

The Avening Community Coronavirus Team



Neighbourhood Network Newsletter #4



Hello!

Our postman, Rich, told us this week that he'd never seen so many people exercising. Maybe that's because everyone's daily walks have become about so much more than merely keeping fit. For a start, there's the way they absorb some of the excess energy in the molecules of fractious children or frustrated golfers. In Avening you can pick up a jar of honey, a book, a tomato plant or two, some eggs (if you're lucky), something unexpected from the growing number of kerbside bric-a-brac stalls or beer from The Bell if your strolls are evening ones. You can do a bit of wildlife spotting (*where are all the swallows?*) and share your snaps on the Wild About Avening Facebook page - or take an imaginary safari (thank you FOAS!).

Best of all, you can chat (at an appropriate distance) with your fellow lockdown-ees – whether with **Derrick Ind** and **Jim Hill** about gardening or **Jean Scotford** as she hacks back the undergrowth round the Club. You can listen to a complete stranger vent about dog poo or marvel at and/or secretly resent a triumphant neighbour telling you they've finally found flour (it's flour for goodness sake, not the Lost Ark of the Covenant!).

For us, one walk this week meant more than most as we had the first chance to talk to our old friend **Olga Scott**, after we heard the news that she was in intensive care with the Coronavirus back in March. Olga was only the second person in Gloucestershire to be admitted to hospital with Covid 19. It was lovely to see her again, but talking to her was also a sobering reminder of why staying at home and staying safe is so important: this disease can exact a terrible toll.

So if you're lucky enough to have a garden fronting a road, think about taking your morning cuppa, afternoon tea or sun-over-the-yardarm quencher somewhere where you can 'greet the street'. Because right now, there's nothing quite like a good old-fashioned gossip. And of course if you hear anything worth repeating in these newsletters do share!

Around Gloucestershire

A number of residents run their own **businesses** and are grappling with the implications for them of the lockdown and financial downturn. The government's website is the best initial port of call as much is changing for SMEs, and many of the arrangements are still evolving. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

The Federation of Small Businesses is particularly helpful, although accessing some services means you have to take out membership:

<https://www.fsb.org.uk/campaign/covid19.html?anchor=free-webinars-from-fsb-first-voice>. And the **Confederation of British Industry** has developed a hub for information and analysis about the implications of coronavirus for industry:

https://www.cbi.org.uk/coronavirus-hub/?utm_source=cbi_org&utm_medium=website&utm_campaign=slider&utm_content=homepage_slide1. **The British Business Bank**, a government-owned business development bank dedicated to making finance markets work better for smaller businesses

has a hub for information about the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan scheme: <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-scheme-cbils-2/for-businesses-and-advisors/>

A recent article in the local press highlighted the increased use of **Foodbanks** in Gloucestershire. Kieran Archer, who lives in Avening and is a trustee of the Foodbank gave a very helpful response to the coverage: The Foodbank in the Cirencester, Tetbury and Fairford Area (which covers Avening) is coping very well with the increased demand imposed by the Covid 19 situation and is not in crisis, he told the Covid Coordinator network.

In terms of latest developments, the Foodbank's Facebook page is more up to date than the website and gives a flavour of the scale of the donations they have been receiving: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/cirenfoodbank/posts/>. In Avening the Foodbank box is now in the garden of 14 High Street and all donations of non-perishable foodstuffs are very welcome. Please check out the Foodbank website www.cirencester.foodbank.org.uk to see which items are most in demand. Up until now distribution of Foodbank parcels has required clients to collect their parcels from the Foodbank Centre in Tetbury, but that will change in the next week or so when they aim to improve accessibility with a move to home delivery.

The Mark Townsend Trust plays a big role in helping people in the village and those who are finding it difficult to fund essential items of food may apply to the Trust for food vouchers. Contact the Trust on 01453 832799. They also have a list of organisations for anyone placed in a vulnerable situation as a result of the lockdown. It can be accessed here:

<https://themarktownsendcharitabletrust.com/coronavirus/resources/helplines/>

Around the Village

We'll kick off with news of two charities with close links to the Village: **Longfield** and **The Door**. First, Longfield <https://www.longfield.org.uk>, a Minchinhampton-based community hospice care charity supported by many people in the village. Although the charity has closed its usual day services, it continues to offer Hospice At Home support, as well as telephone-based guidance, signposting and support – invaluable in these difficult times. With all of its shops now closed, it has launched a fund-raising appeal. Amanda Sanders and her Zoom Dance session participants have stepped up to the mark, collecting nearly £100 for the charity. **Amanda Sanders' Zoom Dance sessions**, are held twice a week at 4pm on Mondays and Wednesdays

