

Coronavirus COVID-19 Update – November 2020

Initial work within the community...

I wanted to let you know what we have been working on for the last eight months, and to thank all of our supporters for their continued help. We have been working within the local community during the initial Covid-19 outbreak, and have created the **Wantage and Surrounding Areas Coronavirus Support Group**, working as follows.

Firstly, a dedicated phone line was installed (01235 260033) with members of **Wantage Methodist Church** congregation and trust volunteers handling the calls between **9am - 7pm seven days a week**. The helpline received **1900 calls** from local residents and the text line we added after a few weeks had **900 TEXTS** for prescriptions (from those in the OX12 plus a few in the SN7 and OX11 postcodes).

We produced **10,000 leaflets** and delivered them to all the streets in Wantage & Grove; thanks to the **Grove Scouts & parents**, and put up several banners along the roads into Wantage & Grove and at the Mably Way Health Centre - displaying our phone number. We also sent out a press release to the local press to reassure residents we were able to help them.

Continued work....

We signed up **100 volunteers** and have carried out over **600 shops** for people shielding or self-isolating, and have done **500 family shops paid for by the Trust at approximately 3,000 bags of shopping**. These families have all been referred to us by the local schools, the Wantage Independent Advice Centre, Social Workers, Midwives, Sovereign Housing Association, Carers and other medical workers and organisations.

We have delivered 2,800 items for Lloyds, Boots and Cleggs pharmacies and organised the stalwart marshalling of the 'Mably Way Health Centre' where the queues were 4-5hrs waiting time and snaked around from the back of the building to the front at the busiest times. Thanks to **Shaun** from **Wantage Couriers** for all of his organisation and to all of the volunteers who marshalled this for four weeks, bringing the queue down to 30 mins, and allowing the centre staff to do their vital jobs instead of acting as marshals outside.

We have paid for taxis to deliver high risk medication to those shielding and for vulnerable patients so they didn't miss vital hospital appointments at the JR.

We have supported twenty further families and individuals with emergency electrical appliances (cookers, fridge freezers, washing machines) at a cost of £8,000, all have been referred to us. Thanks to **Andrew Ledbury**, owner of **Peter B Ledbury Ltd**, who waived all install and removal charges, even though the shop was facing challenging times. This saved us hundreds of pounds.

Feeding the community...

Karen Smith, owner of **Corks & Canapes**, produced approximately **1000 home cooked style meals** and **500 slices of cake** were supplied by **Ardington Bakery**. We gave away fifty free meals to those in need and who had been referred to us. We have had lots of very positive feedback from the home cooked style meal. The quality of produce, freshness and great taste were very well received.

We also set up a website to sell the meals at cost price with our group covering credit card costs and doing free delivery weekly. A mobile credit card system was used for card payments to limit contact and we have now purchased several of these machines.

Lockdown birthday celebrations...

We helped a local lady celebrate her 80th birthday after her friend contacted us, as they would be apart. Thanks to one of our many supporters **Sarah Kerr** who made a beautiful cake and we supplied a lovely Bouquet of flowers and delivered these, along with her best friend's card on her birthday.

Supporting education....

We supplied a new laptop to a young lady with learning difficulties studying at Abingdon college. The laptop has already had a big impact on her studies and will hopefully enable her to get her grades to fulfil her ambition of employment.

We have also helped several people who had moved suddenly due to suffering from domestic abuse, with essential appliances and food shops.

Supporting the elderly and their carers....

We supplied some treats and hand creams to the 31 carers at Golden Care Services and to the care staff for 60 Dementia and Alzheimer rooms at Richmond Village, to express our community's thanks for all their hard work and long hours in these most difficult days.

We have also helped four local care homes, Framlands Care Home, Stirling's Elderly Care Home, Wantage Nursing Home and St Katharine's House, supplying toiletries, hand creams, shampoos and shower gels as well as cakes, sweets, chocolates and drinks for staff and residents plus fresh flowers for residents' rooms to brighten up their rooms and lift their spirits.

This has benefited 193 care home residents and 300 care staff.

We donated over 3,000 items, toiletries, hand creams, as well as cakes, sweets, chocolates, biscuits, crisps and drinks for staff benefitting 500 nurses and support staff at the Children's Hospital at the JR.

We have paid for two skips to enable us to clear two very overgrown gardens for vulnerable elderly residents so carers could get to them without fear of serious injury from tripping over countless hazards and extremely overgrown hedges, grass, bushes and trees.

We also donated 60 Cadbury Chocolate Hampers to Young Carers in Wantage & Grove who helped their families enormously through lockdown.

Summary

We have helped 80 families hit financially by Covid-19, and we are currently still supporting 17 families. So far, we have raised £71,000 and spent nearly £50,000 helping and feeding those in need in our community in a variety of ways – and continue to provide support moving forward.

Thank you to all of supporters, volunteers and those that have given so much of their time and to those who have selflessly donated – no matter how big or small your donation is, it really helps make a big difference in our support efforts.

Thank you,

Ray Collins

Ray Collins BCA
Chairman