



Creating Digital Safe Space at Bayton and Lindridge Village Halls

From the 1st of April 2021

Rural communities came together brilliantly to support one another during flooding in 2020 and they have maintained that spontaneous response throughout the pandemic.

We know first-hand from rural communities across Herefordshire and Worcestershire, that there are serious issues in a lack of support services accessible to people where they live, especially as already limited public transport in rural areas is likely to be an inappropriate way to travel now. Many in rural communities still do not have the broadband they need or can't afford the computer hardware to access services and engage in their community virtually.

Community First support a network of village halls across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Our recent village hall survey identified more than 14 halls that have broadband connections and space to be able to offer a Digital Safe Space for one-to-one health, wellbeing, and advice sessions at the village hall. Our Fore Trust funding will enable us to work with five halls to develop Digital Safe Spaces in 2021.

A Digital Safe Space at a village hall enables virtual access to services, a place for people to have confidential conversations and, where necessary, a place to raise the alarm in the case of domestic abuse. It can also be a place to make contact with friends and family through video calling.

Lindridge Parish Hall and Bayton Village Hall are among the five halls chosen to take part in the pilot project. When Lindridge hall reopens this Digital Safe Space will be available by appointment, with volunteers opening the hall for people who need to get online. Bayton will offer a virtual system for the foreseeable future. In the meantime, both halls will be offering a 'virtual' Digital Safe Space as from April 1st - there will be free 24/7 wireless internet outside each hall.

For more information about Community First and Digital Safe Spaces please contact Nick Comley by email at nickc@comfirst.org.uk or calling 07909 290942 or by contacting Bayton Village Hall on : helpatbvh@gmail.com and Lindridge Village Hall on helpatlph@gmail.com for further advice and instructions.