

# Christmas Gift Voucher Scheme 2021

Policy, Process & Revenue Committee, Monday 23 August 2021

## BACKGROUND

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The Town Council has operated a Christmas Gift Voucher Scheme for a number of years whereby residents over the age of 70 may apply to for a £10 Gift Voucher, redeemable with local independent businesses. In October 2020 the scheme was extended to allow all Frodsham pubs and establishments that provide meals to join the scheme. Eligible residents also have the option of donating their voucher to local good causes such as charities, youth groups and churches.

The scheme was introduced to replace the "Old People's Christmas Party" organised by the Town Council, which was declining in popularity, and to help local high street traders.

## CHRISTMAS VOUCHER SCHEME 2020

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A final report on the 2020 scheme was presented to the Council at its meeting on xxx (appended).

## ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION IN 2021 SCHEME

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### 1. Continuous of the scheme

Whether to continue the gift voucher scheme in some format and, if not, whether to replace it with an alternative "Christmas gift" for older or disadvantaged residents.

### 2. Value of the vouchers

If the scheme continues, to decide the value of the vouchers to be offered in 2021. A budget of £15,000 is available.

### 3. Eligibility

Rules applied in previous years would require:

- the applicant to be 70 years of age or older at 31 January 2022
- the applicant to be resident within the town boundaries of Frodsham.

### 4. Publicity

It is proposed that we retain the online application form introduced in 2020, supplemented by a paper form available from local outlets and Frodsham and District Open Hands volunteers.

Suggested publicity methods:

- FTC website and social media
- Frodsham Nub News
- Frodsham Life social media
- InFrodsham website
- Posters in local shops and community venues

- Paper and electronic flyers for distribution to/by:
  - FTC and CWaC Councillors
  - Churches
  - OPAL Club
  - Weaver Vale Housing Trust
  - Food Bank
  - Local care homes
  - Schools/youth groups (for grand-parents)
  - etc

## 5. Printing

It is suggested that we retain Hawk Publications to design and print the posters, flyers and vouchers as they can turn around the printing quickly and have been reliable and good value in the past.

## 6. Distribution

In previous years, ward councillors have hand delivered vouchers to residents in their wards, but last year they were delivered by volunteers from Frodsham and District Open Hands support group. The group has indicated its willingness to do the same this year.

## 7. Timescale

A proposed timetable for a gift voucher scheme in 2021, should such a scheme go ahead, is set out below:

Advertise voucher scheme online (see point 4 above)	From Wednesday 1 September 2021
Closing date for businesses and organisations	Friday 15 October 2021
Closing date for resident applications	Friday 29 October 2021
Vouchers available for distribution	Friday 19 November 2021
Deadline for distributing vouchers	Saturday 27 November 2021 (day of Frodsham Christmas Festival)
Deadline for residents to redeem vouchers	Monday 31 January 2022
Deadline for businesses and organisations to redeem vouchers	Monday 28 February 2022
Deadline for FTC to reimburse businesses and organisations	Thursday 31 March 2022 (we aim to process claims within 14 days)

**Item 210. Final Report on Over 70s Christmas Gift Voucher Scheme 2020**

**Take-up of the scheme**

The scheme this year was delivered within the budget of £15,000.

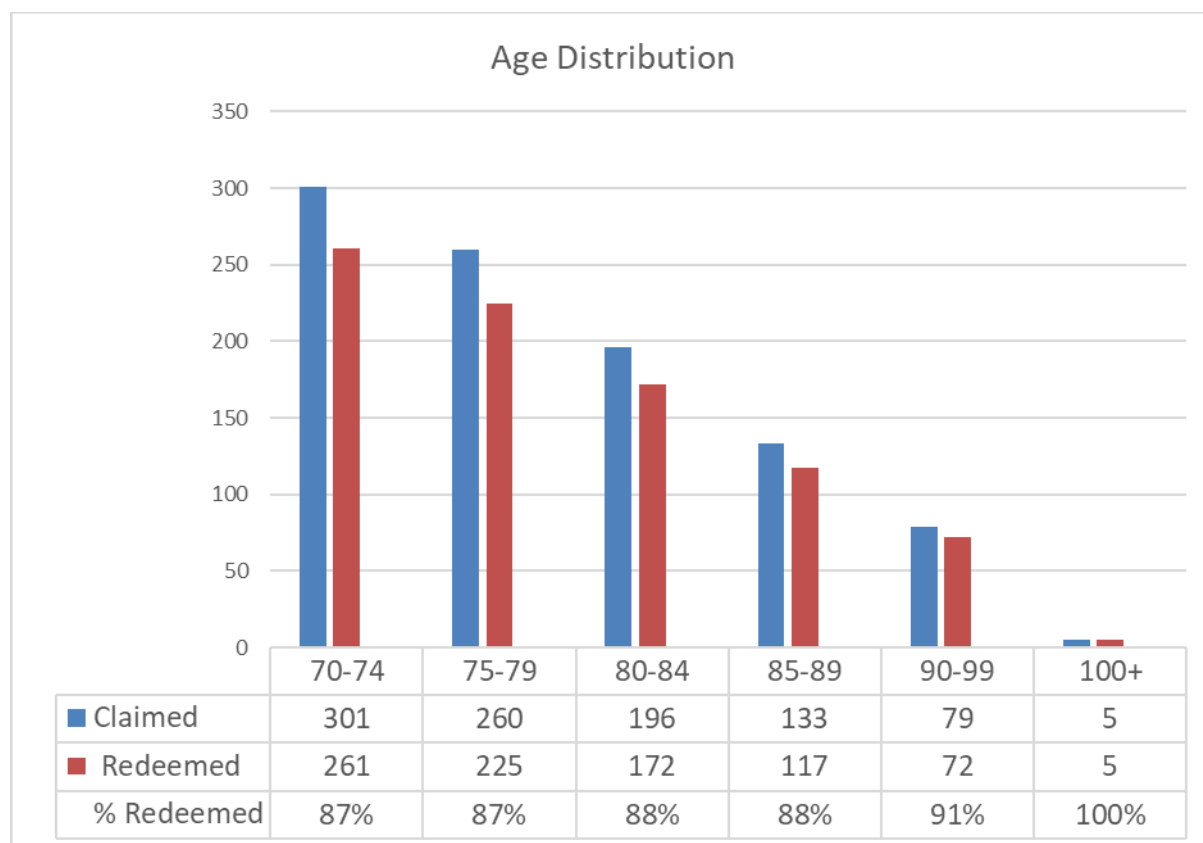
£8,520 was disbursed to organisations redeeming the vouchers. A further £294 was spent on printing the vouchers and posters. The vouchers were all delivered by volunteers from Frodsham & District Open Hands.

