

Frodsham Town Council Community Committee - 17 April 2018

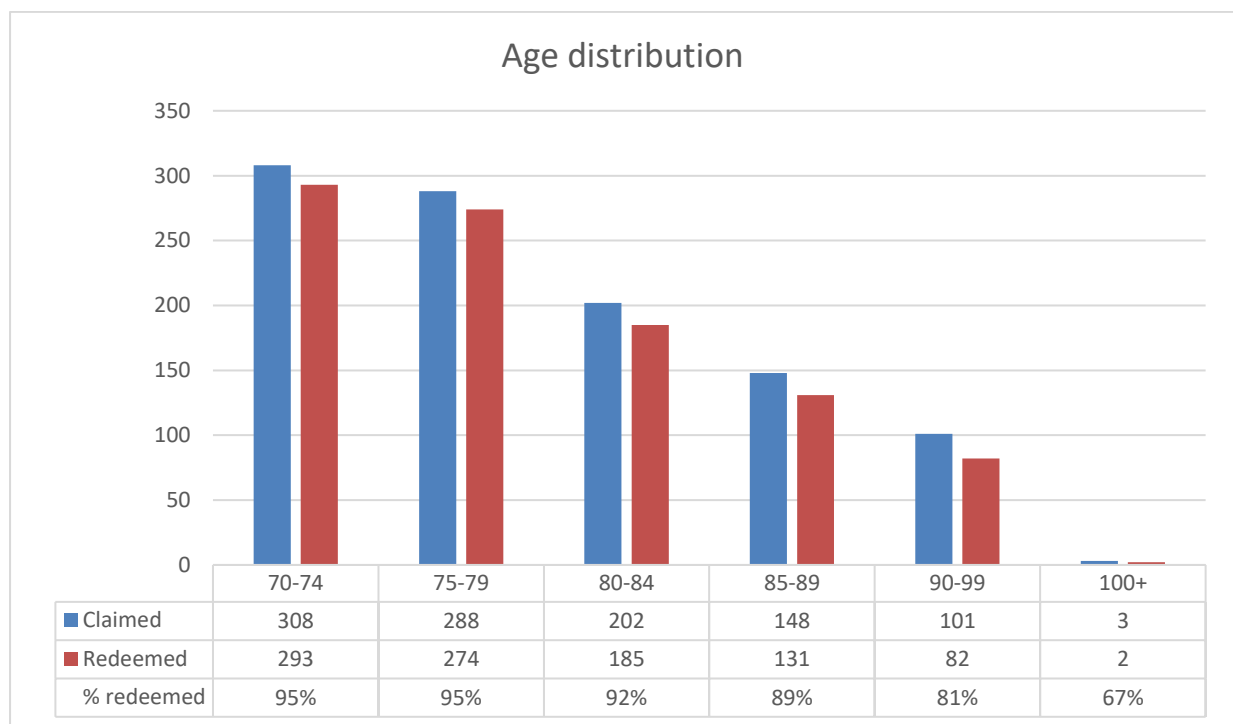
Over 70s Voucher Scheme 2017

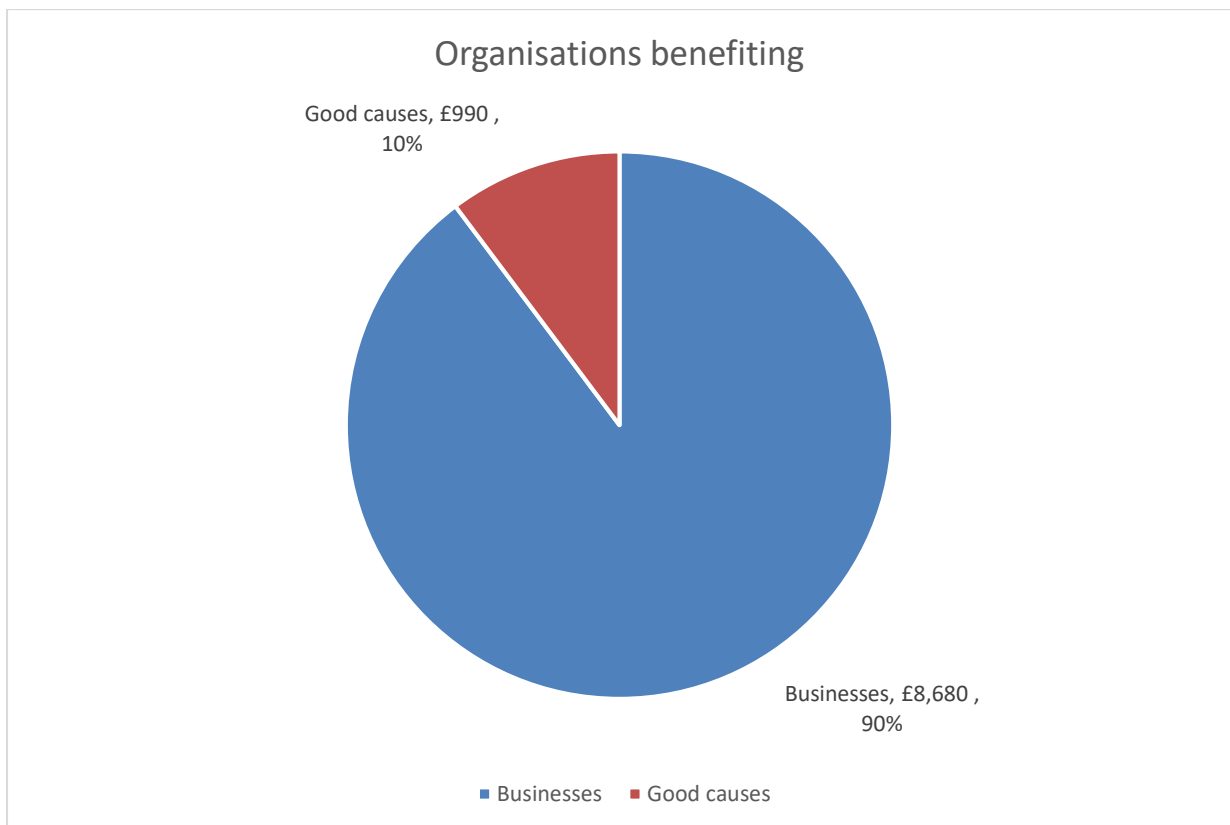
