



# THORNTON HEATH

## Chronicle

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### Whitehorse Manor Junior School lit up in blue as a 'thank you' to the great staff of the NHS'

The first week saw polite applause. On the second Thursday at 8pm, we heard clapping, banging pots and pans, car horns and dogs barking their appreciation. Some residents also displayed blue lights in recognition of NHS staff. Delivery drivers, supermarket staff, care workers and bin collectors were among those honoured. Emergency and NHS workers also joined in the applause including firefighters in Croydon.

## CLAP FOR OUR CARERS



## PLAYERS GIVE TO CHARITY

Crystal Palace players have got together to donate an undisclosed sum of money to help Age UK Croydon through this crisis.

The Premier League club confirmed that: "It was a joint donation made by all the players' but they wanted to keep the amount private.

Age UK Croydon said: "We are very grateful to the players for donating to us - we're going to be using the funds to support the key services we're operating right now."

## COVID-19 HOUSING CRISIS AS NORTH OF THE BOROUGH WORST HIT BY VIRUS

The council is desperately trying to find accommodation to house families in cramped accommodation who are unable to self isolate from elderly and vulnerable relatives.

Options being looked at include hotels, private buildings and the newly completed council Brick by Brick properties as it emerged that Croydon had one of the highest infection rates in the country with the north of the borough worst affected with the only assumption, explained MP Steve Reed that it was down to the high population of people living in more cramped sub standard housing, with multi generations in one house - similar to Italy.

People are worried about self isolation as they are living with older relatives in temporary accommodation and how to protect themselves.

He cited the case of parents and two teenagers living in a one bedroom flat with one living space and how can they self isolate with no outdoor space and one walk a day, saying it must be 'really tough'. He added that the situation could be exacerbated by underlying trauma, illness or domestic violence.

The MP described the efforts of Croydon University Hospital as 'heroic' and having spoken to the chief executive on a weekly



basis, said they were preparing for a peak in five weeks but it was nearer 2-3.

He said there had been more optimistic news last Friday as the rate of infection had been slightly lower than feared, which ensured medical staff 'could cope' as long as the rate of infection doesn't change but it depended on people self isolating and staying at home.

Today it emerged that a Thornton Heath mum-of-four Fiona Clarke, 49, had died of coronavirus (P4).

The MP said his caseload had 'doubled' since the crisis and that he had been inundated with requests for help including from families living in temporary accommodation. All the issues are being collated and responses on his website with links to resources.

He said he was worried about xenophobia but what was positive was the solidarity and community spirit,

rallying together to support each other, getting to know neighbours delivering food which had been "wonderful".

Deputy Leader Cllr Alison Butler said: "We have escalated work on voids and other council assets required for Covid 19 duties. At the moment and probably on-going, we have a huge demand for accommodation for those who need to self-isolate and their current accommodation does not allow this."

She also revealed that 20 per cent of council staff were off through sickness or self isolating. It also emerged that the council had planned for such a pandemic (P2) and the worst case scenario includes predicted infections and deaths.

It also covers PPE procurement and disposal arrangements and states: "There will not be central stockpiles of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or cleaning products for councils to buy from ..."

More than 150 people are currently being treated for coronavirus in Croydon; 60 local people have tragically lost their lives and more than 140 people have successfully recovered.

Turn to Page2 to read the story of Nita Clarke OBE, former advisor to the PM.

▶▶ TURN TO PAGE 4

## HUGE AID EFFORT

A huge humanitarian aid effort has been launched to help the borough's elderly and vulnerable. In just over two weeks over 3,000 Croydon residents have joined Croydon Covid-19 Mutual Aid (CCMA) to help serve their neighbours and the most vulnerable through the coronavirus crisis.

In an unprecedented wave of grassroots action, these volunteers are organised locally, with over 60 WhatsApp and Facebook groups covering neighbourhoods including Thornton Heath. Throughout the following pages you read about selfless acts of kindness of food banks and multiple volunteers offering help.

In the next week there are plans to launch a borough wide help line which will be manned by volunteers with calls ▶▶ TURN TO PAGE 8

## SUPERMARKETS SLOW TO REACT TO PANIC BUYING

A hospital consultant in infection described the behaviour of shoppers shown in these shocking pictures taken outside the Thornton Heath branch of Tesco during an NHS-only hour as 'absolutely disgusting'.



For supermarkets like Tesco, they have never been more busy and are making rocket profits but initially the stores like the one in Brigstock Road, were ill prepared to deal with the desperate panic buying.

Social distancing was non existent and a breeding ground for the virus with, ▶▶ TURN TO PAGE 7

## PLEA FOR PPE AS DOCTORS GO TO WAR TO SAVE LIVES

A GP surgery has had to rely on the kindness of a foreign medical student who sent dozens of H95 masks to protect ill equipped staff working in conditions likened to a war.

The next week will see the battle to save lives in London with the Covid-19 death toll expected to significantly rise in the days ahead.

Doctors surgeries will be on the frontline but NHS guidelines say staff working in general practice don't need the same level of protection as hospital staff.

Dr Agnelo Fernandes, of the Parchmore



Medical Centre, said it is causing 'anxiety' and 'stress' amongst doctors who are being dispatched in to the community to treat coronavirus with just basic protection.

The practice like many others has also

experienced a third of its staff either having to work from home or go in to self isolation; including three doctors who can't go back to work because of the testing delays.

Parchmore has been fortunate enough to have secured 60 of the N95 masks which offer more protection because they are tight-fitting, filter out airborne particles and are able to be cleaned. They were sent by a Chinese student who had worked on attachment at the practice and was concerned by the reports that British doctors only had access to basic masks.

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This special edition of The Chronicle is available only as a pdf.

We will be providing regular, where possible, local coverage and stories about Co-Vid19 but you will need to sign up to The Chronicle mailing list. [thorntonheathchronicle.co.uk](http://thorntonheathchronicle.co.uk)

If you want to share a positive news item, an account of life under coronavirus, pay tribute to a key worker or loved one, share an appeal for help or donations then please contact Editor Andrea Perry.

Get in contact email editor@thorntonheathchronicle.co.uk or The Chronicle WhatsApp: 07930 354128

We wish our readers well in these unprecedented times. Stay safe.



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## BINMEN THANKED

Refuge collectors are receiving notes of thanks from residents on their wheelie bin lids after the council ensured that rubbish collection was prioritised.



The private company Veolia, which has the contract for Croydon has also been inundated with 'thank you' letters from local children (pictured). The reduced workforce due to the coronavirus means that bin collections in Croydon may be later than usual but at the moment, recycling and waste collections are taking place with general waste and food waste being prioritised. Others council's have already cancelled recycling collections due to dwindling staff numbers.

Cllr Stuart King, lead cabinet member for Environment and Transport, posted this Tweet: "Saw this on my daily permitted walk this evening. Note says 'just to say thank you and let you know you are not forgotten. Thank you.'" Croydon council is advising residents to leave their bins in the place they are normally picked up if a collection is missed, as the bin lorries aim to return in the following days.

