

The Pershore Volunteer

Pershore Volunteer Centre puts volunteering at the heart of the community
to reduce rural and social isolation for local people.

July- August 2020

A Message to You All from the Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire



Lt Col Patrick Holcroft LVO OBE
Lord-Lieutenant of Worcestershire

The innovation, collaboration, courage and selflessness shown by so many across the County during the COVID-19 pandemic has been truly inspirational and uplifting.

As Her Majesty The Queen's representative, I would like to thank you for the wonderful contribution you have made to the County during these extraordinary and challenging times.

Lt Col Patrick Holcroft LVO OBE
Lord-Lieutenant of Worcestershire

The Lord-Lieutenant is the personal representative of The Sovereign in Worcestershire. He represents Her Majesty The Queen on a wide variety of occasions which merit Royal support and which celebrate significant achievement in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The Lord-Lieutenant works across the County with his Deputy Lieutenants to promote Worcestershire and to help it become a better place in which to live and work.

Pershore Volunteer Centre

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And a Message from Our Chairman

As the lock down restrictions start to ease and furloughing is being wound down, many of our volunteers will be returning to work.

On behalf of the Volunteer Centre and the people of Pershore and the surrounding villages, I would like to thank all those people who have helped us deliver much needed support to our community. We hope that some of our new found volunteers will find a way to stay with us and continue to support our community post Covid. We are always on the lookout for people to help in the office, manage fund raising events, become one of our drivers, (we are very short of drivers in the villages to the north of Pershore) etc. If you think you could continue to help, if only for an hour or two per week please speak to Donna King or Angi Ballard on 01368 554299

We are also looking to strengthen our board of trustees, especially with people with HR, legal skills or any other skill. If you would like to explore the opportunity of driving this great charity forward into the "new normal". Please give me a ring on 01386 554299.

In addition to my own personal thanks, we have received a letter of thanks from Pershore Medical Practice, who are now returning to normal prescription collects for those patients not instructed to self isolate. You will also see elsewhere in this newsletter that we have received a letter of thanks from the Mayor of Pershore and from the Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire (sent on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen). All of these thanks I am delighted to pass on to each of you.

Keep safe.

Eric Wiles

Chairman Pershore Volunteer Centre.



Newsletter update July 2020- Donna King

Once again, I would like to start with best wishes, I hope everyone is keeping safe and well.

The office continues to be closed to the public with one member of staff working in isolation (Donna & Sue), Kate and Angi continue to work from home.

As we enter week 17 (week commencing 22nd July) of lockdown we (our amazing volunteers) have received nearly one thousand individual support requests. Of these clients may have more than one need that we support. We have supported a total of 1646 needs to date and have supported well over 950 individual support needs. Those needs are predominantly: collection and delivery of prescriptions, dog walking and shopping.

In addition, our group of thirteen HERE4YOU volunteers -we have gained three more since our last report - are supporting eleven individuals with befriending/mental health support. On average they spend 40 minutes-1 hour per call, some clients receive a call more than once a week.

I am sure you will agree this is truly incredible.

We have bade farewell to several volunteers who have returned to work, we cannot thank you all enough for your help, please keep in touch.

A special mention should go to Tessa, who stepped up (pardon the pun) offering to dog walk. "Tuppence" needed daily exercise as her owner was unable to do so due to isolating. Tessa took up the challenge that included driving a fair distance as she lived several miles away. Tessa took on the role that turned into her volunteering seven days a week and nearly 100 hours of volunteering. Thank you. We will miss you, Tuppence will too. Angi is working with village residents to find other people who can continue to walk Tuppence. Tessa has written an account of her volunteering experience during lockdown so do read her own words below.

The Social Car Scheme is getting a little busier. We have recruited three drivers recently, welcome to the team Derek, Suzanne and Bryan

We previously reported that we were due to start planning the safe return of staff & volunteers. Since then we have followed Government guidance and produced many risk assessments, updated policies and procedures, to reflect the current climate and work towards mitigating risks

What we have done: sourced PPE items such as

- face coverings
- visors for minibus drivers and passenger assistants
- hand sanitiser
- anti-bacterial cleaning products.
- signage is present in the office highlighting the need to social distance
- hand sanitising station upon entry
- the transport desk has been moved to ensure desk is front facing.
- Perspex shields for have been fitted to the office desks.

Sneeze screens have been fitted in the minibus to protect drivers and Passenger assistants; we also have face visors available.

Contd. over

The current Government guidance states:

***Some people are at higher risk from coronavirus. This could be because you:
are over the age of 70
have underlying health problems which mean you are at greater risk
live with or care for someone who is more vulnerable.***

If you fall into one of these groups, it does not mean that you cannot go back to volunteering, but it is a good idea to think about extra precautions you could take to volunteer safely.

We do expect that some staff and volunteers can start to return to work from August (not yet authorised) but this must be done safely, firstly there will be a need to complete an **Individual Risk Assessment with a member of Staff.**

Some volunteering roles come with greater risks than others. For example, volunteering for the Social Car Scheme and Minibus transport will be riskier than over-the-phone befriending.

Sometimes it will not be obvious how risky your role is. The following questions can help you to think through the risks:

Will you have face-to-face contact with people you do not live with?

Will you be in contact with the same people each time or different people? The more people you meet the greater the risk of transmission.

Will you be around people who may be more exposed to COVID-19? For example, health professionals?

Will you be able to socially distance from other people?

