

WHERE TO FIND A WARM HUB

Alcester

Mondays, 10am-12pm: Our Lady and St Joseph Church Hall, Priory Road
Tuesdays, 10am-2pm: Alcester Methodist Church, Priory Road. Hot drinks, cakes and soup. Plus, newspapers, games and crafts.

Tuesdays, 9am-12pm: Orange Mabel tearoom, 59 High Street.

Wednesdays, 9.30am-11.30am: Alcester Baptist Church and 11am-4pm, Church House, Butter Street.

Thursdays, Alcester Library, Globe House, Priory Road.

Bidford

Wednesdays, 10am-12pm: Crawford Memorial Hall. Free refreshments.

Henley

Saturdays, 9.30am to 12.30pm: Baptist Church Hall, High Street.

Ilmington

Mondays, 1pm-3pm: Village Hall, 1 Front Street.

Lighthorne Heath

Tuesdays, 1pm-5pm: Lighthorne Heath Village Hall. Free refreshments, games and wifi. From 3rd January, the time will be 10am-2pm.

Long Itchington

Thursdays, 11.30am-2.30pm: 1st, 15th and 29th December at the Community Centre; 8th December, The Chapel, and 22nd December at Holy Trinity Church. Free refreshments and a light snack.

Salford Priors

Thursdays, 10am-12pm: Salford Priors Memorial Hall, School Road. Community Café which offers free soup and roll with other activities such as cards and board games.

Shotteswell

Third Sunday of the month, 9am-11.30am, Shotteswell

Village Hall, Coronation Lane.

Stratford

Thursdays, 9.30am-12.30pm: Foundation House, Masons Road. Free refreshments.

Southam

Mondays, 11am-3pm: Galanos House, Community Hub and Café, Banbury Road.
Tuesdays, 1pm-3pm, Graham Adams Centre, St James Road.
Wednesdays, 10am-4pm: Southam Congregational Church, Wood Street.

Studley

Wednesdays, 10am-12pm: Studley Sports and Social Club, Eldorado Close. Sponsored by Studley Parish Council.

Thursdays, time tbc, Studley Methodist Church, Alcester Road.

Shipston

Thursdays, 9am-1pm: The Scout Hut, New Street. Relax with free refreshments, board games and wifi. Plus energy-saving tips and advice.

Stockton

Wednesdays and Fridays, 1pm-4pm: The Nelson Club, Napton Road. Refreshments, games, bingo, free wi-fi, quiet corner and kid's corner.

Temple Grafton

Wednesdays, 10am-11.30am: Grafton Village Hall, New Road.

Wellesbourne

Mondays, 2pm-3.30pm, Wellesbourne Sports and Community Centre, Loxley Close.

Wednesdays, 10.30am-1pm: Church Centre, St Peters Church, Church Street. Refreshments, plus soup and a roll.

Wolverton

Tuesdays, 10.30am-12.30pm: Wolverton Church Hall.

Rise of the warm hub as energy costs rocket

By LISE EVANS

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AS temperatures plummet and the price of heating homes increases, it's falling upon communities, charities and councils to step in to make sure there's a warm place to relax for people this winter.

Village halls and community centres are just some of the venues where warm hubs are springing up, offering people a place to get some heat without worrying about the cost.

In the Stratford district, a network of warm hubs will be open this winter to residents of all ages. From a scout hut in Shipston and a church in Southam to a sports centre in Studley – there are more than 30 places designated as warm hubs. Some will also provide light refreshments, activities and the chance for some social interaction.

On Friday (25th November), the warm hub network was boosted by another venue as Foundation House, the community centre owned by Stratford Town Trust in Masons Road, joined the ranks. The building will be open every Thursday, 9.30am-12.30pm, when people can also get practical tips and advice on saving energy. Firefighters will also be on hand each week to promote fire safety.

Fran Nibbs, Foundation House manager, told the *Herald*: "It is a shame that we need these at all – and we're not the solution to the cost of living and energy crisis – but if we can alleviate even the smallest bit of anxiety and support our community through these difficult times, we will have served a purpose."
 "Our lovely team of volunteers



■ At the warm hub launch at Foundation House were Fran Nibbs, manager, volunteers Philip Coldicott and Catherine Cockburn, Tim Burden of the Citizens Advice, Firefighter Tony O'Connell from Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, Jacqueline Holcroft of WRCC Energy, and Sara Aspley, CEO of Stratford Town Trust.

Photo: Mark Williamson

will be offering a warm welcome to all and we are looking forward to opening our doors to individuals from all walks of life. From parents with young families to elders looked for friendship. We are particularly keen to welcome members of our community who have not visited us before."

Nationally warm hubs will help a small number of the estimated 7m households* in the UK in fuel poverty – households that have to spend more than 10 per cent of household income on fuel.

Most of the Stratford district's warm hubs have received ad-

vice and financial support from Warwickshire Rural Community Council. Its warm hubs project has been sponsored by Cadent Gas, which helps communities in Warwickshire and Solihull tackle social isolation and fuel poverty.

Jackie Holcroft, WRCC energy, sustainability and warm hubs manager, told the *Herald* that warm hubs also have a role to play in tackling the lingering impact of Covid as many older people in rural communities still haven't regained the confidence to go back out into the community.

"People have become de-so-

cialised and are often isolated because of where they live," she said. "They have become disconnected from the community, and it's so important for people to connect and make friendships. Once they connect, they let their guard down and might talk about the issues they are experiencing."

For the latest list of warm hubs and links to energy information, available grants, visit www.wrcrural.org.uk/wrcc-warm-hubs.

*Figures from The End Fuel Poverty Coalition which predicts the figure will rise to 8.6m by April next year.