

WEST KINTYRE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

COVID-19 SUPPORT

In March 2020 following the announcement of a national “lockdown” the West Kintyre Community Council met to discuss the most appropriate way we could help and support the community we represent.

As our community covers the seven villages on the western side of the Kintyre peninsular and has a large number of residents in the “at risk” age group of over 65’s plus a significant number of these being in the “shielded” group we decided rather than try to re-invent the wheel by seeking to set up a new support group it would be more appropriate to seek the help of those who had for several years been offering support to our residents in the form of shopping deliveries, lunch clubs and social groups, and were well known and trusted by the community. Following these discussions and due to already having recruited several new volunteers such as teachers who already held a PVG certificate Shopper-Aide were more than happy to increase their services across the area. With the help of funding from our community benefit funds of both The West Kintyre Windfarm Trust and the Fern (Cour) Community Benefit fund we were able to fund the adaptations needed for Shopper-Aide vehicles to carry the increased shopping loads, plus fuel costs. Due to their current computer system not having video or microphone facilities we also funded a new computer system plus laptops for staff to work remotely if required. As well as increased shopping they arranged to hold monthly virtual tea parties with cakes and goodies supplied by local shops being delivered to residents with those able to join in via computer encouraged to do so. Monthly quizzes were developed plus a telephone buddy system to help offset social isolation. All these actions were well received resulting in people feeling less anxious and isolated about the difficult situation they found themselves dealing with. We supported the Campbeltown Food Bank by the purchasing of new freezers for their increased demand and Friends of Tarbert with fuel costs for volunteers delivering shopping in the area.

Our three village shops commenced deliveries for those who requested such a service plus each village had groups of neighbours making contact with those who were living on their own to ensure they were OK and not in need of help.

One of the casualties of “lockdown” was due to lack of space and the need for social distancing in the shop the loss of the outreach post office service three mornings a week at Clachan shop. This service is relied on by a few residents who do not have on-line banking facilities and still receive their benefits via cash from the post office. The mobile post office could not be utilised due to lack of mobile signal in the centre of most of our villages. However, we were able to organise alternatives for these residents

Another group of residents rallied round and produced scrubs for the NHS plus others made face coverings which were distributed free of charge to anyone who wished to have one.

The whole community must be congratulated on the great community and caring for others spirit that has developed during these difficult times.

We have also recommended Shopper-Aide be awarded the Queens Award to Volunteers.