

## **Kingskerswell Community Crisis Response (KCCR) : Case Study**

In Kingskerswell our Kingskerswell Community Crisis Response (KCCR) is a group formed the week before lock down that includes the parish council, the parish church, the local action group, and the local voluntary support group, drawing in other individuals and groups as we evolve. The basis of the group's formation was and remit is, as the name suggests "The Kingskerswell Community Crisis Response". The parish council (PC) - currently only really offering funds and loans to cover shopping if needed, but plans are for this to evolve as we re look at our Parish Emergency Plan. Whilst the KCCR group was formed by a councillor, and councillors support it, it was not directed / led by the council.

The PC has the leaflet pinned on front page of the website and has links to other services and organisations of use through COVID-19. We also use the PC notice boards around the community for the flyer, as a reminder and reassurance to those walking around for exercise / shop. The PC does not, at this time, have a FB page but rather uses the main community ones, already known in and used by the community, to post urgent messages on, in addition to the PC website.

The Parish Church - with our brand new vicar come to our community from Buenos Aires and inaugurated Feb 24<sup>th</sup> 2020...somewhat dropped in at the deep end, thankfully has a great admin team in place who are offering shopping and med deliveries and chatting circles and offer volunteers as needed. The vicar has set up a FB group for the entire community in addition to the church one, so people can contact him, chat, and also he posts his streamed services on there in addition to the church groups. The church group also offer chatting circles for anyone lonely.

The Kingskerswell Action Group (KKAG) is all about beautifying the community, weeding, planting flowers etc. and has loaned KCCR one of their previously closed FB pages, opened it up to everyone and we use that as a gentle mental health support area for quizzes, jokes, music, music parties etc., as opposed to the other FB groups in the village that are for noticing things, swaps, announcements, complaining, lost pets, etc. KKAG also have volunteers available as needed.

All the Community FB groups have helped by posting the KCCR flyer, all the collated info sheets on local delivery services that volunteers have put together. And keeping top of page for over a week the request to engage in a Community conversation on what people

need and want and how we can help.

Kerswella Care is the main delivery hub, a voluntary support group running under the umbrella of Kings Care (Kingsteignton and Newton Abbot) funded by the Lottery and Government Building Communities Fund and runs out of the GP surgery - therefore confidentiality and referrals to and from the GP's is easy.

Kerswella Care in normal times, offer activities and services with social inclusion and loneliness at the fore of all that they do – Memory Cafe, Lunch Club, home visits and support, advice with benefit claims and transport to health and well-being appointments. All these activities have had to stop due to the COVID-19 crisis. They have now joined the KCCR and with a band of volunteers are offering grocery shopping, prescription delivery, a Check in and Chat telephone scheme, household and pet emergency issues. Food bank referrals (THAT Food bank in Newton Abbot) pick up and re-distribution / donation of to THAT of contents of any un- needed Gov supplied food boxes (with additional liaison and guidance from DCC re this) , meal delivery services via ThePlotCatering / FeedSouthDevon CIC. Services are evolving as needs are evolving and indeed this crisis could change the focus of their work permanently.

Just from Kerswella Care hub, over 200 households have been supported during the crisis in one way or another, and this includes 320 prescriptions delivered, 170 shopping trips, and 120 plus on the telephone support system.

Kerswella Care started by offering transport but that rapidly became too dangerous in COVID-19 so other solutions looked for.

I have been watching with awe Ashburton and Buckfastleigh's purchase of a black cab - superb move.... Kerswella Care have a wheelchair accessible 5 seater vehicle purchased through their lottery funding 18 months ago and their committee are looking into the possibility of having a Perspex screen fitted between rear and front seats so that they can resume safely at least some transport services to essential health appointments.

The Posties in the community are already checking on the vulnerable people on their routes and they also will contact the hub of Kerswella Care if they have any concerns about anyone - this is enormously reassuring for both the Posties for a back up and also for the rest of us worrying that we may just have missed someone.

Initially our village co-op manager joined the group before he had to shield himself, but in that time we began a pre-paid community shopping card that volunteers could use when shopping - and sorted all the logistics as to how this would work and be safely

stored. Distancing in the very cramped layout of our small co-op has been difficult. They have worked to creating a safer system of 1 in , 1 out ....still a scary proposition though! We have 2 petrol stations with convenience stores at each end of the village and a small farm shop at the quarry who have been very helpful.

The school has not (yet) been involved - in part probably because none of us had a direct link with them in the beginning set up. The formal set up of KCCR was incredibly rapid - emailing the evening before and then sending the meeting time in the morning of for the very distanced meeting in the very large centre of village space of the St Mary's Garage empty showroom , with the wording of the flyer confirmed the same evening, it printed overnight and delivered to 5,000 homes within 2 days. Royal mail required a 4 week lead in so DCC Alistair Dewhurst assisted with his delivery maps and volunteers. The PC offered immediate funds for printing costs and setting up community shopping card.

We have held a FB Village Conversation campaign to see if there is anything else people need / would like us to do - and asked if everyone could pass the question to any neighbours they have not on line. The result was a lot of thankyou's and 2 new volunteers...

Our local Dementia Carer Support group has gone from monthly meetings to weekly shorter zoom sessions

I think many in our village are aware of the stark reminder of the temporary morgue sitting on the village outskirts. This is not necessarily a bad reminder of realities.

We have considered if any new flyers were needed and have additional ones ready to be printed if needed but have held back due to not putting flyer delivery people at risk when its not vitally urgent, and that so many people are referring to the original flyer on the FB groups as it is simple and direct in its language..."We are here, if you need help and support, her is who you call". The flyer in itself is a statement of reassurance in my opinion and observation. We also have volunteers monitoring FB for needs and concerns – especially during the community conversation campaign.

KCCR has been looking for ways to actively engage and encourage all the many so wonderful people who have offered to help. Initially many of the Kerswella Care volunteers found themselves in the life-changing situation of going from being an active volunteer in the community to becoming in the Vulnerable and Shielded sections of the community – not conducive to optimum mental health. However we have found ways to offer them different ways of volunteering, if they wish, via the Check in and Chat system and the

chatting circles and so on. It is a fact that many volunteers are retired people.

The PC took the view that we are not the police and that parishioners need to take responsibility for their social distancing actions, whilst gently reminding via FB and the PC website of the Gov and DCC restrictions and advice rather than the instructions coming from the PC. We have kept our open areas open - before instructed to do so by DCC - whilst reminding people to behave sensibly so we can continue to keep them open. Toilets, MUGA and play parks all closed as per direction. Directives from DCC have been vital to guide and support the PC through the evolving and unprecedented crisis.

In reflection KCCR has been created with the goodwill and desire to help from existing links developed over time with many local groups. Gaps in these links – for example the village school – could be areas to develop as we move forward.

In our community – as I'm sure is reflected across the county – there are so many overlaps in the volunteers who give their time and energy to so many different local needs. I know from my personal experience that at any committee or group I usually meet several other people who I work with in other groups – laying a foundation of already established trust and knowledge of how different people work - which helps rapid set ups as happened with KCCR.

Am sure I've missed plenty but this is a nutshell of what KCCR is offering. As we move out of CV19 I hope the 4 groups will continue to work together to the enrichment of our community and to evolve and develop further

Many thanks,

Janet Carter

Kingskerswell PC