



Report to:	<i>Full Council</i>
Tabled on:	<i>Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020</i>
Agenda reference:	20/047(b) Update – Community Engagement
Report by:	Liz Carroll-Wheat, Community Projects Officer

### **Overview:**

This report outlines our work during the current Coronavirus outbreak and subsequent lockdown period. It includes information on support to our local community, adaptations to our engagement programme and networking/planning with partner organisations.

Our current community engagement programme has obviously changed a great deal over the past 7 weeks, whilst we have had to move to operating in a very different landscape. We have continued to work, adapting and developing our program schedule and our offer to the community, based on new and developing local need.

Clearly, for all organisations, community engagement is a challenge at this time, with the ability to meet in groups, or work directly with the public, being removed.

#### **1.1 Our initial work:**

Our first priority was around informing people about the changes to our programme, to ensure that people did not attend at venues, and to cancel tutors and contributors. A number of large-scale activities have had to be put on hold. At this stage we will not be announcing any alternative dates.

In terms of our group activities, this has included all Seniors coffee mornings, Get Active health & wellbeing program, Library based Crafternoon series, School of Life Intergenerational Program, joint initiatives with Abbey Centre, W.I., our Schools and community groups. These activities are now all postponed, in line with government instruction.

Prior to the initial closure of the office, we also published a newsletter to our seniors' group, which is our largest community group at this time. This contained important relevant information for them, in relation to the Coronavirus lockdown.

In terms of communication with the wider community, we set up a dedicated area of our website, to reflect Covid-19 information, this is regularly updated by the Parish Clerk, and we have continued to jointly update both website and social media on a regular basis.

Social media has quickly become a main stay in terms of communication at this time, and has also been a key way for the local community to reach out to us, with requests and ideas for community projects. It has also been vital in terms of recruiting many new local volunteers, to assist with community initiatives.

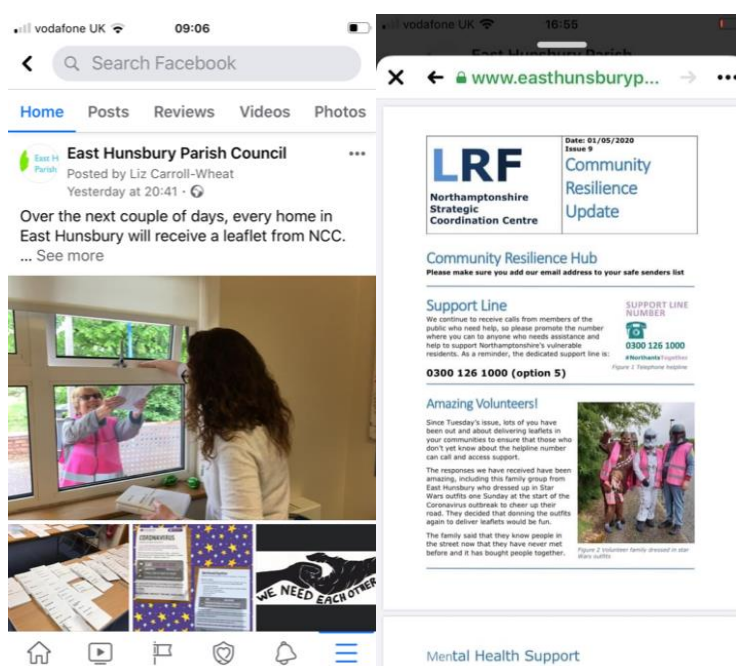


## 2.1 Key Initiatives:

**The Help Register:** In week 1 of the lockdown, we established East Hunsbury Help Register. This is a log of people who require help, for instance shopping, a chat, advice on agencies, plus those who can offer to help. Following requests from individuals, we can link people together where there is a need. This register developed at the same time as the local volunteer **Mutual Aid Covid 19 Group**. Feedback from local residents has been overwhelmingly positive, with many people being incredibly thankful for help with shopping and with getting their medication.

The Parish Clerk is in regular contact with Admin leads for the local Covid-19 group, and at this stage their team of volunteers are doing an amazing amount to support our local community. As this time continues, we will be staying in close contact with their team, to look at how local need may change and how we may help.

**NBC/NCC Resilience Team Information:** we have also been working with colleagues at NBC and NCC, including organising distribution of information leaflets to all homes in East Hunsbury. This again included practical support from our local Covid-19 Team and volunteers, who hand delivered to all East Hunsbury addresses. This information outlined how to get help to those who need most help, with one hotline number. Ensuring that the most socially in need can be helped by appropriate agencies.



