

June 19th/011

Nick Young looks back



In early March Dr. Beanland and Dr. Morton convened a public meeting in the Methodist Church in Broad Street, and Nick Young offered to chair a **Steering Group** to coordinate the relief efforts that would be required.

Victoria Harris and Isabel Chavez had amassed large Facebook databases of volunteers who had pledged their support to the Ludlow community. Victoria had named her Facebook page “Pulling Together Ludlow” and this title seemed to perfectly capture the sentiment of a community forged together to confront Covid-19, irrespective of culture, beliefs or politics.

Hands Together LUDLOW, represented by trustees Chris Deaves and Erica Garner, was firmly committed to the cause, and importantly offered the expertise of their operations team of Pete Gray (Volunteer Coordinator), Di Garrini (Food Services Coordinator) and Sarah Kellett (Administrator).

Hands Together already had an extensive group of dedicated volunteers and turned the charity’s whole operation into meeting the needs of the community during the Covid-19 emergency, under the banner of **PULLING TOGETHER LUDLOW**. Other members of the **Steering Group** included John Wallbank, with project management and risk assessment skills, and Philip Adams as secretary to the Steering Group. Also, representing Portcullis surgery, Isabel Chavez and latterly Rosie Oatham.

Nick Young told us *“whilst I am a ‘Baby Boomer’ I now claim to be a ‘Baby Zoomer’, since all of our Steering Group meetings were virtual.”* During the high intensity start-up phase there were daily meetings, dialling back to just two meetings per week thereafter. In essence **PULLING TOGETHER LUDLOW** would operate as follows: a widely disseminated universal telephone number would ring through to a dedicated team of call handlers. These call handlers were trained to not only enquire of any task that was required but also on occasions to initiate a more formal response if they thought that the caller might also have other issues. The calm efficiency of the call handlers and their long hours of dedication in many ways underpinned the overall success of the 170+ volunteers who have been foremost in carrying out the tasks. They have a complete set of guidelines so that the safety of volunteers and the community is always paramount. This includes DBS checks (when appropriate), official ID cards, provision of a supervisor and an agreement that all volunteers would be covered by Hands Together’s insurance cover as a registered charity.

This was a huge team effort and clearly demonstrated that Ludlow did indeed ‘Pull Together’ to support its own community. Now as the country takes tentative steps towards a *new normal*, Nick feels that he should step back from leading the Steering Group and hand it back to **Hands Together LUDLOW** to continue the work, alongside new areas of support which will be required as we take stock of the affects on our community from the Covid-19 pandemic. Nick says: *“I offer my sincere thanks for the efforts of the volunteers, the call handlers, the medical practices and of course the Steering Group. I was supported on the shoulders of giants and heroes!”*

As chair of the Steering Group, Nick Young reflected that it’s time to move the current activities of **PULLING TOGETHER LUDLOW** wholly into **Hands Together LUDLOW**. So, what are the next steps?

Next steps ...

Erica Garner, a trustee of **Hands Together LUDLOW** and Operational and Community Lead for **PULLING TOGETHER LUDLOW**, said: *“The impetus to support people who are in need has always been the driving force behind Hands Together, and it has been a privilege to be part of the amazing community support during the Covid-19 crisis. Hands Together will continue to deliver seamlessly all of the activities that were set up to tackle the Covid-19 emergency for as long as they are still required.”*

Since the relaxation of government rules as lockdown was eased, there is a reducing number of requests for the collection of prescriptions and shopping as family, friends and neighbours have been able to provide that support. However, there are still many people who are lonely or isolated, who are receiving regular calls (and a growing number) from the befriending service. Some of these people have quite complex needs. The demand for the delivery of meals is also growing and we anticipate this may continue to rise. We are also very conscious that there will be a long-term legacy from the pandemic, which will have an impact on the economy, with businesses closing and jobs being lost. In the next few weeks we will update you on the additional support we may be able to offer young people and adults, who may find themselves without work or training.

Lottery funding confirmed

We are delighted to confirm that **Hands Together LUDLOW** has received confirmation of a £23,850 National Community Fund award, reflecting the work of Hands Together during the Covid-19 emergency. The application for funding was made by the trustees and chair of **Hands Together LUDLOW** in April, and will be used to continue the work of **PULLING TOGETHER LUDLOW** and establish new areas of support during the post Covid-19 period.



