

Updates from the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum

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# Communities and Volunteers



Volunteers continue to step up and dedicate their time to helping vulnerable people within their communities. This is keeping neighbours, friends and the communities safe.

With the recent increased number of cases, volunteers' roles are as important now as they ever were.

After a brief pause, it's intended that this newsletter will be restarted and sent out on a fortnightly basis. As before, it will include useful information for you as volunteers and for the communities you are helping.

If you have news stories, or items for inclusion, please send these to [mark.stoneham@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:mark.stoneham@lincolnshire.gov.uk).

This newsletter is here for you. It is to keep you informed about the pandemic, and to share ideas and good news stories. If you have any comments or ideas for future newsletters, please let us know.

## Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) survey



Thank you to those of you who gave up your time to complete the LRF surveys that have been shared with all LRF registered voluntary and community groups and other organisations.

The aim of the surveys was to ask you to identify what had gone well and what your concerns were for the near future. We also asked you how to engage and communicate with people in your communities.

Along with the surveys you completed we also spoke to 178 shielded people and larger voluntary sector organisations.

All of the findings from the surveys and the conversations were presented on the 9 September 2020 to a workshop of over 25 representatives from local authorities, health and voluntary and community sector organisations.

The key themes identified were funding, communication and engagement, supporting voluntary sector infrastructure organisations, wellbeing and mental health and training for volunteers.

Involving Lincs (an umbrella body that represents the voluntary sector) and another health led voluntary sector umbrella body VET, will be taking forward the actions, working with local authorities and public health colleagues in order to address the themes identified from your comments.

We will keep you informed of the progress of these actions in future editions of this newsletter.

## **Amazing things still happening in the county**



## Alford Hub

Alford Hub was founded by Lynnette Pryke to provide the emergency response and support for the most vulnerable in the Alford community on 16 March 2020 during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Working closely with Alford Town Council, ELDC, LCC, NHS, local churches and third-party organisations, Alford Hub soon became the official Hub for Alford and the villages within a six-mile radius.

They have completed nearly 800 prescription deliveries and have had 41,300 enquires, comments and questions on their virtual community centre Facebook group.

"I was in the extremely critical vulnerable group myself, but I had volunteered in disaster planning and management before. I knew I couldn't just sit at home and do nothing and so I launched the Hub.

"Being in the shielding group and also home schooling my own children, gave me a unique insight into the real challenges that people faced. This information allowed me to tailor the different platforms of the hub to be more effective and meet the needs of the people.

"The quality of the information shared was also a main concern of mine, as I know there is a lot of Fake news about. I was conscious that we would only share verified information from direct sources and that we would give people the opportunity to ask questions if they didn't understand things.

"Part of my role as Hub Coordinator is to seek clarity on government policies. I will ask right at the very top if I have to get an answer for someone." Lynnette explained.

Alford Hub has over 90 volunteers, serving the community, including the free prescription delivery, COVID-19 isolation support, social prescribing, a virtual community centre, virtual information board, befriending, school uniform bank, information hub, citizen signposting service and a free online newspaper.

As the weeks progressed during lockdown, it became very apparent that there was a need for the services beyond the current crisis.

The vulnerability of the community grew due to job losses and families on the poverty line and so Alford Hub expanded to support any vulnerability regardless of age or circumstance.

Alford Hub became a charity in May and does not charge for any of their services, but rely on donations and grants in order to cover the essential running costs.

The local doctors, schools, councils, Lincs wellbeing and adult services can refer people on to use the services of Alford Hub, alternatively you can self-refer by phone or text on 07957 272852 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm.

For further information on the services that Alford Hub provides please visit [www.alfordhub.co.uk](http://www.alfordhub.co.uk) or join the virtual community centre and information board at [www.facebook.com/groups/alfordhub](https://www.facebook.com/groups/alfordhub)



## Good neighbour scheme

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The team supports ten live schemes across the county and is working closely with a further 15 developing schemes, which are transitioning from Covid community groups to GNS. Hogsthorpe GNS is their first Covid group to 'go live' during the pandemic.

The Team has also been working in partnership with Lincolnshire Co-op to connect with community groups to offer support and guidance.

East Elloe (South Holland) GNS launched in September and supports residents across 25+ communities.

Every GNS is different in terms of the services it offers, however, the one thing they have in common is a commitment to their community in supporting those who are vulnerable and in need of help.

This help may take the form of assistance with occasional shopping, lifts to medical appointments, prescription collection, small practical household tasks (for example, changing a lightbulb), dog-walking, or



a friendly check-in phone call.

The Team will provide support every step of the way, from help establishing need and a volunteer base in the community (via survey), to setting up a committee, establishing procedures, applying for funding, maintaining a scheme and becoming part of the county-wide network with access to opportunities for sharing good practice, mentoring and training.

There is a comprehensive toolkit available to developing schemes, which includes sample policies and forms to get you up and running.

To find out more, you can download a [good neighbourhood flyer](#). Alternatively, please email the Team at [gns@lincsymca.co.uk](mailto:gns@lincsymca.co.uk).



## **Branston Parish Council COVID-19 support group update**

Branston Parish Council COVID-19 support group remains operational and continues to provide valuable and much needed support to vulnerable residents.

Primarily the requests, of which now over 1000 have been successfully responded to, are for prescription collections, shopping trips, hospital escorts and for welfare purposes.

However, hundreds of other tasks have been completed, covering a wide and diverse range of activities, all of which have been very gratefully received. The Branston All Saints Covid-19 food bank is still open and remains an important asset for the provision of food boxes for anyone in need.

Although a number of volunteers have returned to work, the ability of the group to respond to requests remains as effective now as it did 6 months ago.

Statistically, the group Helpline receives on average, 6 requests a day or 41 per week. The group continues to serve the community very effectively.

This service and the new found community spirit, brought about from the pandemic, has highlighted that the village would greatly benefit from a community group to act as a focal point for information regarding

all welfare assistance services, social and sporting activities.

As a legacy, a Branston Community Group that will be very closely aligned with a Branston Good Neighbour Scheme and existing Branston Emergency Planning Group, will be formed under the mantle of Project JANUS.

In summary, this will ensure that the capability to provide resilience, safety, protection and welfare services to all Branston residents exists for now and for the future.

Finally, all of the volunteers have performed fantastically and the support from residents in the form of cash, food and face mask donations and following organisations has been totally invaluable, in no particular order:

Co-op Head Office, Branston Co-op Food Store, Branston Co-op Pharmacy, Branston Surgery, FareShare (Hull and Humber), Morrison's Supermarkets, Branston All Saints Group, YMCA Lincs, Community Lincs, NKDC, Branston Parish Council, Well-being, LRF and LCC County Emergency Centre.

## Helpline



If you or anyone you support need advice or support, the COVID-19 helpline number is 01522 782189. You can also use this number if you would like any type of advice and support related to Covid.

Find out more about Lincolnshire's Volunteer Centres and the community response to coronavirus here: [www.lincolnshirevolunteering.org.uk](http://www.lincolnshirevolunteering.org.uk).

## Finally

Remember this newsletter is here for you. Please continue to share your own good news stories, also, any ideas for other volunteers to help the residents. Sent to [mark.stoneham@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:mark.stoneham@lincolnshire.gov.uk).

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