The Door has run Avening's Youth Club and supported younger villagers in other ways in recent years. As with other organisations they have not been able to meet people face to face in recent weeks, but staff have transformed the way they work and have been engaging 1:1 using phone and video calling, providing essential support for those that need it. As with Longfield, The Door's shop is also closed, events are cancelled, and grants are being suspended – a loss of around £500 per working day in income. They have launched the '**Keep The Door Open**' campaign, to ensure that this much valued local charity continues. To donate or to seek their help visit thedoor.org.uk. If you would like to host a virtual fundraiser then call or email Anne, 01453 756745 anne@thedoor.org.uk

Avening's **Women's Institute** has been busy sewing scrubs bags (150 at the last count!) and is exploring the possibility of making scrubs too. For more information contact Helen Haiselden on 01453 835484 or haiselden.family@btinternet.com. As reported in the last newsletter, **Jade Whittingham-Hunt**, has also been making scrub bags. She can be contacted via email on jade@thimbleandfurnish.co.uk. If you are thinking of donating goods to the NHS in Gloucestershire, it's worth checking out <https://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/charity/what-we-do/campaigns/donating-goods-our-covid-19-rapid-response-appeal/>

The Villager is published shortly and promises to be a treasure trove of pictures and stories about life under lockdown. The editors are keen that anyone with a tale to tell gets in touch – the next deadline for material is 18th May.

Two villagers are inspiring us with their dose of 'covid creativity'. **Katy Upton**, whose delightful cards combining printmaking and calligraphy are for sale on Etsy (<https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/LettersAndLino>) is giving people a chance to nominate a 'lockdown hero' to receive a free handmade, personalised card thanking them for their efforts. If you know someone working on the frontline, or a community hero who deserves a special thanks send Katy the person's name and a brief description of why you're nominating them. You can contact Katy on katywingrove@hotmail.co.uk. You'd better be quick, though: the six winners will be selected on Saturday 25th at 8pm. You will have the choice of what you

would like the message to say, and Katy can either send the card to you to write a message inside and send on, or will post it directly to your nominated hero.

Returning to the theme of the importance of our daily walks, Avening-based textile artist **Louise Watson** is using her daily exercise to inspire her latest work. Her blog is at <http://louisemaywatson.blogspot.com> and the chance to see her work evolve from observation to sketch to embroidery is a real tonic. Check out her Instagram page too <https://www.instagram.com/louisemaywatson/?hl=en>

As ever, Avening's wonderful **Primary School** continues to share its unique brand of happiness. This week it gave the village a new landmark, decorating the phone box with rainbows and messages created by the children to 'spread a little joy and put smiles on our faces'. **Sue Osborne** from the Community Café was only too happy to return the favour this week with cupcakes 'bulging with buttercream icing' for the pupils and staff.

Their children have been spreading smiles further afield too, creating colourful images to say thank you to **Gloucestershire Police** for working hard to keep them and everyone else safe. The images include jokes, messages of support and some brilliant drawings of officers and other key workers, including their own parents. The spark for the idea came from Avening residents **Sam and Katy Upton**. Sam works for the Met Police in London and has been helping to do the same thing in the capital. Gloucestershire Constabulary thanked the children on Facebook and encouraged others in the county to follow suit. Well done everyone involved, another fantastic way of putting those special smiles on our faces.

<https://www.facebook.com/gloucestershire.constabulary/photos/pcb.10157274670675496/10157274670230496/?type=3&theater>

The Avening Community Café's third Zoom Café was its biggest yet with plenty of new faces joining in, several of whom were Zoom virgins. The Zoom Cafes run every Tuesday from 9.30 to 11.15 and this week the Café has an additional treat with its first **Crafty Café Tea**, a chance to spend a happy hour or so on Thursday from 3pm in the virtual company of Lil Adams. Lil will be encouraging us to try our hand at carving bars of soap. Email **Clare Bebbington** on ccbebbbs@gmail.com if you'd like dial-in details for either of these events (or a bar of soap!).

There are a few 'happenings' coming up around the village over the next few weeks: **Tom Fryer** is set to continue his occasional kerbside concert – and there's a rumour of other musicians joining in this week. You'll have to be lucky to catch him, but keep your windows open on Saturday if you are around the High Street.....

Looking a little further ahead, the ether lit up with the idea of doing something special for **VE Day** on Friday May 8th. Mel Young is leading the charge, with Sandford Leaze the centre of operations! Contact Mel for more details:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10157949656441211&set=a.264787841210&type=3&theater>

And at the end of May there is a chance for everyone in Avening to contribute to the village's biggest citizen's science project with **The Big Avening Wildlife Watch** from May 23rd to May 25th. <https://www.facebook.com/events/679498249465543/> . The brainchild of Phoebe Carter, this gives us the opportunity to compile a snapshot of one of the village's most precious features: its wildlife. The Wild About Avening Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Wild-about-Avening-108807527428528/> is a source of much delight – spots this week included a dipper and a kingfisher on the stream, as well as having important information about how to protect hedgehogs in this hot weather.

