

CARNFORTH EXPRESS

Carnforth Town Council – Working for you

May / June 2020



Since the April issue of the Carnforth Express was published the nation seems to have passed the peak in the spread of Covid 19 although the North West of England and Lancaster have been areas where the virus seems to have been slower to recede.

The latest announcement from central government about the relaxation of lockdown suggests that we're still some way from a return to normal life so we thought a few positive personal stories combined with a selection of pieces of local information might help lighten the mood. We trust you will find our offering both informative and useful.



Carnforth Citizen of Merit Award: Carnforth Town Council recently established an award for those people in our community who are helping to make the lives of others a little less stressful during the Covid-19 pandemic. When the pandemic is nothing but a distant, bitter memory it is our intention to hold a civic reception for all the nominees to honour them publicly and officially but in the meantime, you can nominate your own Citizen of Merit by following a few simple steps.

You can make a nomination on-line to clerk@carnforthtowncouncil.org stating a few brief details including the name of the nominee, the reasons for the nomination (what the individual has been doing during the pandemic) and your name. The winners of the Award will be announced weekly on the Town Council's website and social media pages and will be invited to a Carnforth Town Council reception when the pandemic is over where they will be presented with certificates to mark their achievement.

If you know someone in Carnforth that you think has put other people before themselves during this difficult time, please nominate them for our Carnforth Citizen of Merit Award.

75th Anniversary of VE Day: How did you celebrate the 75th anniversary of VE Day?

Perhaps not exactly as you'd originally planned? Carnforth Town Council had a schedule of community-based events in the diary to mark the occasion but unfortunately the Covid-19 virus intervened; our planned events were cancelled, and the anniversary was celebrated in a much more low-key and muted fashion.



However, pandemic restrictions permitting, we intend to transfer our attention and our celebratory events to August and the 75th anniversary of VJ (Victory over Japan) Day to mark when the Second World War finally ended. Watch this space and our website for more details.

Cllr. Jim Grisenthwaite



Short Stories: The volunteer: Where to start? I was sitting at home one day and I kept seeing on social media Covid 19 support groups being formed around the country, so I decided to set one up for Carnforth and the surrounding villages. I was amazed how well it took off with people sharing and adding themselves to the page. Next thing I knew I was being inundated with messages and calls from various people asking where they could get help.

I asked Andrea (Wren), Gillian and Kara to help manage the page as I couldn't keep up!! Andrea and I have been in partnership for the last 7 years with charity work, Carnforth Carnival and working together. We have a fantastic bond and as a pair we work well. The next thing I knew we were discussing a leaflet drop with Carnforth Town Council (I don't know who, what, how it got to this stage!!!). I also asked our Carnival team if they would like to get involved and help. I was born and bred in Carnforth and I absolutely love this town and the community. I couldn't just sit back and do nothing, it's not my nature. I am a people person and I would hate for anyone to be struggling throughout this pandemic. I've been so overwhelmed with the support from so many organisations and I'm so glad I can help others out. I've even cried with how overwhelming it has been. We have a fantastic system going and a fantastic team of volunteers who go shopping, pick up prescriptions, walk dogs, or talk on the telephone to people who are feeling down or who just need someone to talk to.

Liam Law, Carnforth & surrounding areas Covid-19 isolation support group co-ordinator, Carnforth Carnival Secretary

A User of the Scheme: As a user of the volunteer scheme, I would like to say a few words about its impact during the Covid 19 pandemic. I live in Bolton-le-Sands with my husband and my parents also live in the village. I have a chronic condition which means I am home for the duration. Initially, this posed a huge problem. How would I get essentials to my mum and dad, both of whom have underlying health conditions? I became aware of the local volunteer group and contacted one of its members, Andrea, to see if they could help. The response was immediate and positive. Yes, they would help, with either Andrea or Liam getting what was needed.

