

COVID-19 Parish Council response – report for May meetings

Prior to the current Government lockdown measures for the Coronavirus Pandemic late March the Vulnerable Persons Scheme was brought into action. The Clerk held a list of willing volunteers ready to look after the vulnerable living locally to them. The volunteers proceeded to make contact with those persons to find out what help they required ranging from collecting prescriptions, getting shopping, a telephone call to ease concerns, gardening or just a friendly knock on the door.

The Scheme gained momentum with Cllr Tracy Saer opening up an extremely successful Swap Shop facility at the Nayland Road carpark three mornings a week with the agreed go ahead of Bures St Mary Parish Council and Babergh District Council. This was followed by a hugely successful initiative of plant sales on a Friday morning. Social distancing and Government Guidelines all being strictly observed.

Sue Calver, Health & Wellbeing Officer for Babergh District Council had been given a redeployment role for the COVID-19 crisis and was regularly liaising with the Clerk on the needs of the village as a whole. All volunteers working on both sides of the border were given authority by letter from Arthur Charvonia, CEO for Babergh District Council to carry out duties to support vulnerable and isolated individuals and families within the community.

A Home, But Not Alone service was launched to help connect people who wanted to volunteer in their communities and residents were urged to download the app.

The Clerk has set up an Essex Food Bank collection service on a Thursday for any unwanted food parcels and any unwanted non-perishable food.

Daily information on the Government Guidelines has been filtered out to all members and residents as appropriate. Social Media has been well used for feeding out information to the village with much more use of the new parish council's facebook page.

The play areas had to be closed as per the Government Guidelines. However the tennis courts have been re-opened from the 13th May but social distancing remains in place along with the new 1 to 1 restrictions.

Essex and Suffolk Associations of Local Councils have produced massive amounts of much needed written advice on how the parish councils should continue working during these difficult times. The Clerk was able to keep all members informed and now both parish councils are proceeding to hold their May meetings via Virtual Zoom.

Mrs Jenny Wright
Clerk to Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary Parish Councils

