

Ferring Residents Support Network.

As many of you are aware, there is an amazing amount of good work going on in the village to look out for each other and a number of the established organisations have set up phone circles to keep in contact with their members and reach out to those who are feeling the worst aspects of isolation. Local businesses are also making a huge contribution to supporting the community. I guess we shouldn't be surprised at the level of help that has been generated across the village as that is the Ferring Way, however, with the current restrictions it is becoming increasingly difficult for individuals to know what they can do to help, whilst continuing to protect themselves and others from the virus.

The government announced a few days ago the setting up of Local Council Hubs. We would like to make you all aware that when the Government refers to Local Councils, they mean the District Council. It is not referring to Parish Councils which are only established under some Local Councils, not all. We are in contact with our District Councillors to try and connect with any 'Local Council' initiatives that Arun may formulate and will share these with you. We are, however helping to co-ordinate the excellent work being done by the established groups and other volunteers in the village, while ensuring the continuation of key Parish Council business having put in place 'distance working' procedures. We remain acutely aware of the need to follow government guidelines; protect the vulnerable from both contact with potential carriers of the virus and general safeguarding against those who would try to exploit the situation.

A number of "phone buddy" and Call and Check schemes have been set up and they are all now linked together to share knowledge and support each other. This also helps address the problem of cold callers in that the callers and recipients are generally known to each other. Anyone needing support and advice will be advised to contact appropriate professional organisations and we are developing a list of possible providers which will be distributed to the coordinators and published on the Parish Council Website. There are, of course, members of the community that are not in any of these groups or on social media and it is important that we all keep an eye on our neighbours and identify those that have specific needs.

We have already formed a network which includes St Andrews and the Baptist Church; Friends of Ferring; Ferring Probus; Ferring Conservation Group; Rassasy/Ferring Helpers; Ferring Downs WI; The Village Hall; Ferring Retirement Club and the Neighbourhood Watch group to coordinate support. If there are other groups in the community that have established a similar system, or are providing help and support, they are more than welcome to join the network. Contact any of these organisations for more information (some have links on our 'Community' page).