

SPEEN & NORTH DEAN COVID RESPONSE

Jill Rogerson, with contributions from Clare Hobbs, Sandy Mitcheson, Graham Peart, Grainne Suter, Lesley Thorn-Davis and Ian Warr

Celebration of our community 2020 – 2022

As we continue to head towards more normal times following the pandemic, this is an opportune moment to reflect on and be thankful for the care and support we have been so lucky to experience within our two villages over the past thirty months. The following are some of the initiatives which were put in place, with apologies for any that may have been omitted but which were equally appreciated.

Covid Support WhatsApp Group and Buddy System

When COVID-19 first hit the headlines and the virus spread like wildfire around the world, a small village WhatsApp group was created to support villagers who might be in need of help. The group, run by Jem Symondson, Andy Thompson, Scott Thorn-Davis, Ian Warr and Craig Watson, aimed to provide a local response to people at risk - those who'd come down with COVID-19 and vulnerable people who needed to self-isolate. As the list of WhatsApp group members swelled, it became apparent just how many local people lived outside the usual hubbub of community activity; many were elderly, living alone and very frightened, and they wrote direct messages to us saying as much.

Around the same time, the team hatched the "buddy" scheme. An appeal for volunteers was sent out on the WhatsApp Covid support group, and we allocated homes to buddies. Help on offer included collecting food supplies, medicines and letters that needed posting. Once we'd figured out a safe and hygienic approach to make this all happen, there was a hive of activity with deliveries being made by about a dozen buddies.

A few weeks later, and once the supermarkets began sorting out more delivery slots and we all got a bit more used to COVID-19, the need for buddies started to dwindle. However, Jem had been keeping a close eye on poverty levels in the Wycombe area and found that the One Can Trust food bank was straining as hundreds of new local families requested help.

One Can Trust

The trustees of One Can Trust, one of whom (Graham Peart) is a Speen resident, thank all of the many Speen and North Dean residents who show incredible generosity when donating food items to the food bank. Graham says that the volume of the food collections in our local communities

remains at a consistently high level.

The High Wycombe-based food bank has been supported over many years by our two villages, with collection boxes situated outside Upper North Dean Farm and Westwood, with kind permission of Peter and Judy Keen, and Jeremy and Christine Symondson, respectively. A number of Speen and North Dean residents are amongst the 200 regular volunteers, collecting food from supermarkets, packing the parcels, making phone calls to clients to offer additional support or delivering the parcels to doorsteps.

The need for the services of the One Can Trust food bank became critical during the pandemic during which carefully tailored parcels were delivered initially to around 180 households each week to. By the end of 2020, in December 2020 alone, over £45,000 worth of food was collected, sorted, carefully packed into emergency food parcels and delivered to the doorsteps of 914 people including many children, providing food including fresh produce and other essentials..

Clapping for Carers

We all clapped, rang bells and made lots of noise every Thursday evening during the first lockdown – a young trombone player and a more mature kettle drummer were spotted on a regular basis in the groups of socially distanced individuals and families in front of their houses.

Speen NHS Bakers



Clare Hobbs delivering tray bakes at Wycombe Hospital

A team of 20 bakers from the village provided tray-bakes during Lockdown 1 which were distributed by Clare Hobbs, a Cardiac Rehabilitation Specialist Nurse; and, during her absence on leave, by fellow Speen resident Jill Roberts, Senior Sister at the McIntyre Endoscopy Unit, both based at Wycombe Hospital. They speak about the tremendous pressure the hospital was under throughout the pandemic and particularly during the early uncertain times. One of the very few

positives at this bleak time, described by Clare as "grim beyond belief", was the sense of spirit and community which was directed towards the NHS from the outside community.

The arrival of the tray-bakes of various flavours were greatly appreciated and were delivered initially by Clare who had to obtain special permission to move around the hospital. She recalls one day delivering a coffee-flavoured tray bake to the Minor Injuries unit, chocolate brownies to the Cardiac Day Unit, chocolate fridge cake to the Path Lab, with another to the Sunrise Cancer and Haematology Unit.

