

South Northants Council: Update for Parish and Town Councils

April 24th 2020

Edition: 3

1. COVID-19 Response

1.1 Community Resilience Hub Update

Central Government has directed all local authorities to respond to the local needs of their residents during this time of crisis. The Community Resilience Hub has two main functions, to:

- 1) provide the local response for residents requesting support for food, medication, isolation and loneliness
- 2) co-ordinate the volunteer support through matching requests for help with appropriate volunteer response.

The Hub is working closely with local volunteer organisations and groups to co-ordinate the response and provide our residents with the support they need. Volunteers can sign up to help through the [county council website](#). Volunteers registering to help in South Northants will be contacted by our Hub team and signposted to volunteer opportunities.

A few stats to give an overview of developments. So far we have:

- Number of registered organisations / businesses for volunteering: **67**
- Requests for help before County Helpline set up: **10**
- Requests for help via County 0300 helpline: **90**

The majority of requests for help are for food, followed by prescription collection. We have received a few requests for loneliness calls and posting letters.

If you or someone you know requires help, please contact **NCC on 0300 126 1000 and select Option 5 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)**. Leaflets will soon be dropping through letter boxes of residents across South Northamptonshire promoting the county support hotline.

Partnership Working

We are continuing conversations with local community and voluntary organisations to extend on the current support offered in our response to Covid19. Organisations cover a range of services including voluntary drivers and food supply.

Volunteer pack

We are producing a pack to go out to all volunteers registered with the county hub but will make this available online for all volunteers working through Parishes. In the meantime, find **in section 5 of this newsletter**, information which forms part of the county letter being given out to verify volunteers.

Volunteers - Distribution of bibs and letters

The Healthy Communities Team have been busy issuing bibs and letters to volunteers who have registered via the County website to support our local response to the current pandemic.

Volunteers will be supporting local need in a range of ways including shopping, food distribution, posting letters and contacting individuals' isolating for a friendly chat. Parishes and town councils who have registered their volunteering support will soon be receiving their bibs, or letters to

help them be identified in their local areas, as part of the county wide response.



Staff & Volunteers wearing branded bibs

Relocation of Towcester Food Bank

Our Healthy Communities Team has been working with the Towcester Foodbank to facilitate their relocation to larger premises. Over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend, the team helped the Towcester Foodbank move to new temporary premises.

This larger venue will help the Foodbank volunteers keep the service going whilst operating safely and complying with guidance for maintaining social distancing, for example whilst packing food parcels. To safely service clients during this period the Towcester Foodbank will move to an e-voucher, delivery only model, continuing to provide vulnerable residents with urgent food parcels.



Volunteers ready to help the relocation of the Towcester Foodbank

E-Vouchers for Foodbank

Tuesday 14th April was the first day of the new e-voucher system and will no longer be taking red paper vouchers. All food will be accessed via delivery, rather than collection.

- Information about the new system can be found on the Contact Us section of the Towcester Foodbank website – <https://towcester.foodbank.org.uk/contact-us/>

Anyone who has used the Foodbank before will need to ring the person who normally provides their voucher and ask for an e-voucher code. Food cannot be accessed without an e-code. Once given a code, the person needing to access the Foodbank can ring on **07724 832043**. This number will only be answered on **Monday and Wednesday between 10am and 12 noon**.

Anyone who has not used the Foodbank before should ring **Senior Money Adviser, Laura Green at SNC on 01327 322107 for an e-voucher**.

Please note vouchers are only for people who cannot afford food. Those self-isolating or ill who need food but cannot get out to shop, need to go to <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-updates> and ask for support, or call 0300 126 1000 and select Option 5 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).

Donations can be dropped off between 10-11am on Tuesday and Friday, but there will be no access to food bags at this time. Please take donations to:

St John Ambulance Hall
Islington Road
Towcester
NN12 6AU

Looking after your wellbeing

The lockdown period has ultimately meant that we are all having to adjust to a new way of working, with many of us now spending a lot more time at home.