Bulky waste collections have been suspended so crews can be re-deployed and rubbish tips are also closed, meaning that bulky items, garden waste, DIY waste and other waste should also be stored at your home. Councillor Stuart Collins, cabinet member for clean green Croydon, tweeted thanking staff, adding: "Things may change as different measures come in, but I am sure the public recognise these are unprecedented times."

## FORMER ADVISOR TO PM THANKS 'MARVELLOUS' NHS AFTER SIX DAYS IN HOSPITAL

One of Tony Blair's former aides has praised NHS staff at Croydon University hospital after they helped her recover from Coronavirus.

Nita Clarke OBE, who is married to the academic Stephen Benn, the 3rd Viscount Stansgate and son of Tony Benn said in a message on Twitter: "I'm back home after 6 days being re-oxygenated at #croydonuniversityhospital. I cannot thank the marvellous teams In Heathfield Ward 3 enough for their care and attention. They are magnificent, each and every one. I am so grateful."

Well wishers included the former Labour leader hopeful MP Jess Phillips who said: "Such a relief so happy you are



home xxx"  
 Local Labour MP for Central Croydon Sarah Jones and the former Conservative MP Gavin Barwell, now a Lord, also

sent best wishes along with former shadow foreign secretary Douglas Alexander and London MP Stella Creasy.

Nita who lives in South Norwood

added: "Happy to spread praise of Mayday if it helps raise staff morale."

Croydon Health Service NHS Trust replied: "We're glad you're feeling better Nita! We'd love to pass your message on to our staff."

Nita was press officer and then political officer for UNISON until January 2001 when she joined Downing Street as Tony Blair's assistant political secretary with responsibility for trade union liaison.

Since 2008 she has been co-chair at Employee Engagement Task Force since 2008.

Her daughter Emily was a Labour Cllr in West Thornton for two years before taking up a job opportunity in New York in 2016.

## PUBLIC SUPPORT GIVES NHS EXTRA 'OOMPH' TO CARRY ON

▶▶TURN FROM PAGE 1

Dr Fernandes said: "We are really grateful for the masks but it doesn't stop the anxiety really because regardless of having the right mask we don't have the right gowns or overalls and have to rely on flimsy plastic aprons. Even the painter and decorator overalls they have in Screwfix would be better as they cover the whole body.

"If staff go to a home where a patient is coughing or near the end of life there is a great risk of contamination. It is a frightening time for doctors in general practice seeing dozens of their colleagues dying in Italy and Spain and now here. We are also managing patients with Covid-19 who have been discharged from hospital."

Another Croydon practice has received protective eye visors from the Whitgift school after an IT teacher turned the school's 3D printer to good use.

Dr Fernandes stressed that the PPE should be prioritised for carers in nursing homes and funeral staff as well. He appealed to businesses to help.

He added: "This is a war. Just because people can't see bombs dropping or buildings being blown up they can't



accept that it's for real but seeing the amount of people dying on a daily basis is quite disconcerting and a real huge psychological blow.

"Yes, in the NHS we are used to seeing people die but people at the end of life not on this scale. That's why the message about staying at home is so important. Everyone has to play a part in blunting that peak so that the NHS won't be overwhelmed in the weeks ahead."

He said the next week would be critical and that 'no one' should be 'complacent', adding: "The experience from Italy is that initially it was effecting old and vulnerable with pre-conditions but now we are seeing a lot of young people also."

Earlier this week 13-year-old Ismail Mohamed Abdulwahab, from Brixton

was youngest to die from Covid-19.

Dr Fernandes also relayed a personal story of how a friend of his wife, who was in her 50s, had succumbed to the virus and died alone in hospital without the comfort of her family because of the restrictions.

"A wife and husband did not get to say goodbye," he said. He also fears the long term mental health impact it will have on the bereaved with funeral farewells also restricted in this crisis.

He said GP's were not just focusing on 'my job, my role' but the bigger picture; supporting colleagues on 111, in hospitals and London Ambulance Service to "maximise saving lives."

He likened the effort to the Dunkirk spirit adding: "The response I have had from patients has been amazing, with 99 per cent ending every phone call with 'take care of yourself doc.'"

He said he had been really touched by acts of kindness like Tesco workers giving out flowers to NHS staff on Mother's Day and a letter from a five-year-old thanking staff for putting 'their lives on the line'.

He added: "These gestures from the public are having a marvellous effect. They give NHS workers that extra 'oomph' to carry on and really make a difference."

## COUNCIL'S PANDEMIC PLAN PREDICTS WORSE CASE SCENARIO

The council adapted its Pandemic Response Plan which predicts the worst case scenario including the number of infections and deaths following a series of nationwide exercises.

The Sunday Telegraph reported that one of the exercises called Cygnus showed the NHS was unable to cope with a lack of PPE for doctors and nurses, inadequate numbers of ventilators and mortuaries overflowing.

In the Croydon document it reveals during a pandemic, the assumptions on which to base the response will be updated in the light of emerging evidence. Until then, planning is based on the assumptions set out in The UK Influenza Preparedness Strategy 2011. These, it says are drawn on the best information currently available on the potential impact of a pandemic virus and have been derived from a combination of current virological and clinical knowledge, expert analysis, extrapolations from previous pandemics and mathematical modelling.

- Cumulative clinical attack rates of up to 50 per cent of the population (385,346 in Croydon) so 192,673, spread over one or more waves each of around 12-15 weeks, each some weeks or months apart.

- Up to 4 per cent of those who are symptomatic may require hospital admission 7,707.

- Up to 2.5 per cent of those who are symptomatic may die 4,817.

The most recent pandemic flu outbreak was an H1N1 strain 'Swine flu' in 2009 which caused at least 18,500 deaths worldwide. In 1918 another variant of the same H1N1 strain 'Spanish flu' killed over 50 million. So far Co-Vid19 has killed over 50,000 people worldwide.

Deputy Leader Cllr Alison Butler said: "In light of the Covid 19 pandemic the council has for some time been reviewing the Pandemic Influenza plan and ensuring this is fit for purpose. Much preparation is being done within London regions with councils taking

the lead on different areas. One of the challenges is, that in past crisis's in London the boroughs have come together to add additional support and resources. In this instance, every borough is stretched to capacity and dealing with their own 'crisis'. However, all eventualities are being prepared for."

The plan says: "Members of the public who have been at risk of catching the emerging infectious disease may be asked to self-isolate to restrict the spread of the illness, either while they are currently well or while they are awaiting the results of diagnostic testing."

Some of the council documents are inaccessible without a password but The Chronicle has found a report dated 2010 'Burial Land Need and Provision Study' which says should the pandemic occur in 2026, given the population increase (13,192) the potential death rate could increase in the borough from between 710 and 4,800 and that..."assuming all deaths are dealt with by Croydon, up to 13 per cent (93 to 624) bodies would require burial during the pandemic period.

# FROM CELEBRATING TV MAKE OVER TO A CRISIS FOR AGE UK IN A WEEK

**I**t was a beautiful summers day last year which saw the unveiling of amazing makeover of this community garden in Thornton Heath from an urban wasteland to oasis.

The Chronicle has been waiting since last September to publish the pictures of the transformation of the overgrown, inaccessible and unsafe garden space that wraps around Scratchely Hall at Age UK Croydon premises on Brigstock Road.