Could you volunteer in a separate space to other volunteers?

Are you able to socially distance from other people while volunteering?

Could you make sure you only volunteer with the same people each time?

There are also precautions that all of us should be taking when we leave the house:

Wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. You could carry hand sanitiser with you for times when washing facilities are not available.

Avoid touching your face, eyes, and mouth when you are outside your house.

Try to socially distance from people that you do not live with. If it is not possible to socially distance, then you must wear a face covering.

I hope you all enjoy this well-deserved recognition not only during this pandemic but for all the time you give/gave volunteering supporting Pershore Volunteer Centre.

Donna



My volunteering experience during lockdown

As a student in London, my day-to-day life had a lot of structure. Days were filled with lectures, seminars, part-time work, volunteering in various museums, and spending time with friends. When coronavirus began affecting all aspects of our lives, I headed home to my parents' house in Pershore and away from the activities of [normal] London life. Suddenly, my days were very empty. I had a dissertation to write and exams to study for, but having nothing to break up the time made these tasks more daunting than they should have been (of course, I am incredibly fortunate to be in good health and for one of the biggest troubles of lockdown to be having not enough structure!).

Volunteering is a big part of my life in London and I felt I had the time and privilege of health to seek out voluntary roles back home. I had heard about mutual aid groups being set up across the country and soon found a Facebook page for the local group. After a quick message, they directed me on to the lovely people at Pershore Volunteer Centre. Very quickly, I was asked if I was interested in walking the dog of an older lady. Having four dogs at home means I am quite accustomed to them, so I was very happy to try out this new role.

At the beginning, I was nervous about committing to walk Tuppence daily, but the routine of this role has been one of its greatest aspects. As a very loyal dog, Tuppence was initially reluctant to leave her owner and walk with me. Persistence was key! Soon enough, she was running out to meet me and dragging me all over the place sniffing away. Walking her throughout April, May, June and July meant that we experienced all sorts of weather, but rain or shine - she was ready for her walk.

Getting to know and walk Tuppence each day has been incredibly rewarding, while meeting and chatting with her owner has been a great added bonus. As I trawled through research for my dissertation and long hours of revision, her owner's kind words were always received welcomingly. During the days of the strictest lockdown, Tuppence and her owner were the only in-person interactions I was having that didn't include my parents; I am lucky that each interaction was so lovely.

A lot has changed for me over the past few months. While walking Tuppence, I have written and submitted my dissertation, sat my final university exams, and received my degree results. Fittingly, the day after my final walk with Tuppence, I graduated from my degree (with a First!). With lockdown easing, I am now heading back to London to start work again. It may seem odd, but in these strange times, walking a (once-)stranger's dog has been a regular moment of solace and happiness. The experience is one I will treasure for a long time.



Congratulations Tessa...and very many thanks from us all.

Pershore Volunteer Centre joins the Crowdfunding Age.

We have just launched a Crowdfunding campaign on Spacehive, to try and make up for some of the income we have lost during the Coronavirus crisis, and the total we have set ourselves is £7318. The good news is that we have already reached £3407, thanks to a generous pledge of £3362 from Wychavon District Council, so in effect our target is £3956, but the bad news is that our deadline is 31st August.

We're really proud of the way our volunteers have responded during the crisis, by either keeping themselves safe, or helping to keep our clients and the wider community safe, so we're not expecting any of you to make a donation. However, we do need to spread the word as widely as we can so that as many people as possible will be persuaded to make a contribution to our campaign, so we're asking you to share this information with friends, family, colleagues or business acquaintances.

All you need to do is just ask them to spare a couple of minutes to pledge some money for our charity; pledges can be made through the Spacehive website using PayPal, or a debit/credit card; you can pledge as little as £2, and no money will be taken until we reach our target. Our fundraising campaign is based on the community services we have delivered during the crisis, and you can find more information, as well as how to donate, in the following link to our project on the Spacehive website <https://www.spacehive.com/pershore-volunteers-to-keep-in-touch>

Thank you for all your help, and if you'd like a copy of this article to email to your friends, please let us know.

Kate Walton

Funding and Grants Manager



Congratulations!

Here are the winners of our monthly draws for June and July



June

£20 Sue Nutting
£15 R Swift
£5 Derek Potter
£5 M Ferris
£5 David Bridgewater

July

£20 Jacqueline Hughes
£15 Paul Rayner
£5 Les Edwards
£5 Joan Dallimore
£5 David Day

Donations received – a big thank you please to:

Aileen Darling, Mr, Mrs Bunten, Mr ,Mrs Steady, Maggie Lawe



Pershore Town Council

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July 2020

Dear Volunteer,

I am well aware that some Town Council members, staff and other volunteers have shown a large degree of selflessness during the recent extraordinary and challenging times. The help that has been given, in different ways, has been well received and appreciated by our community and has helped our town to cope with the various difficulties that have been faced. Whilst much of the praise being offered by residents will never hit the headlines, it is so rewarding to hear those comments as they offer their thanks for that help. I was also pleased to receive a letter from the Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire offering his and Her Majesty the Queen's thanks for all that has been so willingly given by so many.

None of us know how long the current situation will last. Ministers reiterate that "we are in this for the long haul" and we are already seeing heightened outbreaks of the virus in other areas. With our continued help to our community I believe we will emerge from the current situation as a much stronger community.

Thank you for everything you have done and will continue to do and please stay safe.

With best wishes

Cllr Chris Parsons MBE
Town Mayor