

Community Business re COVID-19, Mutual Aid

Theme – Offline social connection (services, information & entertainment)
Host – Sally Lowndes, Onion Collective
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NB The following is in constant review in response to any new government advice

Looking forward at our community response to Covid-19: PROTECT & CONNECT

We have all seen the need to adapt rapidly and responsibly to a changing situation. Therefore, we have been investigating what the future might look like and how we might need to respond. This paper explores a most-likely scenario and what it means for the Group and its operations.

The current government strategy for the general public is based on five key things:

- **Sanitize** relentlessly (clean, disinfect, hand wash - not necessarily being done well. We need to be mindful of decontamination timeframes always.)
- **Isolate** the infected (7 days initially)
- **Quarantine** any who might be infected (for 14 days)
- Widespread **social distancing** for ALL (not yet being taken seriously enough)
- **Seclude** the vulnerable (elderly, unwell, pre-existing conditions)

All of these are not yet being taken seriously enough, and if we look to Spain and Italy as examples (which are the most relevant, unfortunately) we can expect whole load of much more serious measures to be brought in within a matter of days, in order to suppress the virus and buy us time to get organised. The purpose is to reduce transmission. These measures can be expected to last 3 months initially (perhaps many more).

- **Mandate** much stricter measures on social distancing, likely with police enforcement, which will probably include:
 - Ø No one to leave their homes except for very specific reasons such as medical appointments, essential groceries, care for those who cannot care for themselves, to the bank, perhaps (dog) walking (but also very restricted).
 - Ø If out, keep 6 feet apart, stay close to home, playgrounds etc. closed.
 - Ø No groups of more than 5 people (means no guests at funerals or weddings).
 - Ø All retail closed except food stores, post offices, pharmacies, pet food.
 - Ø No restaurants except take out/drive through (which holds its own risks) and likely no normal shopping (in Spain, you ring and order and your items are boxed up and given to you – to minimise transmission).
 - Ø Permission to be out forms to be downloaded and updated daily, with fines if not carried.
 - Ø One person only in a car (with your form).
- **Test and trace** will come in as soon as the Government can get the kit and systems. This will mean temperature and other tests on entering most buildings, testing at home systems, and strict enforcement of isolation/quarantine. How well we do this will be a big part of how long we remain in the above lock down phase.

So what do these measures all mean for Watchet Community Coronavirus Support?

Some of what we have done to date will not be possible; some of it will need adjusted processes; we will need to add additional things.

In all of this, we need to be clear on our **role**, and we need to act **responsibly**. Anything that can be done zero contact must be; alongside strict sanitization protocols.

Our role must be to do the things that others are not doing; else to signpost the right places (for mental health or medical support etc.). Primarily, these are to **protect** the vulnerable and elderly in the community and to **connect** the community in new ways (albeit virtually).

Set up:

- We set up a website ([watchet.link](#)) and a Facebook page (/Watchetcoronavirussupport).
- We set up a support phone line, with options to speak to someone about essential deliveries / support; to connect to someone in a conversation; to volunteer; or to register as not having tech / internet at home.
- We print an emergency Watchet Connects newsletter (leaving it for two days to decontaminate once it arrives) and then distributing a leaflet door to door (within sanitization protocols) which provides the information on the service and other support signposting. We ask people to call our service if they have access to wifi/computer and/or smartphone.
- For Connect: We work with Mind (the Somerset support provider) to triage calls to line 2 – those wanting a chat – and to direct calls back to us when people are lonely and isolated and just want to talk (but removing the specialist support calls).
- Fiona changes role from Visitor Centre Manager to Volunteer coordinator and takes control of line 3 and 4. She takes information from Mind and connects volunteer callers to those in need of a call. She also begins collating data on who is currently not connected.
- The Protect volunteering service we can offer reduces to **ESSENTIALS and EMERGENCY** only; we must respect the social distancing demand.
- The **volunteer team who are making deliveries** (those who will go out and do things) must be tightly controlled – only those who are least risky and least at risk can be part of it, preferably those who are healthy and young, have been through a period of isolation, and only those who accept, understand and will follow the strict sanitization and contact protocols that will be put in place (see other document).
- We then prioritize getting people onto things like zoom (potentially paying self-employed/freelancers who are out of work to be tech helpdesk); working out how ‘good neighbourliness’ can be about sharing wifi if people near you do not have it etc.

We start to consider what digital means we can use to support those groups of people who will be increasingly under pressure, lonely, isolated etc. For example, we immediately establish zoom meetings for things like:

- . Parents at home
- . Morning crosswords and coffee
- . Knit and natter
- . Single dads/mums
- . All kinds of peer tutoring (cooking clubs, book clubs, art clubs etc.)