The happiness is shown in the faces of the elderly users featured in these pictures and will act as a reminder of happier times.

Alan Titchmarsh's TV programme Love Your Garden was screened on (Tuesday March 17) as we woke up to news about the Coronavirus and the need for the vulnerable; especially elderly people to self isolate from this deadly virus.

The programme featured stories of elderly people from Thornton Heath talking about feeling isolated and unsafe but how they had benefited from the services provided by Age UK Croydon.

Now Age UK Croydon is stepping up to deal with one of the worst crisis it is



likely to face in its history.

It has been setting up a food and essentials hub to help the elderly community at 81 Brigstock Road which opens from 10am to 4pm with volunteers delivering goods to local older people or help in other ways.

The CPFC players donation enable the charity to keep the food and deliveries hub well stocked, so volunteers can respond to need. It also means being able to buy some products, alongside the donations they are receiving from the 'very generous public', said a spokeswoman.

To donate or volunteer ring: 0208686 0066.



It will now be some time before the garden which was created by the help of the Love Your Garden team along with many local volunteers and tradespeople will be able to be used again.

Age UK Croydon has big plans to maximise the benefits of the outdoor space, including growing herbs and vegetables to use in a community kitchen, opening a Men in Sheds project to make bird boxes in the tool shed and involving local primary schools to open bug hotels.

Jill Kyne, Age UK Croydon CEO said: "What an absolutely amazing opportunity and honour for us to have our garden overhauled by one of



the best-known professionals in the gardening world. The space is going to benefit so many people - those that join us for regular activities, our volunteers, staff and the wider community. As we move into the summer months, we'll be working with people and organisations across the borough to make the most of our amazing space."

When circumstances allow, Age UK Croydon will be running a series of activities, events and parties so that local people can come back together and have the chance to see and use the garden. To be included or if you are a community group that would like to use the space email: aukc@ageukcroydon.org.uk.

## NHS MATERNITY STAFF DANCING GOES VIRAL

**M**idwives on the maternity wing at Croydon University hospital lightened the mood by dancing in a video which has gone viral on TikTok! Staff at the Thornton Heath hospital, have also been grateful for the generosity of local businesses who have been supplying them with hot meals. One local doctor Ahmed Hankir, posted on Twitter his gratitude at Thursday's #clapforcarers: "This was very touching neighbours in Thornton Heath in London clapping for our NHS heroes. I was clapping and cheering too! "I still can't believe that people were clapping for us. That I was clapping for our NHS heroes and for me. Thank you everyone from the bottom of my heart." The midwives danced to rapper Drake's "Toosie Slide" challenge on TikTok which is about sliding from the left to the right! Lauren Penfold posted: "The two at

the front of the video were my midwife's in November. Lovely ladies and always happy. Keep going girls." Robert Bond messaged: "Come on Croydon show em how it's done." Stephanie Kim Foli said: "Don't they make you feel proud! Smiling, happy and messing about in these very difficult times is just what we all need. Thank you NHS." •CPFC is also supporting the NHS effort with its Selhurst Park ground being used for blood donations with donors classed as 'travelling for an emergency'.



## THE RAINBOW ART BRINGING POSITIVITY



Vania Singh, aged six.



Jake Ackroyd, aged nine.

**A** group of local mums and children were inspired by a group in Spain #FromMyWindow to post pictures of rainbows in their front windows to bring a bit of cheer, in these time of social distancing, to people out on their walks.

Our mini art gallery shows drawings created by five young local artists. The message behind the window art is "everything will be okay" and it's a great way for children to fill up some time and for adults to join in the fun too!



Amy Ahmed aged 10



Sofia Sawyers (7) & Layla Sawyers (5)

## KEEP YOUR HAIR ON

**W**ith hair salons closed due to physical distancing guidelines, some have been forced to take matters in to their own hands with disastrous consequences.



Credit Bampson

Others have opted to loop off their locks during the lockdown by shaving off all their hair. Hairdresser Kish Soobramaney who owns La Zaris on Brigstock Road has urged his clients to consider if they really need a hair cut and if they can hold on for a while longer. For many clients a haircut is more than just vanity it is about socialising and mental well being especially as you can be at the salon for as long as five hours if you are having extensions or braids.

Many of his customers are regular clients and he has already received calls wanting to book in for when he reopens with one client revealing she allowed her daughter to Henna her hair and it went orange! He fears the repair jobs he will encounter on

his return but says that everyone has been very understanding. He suggests getting hair bands and clips to keep your hair in some order until it can be styled again or wear a hat! He has been thinking of ways of how he can support the NHS and key workers with a cap which would have messages of support on it and allow the wearer to disguise weeks of bad hair days!

Kish who took part in the mental health training that was organised for members of the BAME Barbers Network earlier this month says he is really concerned for the welfare of other barbers who will find the sudden change of social environment and lack of banter extremely hard as well as the financial consequences, as he says many barbers survive on tips.

Kish's wife is still able to work from home so he is concentrating on looking after his young daughter and has been able to apply to have his two members of staff furloughed.

He said: "We are all in the same boat and while we have our health our hair will continue to grow and that's what is important."

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU..SHAHZAIB AGED 12

**W**hatever age we are we all like to celebrate our birthdays and when you are a child you usually have a party and invite your friends around. However, the new lockdown rules are restricting the way we are able to celebrate special occasions but many are improvising and finding ways to make them just as much fun.

Mum Saima Syeda explains how she was able to use her creative skills to give son Shahzaib a birthday to remember!

She said: "My son Shahzaib turned 12 on March 24 but since we are all self isolating I had to improvise and create a day for him he could enjoy staying indoors. Luckily I can make personalised gifts and I had some stock at home so made him a game theme hoodie, travel water bottle, decorated his room door with game theme vinyl. The day started with a nice breakfast of his favourite

pancake, me and his dad got him an online game as birthday gift so he could play with his friends instead online, and pizza



for dinner. On his special request I made brownies instead of birthday cake which wasn't an easy task having very little ingredients and not being able to source eggs from anywhere so I improvised luckily the end result was still great. We finished the day watching a movie of his choice on prime. He had a photo session with his sister and had a great laugh. Over all it was a good day and he enjoyed it."

# PUBS AND RESTAURANTS HARDEST HIT BY COVID-19 SHUT DOWN

**T**he hospitality industry has been the hardest hit by the coronavirus shut down which has left businesses like pubs, already operating under tight margins, facing uncertain futures.

Thornton Heath's two publicans are looking to the future and are determined to get through the next few weeks and months ahead.

Both pubs benefit from CPFC football match footfall but also have a strong regular customer base. They are checking in and keeping in touch with their customers via social media.

Prince George landlady Sheila Gaughan said: "We ceased trading just over 10 days ago, although I fully understood and embraced the decision I found it very hard to close the doors, not knowing when we will eventually open again.

"The uncertainty of it all is affecting everyone and I think just being social, even if it's just on WhatsApp group will bring a bit of normality to us all, which we badly need.

"I've been messaging customers on social media to check they're ok, I've set up a Facebook chat, just so we can still keep in touch. So much uncertainty



for everyone but we are looking to the future, we will get through this!

"We are planning a party for the first night we re open!"