A letter of thanks was received from Neil MacDonald, Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, saying that "receiving the cakes will have lifted the spirits of colleagues at the Hospital during this difficult time".

Village support for fund-raising in support of Speen Helping Hospices

As the 1st Lockdown started, the SHH committee and volunteers dusted down their sewing machines and produced face masks, with fabric and elastic donated by villagers, with proceeds going to SHH: the initiative raised £4,400. Joanna Brownridge, a very well-known and local landscape artist, donated one of her paintings to SHH for us to raffle; the initiative was well supported by the village and raised £3,125. As restrictions lifted slightly, the Martin Hart Quartet played at a socially distanced event at Great Hampden Cricket Ground in June 2020, raising £1,200. The Christmas Market went on-line as we hit another lockdown, the on-line shop was an amazing success. We squeezed in two socially distanced carol singing evenings before the Covid rules tightened again, also the Sassy Santas fun run, pop up stalls and a Christmas Hamper raffle raising £6,448.69.

Community support for Speen Helping Hospices continued in 2021 as restrictions were still in place - villagers came out in force to get their raffle tickets for the Valentine' Dinner raffle and to buy Afternoon Tea Boxes in March. The figure raised for 2020 was £17,604.68 and £19,326.93 for 2021, totalling £36,930 for the two years being raised for the charity through support from both villages

Speen Spring Clean & Collect and Sales and Wants WhatsApp Group

At the end of Lockdown 1, a Spring Clean & Collect was held on Bank Holiday Monday: 25th May. We had all been clearing out cupboards and lofts during the first lockdown and, in the absence of charity shops being open, Cat Cook suggested that we fill our verge or driveway with our pre-loved items to be recycled to others around the village. Donations were invited to be made to the One Can Trust and over £900 was raised for this very worthwhile charity. Another

benefit arising from the event was the setting up by Cat of the Speen Sales and Wants WhatsApp group, providing a conduit for the exchange of a whole range of household goods, toys, garden tools ... and even a car and house sale.

VE Day

On 8th May, towards the end of the Lockdown 1, some socially distanced tea parties were held with separated tables made up of family groups celebrating with tea, cakes and in many cases drinking bubbles to celebrate.

A surprise 75th Anniversary VE Day tea complete with homemade scones and jam was delivered by members of the Speen Church community to all villagers who would have been around on VE Day in 1945. For many, it brought back memories of growing up during the war years, the excitement of the VE Day celebrations and finally being able to buy sweets again!

The Chapel's Deliveroo Service



*Megan Chinn
taking delivery of her lunch*

Though lockdowns meant it was no longer possible to keep the Church Café open, home cooked meals were offered to those who were living alone or otherwise vulnerable. This was achieved by a small but fantastic team who willingly took on the added restrictions of COVID rules to cook, pack and deliver meals every Thursday. The menu included a choice of soups, main meal, and delicious cakes and over 300 meals were delivered between April and mid-July 2020. To make this accessible to all, no charge was made but those who wished could make donations to cover the cost of ingredients and benefit the two local and two international charities supported by Speen Church (One Can, Wycombe Homeless Connection, LIFT Vulnerable Mothers and Children in Ethiopia, Agape Alive in India).

But that was all then. Thankfully, the world has moved on a long way.

For many, the lockdowns were actually a happy, peaceful time but for many others these were difficult times. What's clear, and what lingers as a vivid memory, is the response from everyone and the strong, vibrant, caring communities that are Speen and North Dean.

SPEENHELPING HOSPICES

Supporting Helen House for Children, South Bucks Hospice at Home, Florence Nightingale and Rennie Groves Hospice Care

Gráinne Suter



Two fundraising events to report back on this Spring. After a three-year gap, we were back at The Horse Trust on the 11th of May for the annual Spring Lunch. A delicious three course meal was served to 60 guests. David Haggard, Corporate Community Fundraising Manager gave a presentation on the work of South Bucks Hospice at Butterfly House. The hospice is there to support people through diagnosis, treatment, recovery or coping with loss. Many thanks to the Horse Trust, they provided a beautiful venue and all facilities free of charge, their generosity enabled us to save on venue costs.