The purpose is to keep people, especially the otherwise isolated, connected and feeling part of the community – keeping people together as part of this amazing community, even when we are apart.

Watchet Coronavirus Community Help

CONNECT AND PROTECT

VOLUNTEER GROUPS

We are recruiting three groups of volunteers to help us keep local people safe and connected during the coronavirus outbreak. If you are able to help in any of these roles, please fill in the associated volunteer application / agreement form and return it to us at info@lovewatchet.co.uk.

If you can't use email, call 01984 573073.

Connects: Telephone Chatters, Volunteer Brief

The Connects team is a bank of friendly volunteers who are able to call people from the community who are just in need of a chat and connection with other humans through this difficult time.

The system allows people from the community to call us and request a conversation. The calls will have been initially screened by Somerset MIND. Contact details of those needing a friendly chat will then be passed back to us for a Connect volunteer to call.

In order to keep people safe, these volunteers will need to commit to conforming to data protection and reporting protocols.

Protects, Group 1: Triage, Volunteer Brief

Protects Team, Group 1 is a small group of experienced phone volunteers, who will triage calls that come in for delivery of essential items. You will be given safeguarding training, and will also be given an up-to-date list of support agencies to direct people to.

In order to keep people safe, volunteers will need to commit to conforming to data protection and reporting protocols.

Protects, Group 2: Shoppers, Volunteer Brief

A small group of highly committed volunteers are needed to collect and deliver food and other essential and emergency items to and from people's houses. In order to keep people safe, this group needs to be small; they need to all qualify as low risk, and they will need to commit to conforming to strict safety protocols, as well as data protection. Safeguarding training will be provided.

This will be a rolling pool of volunteers so that we can continue to provide if volunteers need to isolate.

In order to qualify, volunteers need to satisfy as many of these points as possible:

- They are self-isolating in the advised way – even without symptoms - and following strict hygiene protocols in their personal lives with regular hand washing / washing between each activity; disinfecting their own homes; wearing correct PPE when out of the house and adhering to advised levels of social distancing.
- They do not share a residence with a key worker, or anyone who is still going out to work.
- They do not have a child going to school or nursery.

- They are not a primary carer of an at-risk person.
- They do not have any significant underlying mental or physical health concerns themselves.
- They are under 50 or under 60 and very healthy.
- They are willing to adhere to incredibly strict safety protocols.
- Have undergone a minimum period of 7 days isolation prior to starting.
- They need a driving licence.
- They need to have a recent DBS or have one done in advance of starting.

Risk protocol for this group:

- Total isolation needed for 7 days prior to starting.
- Wear the best available PPE – gloves, aprons, face masks.
- Gloves to be disposed of after touching anything with any potential for contamination.
- Face masks to be washed after each outing.
- Washing hands before and after each outing and any other opportunity.
- Disinfecting any surface before and after touching it.
- Disinfect the door handle and doorbell / knocker of each house they visit.
- Disinfecting any items delivered to houses.
- Anything that is collected from houses will need to be stored for minimum three days before it is handled by the next person.
- Adhering to 6 feet social distancing rules.
- Carry out online safeguarding training.

Protects volunteers: taking contactless payments using SumUp

- When you join the team, the coordinator will register you with an email and password under the main account and provide you with a card reader.
- Once that has happened, you need to download the SumUp app on your phone and log on using the email and password provided.
- When you are given the card reader you need to connect the phone to the reader by opening the app on your phone, click “More” in bottom RH corner and then click on “Payment Methods”, make sure card reader button is blue (on) and Cash payment button is off and tap Air to set up. The Card Reader will now connect.
- Call the customer and get the shopping list from them – to a value of up to £45.
- Go to the Co-op in Swain Street Watchet and collect the items on the list.
- Go to check-out and say you’re with the Watchet Coronavirus Support Group and request a deferred payment.
- Take 2 copies of deferred payment receipts.
- Take a photo of the receipt and send it to the coordinator.
- Take the shopping and one receipt to the customer.
- Open the app on your phone, and type in the amount including the £2.00 service charge. This will automatically upload on the card reader.
- The shopper holds their bank card next to the card reader and it will take a contactless payment.
- If the customer prefers to keep a safer distance they can put card on suitable surface and step back, volunteer can pick up card to make payment and wipe card with a disinfecting wipe and place back on surface and stand back at safe distance for customer to retrieve the card.

No money is exchanged and no refunds can be made.

For more information please contact Sally Lowndes – sally@onioncollective.co.uk

Community Business Mutual Aid-Case Study
For more information on the Onion Collective contact - sally@onioncollective.co.uk
<https://cbmutualaid.co.uk>