Neal Singh owner of the Railway Telegraph decided to board up the pub just as a precaution to keep the property safe and intact.

He said: "Whilst it was very disheartening to close our business overnight, we totally understand and respect the government's decision. However, it is not just us as business owners who feel the affects.

"The Railway Telegraph is a community hub for many. With a great number of our locals visiting daily, meeting and socialising with one another. It was very sad and emotional for all on the last day when the pub had to close. So many emotions for all, the uncertainty, families livelihoods, possible job losses,



business closure etc.

"We are keeping in touch with many of our customers, praying everyone stays safe and remains positive.

We remain optimistic to open when it's all over, that also depends on time frame, currently we think reopening will be July. We have not received any financial aid yet, but that could change. The owner of Fireaway Pizza is hopeful of being able to stay open despite

custom dropping by a third after demand for its home delivery service doubled.

The eatery has had a great response from locals; hosting parties for birthdays and meetings, charities since opening two year's ago in May on Brigstock Road.

Owner of the authentic artisan pizza business Mario Murphy, said: "Our delivery sales were not amazing but as we had the space for people to sit in we didn't really find that an issue.

"Since the Coronavirus has come to town we have seen some dramatic changes. Our walk in trade has dropped from approximately 30 customers per day to around 10 and we have obviously had to cancel parties of more than two people in store.

"Having said that, our home delivery side of the business has doubled due to most people not leaving their houses. This has luckily saved us. We have had staff members leave but so far we are managing.

Mario added: "On top of that we have been privileged to be able to supply approximately 100 pizzas to St Georges and Mayday hospital staff who are doing an amazing job and hopefully we will be able to stay open for the local community for as long as possible."

[www.fireaway.co.uk](http://www.fireaway.co.uk)

## TOUGH TIMES AHEAD FOR SELF EMPLOYED WAITING FOR JUNE PAY DAY

**T**he fall out of the Co-Vid19 pandemic hasn't discriminated in the impact it has had on the livelihoods of creatives, tradespeople, hairdressers, caterers and many more.

The self employed had to wait the longest to find out what support package the government would offer. Self-employed workers will have 80 per cent of their average earnings, or

up to £2,500 a month, paid for by the government but the grants won't be given out to those eligible, for at least three months.

You can't even apply for the scheme until June when you will be contacted by

HMRC and not all are covered under the announcement which is based on profit not income. And for instance if you pay yourself a dividend via a PSC (personal services company) you won't get any support from this scheme.

Here three local residents explain how they have been affected.



**M**usician Marcus Cliffe, who is the base player with The Manfreds, the reformed legendary 60's group Manfred Mann said: "Being self employed in the arts has always been an up and down way of life.

'Feast or famine' is a common phrase I've heard from my colleagues over the years. However the events of the last month or so have added a new set of experiences to my 35 years of self employment.

"Three weeks ago I had started a three month UK tour, we got three dates in and the whole lot was cancelled. Normally if a tour or any work is cancelled with short notice, either payment in full, or a negotiated cancellation fee is payable.

"Not this time a 'force majeure' means all insurance is null and void. So like most of my musician friends I found myself with no work and no compensation for the loss of it."

Marcus who has worked with Rod Stewart, Eric Clapton, Mark Knopfler, as well as playing on mixes for Tina Turner, Sting and Mariah Carey added: "After the initial shock, I had to make a survival plan so first thing was my largest outgoing, the mortgage. I spent two hours on hold before speaking to someone who was very helpful and sorted out a mortgage holiday.

"I had a friend who was on hold from

8am until 8pm to get through to sort this out, so be prepared. I went through a list of all my monthly standing orders and worked out if I could freeze them or get them lowered. There are many grants available from the various musical/arts establishments, however if you have money put aside for your July or January tax bills then you're not classed as in hardship!

"As self employed people we are actually better placed to deal with this sudden change from an emotional point of view as we have always had to make our own structure. It can be a time to be creative, however being worried is not conducive to creativity so that can be a catch 22 situation."

Here are Marcus' personal suggestions to staying sane through the weeks ahead:

- 1: do some sort of exercise: a healthy body will keep your immune system strong and keep you mentally in better shape.
- 2: Learn something new; I'm learning Davinci resolve video editing for example.
- 3: Try make some sort of daily routine, for me that's daily practice of my instrument.
- 4: Avoid social media! I've come off facebook. The spread of misinformation, negativity and fear isn't good for you.
- 5: If you have to read the news get it from a reliable source.
- 6: don't be afraid to ask for help <https://www.marcuscliffe.com/>



**H**andyman and gardener Grant Winters, who runs Around the House, said: "A couple of months back as we approached Chinese New Year,

when we saw Wuhan lock down. I wondered how long Covid-19 would take to reach us. It was very fast.

"I had already started making adjustments in my head as to what I might do. I knew this was coming our way. I had plenty of work in the diary that I could look forward to. But time has a trick of passing you no matter how fast you work.

"Times three weeks I had to postpone a few jobs to build cough screens for my partner's pharmacy, then for the other shops. With that, a couple of choice announcements by Government my work jobs were starting to get cancelled.

"The enquiries fell off a cliff. My diary is clear... I have taken only a couple of jobs where premises are vacant. But they are a little scant on the ground. I am resigned to the fact I will stay mainly at home looking after my 10-year-old daughter.

"And I do make the most of this opportunity to make my time with her count. I am though still at a loss as to how I am going to finance my normal out goings. It's all very well the bank saying you can take a repayment holiday. But three months from now, the interest accrued will bump up my out

goings even further. That will not help anything.

"I am seriously looking into other work to allow my family get through this experience while staying financially buoyant. I don't have the luxury of waiting till June for the Government to help me.

"Being self-employed has definitely got its downside... my earnings were not great as my little business has grown. So based on those earnings any payout will fall short of what is needed.

"As for my partner, there will be absolutely nothing if she has to stop

**M**um Heidi Tompson is doubly affected as her husband Scott is also self employed working with tenants and landlords.



Heidi who runs Sugar and Spice, supplying bespoke cakes to order for any event, said: "I'm just hoping that the customers I have will return but as my business is 'not important and more luxurious' people just won't have money to buy cakes.

"I actually don't see me getting back to business until next year. My husband is hoping he will be back far sooner. It's a very hard time for everyone as it's something no-one has experienced before. I'm hoping that the last 10 years of my business and training hasn't gone."

# FOOD BANKS ARE ON THE FRONTLINE DELIVERING EMERGENCY AID

**F**ood banks are on the frontline of this crisis delivering food parcels to the elderly, vulnerable and those self isolating.

They need an army of volunteers like local residents Ife Oguntokun and Rossella Scalia - to help with the vast increase in demand on their services.

Elim Pentecostal Church has set up a hub in its church building in Mersham Road and are working alongside medical centres, volunteer organisations and MP Steve Reed. It is offering help with food parcels, picking up shopping, prescription collection, a phone call to cheer you up, a prayer to lift your spirit or anything else to help residents

Thornton Heath resident Ife, who is a creative working in TV production and in between jobs saw the appeal for help on Twitter and is putting together food parcels ready for delivery.