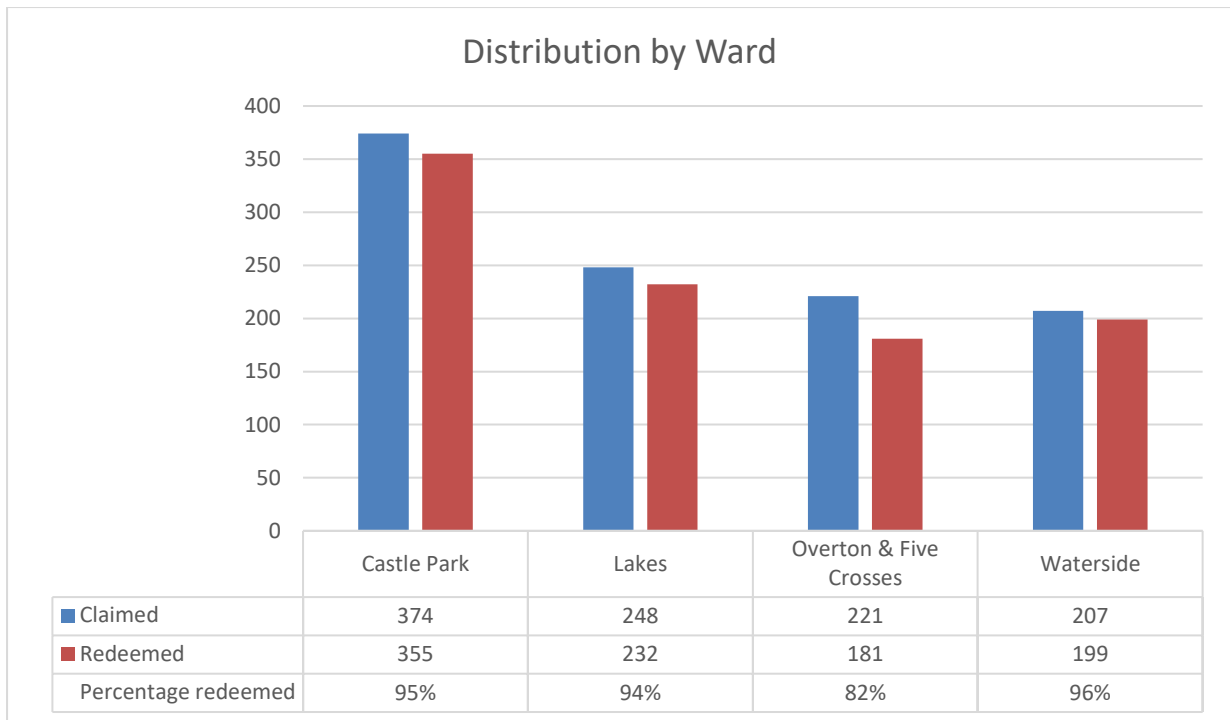
Part 1 of this report looks at the take-up of the scheme and a complaint from a resident; with Part 2 addressing some of the practical arrangements.