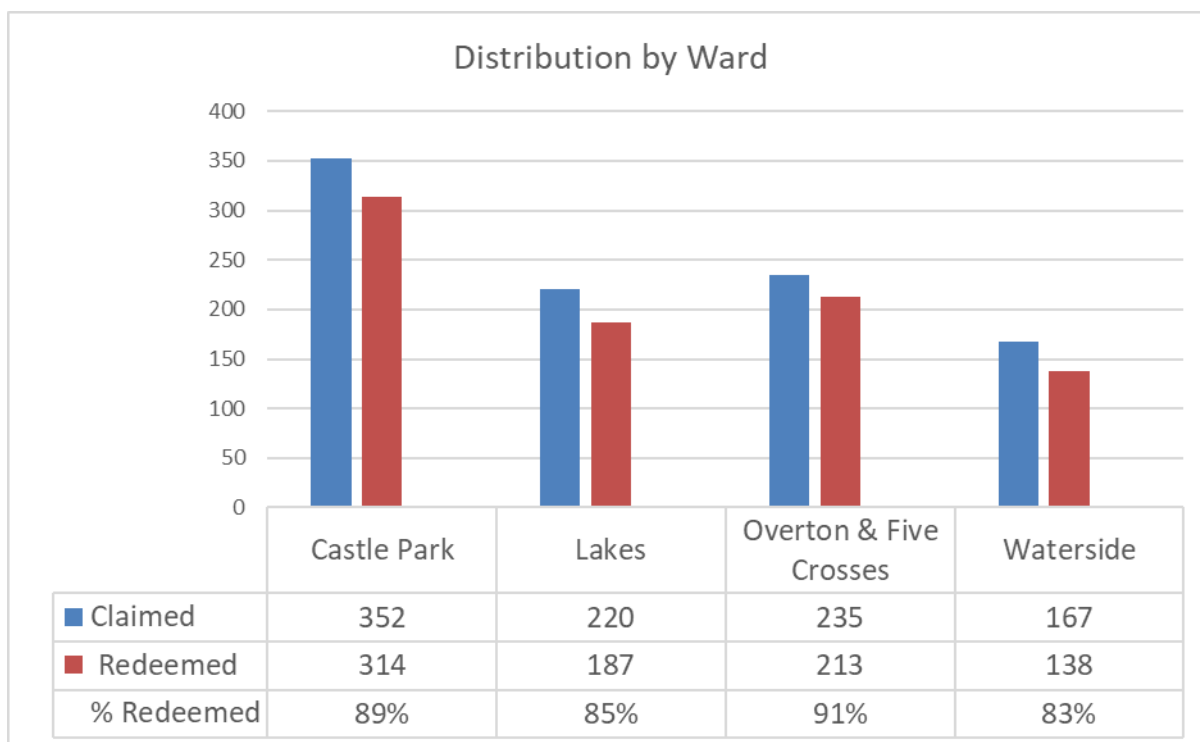
974 vouchers were issued and 852 (87%) were redeemed. This represents a reduction in vouchers issued of 158 (14%) on last year. The redemption rate is 7 percentage points lower than last year.

This reduced take-up and redemption is largely due to the pandemic and lockdown reducing people's ability to access the scheme and, despite extending the deadline to spend the vouchers by a month, to spend the vouchers.

The printed application form in Frodsham Life magazine was used by 42% of applicants in 2019, but the magazine was last produced in March 2020. Many of the local businesses participating in the scheme were closed or restricted by lockdown.

**Who were the applicants?**





### Where were the vouchers redeemed?

19 businesses accepted the vouchers in 2020, along with 4 local good causes,

#### Businesses

HE Coward Butchers, Main St	£4,000
4 Seasons 4 Food, Main St	£640
Ring 'O Bells, Bellemonte Rd	£470
Devonshire Bakery, High St	£470
Hales Fruits, Church St	£310
Robert Gleave & Sons, Mill Lane	£290
The Cottage Teashop, Main St	£280
Home and Beauty, Church St	£270
Top Shop, Langdale Way	£250
The Vintage Teapot Teashop, Lady Heyes	£210
Simply Local - St Hilda's Drive Post Office	£150
Kates Closet, Langdale Way	£130
Millmark Foods, Main St	£90
The Queens Head, Main St	£90
Flowers by Jenny Penny	£90
Elliotts Newsagents, Main St	£70
Dandelion Gifts	£30
Frodsham Coffee Shop, Main St	£30
Browsers Bazaar, Lady Heyes	£10
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,880</b>

## Good causes

St Laurence Parish Church	£310
Will to Work Workshop	£130
Frodsham Community Association	£120
4th Frodsham Scout Group	£80
<b>Total</b>	<b>£640</b>

