

Leonard Stanley Parish Council was quick to respond to the Covid 19 lockdown and the ramifications this would have for a number of our residents. The Council promptly put together a leaflet to be distributed to all the households within the Parish informing residents of who to contact if they felt they may need some help and also a request for those who could offer assistance. An appeal through The Stanleys Facebook site got an immediate response from several people volunteering to deliver the 'At Need' cards throughout the village. This was a prime example of the speed and willingness of our residents to assist the wider community. The 'At Need' cards got a phenomenal response from both those offering help and those requiring some assistance.

Many of those requiring assistance were already anxious of how they would cope with the practicalities of self-isolating/enforced shielding. To be able to work through solutions with them and provide reassurance was immensely appreciated by everyone. There were numerous challenges to overcome especially when it came to shopping; as the shops imposed limits on certain items, queues and issues on how to pay for the shopping. Thankfully, within a few weeks of lockdown the Coop in Stonehouse provided a fantastic service which addressed most of these issues and enabled the volunteers to just collect and deliver the actual shopping.

The Parish Council registered the group of volunteers with the 'Gloucestershire Hub'; which is the recognised authority that consists of collaboration between all the local councils, police, health services and other useful organisations. The Parish Council also encouraged those requiring assistance to register with the Hub, to ensure that they received any additional resources that they may require. The Parish Council were able to refer several families suffering additional hardship to the Foodbank and meals from the Long Table. The Parish Council also made referrals for those suffering anxiety and those requiring specialist advice. The Parish Council have co-ordinated the requests for assistance and matched them with the wonderful volunteers; who have shopped, collected prescriptions (from 6 different pharmacies), been there for friendly chats, collected other items like glasses, posted letters and walked dogs. There are a total of 20 amazing volunteers and 25 lovely residents who have received some assistance.

The Parish Council has worked with the editor of the Newsletter to provide the avalanche of information; for a number of helplines, information on grants available, services on offer and examples of kindness. As it was no longer possible to deliver a hardcopy of the Newsletter, it has been made available online at the Council's website www.leonardstanley-pc.gov.uk and the Council also circulated this by email to approximately 100 families (and some of those have printed off copies for their neighbours who are not online). The Newsletters have also been displayed on the noticeboards around the village. There has been a brief break in the Newsletter but this will resume shortly.

The Parish Council along with the Welfare Trust (who manage the allotments) and some individual donations worked with the School and provided over 20 food hampers to those requiring a little extra due to the additional pressures during these trying times. Thank you cards and feedback received proved that these really were appreciated. Both organisations will continue to work with the school to assist further if necessary.

Leonard Stanley Parish Council has also been working closely with Kings Stanley Parish Council and the District Councillors Nigel Studdert-Kennedy and Steve Lydon – this has proved to be extremely useful for all parties and ensured that the Councils could be there for members of our community who may otherwise have struggled.

However, whilst the lockdown is slowly being lifted, there are many of our residents who still require assistance and it is imperative that they know that the Council and the merry band of volunteers are still here for them. It is a real privilege to be able to serve our community and very humbling to be part of this amazing team during these challenging times.

Irena Litton
Clerk to Leonard Stanley Parish Council