



## Weekly News Bulletin for Community and Voluntary Groups, Town and Parish Councils, Partners and Hub Update Subscribers

### Updates from the Community Support Hub

**Updated list of Covid-related Help resources** – As part of the Council's ongoing local outbreak control planning measures, the Community Support Hub team has updated the Covid-related Help resource list on the Hub website here: [info.westberks.gov.uk/covidhelp](http://info.westberks.gov.uk/covidhelp). There are a number of new links that have been added to direct residents to any help they may need.



**Updated food bank listing** – The Hub team has also contacted all the food bank providers this week to make sure that our website listing for those struggling to buy food is up to date. The updated food bank list is on <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/foodservices>.

**Shopping and prescription collections for individuals and families who are self-isolating** – We are advising that those self-isolating who require support with shopping or prescription collections to contact family, friends or neighbours; or their Community Support Group; or NHS Volunteer Responders. The Hub will continue to be a port of call in supporting those who are considered clinically extremely vulnerable or vulnerable (NHS registered) and/or are in financial difficulty.

### Government's Latest News and Guidance on Covid-19

**The Rule of Six** – The government has announced new measures to suppress the virus and keep the number of infections down. From Monday 14 September, you must not meet with people from other households socially in groups of more than six, both indoors and outdoors. We want to encourage all of our residents to adhere to this rule, as challenging as may be, in order to keep West Berkshire Open and help protect our families and loved ones. Accordingly, the Residents Bulletin issued by the Council today leads with this topic.



In summary, from 14 September it will be against the law to meet people you do not live with in a group larger than six, unless you are meeting as a household or support bubble.

The police will have the powers to enforce these legal limits, including issuing fines of £100, doubling for further breaches up to a maximum of £3,200. There are some exemptions where groups of six can gather, including Covid-19 secure work places, organised team sports, education, weddings and funerals.

For more information:

- [What Has Changed News Announcement](#)
- [Updated Covid-19 Guidance for England on Meeting Others Safely](#) – contains new rules and exemptions

**Hands. Face. Space.** This new campaign for England from the government and NHS is to remind the public of the key things we can all do to protect ourselves and others:

- **HANDS** – Wash your hands regularly and for 20 seconds.
- **FACE** – Wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- **SPACE** – Stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place.

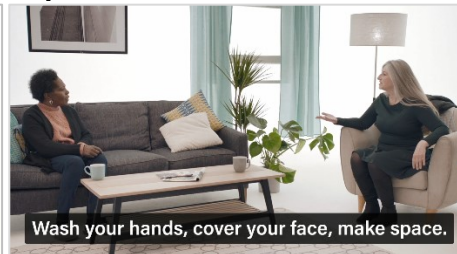
**Hands.**



**Face.**



**Space.**



These key messages correspond with our local campaign “Let’s all play our part to keep West Berkshire open.” It is worth sharing with your community the following NHS films on the importance of observing the **Hands. Face. Space.** guidelines:

- [Hands. Face. Space. PR video](#) – explains why the hands, face, and space measures are so important, especially with winter approaching. The film shows how easily droplets can spread, and what to do to avoid spreading or coming into contact the contagion.
- [Hands. Face. Space. TV advert](#) – features people explaining how and why they are taking social distancing measures.

**Better Health - Every Mind Matters support for parents/carers and young people**

Public Health England and NHS have launched campaigns to provide mental health support for parents/carers of children/young people from 5-18 years of age as well as to young people aged 13-18:

**Campaign to parents/carers** - The past few months have been hard on everyone, including our kids. But there are lots of things we can do to support them at this time. [Better Health - Every Mind Matters](#) (parents/carers section) will help you find what’s right for your children - whether it’s listening to them talk about the challenges they’re facing or helping them develop skills to cope with their emotions.



**Campaign to young people** - Knowing what steps we can take to support our mental wellbeing can help us feel better, sleep better and have better relationships with the people around us – and that goes not just for today but for the future too. Find out more on [Better Health – Every Mind Matters](#) (young people section).

**The Belonging Project West Berkshire, 16 September 2020, 18.00 hours, via Zoom**

Community United is hosting this free, inaugural event to start the conversation about you and your family's success, challenges faced, living in West Berkshire along with suggestions and aspirations for your life within the community.

Register by noon 16 Sept on [Eventbrite](#). The Zoom link will be sent event nearer the date. Read more about Community United on their [website](#) and [Facebook page](#).

## Meet the Marvellous East Ilsley Emergency Response Team

Interview with Fenella Woods, Parish Clerk of East Ilsley, about team's super hero efforts during lockdown and beyond

A resident sent Fenella Woods the following amazing testimonial about the East Ilsley Emergency Response Team:

“Just a quick note to say a massive thank you to you, and all the team, who supported the village over the last few weeks. The speed in which you put a plan in progress and knowing you were there whilst we were locked down was very reassuring. Please can you give a special thanks to our buddy for all the shopping she picked up for us, especially in the first 6 weeks when we were unable to get click and collect or a delivery. Also to the prescription lady who was always so cheerful.”

We at West Berkshire Community Support Hub were very eager to find out more about these super hero efforts of the East Ilsley volunteers, so we met up with the team's leader Fenella Woods to tell us the story.

We also asked Fen for any advice for people who may need to set up an emergency response team for their own area in the future.

**Hi Fen, thank you for joining us. What was the situation in East Ilsley at the start of lockdown and how did the Emergency Response team get formed?**



We have a real mix of people in the village. There are many people who have lived there all their lives. We also have lovely, fun young families who've more recently moved into the area, although overall we do have a high proportion of vulnerable people in terms of age and health.