The photo above shows us distributing leaflets to the Covid Volunteer Group for distribution in a safe manner at from our Library office. The East Hunsbury volunteers featured in the local Community Resilience Update – for their brilliant work, and fun attire – to cheer people up!



**Seniors Club:** with over 300 people now on our records, we have used our database to keep our seniors well informed, with a couple of newsletters, giving useful information about Coronavirus. As we go forward, we will be sending more updates, which will also include more positive information and activities. We are working with local organisations and have asked individuals to create quizzes, online activities, and general fun information for our seniors, to keep them engaged at this time. This includes promoting online exercise classes from Danes Camp Leisure Centre and crafting sessions from EH WI, especially created for this period, when our seniors cannot take part in their usual activities.

**Seniors Phone Crew:** following the success of the Help Register, we followed up our Seniors Newsletters, with a phone-buddy-system. A group of 10 volunteers have been recruited to call each of our seniors members, for a chat.

Following our first set of phone calls, we have been able to help a number of people with enquiries and assist them to gain more support. Happily, we can report that most of the seniors are well looked after and have reported that they have found updates from the Parish Council to be very useful at this time. A number are being helped with shopping etc., by volunteers from the local Covid-19 group and we have been able to match a number of people with Help Register volunteers, for other purposes.

The system now in place, will be used to check with people who have indicated that they would like a regular phone call from our volunteer team.

## 2.2 New Community Initiatives

Whilst our “traditional” activities have been put on hold, via social media and via our ever growing list of community contacts, East Hunsbury has become a key contributor to the Making for the NHS community initiative.

### East Hunsbury Stitches

One of our main activities in the last month, has been the creation of East Hunsbury NHS Stitches community project. The project began quite simply, with one of our seniors asking if we offer help a tutor from NCC Adult Learning Services. They had been approached by a nurse at NGH, to initially make scrubs bags for health workers. These bags have proved vital for health care staff, in order to transport their uniforms back home and place straight into the wash, without having to remove them from the bag itself.

This project has grown to involving over 40 local makers, creating scrubs bags, and now mask mates and mask headbands for Northampton General Hospital, First Responders, Ambulance Staff and Care Homes. Off shoot have subsequently started up in West Hunsbury, Wootton, Standens Barn, Pattishall. Taking a lead from East Hunsbury.

Continues...

To date – over 2,300 items have been created by our team, for our local health teams and volunteers.

Our project has been featured on BBC Radio Northampton, with interviews on two of their news programmes, and widely reported on other social media sites.

We would like to recognise the efforts of East Hunsbury Volunteer Pauline Boler for helping us to create this vital project.

From Seniors, to furloughed workers, to school children at home, East Hunsbury has been a leading light. Out Parish Council role has been to manage, to recruit, support, pick up, deliver and promote the scheme.



As we go forward, this amazing set of new volunteers will be invited to take part in more initiatives and will be celebrated with our focus on our East Hunsbury Volunteers, later in the year.

### Celebrating the NHS

Each week, during the lockdown, we have positively promoted Clap for Carers via our social media. We receive wonderful feedback to this, with the local residents reporting back to us, how they are taking part in their streets and roads.

As part of the initiative, we have also been supporting local groups who have been encouraging our young residents to create posters, rainbows, thumbs up, smiley faces, for our NHS.



One post on our social media caught our eye in particular – the story of a little girl who’s poster kept being washed away. She kept making such an effort to recreate it.

We contacted her Father, to see if we could adopt her image, to be our East Hunsbury Logo for our own official NHS Thankyou Banners.

See below – photograph of our banners – three of which are erected now in East Hunsbury.

We thank Ela-Mai age 5 and her Dad, Matt Buckle – for allowing us to use her wonderful image, which has led to an incredible online local response from other residents.



## VE Day Commemorations

Due to the restriction on public events, our planned tree planting event was put on hold. In reflecting the mood of our residents, we followed the recommendations around community celebrations, to be held in a safe manner, in line with government guidance.

Once again using social media, we promoted community input, and invited people to tell us about their front-garden-tea-parties and send us photographs, to create a record of the event. These will be used alongside other community information to create a record of this entire time, and how our community came through it.