Activities that we would have accessed during the week are either cancelled or moving online, meaning our sense of routine may be feeling a little off.

While the situation can be frustrating at times, there are things you can do to make your time at home enjoyable and take care of your physical and mental wellbeing.

There is an abundance of online resources which we would encourage you to take advantage of. Our Healthy Communities team has also been working hard to find alternatives for some activities that would normally be taking place.

We have updated our [webpages](#) to include a range of resources to help people keep fit and active while staying at home, which includes resources from our Leisure Centres which are providing on-line classes whilst physically shut.

We also have information on local walks and cycle routes and local arts and craft opportunities. There are also links to local food producers, many of who are operating delivering services to customers during the lockdown.

We will continue to add to these, so please contact us with any information you feel it would be useful for us to promote.

1.2 Government campaign to tackle loneliness during Covid-19

The Government launched on 22 April, a major effort to [tackle loneliness and social isolation](#) during the coronavirus outbreak and period of social distancing.

- New public campaign launched by Culture Secretary to get people talking openly about loneliness
- Loneliness to be a priority category of £750 million charity funding package, announced on 8 April
- Guaranteed £5 million boost for national loneliness organisations leading the charge
- Government publishes guidance on supporting yourself and others safely
- Loneliness charities including Age UK will be supported to work with NHS Volunteer Responders in their communities
- Network of high-profile charities, businesses and public figures to join 'Tackling Loneliness Network' formed by Government to help connect groups at risk of isolation.

You can find relevant information to help keep well and active during the lockdown, on our [webpages](#).

1.3 Requests for information

To enable us to gather information on volunteer groups being set up within Parishes to help the Covid-19 response we asked if you could complete our survey monkey questionnaire <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Covid19volunteerorgs>. We appreciate people are very busy dealing with their community needs, but response to the survey was very low. **Please do respond by Friday 1st May**

The survey is very brief and just asks for details of groups set up and the type of help being offered.

Please also ensure you have signed up to the volunteer organisation/group on the Northamptonshire County Council ‘Volunteer to help those in need – Coronavirus’ page <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-updates/Pages/volunteer-to-help-those-in-need-coronavirus.aspx>

1.4 Virtual Parish Forum: Watch this space!

We are looking at how we can facilitate a virtual meeting between Parishes to give updates in our response to Covid-19 and a means of sharing good practice. Further information to follow.

! **KEEP THIS LEAFLET SAFE**
in case you need these details



CORONAVIRUS

Getting local help if you need it

If you need help and are being supported by approved local volunteers and support groups, please continue to use them.

But if you are not getting any help - and you need support with getting food, medication or other important things - please contact us.



Call 0300 126 1000
and select **Option 5 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)** or email customerservices@northamptonshire.gov.uk

We appreciate that this is not easy but together we can get through this. Thank you for everything you are doing.

STAY AT HOME, PROTECT THE NHS, SAVE LIVES

Flyer being distributed to all homes across Northamptonshire

1.5 Leaflet distribution

Each District and Borough Council has been tasked with distributing Coronavirus information leaflets to their residents.

SNC will be working alongside Northamptonshire Sport and colleagues at County Council to plan the distribution over the coming weeks.

Any Parish Councils available to offer support to deliver leaflets to their residents please contact healthy.communities@southnorthants.gov.uk email subject titled ‘LEAFLET DISTRIBUTION’.