The weekly service they have provided has been amazing and always with a smile! It has been nothing short of a lifeline. We can forget how much the volunteer service adds over and above collection and delivery of essential shopping. Their friendly care and attention have certainly made us feel less isolated. The kindness of strangers has shone through this crisis. We could not be more grateful – in fact mum and dad have commented that they wish this could carry on after lockdown is over! It has meant that much. Thank you all! **Helen B, Bolton-le-Sands**

Another volunteer: My first contact with the group was with Liam Law at the end of March. I explained I wanted to help but, partly because of my age (70+), I wasn't happy to do shopping but would love to make phone calls. No problem was the answer - I would be contacted via Facebook if my services were required!

Facebook was the first hurdle to overcome and after a few mistakes – I accidentally invited a friend in France to join our group! – I have found it really useful for supporting one another and generally keeping up to date. At first it seemed my services were not needed but by 5 April I had found three new friends in Carnforth. We chat every couple of days and exchange news and stories and discover surprising things about one another!

When it came to Easter, I suggested it would be good for us to meet (keeping a safe distance apart) and on Sunday I did do a shop and gave each of them a small Easter egg. As one lady said, *"At this difficult time it's good to make new friends"*. **Ian Downes, Carnforth**



The Survivors – Three Stories compiled by Cllr Chris Smith:

There is a lot of very dark news surrounding Corona Virus Disease 2019 [CV-19] and some very sad and tragic stories. To redress the balance, I have spoken to three residents who have had confirmed cases of CV-19 but recovered. What is clear is that it affects individuals very differently, it is a very nasty illness but, as in most cases, these individuals are now on the road to recovery. I am very grateful to be able to share their stories, so here they are - although the names have been changed.

This is Susan's story: *I live with my partner Mark. Mark works for the health service and has been involved with CV-19 from the very start carrying out test swabbing on frontline health workers. Mark was always provided with suitable protective equipment and when he returned home at night we were always very diligent with washing and hand cleansing – after all as a previously practising nurse I am very aware of cross infection and its control.*

In April Mark came home from work feeling very unwell – his initial symptoms were a sore throat, earache, general muscle pain but no temperature. As a precaution he was tested at work and then immediately self-isolated in a separate room, while I carried out deep cleansing of the house [the test later came back as positive for CV-19].

Within 24 hours of Mark falling ill I started to deteriorate myself with swollen glands in my neck, aching limbs and a very high temperature. A week later I also lost my sense of taste and smell. Fortunately, neither of us developed severe breathing difficulties and managed our illness at home with painkillers, vitamin supplements and a nebuliser. We also practised deep breathing exercises to maintain healthy lung capacity. To do this you breathe deeply from your stomach, hold your breath for several seconds then exhale fully and cough.

It has taken me three weeks to recover so far and although I am feeling pretty much back to normal, I still get very tired and have not yet recovered my taste or smell.

I am part of a local volunteer group supporting vulnerable people in the community with shopping etc, although I was not expecting to call on help myself, I was very grateful for the support of family, friends and neighbours. It is very heart-warming that, during a time of tremendous need, people in our communities are coming together to look after each other.

It is a horrible illness and I really would encourage people to take care and stay safe.

Our second story comes from David: *I retired early a few years ago and keep busy pottering around and helping my family with odd jobs. I would say that I am generally a fit and active man. I had been isolating in accordance with advice apart from the occasional essential trip to the shops or to collect a newspaper.*

It was one Monday when I started to feel a bit poorly and by the following day, I was suffering from a severe upset stomach with all the associated problems! After about a week of feeling like this and not eating, my daughter [who is a nurse] decided that she would ring 111 and seek advice. By this stage I had a bit of a raised temperature but no breathlessness.

I was told to go immediately to A&E [the CV-19 section] and I was admitted straight onto the CV-19 ward – my daughter dropped me at the entrance to A&E and that was the last contact I had with my family for 13 days!

Once I was on the ward I was immediately put on a saline drip and given oxygen via a face mask – the mask was a bit uncomfortable and of course prevented me from speaking to anyone else on the ward. I was given a throat swab which later confirmed that I had Covid-19.

Although I didn't feel breathless, after two days the doctors were still concerned about my blood oxygen levels and told me to prepare myself for the possibility of going onto the Intensive Care Unit, to be sedated and put onto a ventilator.

The experience on the ward was quite unnerving. All the nurses were covered with protective gear and followed very strict procedures as they entered and left the ward – all that you could see were their eyes.