Part 1 Take-up of the scheme

1,050 vouchers were issued, and 967 (92%) redeemed. This represents an increase of 42 (4%) on last year. The redemption rate has increased from 91% last year. This is despite the withdrawal of one of the participating businesses part-way through the scheme due to a family bereavement.

40 (48%) of those not redeemed had been issued to residents in sheltered accommodation or care homes.





Where were the vouchers redeemed?

27 businesses accepted the vouchers in 2017, compared with 23 last year. Participating good causes reduced from 7 to 6.

Businesses

H E Coward Butchers	£2,270
Ring 'O Bells	£1,090
Devonshire Bakery	£740
The Vintage Teapot	£620
Alan Pickup Butchers	£600
Gates Garage	£470
Top Shop	£420
Home and Beauty	£360
Top Marks	£300
Hales Fruits	£260
Robert Gleave & Sons	£230
St Hilda's Drive Post Office	£230
The Cottage Teashop	£180
Frodsham Coffee Shop	£130
Celebrations	£110
Dandelion Gifts	£110
Overton Village Store	£110
DRB Jewellers	£80
Paws & Claws	£80
Millmark Foods	£60
Flowers by Jenny Penny	£50
Frodsham Flowers	£50
Peers Hairdressing	£40
Elliotts Newsagents	£30
Les Harris Jewellers	£30
Mayland Art	£20
Brew + Tucker	£10

Totals £8,680

Good causes

St Laurence Parish Church	£320
Halton Haven Hospice Shop	£280
Frodsham Community Association	£130
Will to Work Workshop	£120
4th Frodsham Scout Group	£80
Frodsham & District Stroke Club	£60

£990

The different care homes and sheltered housing developments showed different patterns of spend

- None of the 28 residents of Hillcrest care home redeemed their vouchers. We have been in touch with the care home and spoken to the manager.
- Of the 61 vouchers issued to residents of Chapelfields care home, 55 (90%) were spent with The Vintage Teapot, Lady Heyes.
- At Meadow Court extra care housing scheme, 17 out of 18 vouchers (94%) were spent at Devonshire Bakery.
- The 37 residents at Ashley Court retirement housing spent their vouchers with 9 different businesses – almost half at Top Shop in Langdale Way.
- The 22 residents of Newton Hall residential home spread their spend between 7 different businesses.

Learning point

We have been in touch with the manager at Hillcrest care home. She pointed out that the level of dependency of the residents is such that they are unlikely to be able to spend their vouchers individually. She was unaware that it would be acceptable

for the care home, with the agreement of the residents or their relatives, to spend the vouchers on a Christmas party or other suitable treat. She will make use of the vouchers in this way next year and has suggested that we provide some guidelines to care homes on what is acceptable.

Complaint from resident

One voucher recipient returned his voucher requested payment in cash after being unable to use his voucher in the business that had withdrawn from the scheme.

