

HAWKHURST COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP

Helping the community beat the virus

Newsletter No. 8

22nd May 2020

Welcome to the eighth edition of the HCSG newsletter, which we hope you continue to enjoy. From now on, the newsletter will be posted on the HCSG website and circulated to the HCSG community on Friday (rather than Sunday).

As you can imagine, putting the newsletter together every week involves a great deal of work for all those involved, so we'd really like to hear your feedback - do you find it interesting? is it useful? is there something in particular you'd like us to feature? Please do let us know by emailing us at hawkhurstcommunity@gmail.com



A word from the Chair.....

I'm sure you'll agree that our HCSG volunteers are an amazing bunch, really going out of their way to help everyone through this crisis. What might be less obvious is the role that has been played by other organisations. When the HCSG was first established, we set up a Reference Group to provide oversight. We "meet" each week and the Reference Group has itself provided huge amounts of support.

Both of our supermarkets have been incredibly generous, as has Fr. Rodney and St Laurence Church. For instance, this week, Fr. Rodney and the Church donated yet more tins to our Food 4 Families scheme and Tesco also made a further financial contribution. Thank you so much.

The Reference Group has also discussed forthcoming changes in the way that patients will need to access North Ridge Surgery. The changes will come into place from 1st June and we will be sharing details on the HCSG website as soon as they become available. Keep an eye out for further details in next week's newsletter.

And finally, I just want to let you know that St Laurence Church will be holding services by Zoom on Sundays. Please see their website for all the details:

www.stlaurencechurch-hawkhurst.org

Clare

Volunteer & Client numbers: update

We currently have 143 volunteers and 186 clients registered with HCSG.

HAWKHURST

COMMUNITY FRIDGE

Opening in June 2020 at the Green Shop, the Hawkhurst Community Fridge is part of a nationwide network of authorised food outlets aimed at reducing food waste, connecting communities and tackling silent hunger in our village. Anyone can take and contribute to the fridge. It is not means tested. There is no shame and everyone is welcome.

Hawkhurst Community Trust 2018 has been through a process of rigorous checks and has Public Liability Insurance in place. We have local volunteers with different areas of expertise undertaking construction, painting and networking work for us.

We now need volunteers to collect food by arrangement from local stores and deliver to the site. We also need volunteer key holders to lock and unlock the fridge, as it will be secured overnight.

If you would like to be part of the project in *any* capacity, please email

Ellen at: hawkhurstcommunityfridge@gmail.com



Registered Charity # 1180085

www.hawkhurstcommunitycentre.co.uk

Hawkhurst Community Trust is a separate community group to HCSG. They have a longer term ambition to support the Hawkhurst community and are not just a response to the need generated by Covid-19.

Any queries regarding the Hawkhurst Community Fridge or the Hawkhurst Community Trust should be directed to Ellen at hawkhurstcommunityfridge@gmail.com

Thank you HCSG.....

Every member of the HCSG Co-ordinating Group and all the volunteers are just that - volunteers. We all have our own lives, families and jobs to run alongside our HCSG commitments.

It is very heartening then to receive such warm and positive feedback from our community. Here are just some of the comments we have received since we started two months ago:

From our clients about their volunteers:

"I am so thankful to rely on somebody. So friendly, so helpful"

"I am so grateful. My volunteer is so helpful, I can't praise them enough. What wonderful community support"

"I have a phone buddy and it's like talking to an old friend. We have so much in Common and I really look forward to his calls. He is making such difference to me"

From our volunteers about their clients:

"I just wanted to say thank you for introducing me to my client. She is a wonderful lady and I will certainly be staying in touch after this has all finished."

"We sang happy birthday down the phone to one of my clients who turned 80! She was embarrassed but clearly pleased to hear from us."

About HCSG and the newsletter:

"I just want to say a huge thank you to you all for this newsletter and all the organisation that has been going on behind the scenes. You are all unsung heroes!"

"I cannot put fully into words how much we admire you as a group and are deeply grateful for all you are doing for our village in these dreadful circumstances. Hawkhurst residents are truly blessed."

More wonderful thank yous in the next edition.....