After 3 days I improved and was taken off the mask and given oxygen via nose tubes. At least now I could speak to some of the other patients on the ward. I still wasn't eating much and had lost 4 stones in weight! After 13 days in hospital I could go home.

I can only express my sincere gratitude to all the doctors and nurses on the CV-19 ward at the RLI who gave me such exceptional care.

It was a very worrying time for me, my wife, my family and friends and although I am now on the mend, I still get very tired.

This is a very unpleasant virus and I hope that sharing my story will ensure that people continue to follow guidance and stay safe.

Our final story comes from a healthcare professional who is currently on maternity leave. **This is Samantha's story:** *I am currently on maternity leave from my job in the healthcare sector. During the second week in March I developed slight breathlessness and a dry cough – I just put this down to a bug that I had caught in the late stage of my pregnancy – I was at this point 36 weeks pregnant.*



I was tired and struggling to sleep lying down but again all things that I had become used to during those last few weeks. After a week with a sore throat and one night of running a temperature I did seek advice and was offered a test which subsequently proved to be positive.

I immediately self-isolated, as did my partner, who also developed a mild dry cough which we can now only assume was also CV-19. Being pregnant the only option for me was paracetamol and rest. For me the worst symptom was my loss of smell and taste, something that took quite a long time to return.

I was symptom free by 3rd April and had a wonderful baby boy on the 17th. My family have been very supportive as have my neighbours. I hope that the community spirit that has been displayed during this time continues once CV-19 has become a distant memory.



It has been a great privilege to speak to these residents and I am very grateful to them for sharing with me their experience of this very unpleasant illness. I am sure you will join with me and the rest of Carnforth Town Council as we wish them, and all our residents who have had, or have this virus a speedy recovery to full health.

TAKE CARE and STAY SAFE Cllr. Chris Smith

Another Post Office service: If you're self-isolating, getting hold of cash may not be easy. This may mean that if you're not set up for digital banking, it's difficult to pay people you owe money to, such as someone who has bought your [groceries](#) for you.

The good news is you can now access cash by asking a friend, neighbour or family member to withdraw it for you - without revealing any personal details such as your pin or even giving your debit card to them - through the Post Office. The [Post Office](#) has made its ask-a-friend access to cash scheme available to all banks, building societies and credit unions, meaning you can get hold of cash easily no matter where you bank.

Here's what you need to know - The scheme - known as the Payout Now scheme - is run by the Post Office and allows someone to collect cash for you. Call your bank or building society to see if they're part of the scheme, then simply let them know the amount you want to be collected and give the details of the person collecting the cash.

Your nominated person is then sent a one-time-use barcode on their phone, email or by post to exchange for cash. They will have to take ID with them and can collect the money from any local Post Office branch.

The graphic features a blue background. On the left, the text 'Lancaster District Community Hub' is written in white, with the phone number '01524 582000' and the website 'Lancaster.gov.uk/coronavirus' below it. On the right, there is a graphic with three speech bubbles containing the words 'Help', 'Advice', and 'Support'. Below the speech bubbles are three cartoon characters: a girl with black hair, a girl with blonde hair, and a boy with black hair. At the bottom right of the graphic, the text 'Supporting our communities and the most vulnerable' is written in white.

Cold calling: Lancaster City Council is working hard to protect and support vulnerable people in our community. The Council is contacting residents using several different lists that have been compiled and consolidated. So, although everything is being done to avoid duplication, a small number of residents may receive a second telephone call or welfare visit.

If you are contacted, officers from the City Council have set questions to ask you to make sure you have all the food, medication and support that you need. Officers should start the call by making sure you know that they will not be asking for any personal information. If you are contacted, but you are unsure if the call is genuine, please end the call and contact Lancaster City Council Customer Services on 01524 582000.

All officers who are completing welfare visits across the district do have Lancaster City Council ID Badges and officers should always make these visible.

Other groups are also contacting residents – the NHS, for example, are proactively contacting people on their vulnerable people list and the government has also now set up a Sheltered People team. You may receive calls from one or both groups. Whilst there may be some duplication of contact, this is well intended and seeks to ensure that everyone who needs support is receiving it.