Avening Church itself is closed but worship of God and care for others continue. To keep in touch with the Church please go to:

www.achurchnearyou.com/church/14317/. This site includes an audio service each Sunday with readings, prayers and music from members of our own community and links to other acts of worship, local and national, and other resources. On Wednesday evening at 7.30pm there will be a short evening Zoom service led by **Derrick Pierce**. To receive the link for this please email derrickcompline@gmail.com. Some of our church community are making regular phone calls to other villagers. If you would like a call or know someone who would please let Gerald South know on 01453 883456 or gp.south@btopenworld.com.

And finally, don't forget there is a **book swap/giveaway for adults and children** outside 6 Old Hill run by Clare Bebbington and outside 44 High Street run by Sheelagh O'Kelly on behalf of the Community Cafe. There is a **plant and seed stall** outside Number 14 High Street, run by Elizabeth Buchanan on behalf of the Community Café. There is a pot for donations which will be shared between the Mark Townsend Trust and the Stroud Women's Refuge. Mel and Richard Young are 'hosting' a **DVD swap and giveaway**. And **Cas Boddam-Whetham**, Nag's Head-based chartered physiotherapist, is at the end of the phone to chat over and advise on any sprains, aches and pains, injuries or stress-related symptoms. Of course, she says, there is no charge. Her phone number is 01453 834834 and web site: www.casbw.co.uk.

Any comments and suggestions for the newsletter, please contact Clare Bebbington (ccbebbbs@gmail.com). In the meantime: Stay safe, stay home and stay connected.

With best wishes and thanks for everything you're doing,
Avening Parish Council

Neighbour Network News #1 included information on safeguarding, how to support older residents, details of food vouchers available from the Mark Townsend Trust and helpful links to authoritative sources of information about coronavirus, especially how to look after your mental health.

NN #2 included information on support for those experiencing domestic violence, how Gloucestershire Police were interpreting the lockdown requirements and some information about local pharmacies

NN #3 included information on utility companies and their responses to coronavirus, resources in Gloucestershire for parents and children and a Lockdown Lowdown on food companies delivering to Avening.

All previous editions are available online at www.avening-pc.gov.uk or in hard copy outside 6 Old Hill.

The Lockdown Lowdown

Each week we compile a handy list which will make life under lockdown a bit easier

This week: garden suppliers

Most of us lucky enough to have gardens are showing them a lot of love at the moment. Most garden suppliers are doing their best to keep up with demand, but it's a struggle. We want to support our local garden centres – so patience is rewarded!

In Avening

Don't ignore the Community Café seed, seedling and plant stall run by Elizabeth Buchanan outside **Number 14 High Street**. If you have spare seeds, seedlings or plants please bring them along – there's something new every day. Elizabeth has a box for donations for the The Mark Townsend Trust and the Stroud Women's Refuge and has raised nearly £75 so far.

Delivering to Avening

Blue Diamond Garden Centre in Nailsworth will deliver to Avening. Delivery is free to Blue Diamond members, £5 for everyone else. At the moment there is at least a ten-day delay in fulfilling orders. Log on to their website for the online shop, then call 01453 833 989. <https://contact.bluediamond.gg/index.php?branchid=NAIL&cat=&link=order-branch>

The Nursery at Miserden is delivering to addresses within a 20-mile radius of the nursery (ie includes Avening). They list their plants but do not have compost at present. Delivery is free for orders over £50, otherwise it's £5. See <http://www.miserdennursery.co.uk> for available plants, then email your order to info@miserdennursery.co.uk.

Further afield

There are plenty of online garden suppliers (eg, <https://www.sarahraven.com>), but all are reporting delays. Some nurseries have shut their shops, but switched online (eg www.dobbies.com); others have closed their doors completely (eg Highfield). Only try to use the B&Q site if you're feeling mentally robust and have at least half a day to spare¹! Listed here are just a few of our favourite local, independent nurseries.

Brutons in Nailsworth is offering a 'closed door service' and has a selection of seeds, compost and garden equipment. They will deliver to anyone over 70, or anyone housebound. Deliveries are free for orders over £40, or £5 otherwise. Call 01453 832826.

Hortico in Sherston <https://hortico.online> is delivering to a seven mile radius of the nursery (which includes Tetbury, but not Avening). **Foxley Road Nurseries** near Malmesbury is also delivering to a seven-mile radius of the nursery. They are pausing their service until 27th April to catch up with demand. Its Facebook page is the best source of information. <https://www.facebook.com/FoxleyRoadNurseries/>.

For those working in Bath, **Derry Watkins'** nursery <https://www.specialplants.net> in Cold Ashton may be an option for picking up plants, although it would not qualify for an essential trip! Call 01225 891686.

¹ As this newsletter was being put together news reached us that the B&Q in Stroud may have re-opened.