Don't forget that every household which has registered with HCSG, and is actively receiving support from the Group, will automatically be entered into the draw for a **£200 bumper hamper** donated by Tesco and Waitrose. If you are eligible for support from HCSG, please sign up today by emailing or calling us (details at the bottom of this page) and do your bit to protect our village.

The winner will be announced at the end of May.

Glorious Gardens

This week it's the turn of some of our wonderful gardens to delight you (virtually of course):

Chelsea Flower Show 2020

A lively mix of videos and inspirational articles throughout show week.



www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/virtual-chelsea

Hidcote Manor

Take a 360 degree tour around the old garden, plant house and spectacular borders of the National Trust's Hidcote Manor Gardens in Gloucestershire. The Arts & Craft-inspired garden, created in 1907, is known for its intimate garden rooms as well as the Fuchsia Garden and Bathing Pool Garden.



www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hidcote/features/hidcote-virtual-tours



Highgrove

Even the gardens of the private residence of Prince Charles and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall aren't out of bounds for a virtual tour. Sustainability is the focus for the gardens at Highgrove, with designs made to keep the garden growing in harmony with nature.

<https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/igLSEOWqhVHoJw>

Kew Gardens

Take a tour of the top ten sights to see at the UNESCO World Heritage Site Kew Gardens, with guided commentary from Kew Gardens experts along the way. The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew has thirty-seven acres of woodland, 14,000 trees and 50,000 different plant species. The picturesque Victorian glasshouses and Alpine rock garden are two other noteworthy sights.



www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioG_Vfh0Kxw



Monet's garden at Giverny

Hop across the channel for a virtual tour and guide of Monet's spectacular garden at Giverny in Normandy, France. Royal Academy curator Ann Dumas and head gardener James Priest provide commentary alongside a video tour of the famous garden, including the wonderful lily pond.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjWx2WNXFF4

We now have a HCSG bank account!

Following the phenomenal success of our recent Food 4 Families appeal, we formally closed the original appeal once we met the published target. However, we continue gratefully to receive contributions to our work to help those in need during the crisis, which seems likely to remain with us for some time. Your contribution is most welcome and will be used to help those in need in our community. Donations should be made by bank transfer using the following details. Thank you!

Bank: HSBC
Account: Hawkhurst Community Support Group
Sort code: 40-44-37
Account Number: 42304961

Results of our recent survey

If you are a volunteer or one of our clients, you will know that we have recently asked you to complete a survey on how you think things are going, and what might change for you in future.

The results were all very positive - volunteers felt that their current workload was manageable and some could even take on more duties. Most volunteers shop and collect prescriptions for their clients, although some also walk clients' dogs too. Many clients have access to the internet and have already shopped online, others could perhaps do this with support in future.

Overall, the surveys showed that both volunteers and clients continue to have confidence in the HCSG, its leadership, support and the team spirit fostered by regular and high quality communications.

A huge thanks from the Co-ordinating Group to all those who took the time to respond to the surveys.

Meet the HCSG Team

Having introduced you over the last few weeks to the Co-ordinating Group, we would now like you to meet some of our amazing Leads. This week we start with **Liz Reader**, Area Leader and **Rachel Bennett**, Phone Buddy Lead.



Liz Reader
Area Leader for Highgate Hill

As an Area Leader (Highgate Hill), Liz provides the central point of contact for our clients and our volunteers, ensuring they are all fully supported. Liz also assists in managing the HCSG finances. She has lived in the village for over 19 years with her husband and 3 children and can normally be found working as an IT Project Manager.

Liz says *'It has been an absolute pleasure to be involved with this community project, a very rewarding and positive experience'*.



Rachel Bennett
Phone Buddy Lead

"I have the role of Phone Buddy Lead and link volunteers with clients who are feeling lonely, isolated or just needing a friendly chat! I work from home for our family business, I have two daughters and a menagerie of animals to care for - dogs, cats, chickens, ducks and our pet pigs 'Piggy', 'Wiggy' and 'Woo'.

I am so glad I volunteered to be part of the HCSG. It is a tremendous example of community spirit and support, which I feel honoured to have played a very small part of. Long may it continue".