

CORONAVIRUS, PARISH COUNCIL AND THE VOLUNTARY HELP GROUP

Please note this piece was written on March 20th and things may have changed by the time you read it. A voluntary help group has been set up to bring those needing help in touch with those able to offer it – see details below.

The parish council will have three aims during this period. First, ensuring that our day to day business continues as close to usual as possible, continues to meet legal requirements and that our staff and any people we come into contact with are protected. Second, as and if needed, assistance for the voluntary help group that has been set up to support those who are self-isolating or have other needs. Third, to communicate local information where appropriate via social media, shop window notices and website without unnecessarily duplicating other information out there.

Parish council meetings will continue (legally these have to be face to face) but will be moved to the main hall to allow distance between people. Given that a number of councillors are over 70 we are able to reduce our quorum at meetings to 2 from the normal 4 (plus the clerk). Please wait for information about the Annual Parish Meeting normally held at the beginning of May.

We will keep the Hall available for use while permitted. The toilets remain open for the moment but we are keeping matters under review bearing in mind our responsibilities to our cleaner. We will continue to review planning applications but will no longer make our normal visits.

For any who do not already know a facebook page has been set up to coordinate volunteers offering help with those needing it. Go onto www.facebook.com and search for Charing Covid-19 Mutual Aid Group. Huge thanks to those who have taken the initiative to set this up. **If you are willing to offer help or if you think you may need help please do join it** keeping it mainly for offers of help or requests for help. You can use it to ask for help directly - a password system is being used for safeguarding when this happens.

In addition, group members willing to help have started to post notes with their contact details through doors of people they would be able to help. **Please do not be afraid to ask for help if you need it – there are many people in the parish willing to help.**

Relevant local information will be posted on our website, on local social media facebook www.facebook.com pages (our own, charing chatter, charing heath and lenham heath) and www.nextdoor.co.uk . Even if you are not used to facebook or nextdoor we strongly advise that you join one of these to stay in touch. They are the easiest and quickest way to disseminate information and will ensure that you are as well informed as possible.

Finally Ashford Borough Council has a useful information page at <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/your-community/emergency-planning/health-and-pandemics/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Meanwhile stay safe bearing in mind that we have already had two members of one family in Charing village diagnosed with Covid-19 – they are, obviously, self isolating and should be through it before long.