There were only a few days left before the deadline to use the voucher.

The resident was provided with a list of the other 34 places accepting the vouchers, including a local garage where (amongst other things) he could purchase fuel for his car, but he said none were convenient.

It was explained that the vouchers clearly state “FTC’s responsibility is only to issue the voucher. It is a matter for the local businesses, groups and societies whether they will accept them” and “It cannot be exchanged for cash”.

For decision: The resident has asked the Committee to consider his request for a cash payment.

Part 2 Practical arrangements

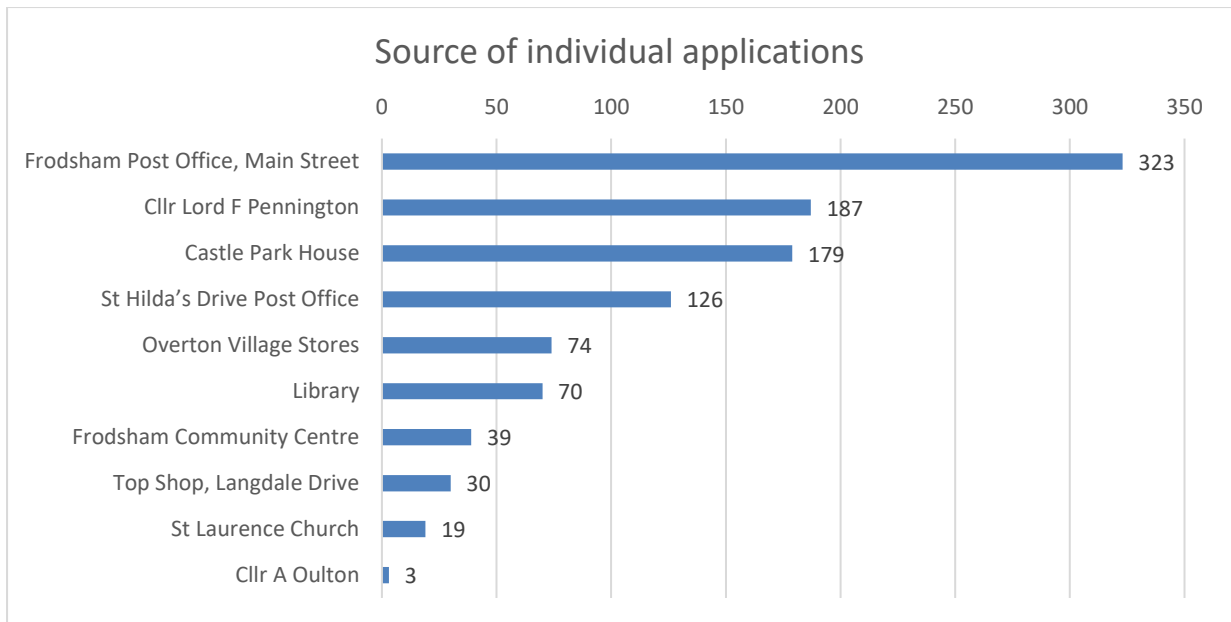
Application forms were, as usual, printed in Frodsham Life magazine and made available for collection from local outlets (listed in the chart below) as well as the Council’s website. Cllr Lord Pennington also distributed application forms widely. FTC’s Facebook and Twitter accounts were used to promote awareness of the scheme.

The design of the vouchers changed this year to streamline the administration involved in preparing the vouchers and this worked well, despite late delivery from the printer.

Cllr Lord Pennington delivered vouchers to the various care homes and sheltered housing developments in the town. The remaining vouchers were delivered by the relevant ward councillors, with each councillor in an individual ward allocated a roughly equal number.

Where did the returned application forms come from?

Members asked that records should be kept this year of the number of applications received from the different drop-off points. This is shown in the chart below – note that Cllrs Lord Pennington and Oulton returned some forms to the FTC office in person.



23% of all applications (240) were submitted on the application form printed in Frodsham Life, with the remainder being on forms distributed at the collection points, by individual councillors or downloaded from the FTC website.