

How a Community Organisation Adapted During the COVID-19 Crisis

September 2020

By working with our colleagues in the Voluntary and Community sector, we have a series of reports on our website that capture the experiences and issues from the point of view of services and groups that support local people in the community.

This is an independent case study showing an example of one community organisation's story of adapting and what the future holds.

About the organisation



The Communities and Wellbeing team for Chichester oversee strategic partnerships and support a wide range of organisations to improve their local offer for local communities.

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We engage with local communities and have eight Community Wardens. We also support safeguarding and modern slavery, employability, grants and concessions, wellbeing smoking cessation and alcohol etc. and have 5 social prescribers to support, as well as CCTV monitoring.

Pam Bushby, Divisional Manager Communities and Wellbeing

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What were the immediate challenges?

During the Lockdown their Social Prescriber and Wellbeing teams maintained appointments virtually - online and by telephone - to encourage and support people. For the team of eight Community Wardens, *it was business as usual for 5 members*, still patrolling to support local people and communities - delivering food parcels, etc. but no face-to-face contact. One member of the team was redeployed to the rough sleeper outreach service and two needed to shield. Their Wellbeing team are working virtually as a *mix and match* of telephone support and virtual. Neighbourhood disputes not surprisingly have increased during the Lockdown.

“ Two wardens supported the delivery of food parcels to north/west and south of district. They really enjoyed doing this. ”

What has been the practical challenges facing communities and residents?

Anecdotal evidence suggests that isolation has increased as people are not seeing friends and family. Working from home although great for many is challenging for some, with home schooling and other home distractions.

“ We have a small team of responders dealing with different queries - essential food parcels, practical things, and wellbeing calls. We supported a gentleman who was struggling with his heating by speaking with British Gas. ”

West Sussex County Council set-up the Community Hubs and the District Council respond to referrals from the County Council, mainly for those with no support or who have issues with food supplies. They have delivered food and medications, supported with wellbeing calls, for those in the *shielding* or self-isolating categories.

“ Some of the people we have supported like to read books and enjoy doing crafts. We ran an appeal for craft materials and books through our workplace chat and these have been delivered by the community wardens. ”

What has been your key areas of focus at this time?

Chichester District Council team has had to deal with increases in *deliberate targeted activity* -neighbourhood disputes, increases in anti-social bonfires and people not social distancing. During Lockdown people were under more pressure and this just exacerbates tensions. They have remained in contact with local people through their Social Prescribers and Community Wardens and this encourages positive behaviours.



The Community Wardens communicated the Government guidance as to what one can and cannot do. There was very little we could do to stop people coming to the Witterings beach except *asking people not to come at this time*.



How have you been working with the Voluntary and Community Sector at this time?

The Voluntary and Community Sector has been amazing. They used the framework and Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester as a go to for signposting. The sheer numbers of volunteers coming forward was fantastic. In Selsey a ‘*buddy system*’ was set up - they were only asked to provide support to two people in the Selsey area as this system pick-up the rest.

They developed a comprehensive directory of local organisations and offers including stores and local groups. Local churches have really supported for example Grace Church *nothing has been too much trouble*. They would like to continue to work in this way and to harness services. There has been more partnership working during the pandemic than ever before.



Many people are using online forums as struggling being alone. Some people have told us they cannot wait to go out and begin socialising again.



As the lockdown begins to ease what changes are you planning?

They will continue the telephone support. Face-to-face group work may take a little longer to establish within the guidance. Virtual group sessions maybe a way forward. If it is working and right it will continue.



We do not yet know if there will be a second wave or not. They need to review what has worked well and what has not so that the good things remain and the not so good do not.

They are a little concerned about the number of referrals being down but still needs to provide an offer. Many people are still *shielding* or self-isolating and many are in shock. More around IT training for those who need this maybe.

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Our main challenge will be funding for new ways of working.

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Contact details

To learn more about these teams:

Call **01243 534801**

Email community@chichester.gov.uk

Or visit their webpage www.chichester.gov.uk



Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester

Our role is to enable, support and promote VCS groups across Arun and Chichester.

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- We provide a Funding monthly e-newsletter, and our funding surgeries via zoom.
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We have a simple ambition at Healthwatch West Sussex...
to make local health and social care services better for
people that use them.



We are here to listen, take action and influence positive change for local people
living in West Sussex.

We record what people tell us and share this anonymously with those who make
decisions about our health and care services.

You can contact us in several ways:



Telephone - 0300 012 0122



Email - helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk



Website - www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

You can also follow our social media channels to always be updated with the latest
in health and social care news across West Sussex: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#).

If you have questions about the content of this update, please either call 0300 012
0122 or email cheryl.berry@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk



How a voluntary organisation has adapted during COVID-19 - Case Study