This initiative, as with the East Hunsbury Stitches project, shows our increasing success at using our social media in an innovative way. Although it is difficult to see many positives at this time, our communication with East Hunsbury community members and residents has really grown, with the local community being proactive and incredibly helpful with their ideas and support for schemes.



These pictures of local commemorations, will form a key part of recording what has taken place during this lockdown period and shows great community spirit in East Hunsbury. All sent via social media.

### 3.1 How we move forward:

In the short term, we will continue with our adapted engagement programme, developing new initiatives where we can, and supporting our local community as much as possible, with information and partnership working. We are in regular contact with local organisations, including:

- Hunsbury Library
- Danes Camp Leisure Team
- EH Seniors Group Reps and members
- Abbey Centre Team
- Local Schools – East Hunsbury Primary/Simon de Senlis/Wootton Park
- East Hunsbury W.I.
- Community groups/crafting groups/exercise and health groups
- East Hunsbury Social Media Groups



As restrictions/instructions from government change, we will continue to look at how we can work with and support our local groups and organisations and see how we can start to move towards restarting community activities, when possible. This will be some time in the future.

We are also in contact with County organisations, including Voluntary Impact Northampton, looking at how we may link in to schemes and idea-sharing with other providers.

We are also keeping in touch with local business, in order to look at how we can share information about how they are operating and when they are open to the public. For instance, we regularly update residents via social media, with information on shop opening hours – which is research by one of our new volunteers, Petra Sefton:

Supermarket	Opening hours Easter Week	Elderly and vulnerable	NHS staff	R
Tesco Mere Way	Mon-Thu 8.00 am -10.00pm Fri 8.00 am- 8.00 pm Sat 8.00 am - 10.00 pm Sun Closed Mon 8.00 am -6.00 pm	Mon, Wed, Fri 9.00 am-10.00 am	Tue, Thur, Sun 9.00 am-10.00 am	3
Sainsbury's Grosvenor Centre	Mon-Sat 8.00 am - 5.00pm Sun Closed Mon 8.00 am -5.00pm	Mon,Wed,Fri 8.00 am- 9.00 am	Mon-Sat 7.30 am- 8.00 am (before store opens)	3
Iceland St Peter's Way	Mon-Sat 9.00 am - 6.00 pm Sun Closed	Mon-Sat 9.00am -10.00 am	Mon-Sat 5.00pm-6.00 pm	3
Asda London Road	Mon-Thu 8.00 am -10.00pm Fri 8.00 am- 8.00 pm Sat 8.00 am - 8.00 pm Sun Closed Mon 8.00 am -8.00 pm		Mon, Wed, Fri 8.00am-9.00 am	3
M&S Sixfields	Mon-Sat 8.00 am - 8.00pm Sun 10.00 am- 4.00 pm Mon 8.00 am -6.00pm	Mon, Thu 8.00 am-9.00 am	Tue, Fri 8.00am-9.00 am	3
Aldi Towcester Road	Mon-Sat 8.00 am - 8.00pm Sun Closed Mon TBC	Mon-Sat 30 min early browsing before opening	Every day priority in a queue . 30 min early browsing before opening	Sun 4
Waitrose Wootton	Mon-Sat 8.00 am - 8.00pm Sun Closed Mon 8.00 am -6.00pm	First shopping hour	Set aside some hard to find essentials for NHS staff. Priority check out	3

Regular updates to social media about shop opening hours, including special arrangements for Elderly and NHS staff

### 3.2 Developing Ideas:

As we go forward, we know that we will be challenged to look at how we can adapt our activities and groups. This will be an ongoing process, in line with government guidelines.

We are in talks with a number of local groups, about the potential for online activities, such as The Big Sing, our Tai Chi classes for seniors and other participatory activities such as quizzing and crafting. Much will depend on finding the right platform for this and volunteers with technical knowledge to assist.

Social Media will remain a key tool in terms of building community capacity and keeping people informed, in line with newsletters to specific groups.



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We will continue our work linking into the Resilience Teams at NCC and NBC – particularly in respect of the most socially isolated in the community and those with immediate need. This will include continuing to look at how we can support our local Covid-19 volunteer group.

Through our Social Media – we will continue to search for and to reflect good-news local stories, to profile and support. Positive Community feeling cannot be underestimated in terms of its importance at this time.

One final point – when we can, we will want to officially thank all of the amazing volunteers, who have reached out to the Parish Council, at a difficult time, to help us to keep East Hunsbury informed and supported.