

COVID-19 Community Response: Just a few illustrations of the amazing effort happening right across East Suffolk

Lowestoft and Northern Parishes Community Partnership area

The Communities Team set up a 'Community Hub' in East Suffolk Council's Riverside building in response to the lockdown and anticipated high level of need in the area for support with accessing food and medicine.

We put up a request for volunteers through the Communities Team Facebook and had an overwhelming response by people from a range of backgrounds such as schools, Churches, local theatres, charities and Council employees who wanted to provide their help and skills to assist with an ever growing number of daily referrals coming to the team via the Home But Not Alone telephone number.

These wonderful volunteers have helped the Communities Team for five weeks now and have responded to 588 referrals so far. Each referral has a different level of need to be met; these can range from helping vulnerable and isolated people with food shopping, medication collections, dog walking, a befriending support service, supporting individuals to contact the Shielding list when they were unable to, training to help the Communities Team manage the referrals and even rehoming cats!

During this challenging time, the volunteers have not only physically and mentally helped the vulnerable, but they have also established friendships with these individuals and really care for each person that they support.

On behalf of everyone in the Communities Team, we would like to say a **massive** thank you to all the selfless, caring, and hard-working volunteers. We would also like to give a big thank you to Morrisons in Lowestoft who have helped our community by donating food parcels. None of this would have been possible without any of them!

Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham and villages Community Partnership area

Local Leiston efforts to produce PPE for frontline staff

Alde Valley Academy and East Suffolk PPE have joined forces to improve the level and quantity of provision of PPE to front line nurses, doctors, and care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. AVA Design Technology Team have been producing 100 visors each day.

A local initiative of local makers and crafts people, small businesses and one larger firm, has been set up to produce and donate PPE to Emergency and key workers. This includes face shields, washable cotton masks, mask clips presently, and have just arranged a group of 20+ willing volunteers to sew scrubs, scrub hats, and scrub bags! We are grateful to **Newton Commercial in Leiston** who have provided the factory on Eastlands Industrial Estate, Leiston, to use their machinery to cut materials in greater quantities for the face shields and scrubs.

The group had produced more than 700 face shields, 300 masks and the same of mask clips week beginning 20th April 2020. Much of this is going to nurses, patient transport, care homes individual carers and charities such as the blood riders who transport blood about the country voluntarily. The group are in contact with St Johns ambulance about providing their drivers with face shields. They are also having conversations with Ipswich and James Paget hospitals too.

The local group have set up a website: www.eastsuffolkppe.co.uk where they are directing enquires for those who need help accessing PPE, volunteers or donations through a GoFundMe page, and a bank account should people wish to pay direct without the charges.

Other bits:

- 1) Local AVA staff team signed up individually to **TRIBE Volunteer app**. As all the teaching team and non-teaching team are DBS checked, they have been very helpful volunteers
- 2) **Magnox** has donated £25k to local groups who have been impacted by COVID 19. Magnox also donated 66k pieces of PPE to the NHS
- 3) **Magnox** volunteers have been providing valuable support to Sax Pharmacy and Leiston Practice, especially when they set up their new phlebotomy drive through service
- 4) **Leiston and Saxmundham Libraries** have been providing a timetable of online activities and stories for children
- 5) **The local fb groups** have been providing information and support for others in a very community spirited way
- 6) **GNS 17 and GNS16** have set up Go Fund me pages as several people want to do fund raising to support the work of local volunteers
- 7) **Wickham Market East of England Coop** have provided a 'on the phone order and card payment' arrangement for up to 20 local Leiston households who are self-isolating
- 8) **Local Churches** have provided on the telephone Sunday services for elderly people who are self-isolating, such as Saxmundham United Reformed Church.

Jade Reid, Communities Assistant, April 2020.