The weather prevented Jane Marchant from Alchemille Garden Design from selling plants at the event, but on the following Saturday Jane and her daughter Lulu held a plant sale in Speen with profits going to SHH.



We were much luckier with the weather on the 12th of June for the third Jazz in The Park at Great Hampden Cricket Ground featuring the wonderful Martin Hart Quartet. A perfect way to spend a lazy sunny afternoon, wine, huge picnics and great music.



Thank you also to Richard Hearn who played the piano whilst Martin and the band took a break.

This is a review from a very satisfied customer

"Just to say thank you so much for a wonderful afternoon of jazz – we all enjoyed the music and the children had a lovely time dancing and playing. It was a very happy afternoon and I hope you raised a good amount of money for SHH. Thanks again Emily". *Emily and family are pictured below.*



Your support really matters. The hospices are primarily supported by charitable donations, so the success of every event that we run is dependent on your generosity. These are financially challenging times, and we know there are many calls on your generosity but please continue to support Speen Helping Hospices. With your support we can help to improve the nature and quality of care provided at end of life, not only for the individuals approaching end of life but the needs of their families also. Your contributions enable families spend their last days together with care, compassion and dignity.



John and Gloria Holmes enjoying the event.

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Fundraising Challenge

Help raise money in 2023

Speen Helping Hospices are looking for people to raise money for SHH by taking part in a local fun run/half marathon/cycle race or other event.

If you are planning or considering taking part in a sporting event, would you help others by fundraising for Speen Helping Hospices as you run/cycle/swim?

We will support your fundraising, promoting your participation locally and via social media and our website to attract sponsorship.

If you are up for this challenge, now is the time to plan it, visit our website for more information at <http://www.shh-shop.org/FundraisingChallenges.htm>

Dates for your Diary

Bridge Challenge and Afternoon Tea

19th October in North Dean Village Hall.

Christmas Market

19th November in the Chapel Hall.

For further information about the events check out our website www.shh-shop.org

Don't forget if you would like to support or sponsor a fundraising event, or help us in some way, please contact me

grainnesuter@btconnect.com or 07778803260.



LACEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Roger Craft and Philip Suter - Councillors

Mugs

As requested by Amanda Dobbs and Debbie Tilt of Speen Community Jubilee Celebration, the Parish Council paid for 120 Jubilee mugs that were distributed to the children at Speen School.



To mark the occasion of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the Parish Council agreed on one memorial for the three villages with new gates and driveway at the Garden of Rest, an area that is solely for residents of the three communities to bury their loved ones in the Parish in which they had resided.

New Gates at The Garden of Rest



The Garden of Rest was acquired by the Parish Council from the Methodist Church many years ago and was originally known as the Lacey Green Methodist Cemetery. It is now known as The Garden of Rest and is a non-denominational facility for use of residents from Speen, Loosley Row and Lacey Green. The Parish Council maintains the area and are undertaking work to improve the environment. As part of the improvement plan the old wooden gates were earmarked for replacement as well as resurfacing the driveway.

Unlike in neighbouring Hughenden Parish Council, residents of Walter Ash, North Dean or Bryants Bottom have to travel a longish distance to Four Ashes Road at Cryers Hill to visit their Garden of Rest, for residents of Speen and Loosley Row it is a short distance to Lacey Green.

More information can be found at Speen Village website

MVAS – Motor Vehicle Activated Signs

You may have noticed that the MVAS monitoring units, purchased and owned by LGPC, that display the speed of vehicles and collect information about the number of vehicle movements over a period, as well as registering the number exceeding the speed limits, have been missing over the past few months. Unfortunately, they have been broken into and the lithium batteries removed which is not unique to Speen and surrounding villages, but also in other parts of Buckinghamshire. We are in discussion with the manufactures with regard to their repair and security measures to safeguard the lithium batteries. Hopefully, you will see the return of the upgraded MVAS units in the next few weeks.