



Bewdley-In-Kind

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Support Group

Annual Report for Bewdley Town Council April 2021

Bewdley-In-Kind is a voluntary support group that was set up to assist people who were impacted by the lockdowns imposed during the COVID 19 pandemic.

In March 2020 it became apparent that the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID 19) virus was spreading rapidly throughout the country and that this was likely to cause a significant change to our lives until the virus could be brought under control.

Initially a Facebook Page and website was established – the aim was to provide information and guidance for people locally to help to keep themselves safe. This then grew to a project to assist the local community, when it became apparent that the country would be locked down.

A group of four local residents met to discuss how we could help to get help to the people who needed it, when they needed it. The virus came on the back of the flooding that had impacted our Town in early 2020 and there were already some support mechanisms in place from then via the floodbank. We realised that we would need to be able to respond quickly to people who were shielding either because they were clinically vulnerable or because they had the virus and needed to self-isolate.

To start with it seemed a huge task, however we worked quickly to get volunteers who could help out. Members of the community and businesses stepped up and provided PPE, sanitiser and printed leaflets for us to distribute to reach those without access to social media.

I remain extremely proud of the way we mobilised so quickly to have volunteers out in the field providing support. All volunteers were security checked to ensure they posed no risk to the people that we were helping.

At the busiest time last April / May we had around 70 volunteers helping out within the community on a daily basis. Over the past year we have provided help and assistance for over 500 people. Some people have required ongoing support with frequent phone calls, assistance with shopping and collecting prescriptions. Others we have just provided ad hoc assistance for when required.

We work in collaboration with Franche foodbank and set up collection points around the town. This we were able to get emergency food parcels out to people very quickly should they be required. Some people who were in receipt of emergency food parcels donated these to us to pass on to others.

We have also assisted people with specific requests and have responded for more unusual requests. We decided very early on that nobody who really needed help would be turned away. It became obvious that some people, especially the elderly members of the community could become very isolated in a short period of time. We found a number of cases where family members had been providing support but were unable to get to their relatives, either because of lockdown or because they were shielding. There were people who were at risk of falling through the safety net and we managed to help out here.

It has been a hectic year but very rewarding and I am so proud of what we have all achieved in such a short space of time that really helped to bring help to many in the Bewdley community.

Corinne Bailey – Chair of Bewdley-In-Kind - April 2021