There are unfortunately people who may take advantage of this situation and you must be alert to the risk of scams. Never give personal information to someone you don't know and if you are unsure of someone's identity don't be afraid to check. Any genuine caller will be perfectly happy to have their identity checked. **Cllr. Chris Smith**



Message from Cllr John Reynolds: Like many of you, I have spent the last few weeks ensuring that the most vulnerable in our community are protected, and that starts by staying home to save lives. As the crisis progresses, we are all looking to a very different and uncertain future, and that is particularly acute for our local businesses who provide our local jobs and services.

Many local businesses have already benefited from the schemes. Lancaster City Council have, to date, paid out more than almost £2 million to businesses in the Carnforth area, well ahead of the funding being released by the Government. This is unprecedented, and very few councils in England have shown this level of ambition and commitment to local business and jobs. If you haven't already accessed the schemes, or indeed if you are having difficulty accessing a scheme you are entitled to, I want to hear from you jreynolds@lancaster.gov.uk.

Please check your eligibility by following the link:

<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/environmental-health/emergency-planning/coronavirus>



What next? Lancaster City Council's response: Most of us have focused initially, and quite rightly, on finding and supporting those most vulnerable in our community and the response has been truly amazing!

Our thoughts have now been drawn to think about other people in our community who may be starting to struggle who have perhaps not struggled or needed to ask for help before and either don't know how or are too embarrassed or proud to do so –

- Families or individuals who have now been furloughed and are awaiting their 80%;
- Families or individuals who have been made redundant and are awaiting benefits;
- Self-employed people with no savings;
- New business owners with no working capital.

These people may now suddenly find themselves in nil income households whilst waiting for central government support.

Lancaster City Council has set up a 7-day telephone and email help line to make sure people can get reliable support: by phone 01524 582000 by email: customerservices@lancaster.gov.uk (for residents) or econdev@lancaster.gov.uk (for businesses).

The phone lines are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and every Saturday and Sunday between 10am and 3pm. The hours are being kept under review and they may extend them in the future.

The council has also launched a partnership with Morecambe Bay Foodbank to co-ordinate and deliver emergency food parcels to vulnerable people across the district. They are available to anyone who is struggling - there is no shame or loss of dignity in accessing the support families may need to see them through these unprecedented times.

A new website: www.lancasterdistrictcovid19.org.uk has been created for agencies to refer someone for emergency food. If anyone needs help, they can find the contact details of people and organisations who can refer them. Those with no access to the internet can telephone the food hub on 01524 932001.

In addition to the regular Community Offers Bulletin that is sent out, Lancaster City Council have a dedicated website where people can find out how to get emergency food, business grants, business rate relief and advice and guidance.: [http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/environmental-health/emergency-planning/coronavirus](https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/environmental-health/emergency-planning/coronavirus)

If you find yourself starting to struggle, **please seek support and advice** – help is available!

Bins for litter and dog waste: With many of us now getting our daily exercise by walking locally there is an increase in the use of litter bins and dog waste bins. If you notice a bin full or overflowing as you walk round, please let us know and we will contact Lancaster City Council to get the bin emptied. The City Council has assured us that they will adjust their bin emptying cycle to take account of increased bin use, but this may take a while to settle down.

Please use bins for litter and dog waste. As people make more use of our local footpaths it will be unfortunately obvious that some dog owners are not cleaning up after their dogs. This makes it difficult and unpleasant to use grassy verges to widen the distance between yourself and other walkers. Please be considerate and clean up after your dog!



Cards of Kindness: We all know that the NHS is doing wonderful work with their attention to those affected by the Coronavirus, but often those workers in the Care Sector outside of hospital are overlooked and so the idea of 'Cards for Kindness' has been developed. This is an initiative which aims to reduce the feeling of loneliness in our Care Homes, by getting



Everything will be OK.



members of the community to send a card of thanks or encouragement to a local Care Home. *"Thinking about you"* and *"Thanking you for all you do"* would be appropriate cards to send just to show these workers they are not forgotten. If you haven't got a card just ask one of the Carnforth Covid-19 Volunteers to get one for you. Make sure you keep safe yourself. **Cllr. Malcolm Watkins**

Salvation Army Distribution Hub: After an initial enquiry from Carnforth Town Council and subsequent consultation with Morecambe Bay Foodbank, The Salvation Army in Carnforth agreed to set up a satellite Foodbank from its Church Building on Preston Street. With the Charity Shop being closed to comply with the government instructions for lockdown and with no worship or public gatherings being allowed in churches, the area Leaders had set up office in their home and the shop supervisor was also working from home on some special projects.



