or have experienced greater challenges with development, friendships, services and social isolation, all impacting on the family unit.

Finance and Value for Money

Roughly £1,000 of this year's Town Council Grants Awards monies were not fully allotted. There is an opportunity to use some monies to help promote, establish and set up this essential service for the long-term benefit of the Coleshill community.

The start-up fund would be to help provide matting, some musical toy items, glue sticks, paper, pens and crayons, etc.

The Old Court Room is currently not booked most Tuesday mornings and the recommendation would be to only charge a minimal fee once the group is established and successful, so it can then be run independently from the Hub/Town Council. Toys are already being offered and donated (although some are too old/worn to safely reuse). Basic refreshments could be provided at a minimal cost, as parents usually bring their children's own food choices and drinks /cups.

Risk Management Issues

Initially some minimal staff involvement may be needed to set this up, with the plan that a Hub volunteer and/or a couple of keen parents could be found within the group to manage and run this independently.

A stair-gate has already been donated by a town councillor to secure the Old Courtroom fire exit steps. (However, all parents know how to open and close a stair gate, so the risk of incident is significantly reduced).

Users would be covered by the Town Council's insurance as general participants in the building. Thus, there is little risk of the Town Council, whilst offering significant benefits to the reputation of the Council and the wellbeing of the community.

This report has been prepared by the C & P Manager