2. Other Covid-19 Resources

2.1 Volunteer card/ Voucher scheme

The Co-op, ASDA, Sainsbury's and M&S are offering a volunteer card/voucher scheme. These can be purchased online by residents who are self-isolating and given to their family, friends or volunteers who are helping them with shopping. These are available to purchase online so won't be an option for all our residents. However, it's a good way to safeguard both residents and volunteers where possible as these are cashless transactions and avoid the need to share bank cards/details etc. More details can be found on the supermarket websites:

www.sainsburysgiftcard.co.uk

<https://cards.asda.com/volunteer>

<https://www.marksandspencer.com/all-in-this-together/p/p60282075?prevPage=srp>

The Co-op's card can be accessed via a dedicated phoneline on **0800 029 4592**

In addition, schools have access to a voucher scheme for pupils who access free school meals get a £15.00 voucher per week to reduce costs of providing for their child whilst they are at home. See:
<https://dfimedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/04/17/free-school-meals-covid-19-faq/>

2.2 Farmers and wellbeing

The [NFU](#) have information to support the wellbeing of those working on farms during the pandemic, including help with contingency planning should farmers become unwell.

The RSPCA suggest that those concerned about their ability to look after livestock if they become unwell and have no local support, should call the RSPCA's CallCenter on **03001234999** and they will get an officer to assess the situation.

2.3 Services for young people

Free to Talk are [running a competition](#) to get young people engaged in their radio show – the prize is a Playstation 4. They expect this will be the front door for young people into the service whilst lockdown measures continue. It is hoped this will establish mass communication and help to signpost into services.

Free to Talk also welcome contributions to the radio show, so if young people want to send in messages to send out or you want to be interviewed on your service or want to discuss topics with young people please also get in touch, with **Jodie Low**, Director, Youth and Community Worker, on **07786227365**.

2.4 Health information for parents

The [Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health](#) have produced a helpful poster for parents concerned about childhood illness during Covid-19.

2.5 Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion is working to ensure vital services and support remain available to the Armed Forces community.

The Legion continues to provide much needed support to the Armed Forces community, especially those who may be feeling more isolated than ever at this time, by:

- The Legion's contact centre remains operational to support the Armed Forces community on 0808 802 8080 (8am-8pm, seven days a week) or at info@britishlegion.org.uk.
- The Legion continues to operate the Veterans' Gateway along with a network of Armed Forces organisations. The Gateway supports veterans and their families across a range of issue including housing, employment and finances. Advisers are available 24 hours a day, seven days a

week, on 0808 802 1212 or through www.veteransgateway.org.uk.

- Legion Branches are undertaking a range of activities to help the vulnerable in their communities, including operating a telephone buddy service to support vulnerable individuals and our wider community. The Membership team can be contacted at membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk.
- The Branch Community Support volunteers are exploring ways to provide remote support to beneficiaries.
- The Legion continues to operate its 6 care homes providing residential, nursing and specialist dementia care to approximately 450 veterans and their dependents.

In line with Government advice, the Legion's 15 Pop-In Centres around the UK have now closed until it is safe to reopen them. All home visits have been suspended to protect beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, and it is finding new ways of connecting, with casework and support continuing. Following the announcement of stronger restrictions on everyday life, the Legion have closed the Aylesford poppy factory and the National Memorial Arboretum and strongly recommends that all Legion branch meetings and Member events are cancelled or postponed.

Remembrance events

With regards to the VE Day commemorations, the Legion has taken the difficult decision not to continue with plans to facilitate attendance for members of the Second World War generation at events in London for VE75. The Legion is working with the Government to develop alternative commemorations for VE Day. The Legion has also taken the difficult decision not to continue with planned events in Bayeux to commemorate the 76th anniversary of D-Day. It is continuing

to identify ways to commemorate the anniversary of D-Day on Saturday 6th June.

Campaigning

If the Legion can support your work, contact Karl Hobley: khobley@britishlegion.org.uk

2.6 Useful links

Please find below social media links to connect to wider communications via key partners. Partners also request you retweet their messages to amplify their reach.

