

PAINSWICK COVID-19 COMMUNITY SUPPORT

A proposal to Painswick Parish Council, 16th September 2020

The Painswick Covid-19 Community Support initiative was set up as an emergency response to the spread of Covid19 in the UK and the associated lockdown. It aimed to provide practical support to all those finding themselves isolated at home and in need of assistance with tasks including shopping, dog walking, picking up prescriptions, posting mail and a friendly phone call. It was set up with over 100 volunteers split into 14 areas, with the central phonenumber and email brokering relationships between requestor and volunteer neighbours. The details of the services required and how they were implemented was left to the requestor and volunteer to agree.

With demand having petered off, but with recognition of a potential ongoing community need, not just in relation to Covid19, the group has been considering how it needs to position itself to function going forward, building on the goodwill that has been generated. A recent survey of volunteers has indicated that there are still 41 who can remain active – these are sufficiently spread around the village to have 5 sub-areas, plus 2 volunteers in Sheepscombe. Five of these are committee members. As a whole, this provides an effective operating structure, making use of the existing phone line and email and publicity and reputation garnered over the last few months.

However, as we move beyond the emergency response, we need to create a more formal management system. At the heart of this we need to embed fit-for-purpose safeguarding and GDPR processes.

We have reached out to a number of organisations and have pooled our ideas, working closely with the Parish Council clerk. We believe there is a need for paid resource to set up and administer the required processes.

Our proposal to Painswick Parish Council:

- The group continues to operate albeit with a revised volunteer network (as described above) but moves to sit more formally under the administration of the Parish Council.
- This paid resource could be sourced through overtime or external expertise, or a mixture of both (e.g. external resource to undertake the initial set-up with overtime used for the anticipated low level ongoing administration).
- Initial funding required is expected to be up to £2000 – this covers DBS checks for each volunteer (£23 per volunteer) and establishing other safeguarding and GDPR procedures specifically for the group.

Going forward, we hope to re-launch the group as Painswick Community Support to include all of the practical services currently offered but include greater focus on befriending focus. From discussions with others (including the Independence Trust), we believe the latter was a need pre-Covid19 and that this has only increased with the Covid19-related social restrictions.

As part of the re-launch we will seek to form further connections with similar support services (eg Neighbourhood Warden, PPC Churches together, Independence Trust). This will ensure we can more effectively signpost individuals to the right resources if their request is beyond our remit.

Depending on the outcome of this proposal and how quickly the required resources can be engaged we would hope to relaunch at the start of November using the Beacon as our primary publicity for this. In the meantime, the group continues to be active, manning the phone and email and responding to any requests that come in.

Thank you for considering this.

Abigail Smith

On behalf of Painswick Covid-19 Community Support