We are reasonably isolated - you might even say we are in the middle of nowhere. It's 10 miles to Newbury and 3 miles to Compton on a rural road. With four buses a day it can be difficult for people without their own form of transport to get around. Our older people tend not to drive and rely heavily on bus services and friends and family. Therefore, as soon as lockdown was announced, the East Ilsley Parish Council knew that we had to do something to support our rural community and we saw it as our role to take on that mantle.

The first thing I did as Parish Clerk was to put out a plea on our Facebook page and on Twitter to see if anybody was willing to join an Emergency Response Team. I got 30 people pretty much straight away who said “Yes, I want to help.” As time went on, I even had a waiting list of people ready to volunteer if needed.

First of all I checked to make sure that people who kindly volunteered were genuine residents - with people going to other people's homes, security was highly important. Therefore I devised a form for them to provide details of where they lived, and for them to give their permission to join a WhatsApp group in accordance with data protection regulations.

As well as validating their identity, this information from the volunteers would then help me buddy them up with people when requests came through for help. I was really lucky that all those offering to help were indeed from here. I soon discovered that they were really nicely dotted around the village, and that we were going to be well covered going into lockdown.

### How were villagers made aware that help was available from the Emergency Response volunteers?



In the village many are quite active on our East Ilsley social media, so that was our first port of call to let residents know. We also produced and “door dropped” leaflets back in March to every home in the village to ensure that anyone not on social media know that there was a team available to offer them support.

We offered assistance with activities such as shopping, prescription collections, dog walking, running errands and befriending. We also plastered the village with posters on noticeboards and in windows, and printed out the posters for those who wanted copies.

Within about a day, requests started to come through and it turned out that the majority of requirements to begin with were for prescription collections. I then spoke to the Downland Practice and found out that they were starting a rural delivery system. I sent copies of driving licenses of 10 of the volunteers over quickly to the Downland Practice so that they knew who was authorised to pick up prescriptions from them.



### What other activities were the volunteers involved with?



At peak time we were looking after over 30 families. Nearly every volunteer was assigned as a buddy to an individual family to meet their particular needs. One helper, for example, collected newspapers daily for an elderly couple who live at the top of the hill, and others took care of shopping for their family. And if we hadn't heard from a particular family their volunteer buddy would call to check in to see how they were, and offer to lend a hand.

Other helpers took on specific tasks for the village. We had one lady solely assigned to dog walking, for instance. She took her own dogs out twice a day for exercise, and collected any other dogs who needed walking. She bought a special lead that hadn't been in contact with anybody so it was Covid-secure. The lead was long enough so that the 'guest' dogs had room to move without feeling it was in a pack with hers. This service gave residents peace of mind that their dog was getting exercise whilst they were self-isolating.

### How were the volunteers able to get shopping during lockdown, especially when there were supermarket restrictions to limit the number of items purchased?

All calls came into me and I would put out the request to the response team on our WhatsApp chat group, or volunteers would offer on WhatsApp to pick up any items needed. In addition, I made all of the volunteers a laminated ID card with our Emergency Response logo, their name, and the slogan "I'm out and about because I'm helping vulnerable people in my village." They carried those around to explain if needed why there were out and away from their home, or why they were buying extra items at the till.

### How did the volunteers stay safe?

Given the high proportion of vulnerable people in terms of age and health, safety restrictions are not going away for us any time soon. We've been very strict about following the Covid guidelines and looking after our vulnerable people as best we can. To avoid handling cash, residents used private bank transfers to reimburse their volunteer buddy, who provided the receipt in one of the shopping bags. Of course, no volunteers were allowed to take any bank cards, pin numbers, or cheque books. In addition, Hawkridge Gin Distillers in Compton kindly donated 5 litres of hand gel which I distributed to all of the volunteers. One of the volunteers who made scrubs and face masks for the NHS also provided masks to the Response team when needed.

### We've heard that you have been a great team motivator for the response group. Tell us what you did?

I used to send them weekly "Go team!" type of messages on WhatsApp, and I made a point of telling them how brilliant they were, such as "You're looking after everyone in the village and it's wonderful!" I sent them a 'super heroes' image saying "This is you" and "I couldn't do this without you!" The feedback I got from that is that it really boosted them and made them want to go out and do more. As the person running this group, it was really important for me to keep reminding them how amazing they very much were.

### What was the feedback from the community about the Emergency Response team's overall efforts?

The community spirit just exploded and it was fantastic! It was a real joy to be present in it. BBC Radio Berkshire and Newbury News picked up on and promoted the team's efforts. Laura Farris, MP for Newbury, also paid a visit and met with some of the volunteer team, socially distanced around the pond despite the downpour!



### What's next in store?

We are still looking after people and getting some calls and matching up buddies to families. Our message is that people are still available to offer support.



The East Ilsley Parish Council and I want to say a huge thank you to each and every one of our volunteers – we couldn't have supported the village throughout lockdown without them!! Furthermore, we are delighted that all of the volunteers are keen to stay on as members of the response team, and each have signed up to the forward-looking community plan which is now being developed. The plan is primarily for emergency arrangements due to flooding, but we've now added pandemic to the plan as another risk to the village. Knowing we have willing people who are happy to be on call should another emergency happen in the village is making it much easier to write the plan!

**Good news stories – please keep them coming in!** - We love to feature your good news stories on our social media and [Hub Facebook](#) page and you can find more about the wonderful work of West Berkshire's volunteers on our [Local Heroes](#) website. With our grateful thanks and best wishes, The Hub Team.

Please ensure that all queries about individual cases are directed to the Hub via the general email [westberksbct@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:westberksbct@westberks.gov.uk) or by calling **01635 503579**. This is to ensure they are dealt with promptly, effectively and in line with guidelines on dealing with vulnerable adults.