

Covid 19 Response: So how can I help? How can I get help?

Those of us who are able to help are keen to do something. We see key workers courageously continuing to face the virus head on, working all hours and often making great sacrifices. And we know many older or vulnerable people are confined to home, unable to independently access food, medicines and other essentials. There is also a great need for some form of social contact for those self-isolating, or simply living alone and self-distancing. (It can be very strange to walk down a street and see pedestrians approaching crossing the road to keep away, even though we know it's only to protect us and them!)

So how can we all help or find the help we need?

Sadly, there hasn't been time to set up an official parish group of supporters with the proper and necessary checks. Helpers will, by definition, often be meeting and assisting very vulnerable people and it really is important that we protect them.

So here are some ways everyone can help:

Local groups: neighbours and local friends. If you are able to offer help then the most direct route is to contact your neighbours and all your local social contacts by phone, email or note. Offer to help, make sure people really know you mean it, and just keep in touch. Often, people who might need help will be reluctant to ask for it. We all prefer to manage our lives independently and do things for ourselves, not rely on others. And of course, offers of help are not always really meant. So, it may be best to be specific about how you can help and repeat your offer every now and then. Maybe follow up with messages about when you are going shopping or out and about. And just to cheer people up you could always drop off a little bunch of flowers or some home baking! Sometimes simply a quick text or phone call or a knock on the door to say "Hi!" will mean a lot. And if you need or would like help, please do accept offers – your friends and neighbours will feel so much happier knowing they have been able to do something positive! Don't be afraid to be specific about what you need – a list of shopping once a week is a great way for someone to help you out.

Secondly there is a Cheshire East initiative. This is part of the "People Helping People" scheme to coordinate local voluntary groups. **You can sign up to be a volunteer or to ask for help using the link below.**

https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/coronavirus/cheshire-east-people-helping-people.aspx

The form will ask you for some personal details and what sort of help you can offer or you need (shopping, meal delivery, friendly phone call, advice and guidance, other). The council will then match offers and requests after doing some checks.

Thirdly there is the national initiative to create an 'army' of volunteers to work with the NHS during the Covid 19, outbreak by supporting those older or vulnerable people who have been told to stay at home. You can sign up using the link below. Once your details have been processed you will be able to use the GoodSam app on phone or ipad to find local tasks which require a volunteer and to respond. You can choose to volunteer as a Community Response Volunteer, a Patient Transport Volunteer, an NHS Transport Volunteer or a Check-in and Chat volunteer.

<https://www.goodsamapp.org/NHS>

Hopefully this information will help – it would be lovely to hear of positive actions from around our community!