

Community Business re COVID-19, Mutual Aid Theme – **Online social connection (services, information & entertainment)** Host – **Clare de Bathe, Chichester Community Development Trust**

7th April 2020

Chichester Community Development Trust:

About us:

Chichester Community Development Trust (CCDT) was established in 2009 as a requirement of the sale of the site of the former Graylingwell Hospital (the former West Sussex County Lunatic Asylum) to Linden Homes and Clarion Housing Group. From its early days, CCDT worked hard to represent the needs of the new Graylingwell community, took responsibility for planning and negotiating to acquire buildings that could be used for the benefit of the local residents, and helped to create a sustainable community.

In essence, whilst the developments in which the Trust works are about the growth of housing, CCDT has ensured that these new estates evolve with the people at its heart, to create the services as they need them and to use the buildings to bind people together, not set the estates apart from the rest of the city. As Chichester, along with the rest of the world, faces the impact and aftermath of Covid-19 this mission has never been more important. The people are in greater need than ever to feel a sense of belonging, to find a place to connect and to feel supported as they emerge into the undoubtedly changed world with greater financial and social pressures than existed before. CCDT works with the local communities in North Chichester, empowering people by developing skills and supporting projects that create local opportunities, employment and build community spirit.

Covid-19 response:

Key activities at this time have included:

- Design & publishing a support leaflet for 3,500 residents of north Chichester providing advice & guidelines on community support & a helpline & email address to volunteer or request support.
- Maintenance & management of a volunteer group (currently 50 and growing) via a WhatsApp group, assigning appropriate tasks and keeping the team informed and inspired
- All processes are formalised for both the volunteer and the vulnerable so that all parties understand how the assistance should be provided. Volunteers must first sign up to a written agreement stating the standard of care for themselves and others that is expected with a clear statement outlining how the agreement can be terminated should any of the terms be broken - so ensuring safeguarding throughout, as well as compulsory sign up clauses for the use of data to ensure GDPR compliancy.
- To empower volunteers to purchase shopping or pay prescription fees required without them being out of pocket CCDT has introduced a payment system that negates any need for bank details to be exchanged between volunteers and the vulnerable, or for any cash transfers to take place. On completion of any purchases the volunteer email a photograph of receipts to CCDT who refund them immediately via PayPal. The amount required is then sent to the vulnerable recipient of the service with details of how to pay online. Where funds are not available or the recipient is unable to use online banking payments can either be deferred until the lock down ends or voided in the case of the financially vulnerable. This is made possible through securing grant funding to allow for a food grant to provide those most in need with what they require.
- Sourcing grants to allow for financial support and services to those in the greatest financial need
- Creation of an online community events calendar providing free ways to connect, entertain and inspire, including zoom community cafes, IT cafes providing expert support for any IT challenges, and quiz nights for children and adults.

- Supporting local businesses that previously hired our community buildings by facilitating and managing online paid classes.
- Grant fund raising to source funds that can help within our local community through the provision of food packages, entertainment and education programmes.
- A reliable information resource on practical and helpful information about local facilities, retailers and services.
- Link for our COVID response – <https://chichestercdt.org.uk/>
- Aware that inviting people to an online IT support cafe hosted on Zoom may seem to some like inviting people to a building and not telling them how to operate the trick door, CCDT sourced a very simple, easy-to-watch instructional video explaining the basic set up and functionalities of zoom. This enables those looking to take part in the online events hosted by CCDT to understand how to log on and participate fully. Vital for those that are otherwise almost digitally disconnected to ensure they stay connected.
- Link for zoom help and support - <https://vimeo.com/403204050>
- Digital What's On - With the closure of all of our community buildings CCDT was keen to prevent a greater sense of isolation than was necessary for residents and the wider Chichester Community. To enable a platform for people to continue to be entertained, connected and informed the team undertook work to offer existing hirers of the building the opportunity to conduct online courses or events - either as paid for activities or free of charge to help maintain their small and fragile businesses. In addition free activities usually provided by the Trust such as Community Cafes and IT cafes were taken online, with the addition of new events including a youth quiz to help support families. Where paid for events were created on Eventbrite to sell tickets, and free of charge events were simply clicked onto using the Zoom platform. The team is working hard to identify events and activities that will meet the needs of the wider demographic of the community with youth activities, yoga sessions for the younger and more elderly audience, quiz for adults and one for children, and an online group to support dads to find ways to connect and engage with their children through the third party group Dad la Soul.
- More information on our digital what's on - <https://chichestercdt.org.uk/events/>

Challenges faced:

Some of the key challenges that we have faced in managing this process are:

- Ensuring all volunteers feel equally engaged and able to help
- Setting up the financial management – now resolved and eased by our ability to process the money, but this will be difficult for those without a fund assigned to cashflow this need or an independent bank account through which cost can be transferred.

The leaflet distributed around the houses is featured below, including contact details for anybody that would like to discuss this process with us further:

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP.

AND WE ARE HERE TO HELP TOO...



Support throughout the Coronavirus

As we all prepare for the prospect of the Coronavirus reaching our communities we encourage everyone to do what they can to support their communities during these times.

Be extra thoughtful, check in on your friends and neighbours (particularly if they are vulnerable and isolated) and offer your help and support.

4 examples of practical things you could offer to help with:



Food shopping
and delivery



Collection of
medication



Putting
bins out



Dog
walking

Here at CCDT, we have created a bank of volunteers that will try to help those that are self-isolating or need practical help as a result of the virus. Please, please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like some support from our team.

To gain access to support please contact us at the Chichester Community Development Trust office, Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm:

Email: info@chichestercdt.org.uk

Phone: 01243 537526

Please contact us if you would like to join our team of volunteers.