The Salvation Army were looking for ways to actively serve the community as well as find new ways of "doing church" and keeping connected with members of its various community groups. Initially they made themselves available to the local COVID support group, doing a few NHS appointments with people isolated and had registered to refer to the City Council's Emergency Response. The idea of setting up a Foodbank seemed a bit overwhelming and yet we knew there was going to be an increased need in the area. Speaking to people experienced with the Morecambe Bay Foodbank the question was "why would you want to reinvent the wheel?"

The answer was what we could be the oil to keep the wheels running and our offer of assistance was gratefully accepted by the foodbank! It was agreed that we would be the point for deliveries to be made in the Carnforth area with us supplying volunteer drivers and - whilst the building was open - we could accept donations of food for those who need it most.

It took a few weeks for word to get out and for people to grasp how we were operating but we are now receiving a good number of donations. We have also been able to shop at local stores when the Foodbank has been low on specific items and send it all into the main store at Salt Ayre Leisure Centre to restock.

We have now been operating for over a month and we have assisted over 200 referrals/deliveries or requests for assistance during that time. Well done and thank you to the Carnforth community!

Sadly, we have had to furlough our Shop Supervisor but we cannot thank her enough for her enthusiasm and input into setting up a now well-oiled machine. Her input and organisation have ensured that we are able to continue with just the two church leaders and up to 6 volunteers. We can be found at **Preston Street, Carnforth and you can call us on:**

01524 736217 – Monday to Friday 9:30am – 3:00pm



Merger of Ash Trees and Stoneleigh GP practices: The Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group has now approved the merger of the Ash Trees and Stoneleigh practices from 1 April 2020. The practices have been formally collaborating since April 2019 and have been effectively operating as a single practice sharing many services, functions and staff already. All GP partners have been partners in both practices since April 2019, providing services in Carnforth, Bolton-le-Sands, Halton, Silverdale, Arnside and Milnthorpe to over 24,500 patients.

The merger will allow the combined practice to provide services more flexibly to meet the needs of patients across all six sites. Practice clinical and administrative staff will shortly be able to work more efficiently with a single computer system which will allow more time to be directed to activities that directly benefit patients.

The individual names of all the practice sites are being maintained, phone numbers will remain the same and soon the separate web sites, Facebook and Twitter accounts will be merged. The combined practice has been able to quickly respond to the current Covid19 pandemic, introducing video consultations, text messaging and revised arrangements for face to face appointments to protect patients and staff. The practice is moving to a '5 locality model' that will align groups of GPs and other clinicians with the distinct geographical areas across the practice. This will enhance the continuity of care so that it is easier to request that the same clinician manages your care over time. In the coming weeks further improvements to the appointment system are planned and patients will notice more changes once the two clinical computer systems are merged in early June. **Graham Atkinson, Practice Manager**



Crag Bank Park Development Plans: You may not be aware that there is a quiet little park in the heart of Crag Bank located off the avenues off Jesson Way and The Drive. Crag Bank Park is an oasis for nature, dog walkers and joggers alike. There is also a small area with play equipment and a piece of flat ground which kids regular use to play games in the Summer.

A group of residents are forming a Friend's group with support from Lancaster City Council and the Town Council. We have come up with several ambitious ideas to rejuvenate the play area and the surrounding grounds.

But before any of these ideas become plans we want to hear from you – so we are jointly running a survey for users of Crag Bank Park to help us improve the area in the future. If you have any suggestions and a couple of minutes to fill out the survey you can do so



at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RBMD98Z

If you would like more information or want to join our group, please contact me or check out our Facebook group by searching for "Crag Bank Park Group". **Cllr. Steve Watson**