Self-employed Rossella who lives on Bensham Lane, and normally designs marketing campaigns for small businesses; responded to an appeal on the social networking site Nextdoor and has been out delivering leaflets to local residents advertising for help and asking for food donations.

Mother and son Jennifer and Christopher Allen arrived on foot at the church door with two bags of donations containing much needed tins, pasta



and biscuits. Wearing face masks mum Jennifer explained that Christopher, aged nine, was a premature baby at 25 weeks and has problems with his lungs which is why they were both wearing masks and being so careful.

Food banks have become an essential part of our economy in recent times as more and more people find themselves trapped in low income jobs or having to exist on government benefits but now they being stretched even further to help even more people facing uncertainty and food poverty as a result of Co-Vid19.

Each morning volunteers go out in the



Alive Community Centre Food Bank van collecting food from Aldi, Tesco, M&S food and Waitrose. The collection is arranged by two national charities Fairshare and Neighbourly, the UK's national network of charitable food redistributors.

Elim also collect from some Co-op stores and are in discussions explains Pastor at the church for 20 years Nick Gray with Sainsbury's in Streatham to take extra food to distribute during the Coronavirus crisis.

A job card is produced for each recipient and those ringing for help are told what is available and a food parcel packaged for delivery by a volunteer.

Pastor Nick was awaiting a delivery of food from takeaway giant McDonald's, which has had to close all its restaurants and was hopeful it would be meat. He explained that the hub is also short of the basics such as vegetables, bread and fruit along with non perishables but has been overwhelmed with flowers

because no one is buying them.

Normally the food bank is open between 1-2pm each Saturday providing much needed supplies to 40 individuals and families on a weekly basis

Pastor Nick said: "At the moment we don't know if we are going to be able to continue with the food bank on Saturday's because if the deliveries in the week ramp up then it's all going to be gone by Saturday.

"We have had volunteers putting out the cards all around the area. We have had a trickle of requests but we don't know how that is going to evolve. This is new ground."

He had just taken a call from a headteacher who is no longer able to give free lunches out for children at Winterbourne school so she has 28 needy families but no way of feeding them explained Nick. "She asked if we can help and the short answer is I don't know?"

So far 1,500 cards have been delivered to neighbouring streets and help could be broadened further explains Pastor Nick with 2,000 more cards printed and is looking for a kindly donor to cover the £30 cost.

As well as food deliveries the hub can also collect prescription medication for those in self isolation and working with two local pharmacies.

The hub is also liaising with Croydon Voluntary Action.

# COUNCIL FOOD STOP OFFERING HELP TO NEEDY REMAINS OPEN

**A newly opened food stop offering help to the most needy in the community is continuing to open its doors every week to members.**

The borough's third Food Stop was only officially launched at Parchmore Methodist Church in Thornton Heath in February.

It aims to help people at risk of homelessness or have rent arrears to get cut-price food, one-to-one debt advice along with wider support.

The partnership between Croydon Council teams and local voluntary, community and faith sector organisation and community groups aims to help struggling residents to save up to £700 a year off household bills.

The Food Stop is open at the church's community centre in Parchmore Road every Wednesday from 10am-12pm, where each member can get around £15 to £20 worth of fresh food and other groceries for £3.50 a week.



*Launch of the Food Stop in February*

The award-winning initiative is aimed at local people affected by welfare reforms, Food Stop membership can also include referrals such as for mental and physical health needs and domestic abuse support, plus employment advice through the council's job brokerage service Croydon Works and other partners.

At a launch, the Reverend Nadine Wilkinson hosted 50 guests and was joined by Councillor Alison Butler, Croydon Council's deputy leader and cabinet member for Homes and Gateway services, along with senior Methodist minister and member of the House of



*Rev Nadine Wilkinson with Cllr Alison Butler*

Burton the Reverend Dr Leslie Griffiths, Lord Griffiths of Burry Port. Reverend Nadine said: "Thornton Heath is a community which is uniquely presented both with challenges and a wealth of goodwill, committed neighbours and the gifts and skills to address these challenges.

We're really pleased to be playing a role in connecting people and organisations so that our community might begin to recognise its own potential resourcefulness."

The food stop is appealing for donations of dry goods and tins or packets of food along with any spare plastic bags to hold

shopping.

It is open to take donations on Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am to 12 noon.

A member Parchmore staff is maintaining contact with the 65 plus group who use its services including the lunch club for a chat and to assess any needs that emerge.

- The new Food Stop is Croydon's third to be formally launched by the council's Gateway service since a pilot project began at The Family Centre in Fieldway in 2017. In its first year alone, it saved £52,000 in residents' combined shopping bills, prevented 54 rented households from becoming homeless and helped over 40 people into work or training.

A second opened in Selsdon last October.

To find out more about the service email: [anita.konczack@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:anita.konczack@croydon.gov.uk).

- If you are homeless contact the Council's Gateway service: [gcc@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:gcc@croydon.gov.uk) with a contact number or phone 07732 073171 or 07548264 401

- For Welfare Rights Advice 0800 7315920 or email: [welfare.rights@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:welfare.rights@croydon.gov.uk).

# 'HIS GRACE FOOD BANK' APPEALS FOR DONATIONS AFTER FEEDING 500

**A** food bank which was opened for one day a week is now operating six days and in less than a week has provided food parcels to hundreds of local people in need.

His Grace Food Bank Beulah Road which normally opens every Tuesday is now operating 2pm to 4pm daily except for Sunday.

In the last five days the food bank has provided food packages to over 500 individuals and families via pick up and deliveries which includes the homeless, elderly and other vulnerable individuals.

Pastor Bola Thomas said: "We've also been able to distribute bulk food to other food distribution centres in



Croydon such as charities, churches, clubs, care homes, NHS centres, other food banks, food drop centres, local projects and other community groups who are then able to redistribute to their service users.

"All this was done through our supply from McDonald's which is now completely distributed.

"We would appreciate donation as they are seriously needed. We will be delighted if you can help."

Here are some of the items the food bank needs:

Any canned, tinned and packaged food such as baked beans, sugar, soup, fish, pasta, spaghetti, corn beef, hotdogs, canned fruits and biscuits.

Any vegetables, spices, peppers and fruits, spring onions, onions, carrots, basil, corns, tomatoes, potatoes, apples, bananas, grapes, and berries.

Dairy products such as long life milk, butter, cheese, bread, and rice.

Fresh and frozen products meat, poultry, and fish.

Personal care products such as sanitary towels, baby nappies, baby food, toothpaste, toothbrush, body spray, shampoo, bath soap, shower gel and deodorants.

Hot and cold drinks: tea bags, coffee, hot chocolate, any kind of juice and drinks.

Contact : 07946 546 507 or 0208 653 4433.

His Grace Evangelical Outreach has moved its church services to online via Skype and other social media platforms [www.hisgrace-evangelicaloutreach.co.uk](http://www.hisgrace-evangelicaloutreach.co.uk)

# DOCTORS CONDUCT PATIENT EXAMINATIONS VIA VIDEO LINK

**GP surgeries have been forced overnight to switch from face to face consultations to conducting patient examinations via video links.**

Dr Agnelo Fernandes a GP Parchmore Medical Centre for 30 years, is embracing the change and says the majority of patients have been accepting of the new regime after practices across the country closed their doors to protect patients and staff from the risk of coronavirus contamination.