Regular social media (all partners)

NHS England

<https://twitter.com/NHSEngland>

Public Health England

https://twitter.com/PHE_uk

Northamptonshire County Council

<https://twitter.com/mycountycouncil>

Northamptonshire Emergencies

<https://twitter.com/NorthantsEPTeam>

Borough & District Councils

South Northants Council

<https://twitter.com/SNorthantsC>

Police/Fire/EMAS

Police

<https://twitter.com/NorthantsPolice>

Fire

<https://twitter.com/northantsfire>

East Midlands Ambulance

<https://twitter.com/EMASNHSTrust>

Other accounts to keep an eye on and retweet as necessary:

Health

Northamptonshire Public health

<https://twitter.com/NorthantsPH>

Northants CCGs

<https://twitter.com/NHSNene>

NHFT

<https://twitter.com/NHFTNHS>

Kettering General Hospital

<https://twitter.com/KettGeneral>

Northampton General Hospital

<https://twitter.com/NGHnhstrust>

3 Local Govt Review update

We emailed you last week about an announcement from the Government on the next steps for Local Government Reorganisation across the county. In case you missed that, our Chief Executive, Richard Ellis wrote:

Whilst the Coronavirus response remains top priority, work continues on the Future Northants programme to set up two new councils for April 2021

The elections planned for May 2020 have been cancelled and the government has now introduced legislation that will enable the unitaries to be formed without hampering our response to the Coronavirus.

The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has now set out these changes as follows, with the amended regulations published (16.04.20) and coming into effect on 8 May:

- North and West Northamptonshire Shadow Councils will still be set up this May
- Instead of being made up of newly elected councillors, they will combine the membership of the existing district, borough and county councils
- Existing councillors will sit on the shadow authorities until 1 April 2021
- Elections to the new unitary councils will take place 6 May 2021
- Shadow North Northamptonshire Council will have 152 members
- Shadow West Northamptonshire Council will have 134 members
- Cllr Russell Roberts (Kettering BC), Chair of the Leaders' Oversight Board, will be the Leader for the Shadow North Northamptonshire Council with Cllr Martin Griffiths (Wellingborough), the Chair of the North Joint Committee, as Deputy Leader

- Cllr Ian McCord (South Northants), Deputy Chair of the Leaders' Oversight Board, will be the Leader for the Shadow West Northamptonshire Council with Cllr Jonathan Nunn (Northampton Borough), the Chair of the West Joint Committee, as Deputy Leader

Dates for the first meetings of the two shadow councils have yet to be confirmed and they will both be held virtually, with opportunities for the public to take part. Dates and details will be posted on www.futurenorthantsnorth.org and www.futurenorthantswest.org websites.

Executive committees for each shadow council will also be established:

- These will be made up of two representatives from each of the current councils, consisting of the Leader plus another Councillor.
- The North Northamptonshire Council shadow executive will have 10 members
- The West Northamptonshire Council shadow executive will have 8 members
- The Leader of NCC, Cllr Matt Golby, will sit on the West shadow executive as his division is in the West
- Two Cabinet members from NCC will join the North Northamptonshire Council Shadow Executive

Many resources from across the county have been drafted in to assist with the Coronavirus response and some of those recruited to the Future Northants Team have been reassigned to this work. As a result of this, the scope of the Future Northants Programme will be reviewed to decide what needs to and can be delivered for 1 April 2021. We will keep you updated on this review and any further developments in the programme.

Our own South Northants Council Leader, Ian McCord, who has been named today as the new Leader of the Shadow West Northamptonshire Authority has added:

"The Coronavirus situation has underlined two things: both how important it is to have effective council services delivered in the face of any challenge that arises, and also how much our society truly relies on the essential work of the network of parish meetings, parish and town councils throughout our district. Whether it is our statutory role in leading public health crises, quickly processing new benefit claims, supporting businesses with rate relief and grants, or our routine business carrying on providing social care and emptying the bins, councils matter. And whether it is collecting medicines, delivering groceries and providing essential human contact to our neighbours, or the usual business of providing services in our communities, our parishes and towns are equally indispensable."

"I'm ready to knuckle down and begin this new chapter as we prepare for the new West Northamptonshire Council commencing this day next year, working in a true and genuine partnership of equals with my fellow leaders Jonathan Nunn from Northampton, Richard Auger from Daventry, and Matt Golby from Northamptonshire on the new Shadow Executive."

