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| **Agenda Item** | 4 |
| **Subject** | Update on Coronavirus (Covid-19) |
| **Author** | The Clerk |
| **Date** | 25/06/2020 |

**Overview**

1. This paper aims to bring all Councillors up to date with the situation regarding the Parish Council’s involvement with supporting residents during the Coronavirus outbreak.

**Support Given to Date**

1. Below is an overview of the range of support organised on behalf of the Parish Council carried out by volunteers:
   1. Set up a dedicated Westfield Community Support line as an 0800 freephone number.  This is for anyone in the Parish to call for help and support or just for a chat.  The line has been manned by a dedicated group of volunteers.
   2. To date we have answered 477 calls to either the 0800 number or to the Clerk’s office line which since the outbreak has nearly all been calls for help or support.  This does not include the number of outgoing calls I have made nor the regular calls people have made to our vulnerable residents.
   3. Set up a dedicated website to help keep our residents up to date and informed at [www.westfieldcouncilcovid19.com](http://www.westfieldcouncilcovid19.com/).  As of today we have had 1,279 page views had been from the UK (for some reason we're really popular in the US with 7,251 page views!)
   4. Set up a working partnership with the local surgery and dispensary to deliver out medications to anyone who registered with us.  As of yesterday we had 155 residents on our books we have been helping.  Some have been on a more regular basis than others.
   5. On average we have delivered around 10 medications out to residents 4 days a week so 40 medications on average are delivered each week by our volunteers.
   6. We have provided PPE for all our volunteers who are delivering medication or collecting repeat prescriptions.  This has included a clear zipped pouch to keep all the equipment in, reusable gloves, googles, hand sanitiser and ID badges.
   7. Our work with the surgery has enabled us to give support to individual residents including:
      * Registering a resident as shielded and getting them correctly listed.
      * Obtained a grant to support a vulnerable resident to buy rugs, curtains and a bed.
      * Supported a resident with housing issues as a consequence of them contacting the 0800 number.  The Covid-19 outbreak had made their situations far worse and we have been able to give support to them during this time.
   8. Other jobs volunteers have been carrying out include:
   * Collecting repeat prescriptions
   * Weekly and one-off shops for people
   * Topping up electricity keys
   * Giving regular friendly calls to our residents who have requested this
   * Collecting medication from Sainsburys/Ore/Bohemia Road

**Medication Delivery from the Surgery**

* 1. The Chairman and the Clerk met with the Practice Manager of the surgery. He confirmed that the surgery was not in a position to either set up a delivery system or offer a collection service which allowed patients to collect medication without entering the surgery (i.e. through a window). Patients cannot use the ‘Echo’ or ‘Pharmacies for U’ services from Westfield.
  2. The surgery only has a mandate to deliver out to shielded people until the 30/06/20 in line with government guidance.  We have agreed that we will not automatically deliver to people after the 30/06/2020 unless there is a clear reason given by the surgery or if a resident requests it and we are able to support them.  I am compiling a 'post 30/06/2020' list with the surgery. This is necessary so we can identify those patients that absolutely must have their medication delivered to them after the 30/06/20.
  3. All medication delivery will stop on the 31/07/2020 as even the shielded individuals will not be deemed shielded anymore. However, it does say in the guidance that:

“From Saturday 1 August, the guidance will then be relaxed so clinically extremely vulnerable people will no longer be advised to shield, but support will remain available from NHS volunteers and local councils. People will retain their priority for supermarket delivery slots, and still be able to access help with shopping, medication, phone calls and transport to medical appointments.”

From this guidance it is assumed that the support from ‘local council’ will in fact be the Parish Council in the case of Westfield.

**Next Steps for the Following Weeks**

1. Having looked at the situation the Clerk proposes the next steps:
   1. The surgery is attaching a letter to all those patients who will not be on the list post 30/06/20 saying the delivery of medications will stop on this date.  We have included the 0800 number and asked people to call us if they are worried about not receiving their medication.  We will answer the calls on a case by case basis.
   2. The Clerk will compile a list and email the volunteers identifying anyone they are concerned about if we stop delivering to them? These people we may still deliver out to.
   3. Patients we have emails for an email will go out to them explaining the situation.
   4. Myself and a volunteer will call the remaining 26 people on the list to explain the service will be stopping after the 30/06/2020 and to note any concerns they may have.  It is also an opportunity to check that they have some support network around them.
   5. The Clerk will speak to ESCC about how they can support the shielded people beyond 31/07/2020.
   6. Once we know the numbers who will need ongoing support we will speak to the current volunteers and look at moving to delivering medication out only three days and then look to go down to two days a week.

**The 0800 Support Line**

1. The Clerk and Cllr Hall had a Zoom Meeting with the 0800 volunteers who have been answering calls. We are currently having lines answered Mon – Sat 10am to 4pm.
2. These volunteers where happy to continue answering the phones but it was agreed that a long term plan needed to be looked into about the future and role of the 0800 number.

**Budget and Funding to Date**

1. To date the Parish Council has spent £1,159 on items regarding the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak. This has mainly comprised of flyers, PPE, subscription to Survey monkey for the year and the £250 donation to the Rye Foodbank.
2. Cllr Maynard notified the Clerk to funding the Guestling Clerk had secured from Hastings Direct. The Clerk made an application and the Council has been awarded £500 towards our costs. There are additional grants the Clerk will look to apply for when she can.
3. Considering the grant the total cost to the Parish Council has been £660. This does not take into account the extra hours the Clerk has worked. This will leave £840 in ear marked reserves for additional costs for the year.

**Volunteers**

1. The Clerk has been supported by a wide range of volunteers since mid March. We have had volunteers for the 0800 line and volunteers who have been doing deliveries and other jobs for residents when requested. The time and support they have given has meant the Parish Council has been able to provide a high level of support, advice and practical help to those who have needed this in the parish. It has been raised by Councillors how the Council should show their thanks for the work of these people.

**Other Matters**

1. Since starting this work we have been in contact with many of the vulnerable residents within the Parish. Many of these are residents on their own, usually of the older generation. Some are still scared or deeply concerned about going outside.

**Request to Councillors for Resolution**

1. The Clerk requests that Councillors resolved the below matters at full council:
   1. What long term plan they wish to put in place regarding medication deliveries. Councillors need to decide if this is now going to be a core role for the Clerk moving forward and if not what alternatives are available.
   2. The role and future of the 0800 number.
   3. How and if they wish to show their thanks to the volunteers. Councillors could consider an event for the community as a whole when this is feasible to do so.
   4. Councillors might want to look at ways they could offer some form of support/engagement with the vulnerable residents within the Parish.