However, the demands on general practice haven't just stopped because of Covid-19 and patients with existing

conditions and poor health still need treating. Local residents Mohammed Mir and Sue Ahmed, who have both undergone traumatic



major surgery recently give their accounts (below) on how Co-Vid19 is

impacting on their ongoing treatment and recovery.

Dr Fernandes said: "The world hasn't just stopped because of Co-Vid19. We all need to remember that the NHS was busy before coronavirus and all the people needing treatment for other conditions still need to be managed."

Instead anyone who needs to speak to a doctor can still do so over the telephone or via video conferencing. Patients can still have a face to face consultation with a GP but only through an arranged appointment.

Paper prescriptions have also become

redundant with requests for medication transmitted electronically to pharmacies.

The surgery has also set up an isolation room if someone is suspected of having co-vid19 for triage and assessment.

Dr Fernandes said: "Everyone I have spoken to has been really quite grateful. Not everyone wants a video consultation but for instance I do a lot of dermatology work and I was able to diagnose a nasty skin condition. It is not suitable for everyone and it has been forced on us but everyone is accepting it."

He also said that doctors were also not able to meet face to face and were using Zoom from the confines of their examination rooms to consult over patient cases with other GPs in the same practice.



**Community stalwart Mohammed Mir is in isolation at his home where he had been recovering from a major operation and reveals how the support of his family is helping him to remain positive.**

Five months ago I had open heart surgery. After being discharged by the hospital I was advised by my surgeon to have complete rest as it was major surgery with six blocked arteries.

The surgeon was quite surprised how I survived for such a long time not having a stroke or heart attack?

I answered him back "lord knows the best!" He just laughed.

A cardiac rehabilitation nurse visited me and arranged for physiotherapy once a week as my recovery was very slow.

During that period my wife was supportive and encouraging, not

forgetting Thornton Heath Community Action Team and committee members who visited me several times.

During my physiotherapy we were doing exercise in a group. At that time there was news that Covid-19 was spreading rapidly but we did not know enough about the virus at that time. I had a phone call from the hospital to say the next session had been cancelled.

Watching the TV news and learning more about the virus I self isolated protecting myself from Covid-19 and just stayed in bed watching TV and the news.

Isolation prevents the spread but I was concerned about my family. I have had good days and bad days and sometimes very negative thoughts in my mind.

I discussed it with my wife and she was very concerned. She said to me that when we have low negative thoughts we should try to think positive and reminded me of the young family we've got and what will happen if something does happen to me? She told me we should challenge these thoughts together and with positive ideas we can reflect at the end of each day on all the positive things. I feel much better now logging down every day events."



**Cancer patient and mum Sue Ahmed pleads with people to take social distancing seriously.**

The risks and severity of getting

Coronavirus is increased for me as I have two underlying chronic health conditions that at the moment affect my immune system. I've been shielding myself as much as possible since at least March 12. Before the schools were closed, I was only going out to do the school run.

I have between two to five appointments at hospital a week usually, but from this week, one by one I was contacted by staff to change some appointments to either a video call, a telephone consultation or move various appointments to June to protect me from face to face meetings and travelling into London.

My rehabilitation and physio services that I need weekly to help me move around on a daily basis and to try and

remove the chronic fatigue I have from Cancer will now not go-ahead until Coronavirus has disappeared. This means my recovery will be impeded and delayed.

I telephoned Superdrug Thornton Heath to ask if they had a medicine delivery service for vulnerable customers and their response was that they had not been given any funds so they were unable to provide a delivery Service.

I had to risk going out to collect my pain and autoimmune liver disease medicine. When I was in the queue waiting; I followed the social isolating advice of leaving 2 metres of space between myself and the next person.

People started to stand in front of me, pushing in. Everyone needs to take social distancing from people seriously or it will continue to spread and more people will die. Coronavirus is absolutely contagious. If we don't take this seriously Coronavirus can keep alive by infecting others rather than being stopped dead.

I've tried to get an online delivery of food. All the Supermarket delivery/ collection dates are full or taken up until April 13 and at the last time of checking there are no later dates added yet.



**Dr Anthony Cunliffe, is Macmillan's GP Adviser in London.**

He said: "It's completely understandable that people living with

cancer are worried about coronavirus. If you have cancer, the most important thing is to follow the advice from the NHS and your healthcare team.

"Your clinician may want to review your

treatment plans, including whether the risks involved in any treatment have changed. In some cases, this may lead to a discussion about a revised or modified treatment plan. This is because the risks and benefits of certain treatments may be different in light of the coronavirus risk.

"Many hospitals have started to use more telephone consultations as a way of helping people to avoid long waits in clinics and for treatment. Your clinical team are best placed to talk with you

about the effect on your treatment and appointments. They will work with you to determine the best course of action in each individual situation. If you have any concerns about your treatment, please do speak to your clinical team.

"Some people with cancer and those who have received or are receiving certain treatments are more at risk of becoming seriously ill if they contract COVID-19

"If you are in this category, the NHS will directly contact you with advice about the more stringent measures you should

take in order to keep yourself and others safe. We also know it might be a lonely and stressful time as many people are staying at home to stay safe.

"Staying at home for a prolonged period can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some people and that you or other household members may feel low. It's important to remember to take care of your mind as well as your body and to get support if you need it. Stay in touch with family and friends or Macmillan 0808 808 00 00. [www.macmillan.org](http://www.macmillan.org)

# STREET DRINKERS IGNORE LOCKDOWN AND SOCIAL DISTANCING AND CARRY ON BOOZING

**Thornton Heath's collective of street drinkers are ignoring the lockdown and social distancing and have returned to the Clocktower where they are regularly congregating to booze.**

On the day PM Boris Johnson announced the lockdown, a persistent female street drinker who had previously been fined for ASB, was observed squatting and urinating on the roadside in front of the clocktower as motorists drove passed. The police have tried previously to get a Criminal Behaviour Order to ban her from Thornton Heath but magistrates refused to issue it because it unfairly restricted her movement.



The street drinkers began gathering again at the Clocktower just as the virus crisis broke coinciding with the clocks going back and the weather improving. As these pictures show are not observing social distancing or the lockdown imposed on the rest of us.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team have regularly been seen moving them on over the last week. Crime has significantly decreased since the lockdown but there have been instances of moped theft and car crime with disabled badges stolen from windscreens in West Thornton.

Deputy council leader Cllr Alison Butler said: "In relation to our street drinkers this is a task that is easier said than done. We are trying to ensure that they are engaging with the correct services and do have somewhere to stay but everyone is aware that this is a cohort that will present challenges. However,

everything will be done to protect not only their own safety but also the public's."

In a video message delivered by the borough commander Dave Stringer, he said officers continued to do everything to make the area as safe as possible and that the focus remained on violence. He reassured residents that police were still responding to non emergency calls such as anti social and he thanked people for complying with the government guidelines and not leaving homes accept for essentials and not opening shops. He said this had allowed officers to focus on 'communities safe'.

# SUPERMARKETS SLOW TO REACT TO PANIC BUYING AMID SPREAD OF VIRUS

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worse still time slots set aside for elderly shoppers and NHS staff were abused.