"There's a huge amount of work to do, especially in the current circumstances, in setting up the new authority so vital public services are not interrupted. Much of the full integration between the four authorities coming together will happen from 2021 onwards, under the leadership of whoever the public votes in in May 2021, but we do have not just an opportunity but a duty to make sure that the new council sets off on

the right foot, not least on a sound and sustainable financial footing."

"I look forward to working with our town and parish councils over the next year and thank you again for all your hard work both in these extraordinary times and going forwards."

The vast majority of your services and ours alike are running smoothly during these difficult times, we've taken on extra responsibilities that have arisen as a result of the pandemic, and we now have more certainty as we're continuing to move forwards towards the establishment of the new West Northants Council next year, with all of us in South Northants continuing to punch well above our weight.

4 Funding opportunities

There is a full range of information on local, regional and national funding and other resource [on Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire's website.](#)

Anglian Water

Communities in the Anglian Water region are to receive a cash boost to fight the impacts of Coronavirus as the water company's owners backed plans to establish a new £1 million community support fund.

The Anglian Water [Positive Difference Fund](#) will be distributed through a locally appointed partner which has expertise in getting money quickly to areas in which it is most needed.

Fifty per cent of the fund will immediately be made available to support community organisations on the front line of the battle against coronavirus, with a further fifty per cent released to meet emerging needs later in the year.

Organisations like food banks, outreach programmes and those helping the most vulnerable will be supported by the *Positive Difference Fund*.

Details of how to apply for support from the Anglian Water *Positive Difference Fund* will be released shortly. Any customer who has difficulty paying their bill should contact the company as soon as possible on 0800 169 3630. See their [Press release](#) for full details.

5. Information for volunteers:

Thank you for volunteering to support your local community and those in need. This letter has been provided to you to support your identification as a local authority registered volunteer during the Covid-19 response. Please carry it along with a form of photographic identification such as a Driving Licence or Passport.

To keep yourself safe please note the following advice:

- Always pre-arrange visits with people – don't cold call. The Community Resilience Team will have provided details of your visit to the person requiring support and so they should know you are coming.
- Continue to ensure you comply with the social distancing guidance which can be found at www.gov.uk including regular hand washing.
- Do not enter the property of those you are supporting. All shopping and prescriptions should be placed on the doorstep, knock on the door and step back to a distance of at least two metres.
- Never accept or ask for a person's bankcard and/ or PIN to complete any shopping.
- Obtain a receipt for any shopping undertaken and retain a photo/ copy of the receipt for your records. Good practice would be to get the person requiring support to sign it, and then photograph it to demonstrate that they are happy with the transaction.
- Arrangements should be made for payment upon delivery, this could be by online payment direct to store/ bank transfer/ PayPal/ pre-paid cards/ avoid cash if possible. Your Community Resilience Team can help you with identifying the best way to do this.
- When volunteering ensure that someone knows where you are going and keep a charged mobile phone with you.

If in doubt about undertaking an activity, please don't do it and never put yourself at risk. Inform the individual that the request for help will be passed on and we will get back to them and let your Community Resilience Team know.

If you have safeguarding concerns for someone you are supporting, please contact:

- In an emergency: Police – **999**
- Northamptonshire Children's Safeguarding Team:
 - **0300 126 1000** Option 1 (0800hrs-1800hrs) or:
 - **01604 626 938** (out of hours)
- Northamptonshire Adults Safeguarding Team:
 - **0300 126 1000** Option 2 (0800hrs-1800hrs) or:
 - **01604 626 938** (out of hours) **and:**
- Inform the Community Resilience Team that you are working with.

Concerned about Fraud?

If you are informed about fraudulent activity, report it to the Police by calling **101**

If you think you or someone else has been the victim of a scam, report it to Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040** and contact your bank.