

April 2020

Our response to the Coronavirus global pandemic

The 70-year history of the Harpenden Trust has centred around our ability to step up to the plate swiftly and support our local community when it has needed us most. The current global pandemic is so clearly impacting the lives of many vulnerable individuals locally - and the Trust has been able to act fast in delivering immediate support across our community.

We have substantially scaled-up our Care Fund operations as part of the 'Harpenden Cares' initiative. Harpenden Cares has been established by Town Councillors, bringing together various Volunteering, Church and local community groups to deliver critical levels of support to the community.

The Harpenden Trust has been asked to act as the 'Harpenden Cares Contact Centre'. Based initially at our main Southdown Halls, a fully staffed call-centre has been put in place thanks to the extraordinary efforts of many individuals. The Contact Centre has provided the necessary link between requests for assistance and the resources available to meet those requests.

Our expanded Care Fund operations have accessed our extensive existing Harpenden Trust volunteer network, together now with a further 50+ volunteers who have contacted the Trust directly over recent weeks. Separately, we already have existing longer-term Befriending relationships, now functioning by telephone, with a few 'future' Befrienders in reserve. We will also be able to scale this aspect over time while appreciating that we can also access the wider charity/ church/ community networks through Harpenden Cares. Sadly, some Care Fund activities, like our coffee mornings and outings, have been suspended given current Government guidance, but will return.

We have developed our internal CharityLog system to be accessible to our Harpenden Cares partners. We can send requests for assistance directly from CharityLog to our partners, including a Foodbank operated by The Salvation Army and Bethany Church; a Shopping Service coordinated by Bethany and for medical needs which mainly involves collecting and delivering prescriptions.

We have an incredible team of volunteers who have enabled us to scale-up our operations in record time and to whom we offer our huge thanks. Thanks also to our fabulous partners across the Harpenden Cares network, as it has been a direct result of all the amazing teamwork that has enabled us to meet all the requests for assistance we have received so far.

Richard Nichols, Chairman Harpenden Trust