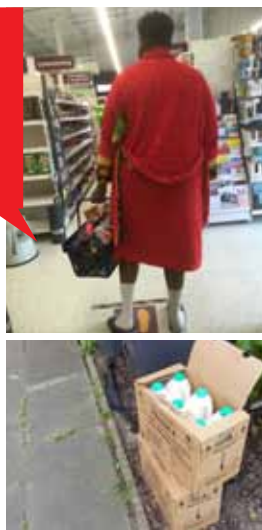
One senior citizen said: "I went down and it was packed with young and old. There wasn't a trolley or basket to be had. I asked the security guy by the entrance what had happened to the elderly hour. He said: 'we're not doing it'. I told him about the emails and TV announcements that had gone out but he knew nothing about it and said nothing had been organised."

The hour set aside for NHS staff on Sunday (March 22) was more like a scrum. What made it worse was that 9 to 10am had been set aside but the store didn't open until 10am.

A consultant in infection at Croydon University hospital Imran Qureshi posted on Twitter on March 22: "Absolutely disgusted with healthcare professionals & collective behaviour @ Tesco this morning, felt embarrassed by it. Also on-call and didn't have reception so had to leave to prioritise calls and had to leave without anything. Staff very unhelpful. Good intention, poor delivery."

On Twitter responding to complaints a Tesco customer service adviser said:

**Pictured:  
Shopper visits  
London Road  
Sainsbury's Local  
in his dressing  
gown at mid-day!**



"I'm really sorry there's been some miscommunication regarding some of our English stores. If they're usually open between 11am and 5pm, you'll be able to

go into the store between 10 and 11am. I'm really sorry for any inconvenience caused."

By the time the store opened there was even a queue of cars in to the car park backed all the way up the ramp on to Parchmore Road.

One care worker said: "I was there.. from 9:30am to 11am waiting. It was manic and slow and there was a queue to start. Then normal people started to join in and the staff couldn't control it and tell normal people to move so it just got out of hand. This morning was my only free time out of the whole week."

A week later Tesco had got its act together and its current TV advert 'Keeping you safe' shows real staff members explaining the supermarket's public-health measures, including separate entry and exit points, social-distancing advice, one-way aisles and protective screens at tills.

The consultant was quick to follow up, full of praise after returning to the store Dr Qureshi posted: "@Tesco last week I was less than complimentary about your scheme for NHS workers. A week on with systems in place, I could not be more complimentary. It was a smooth well oiled machine and my thanks to all of your staff at the Thornton Heath branch for an amazing job."

Shoppers bought an extra £1.9bn of groceries and personal goods in the four weeks ending March 21 sadly, pictures have emerged of stockpiled food, like this organic milk, bought in supermarkets during the coronavirus lockdown which was abandoned on Grove Road behind Lidl on London Road.

One Tesco worker told the Chronicle this week: "After a couple of weeks of transcending chaos, Tesco seems to now have some degree of control! Although queues waiting to get into the store are still very long, there is now more stock left on the shelves throughout the day."

"With new limits on how much customers can buy, and recently introduced social distancing measures, shoppers can now expect a more pleasant shopping experience and shorter queues once inside. However, would be nice to see more efforts to keep everything clean and there is still a shortage of baskets at the front of the store."

• Elsewhere other local shopkeepers were criticised for taking advantage of the crisis by hiking prices on basics such as meat

One shopper complained that the butcher was asking for a leg of lamb which weighed 3kg, a whopping £15 per kg so £45

Another shopper said he was asked for £50 for a box of chicken legs which normally cost £15.99.

• In addition to the routine flytipping there have been unhygienic scenes of abandoned surgical gloves and masks being discarded on the streets alongside existing flytipped bedding.



# COUNCIL HAS 20% LESS STAFF AS IT RESPONDS TO PANDEMIC

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A combined team are focussing on the delivery of housing solutions for different areas of the council including: homelessness, adults, children, and our own staff as well as assisting with other front-line services, said deputy council leader Cllr Alison Butler.

She added: "The council is sourcing various private buildings for use but this need is mainly being met by hotels not currently in use and other premises that are temporarily out of use.

"There are no plans around Ambassador House (currently). Most additional need is being met by empty hotel accommodation and other accommodation which is ready to use."

Croydon had already started work with our street homeless and offers of accommodation have been made to all those the council were aware of and it is continuing to source accommodation for those coming in.



One homeless man who had been living in Thornton Heath Rec in a tent for a month has accepted accommodation.

Cllr Butler added: "We are supporting the opening of Covid Protect site is in a hotel in central Croydon providing accommodation and support to asymptomatic rough sleepers who are vulnerable to Covid-19 with referrals made directly by services.

This fully opened today (Monday) and council staff have worked with various partners to ensure the Somewhere Safe to Stay residents and existing Croydon rough sleepers could access triage.

The rough sleeping team continues to work with the voluntary, faith and community sector to source donations of food, toiletries and distribution to single homeless and former rough sleepers in temporary accommodation.

The council has moved to delivering priority services with a particular emphasis on vulnerable residents, said deputy council leader Cllr Alison Butler. "Officers are being redeployed into a variety of services where there is higher demand. I would say we are probably 20 per cent down on staffing for various reasons, self-isolating due to family members etc but where possible staff are working remotely and are switching to work in priority services. We also have a much higher level of demand of those in need and areas like hospital discharge are working exceptionally hard in difficult circumstances. And there are additional responsibilities the council has taken on or been given by central government."

# TRIBUTES PAID TO THORNTON HEATH MOTHER-OF-FOUR

**E**motional tributes have been paid to a Thornton Heath mum-of-four who died on March 26 after testing positive for coronavirus.



Fiona Clark, 49, who lived with her partner Colin, children and three cats died four days after being rushed to hospital on Mother's Day.

Her friend Emma Tower who paid tribute to her "beautiful, brave, warrior friend Fiona" has launched a Gofundmepage to raise £2,000 for funeral costs to help her partner and children give her the "best send off."

She said: "Ours hearts are broken and our love goes out to Colin, Alyssa, Bailey, Daniel and Jordan. To Issy and her family and to Brian, the father she doted on.

"She takes with her our love and all the many beautiful memories we made with her, that will also help to see us all through this, the saddest of times.

"Fiona has battled cancer and was slowly beginning to live a little and she came down with the virus and she sadly died as a result of having that virus.

"Fiona has four children and they need help to raise funds to give their mum the funeral she deserves.

"This lady was beautiful inside and out and would do anything for anyone."

# HUBS DELIVER TO 'SHIELDED' LIST

**N**ew 'welfare hubs', have been set up to deliver supplies and make contact with those on the government's NHS 'shielded' list.

Croydon Council has begun delivering food parcels to hundreds of the borough's most vulnerable residents.

Council staff and local volunteers will deliver regular non-chilled food parcels to those who have no-one to shop for them and must stay at home for 12 weeks because of severe medical conditions including heart problems, cancer and lung disease.

Any resident identified as being in this priority group needs to call the council, quoting a reference number on their NHS letter :0208 604 7787 and or email covid19support@crocydon.gov.uk.



