

## Report on the Activities of the Parish Council Covid19 Response Group.

On Monday 16th March 2020 as it became closer that we would be heading into a lockdown the Parish Council invited local organisations to form the Affpuddle and Turnerspudde Parish Council COVID19 Response Group. In addition to the Parish Council, The Village Shop, Village Hall and St Lawrence's Church Affpuddle all sent representatives and agreed a strategy of local self help to support all Parish Residents. Three other residents joined the initial meeting to provide support and advice.

Within 48hrs of inception the the Group had set up an organisation centred on keeping the Briantspuddle Shop and Post Office open and finding volunteers. The Community Website was updated with a dedicated Coronavirus page containing advice for residents.

A private Facebook Group was started for residents to keep in touch during the lockdown.

A Parish Helpline Telephone Number was set up and ready to take calls ([07745 796118](tel:07745796118)).

A Parish Helpline Email account went live ([parishhelpline@gmail.com](mailto:parishhelpline@gmail.com)).

In order to ensure that everyone in the parish, including those without access to the internet or social media, would be aware of the support available a Covid newsletter was published on the 18th of March and hand delivered to every address in the parish.

The group received its first request for assistance on the 19th of March. Over the next few days lists where compiled of those seeking assistance and residents who volunteered to help.

The number of volunteers available varied throughout the various lockdowns as circumstances changed and some were able to return to work. At its peak the group had 46 volunteers available and willing to assist with a wide range of tasks such as:

Shopping Collection.

Prescription Collection

Follow up Telephone calls

Trips to Hospital appointments

Marshalling at the Village Shop

And a wide variety of one off tasks, e.g. Jewellery repair, Lawn mowing,

Companionship, dog walking to name a few.

To ensure that everyone stayed safe risk assessments and frequently asked questions where prepared and over the lockdown period 6 volunteer update emails were issued. A digital parish map with the grid reference of every dwelling in the parish was created linking house names with detailed locations.

To help in the matching of volunteer availability with residents requests for support a local company Big Yellow Design based in Broadmayne allowed the group to adapt and use its Advanced Responder Management software free of charge. A small admin team, Amelia Chorley, Ben Bunnell and myself checked the helpline voicemail and inbox and used the software to send tasking requests to the available volunteers. The system then kept track of these tasks only marking them as completed once the volunteer had safely "returned home".

The mail box and helpline have been monitored every day since the 18th of March (414 days and counting).

The group has been supported by some small grants provide through the Parish Council and has facilitated some projects such as the **VE75** events and tea party and the embroidery project.

As we moved through the various stages of lockdown and relaxation it is clear that the majority of residents have adapted to the new reality and the number of calls to the helpline has reduced to one or two each month, primarily from more elderly residents less able to drive or adept in the on-line world.

If the present roadmap for the relaxation of restrictions continues the helpline will close on May 17th. Calls will temporarily be diverted to a personal mobile phone. The software, email address and telephone number will be maintained for use in the event of any resumption of restrictions in the winter of 2021.

The Parish Council and residents may wish to consider retaining this model of operation as the basis of a resilient community able to assist residents during other times of need such as extreme weather events, especially when the statutory agencies resources may be overwhelmed by demand from more populated areas of the county.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to support parish residents.

David Griffith  
Parish Council Covid19 Response Group Coordinator.