PRESS RELEASE

Date: 15th December 2017

Subject: Exciting new community project launches in Havant!

On Thursday 14th December the new Big Lottery Funded project, Positive Pathways, officially launched. The event was held at Leigh Park Community Centre and was attended by over 60 people. Community First were successful in receiving the grant from the National Lottery Fund for the project that works with Havant Borough residents who need a little bit of help to volunteer in their community, to increase participation in volunteering especially for those who are long term unemployed, or want to reconnect with their community, but do not have the confidence to do it alone.

Janet Duggan, Volunteer Service Manager at Community First comments “it was fantastic to see so many people from across our community who came to find out about the impact Positive Pathways is already having on people’s lives. As well as hearing from service users we had presentations from the DWP Havant Job Centre and SE Hants Better Local Care. We also had entertainment from the Artscape Ukulele Band, Space Rats who played a selection of Christmas songs at the end of the launch”.

Geraldine Swain, who attended the event spoke about her journey from being out of work, volunteering in the community and into paid employment. Geraldine says “through Community First I had the opportunity to volunteer which changed my life as I was struggling with depression and anxiety. I passionately feel that group volunteering helped me to move forward and reach goals and improved my confidence and self-esteem. The tools and skills I learnt are now enabling me to support other people back into work. I wish the very best to the new Positive Pathways Team and hope their journey is as successful as mine has been”.

For more information about the project email positivepathways@cfirst.org.uk or call 0300 500 8085. Information about Community First’s Volunteering Service can be found at www.cfirst.org.uk or to find a local volunteering opportunity checkout www.volunteerwessex.org where you will find lots of interesting roles based in local charities and community groups.
Photos:

Geraldine Swain, Speaker at the Positive Pathways Launch

Notes for Editors

Community First is the trading name of Communities First Wessex
Registered Charity no 1147527    Company Registered in England and Wales 8071971 at
Langstone Technology Park Langstone Road Havant Hampshire PO9 1SA
1. Communities First Wessex (known as Community First) provides support and advice to local voluntary and community groups, charities and social enterprises in order to build their capacity and ensure a thriving and successful voluntary sector across East Hampshire, Havant and Winchester. We also provide a one stop shop for all aspects of volunteering; helping recruit and place volunteers throughout our local communities and providing specialist training for voluntary organisations.

2. Communities First Wessex also delivers critical community services including:
   a. Community Transport and Dial a Ride in East Hampshire, Havant, Winchester and Basingstoke
   b. Shopmobility in Winchester, Havant and Chichester
   c. Health and wellbeing services for vulnerable people including surgery signposting services with GP surgeries, and a Silver Linings programme for older people at Hewitt’s in Emsworth
   d. Support for Community Buildings and managing agents for Leigh Park Community Centre in Havant
   e. Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling services
   f. Specialist youth work including support for young people's mental health
   g. Work and skills based training and support for unemployed people
   h. Supported volunteering for people with a range of needs including mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, and those with a physical or mild learning disability.

3. Communities First Wessex employs 90 staff, more than 30 regular volunteers and has a turnover of £2.3m. Its main sources of income are local authority and government grants and contracts, Big Lottery Fund and a range of charitable trusts.

4. For further information contact:
   Tim Houghton, Chief Executive, Communities First Wessex
   07467941018 or email tim.houghton@cfirst.org.uk

5. Big Lottery Fund logos can be found at https://biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding/funding-guidance/managing-your-funding/grant-acknowledgement-and-logos