We support people and communities to thrive.

The National Lottery Community Fund

Hands Together LUDLOW will continue to deliver a range of services to ensure the most vulnerable people in our community get the support they need to stay physically and mentally healthy and safe during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. The project addresses key local issues of isolation and loneliness, poor health and wellbeing and quality of life. Many of those supported are older people who are isolated, lonely and low income, however the impact of an economic downturn may affect many families within our community. Our three key priorities are for people who are:

- Isolated and lonely: often as a result of poor mobility, bereavement, geographic relocation in older age, without independent transport.
- In poor health and wellbeing: often as a result of disability, age -related illnesses/conditions and poor diet.
- Living in poverty: often as a result of being out of work, on low incomes or unable to navigate welfare benefit systems.

Our support will continue to centre around these key themes and we will be able to update you of our work in future newsletters and bulletins.

Doing their bit



Sue Chantler is pictured at a virtual handover with Janna Vigar and Richard Connolly from mfg Solicitors.

A £1,000 donation from **mfg Solicitors** in Corve Street is helping **Hands Together LUDLOW** to continue to provide a wide range of essential services as part of **PULLING TOGETHER LUDLOW** for people who are shielding or self-isolating during the Covid-19 crisis.

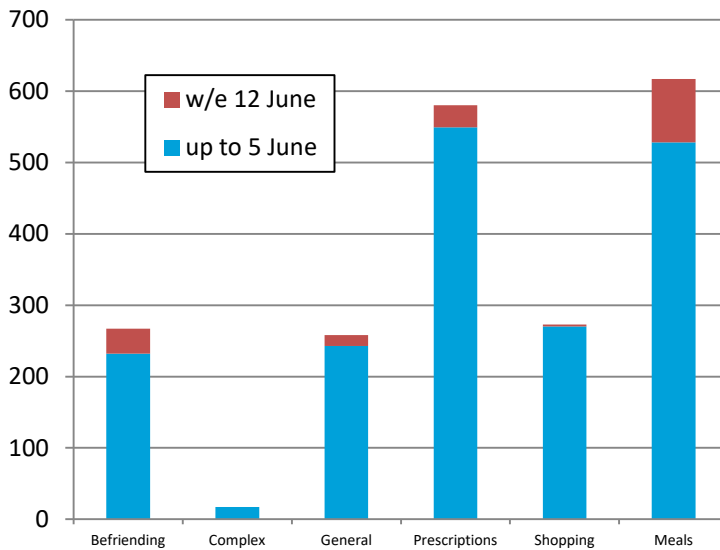
Janna Vigar, partner at **mfg Solicitors** and also a trustee of **Hands Together LUDLOW**, said: *“At present it’s no secret that charities across the country find themselves under increasing pressure due to so many vital causes needing funding to survive. We are proud to be able to do our bit right on our doorstep.”*

Sue Chantler, chair of trustees for **Hands Together LUDLOW**, added: *“Before this dreadful pandemic we were providing a huge range of community services, including lunches and bereavement groups that brought people together face to face. That all had to be put on hold as we were told to stay at home, but people still needed our help. We’re very proud of how quickly we adapted and changed our entire way of working and we are very grateful to mfg Solicitors for their generous support.”*

Helpline activity report

1223 requests successfully resolved so far, 52 since last week

Figures correct as of Thursday 18th June



Befriending: providing social contact through telephone conversations.

Complex: helping vulnerable people with multiple needs.

General: general enquiries, thank you messages, putting people in touch with other organisations.

Prescriptions: delivering prescriptions to self-isolating people.

Shopping: delivering food to people unable to get to the shops or without others to do it for them.

Meals: delivering healthy meals in place of community lunches and free school meals.

Figures correct as of Friday 12th June

Befriending: Last week the befriending team made 35 calls to 26 individuals who are still self-isolating, making a total of 267 calls to date. This represents approximately 26 hours of social interaction with our volunteer 'phone-friends'.

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PULLING TOGETHER LUDLOW:

Email: ludlowcovid19volunteers@gmail.com



Pulling Together Ludlow

Helpline number: **01584 817250**

Website: <https://pullingtogetherludloworguk.wordpress.com/>



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