

Parish Council of Coleford

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18th March 2020

Dear fellow resident of Coleford Parish,

**'COLEFORD GOOD NEIGHBOURS' have volunteered free
neighbourly support to those who may need help due to Coronavirus concerns**

On behalf of Coleford Parish Council, this is to let you know that informal, voluntary arrangements are being put in place locally by your neighbours, in an effort to assist those affected by the Coronavirus.

As of this weekend (Friday 20th March) Those considered most vulnerable i.e. the over 70's, those with underlying health conditions and weakened immune systems, have been advised by the Government to self-isolate for 12 weeks. Others who get a fever and/or cough must stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days. This includes anyone else in the household to recover; others must self-isolate after being in contact with people who get a fever and/or cough or those that have returned from travel. Current Government data shows that so far only three confirmed case of Coronavirus has been diagnosed in the Somerset health authority area however we are told that the majority of those who contract the virus may suffer a mild form and recover at home without testing. So, the risks are real but equally staying at home is not without its own challenges too.

Many of you and your partners are fortunate to have longstanding, reliable networks of family and friends and we have absolutely no intention of interfering with your existing personal arrangements. However, others will not be as fortunate, so we think they might welcome the friendship of others very willing to 'run errands' and to be an additional source of support and advice.

Many volunteers in Coleford are very keen to help their neighbours and many already do so. But to put others in touch whilst protecting privacy and safeguarding both the volunteers and those seeking their help, we will initially coordinate requests and responses, keeping records and personal data securely, in line with Data Protection legislation. In addition, some Guidelines (overleaf) are being provided for use at your own discretion and these are recommended to help safeguard both parties too.

If you or someone you know would like any help or advice, please phone either number below in the first instance. We are mostly available but leave your name and phone number if you get an answer machine and your call will be returned. After discussing your needs, we will seek to match you with a local volunteer (or perhaps even refer you to a specialist agency if your needs are more complex).

Please phone: - **Vickie Watts, Parish Clerk – 07971 516916**
Andy Conn, Parish Councillor – 01373 812481 / 07973 250856
Nick Harding, Parish Councillor – 07921 885362 / 01373 812652

If you are uncertain whether or not to call us; if you don't know who to turn to; if you need a bottle of milk, a full week's shopping or just a chat; please don't hesitate to phone. Your call will be in strict confidence.

Yours faithfully

Vickie Watts
Coleford Parish Clerk

SOME DISCRETIONARY GUIDELINES FOR GOOD NEIGHBOURS' PARTICIPANTS

1. There is no charge for the help and services offered. Volunteers are happy to do this for you, their neighbours. Please do not attempt to make any payment beyond refunding costs incurred, after the production of a receipt.
2. If money needs to change hands (to pay for shopping for example), for the protection of all parties we suggest
 - Always ask for the receipt and check it.
 - Never give out your debit/credit card or its number
 - Try to avoid handing over cash for any large amount - for example amounts greater than £5 or perhaps £10. If you do so, always ask for a receipt – and the change!
 - Whenever possible reimburse larger amounts owing to your volunteer by writing a cheque payable to the individual who paid on your behalf.
3. For safety, security and health reasons, volunteers will not enter your property but will leave things on your doorstep and/or speak to you across the doorstep from several paces away. (Do not invite any stranger indoors, even someone local). If in doubt, phone the Coordinators Vickie, Andy or Nick.
4. If you phone us, you will always be phoned back, and an appointment/time will be confirmed for your errand to be completed or for a named volunteer to call on you. No unfamiliar volunteer will unexpectedly cold-call on you.
5. Most volunteers also have full-time jobs and family, so, except in an emergency, although we will always try to respond quickly, it may be 24 hours or more before the task can be completed, so please allow plenty of time whenever possible.
6. The Parish Council is unable to vouch for the volunteers but they are known to us as helpful, local residents. (Many are young professional ladies and gents, mothers; others are retired).
7. In the unlikely event that you are uncomfortable with the behaviour, treatment or help you receive from any volunteer, please tell a Coordinator immediately, in strict confidence.
8. Any volunteer can choose to refuse any visit or task and will always refuse anything they are unqualified to do. They will inform a Coordinator accordingly and another solution will be sought. Some volunteers may visit in pairs, if so, the user will be informed of this.
9. Remember, all those involved are private individual volunteers. They are not employed by, nor members of any registered charity or body. They are not insured nor DBS-checked for these roles. Although basic safeguarding measures are being put in place to mitigate risks between the individual participants, participation in this scheme both as volunteers and users must take place at participants' own risk. Coleford Parish Council cannot accept liability for any interaction between residents and volunteers.
10. If you have any concerns or doubts about the help being offered, please phone the Coordinators Vickie on 07971 516916, Andy on 01373 812481 or Nick on 01373 812652