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# THOUSANDS OF VOLUNTEERS MOBILISE TO GET SUPPLIES TO THOSE 'MOST' IN NEED

With Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA) signing up over 700 volunteers this week and Croydon Covid-19 Mutual Aid (CCMA) mobilising thousands across the borough, there is no shortage of people wanting to help. The challenge is to balance this voluntary effort with social distancing and to coordinate it so that, if things get worse, we're all working together to make sure that well advised and supported volunteers are getting supplies to the people who need them most, writes Steve Phaure, chief executive of CVA. For now CCMA, the foodbanks and community groups like Revivify, Good Food Matters and Age UK are just getting on with it. Like CVA they are handling food enquiries and delivering bags of food and cooked meals to people, some of whom are very ill. The big problem is supplies – not just food but PPE equipment. Luckily more people are donating and on



Saturday morning (28 March) the CVA Resource Centre was open from 8am to collect deliveries organised by local councillors. That day also saw the first Government delivery to Croydon Council, charged with getting supplies to those on the NHS' extremely vulnerable list. Thereafter the food industry warehouses will start delivering, but one unknown at this stage is whether any supplies will be left over for the foodbanks, CCMA, CVA and our

community partners to deliver to those people not categorised as vulnerable or at risk – people outside the system – but still very much in need. So our main call out at this stage is for supplies. We're being contacted by people needing support and we have the volunteers to provide it – we just need the food and household goods topped up regularly. To make donations please contact us on 0208 253 1268 on Monday to Friday between 10am and 3pm or email [Shalina.Alabaksh@cvalive.org.uk](mailto:Shalina.Alabaksh@cvalive.org.uk).

**A**dditionally, CVA is coordinating the community sector effort to maintain social connections across the borough by:

- Compiling a directory of services and activities still running. Email [connectwellcroydon@cvalive.org.uk](mailto:connectwellcroydon@cvalive.org.uk) with brief details of whatever support your group is managing to provide?
- Running a telephone helpline for vulnerable people who need support to contact: 0208 253 7076.
- Signing up volunteers. Please complete and submit the form to our Volunteer Centre team who will contact you between 10am and 4pm from Monday to Friday.
- Sending out weekly newsletters updating organisations on 'live' services in the borough and funding opportunities linked to the outbreak. Sign up to receive it at <https://cvalive.org.uk/join-us/>

## THORNTON HEATH COVID-19 MUTUAL AID GROUP GOES LIVE

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rooted to local groups to provide instant help but also a friendly voice for those struggling with loneliness and isolation.

The groups spread through social media, but also through the generosity of Matthew's Yard, who printed and helped distribute over 50,000 flyers, extending offers of help to those without internet.

The stories of neighbours helping each other are truly inspiring. Already many neighbours have collected shopping for others who are self-isolating, as well as offering friendly chats with those feeling lonely, redistributing hoarded toilet rolls and even picking up urgent medical supplies. Given the risks of contact at the present time, all volunteers are asked to follow the Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK network's safeguarding guidelines throughout their work.

**Pictured: Map shows spread of volunteer aid groups.**



Ben Taylor, one of the admins of CCMA, said: "Seeing so many people come together in such a short time has been truly inspiring. Having connected with so many groups I have seen people of every age, with every background stand up and say they want to lend a hand to their neighbour without a second thought."

In one particularly inspiring story, the soup kitchen run by Faiths Together on London Road was about to close

through lack of food, until CCMA managed to connect them with a local food producer, Eat with Tom Mathews, that donated enough fresh produce to keep it open.

The network has also helped find young, healthy volunteers for charities such as the Nightwatch, an institution dedicated to supporting homeless people in the borough. These new young volunteers were essential to replace dedicated, long-serving older volunteers in self-isolation. Croydon Mutual Aid is seeking to share these positive stories to raise awareness of the services that can be provided in Croydon by local people, and also to attract new volunteers.

Join the Facebook group to get involved <https://www.facebook.com/groups/croydoncovid19/> whether you want to volunteer or need help.



**T**here has been an amazing response from volunteers from the Thornton Heath Mutual Aid group who have joined forces

on a WhatsApp group to organise a task force of local helpers who are distributing leaflets offering support, delivering food parcels, picking up prescriptions and just listening to anyone who needs assistance.

They have posted hundreds of leaflets through residents letterboxes providing contact with the outside world for those self isolating and live alone or without support.

Many requests are from adult children contacting the group directly asking for help for elderly relatives who they can't get to as they don't live nearby. For example one woman living in Canada put out a pleas for assistance for her diabetic mum who hadn't been eating properly for over a week, while another was from a resident simply requesting for milk.

Kim Standing, who is the admin for the Thornton Heath Covid Mutual Aid WhatsApp said: "I think Thornton Heath has been amazing how they have responded. It makes me really proud to live here with my kids. It would be lovely to reach more people so anyone who could leaflet, even a few homes on their street would be brilliant. I think moving forward we could do with coordinating volunteers who speak multiple languages and having posters in multiple languages in key places. Such as supermarkets.

This group has shown me that we have so many people wanting to reach out and help no one has to be isolated right now we just need to reach everyone we can. Whether people need help with picking up shopping or a friendly chat. "I know this has touched others as much as it has me. People are so thankful not only for the support but to know that people care and that's so lovely for me to hear."

**Danielle Cleary, who is visually impaired, said:**

"They say ever cloud has silver lining and Covid-19 is definitely a cloud but the silver lining is definitely the community spirit shown in the WhatsApp group and how everybody is so willing to do what they can for other people. I am in the shielded group so not able to go out and physically help people but I like to hope that information that I reshare when perhaps other people don't have time is useful to new members. I certainly know from my own point of view that people have dropped me stuff that I needed and just been so kind and helpful.

I just really hope that the community spirit lives on past this horrible time. It is definitely brilliant to be involved with the group and see how everyone is just willing to do what ever they can for each other."

**Hannah Arkwright who is looking after Woodville Road, said:**

"I've always found Thornton Heath to be much friendlier than other parts of London I've lived in. With the current situation I'm very aware I only know my immediate neighbours and that there could be others living nearby needing help and support



who didn't know who to contact or how to get in touch so thought it best to try and contact everyone using the leaflets. Volunteering makes me feel less powerless and keeps me away from the rolling news. Hopefully it will also encourage our community to look out for each other."



**Rachel Kingston said:** "For me it means a chance to be useful and help keep others safe at a very strange and unsettling time. I've had

three responses to my leaflets so far, all from people living on my road who I'd never met before. Managed to get some shopping for one, share some info about help available for those who are self employed with another, and help the third get her medication delivered. Will be doing some more shopping when I go out at the end of the week too. None of it difficult or time-consuming - which is important for me as I'm also a single parent attempting to home educate(ish) and work from home full time - but helped people with what they needed.

**Daisy Narula said:**

"I spent the afternoon delivering food parcels to those in need, donated to a local food bank. One woman, who clearly needed medical support, had been living in a hotel for three months. I'm thankful for the roof over my head and my health."



**E**di Ska who is helping residents in the Gillet and Garnet Road flats, said: "I only just started as I was in self isolation until the end of last week. I went to give away a few masks and gloves to the elderly in Gillet Road and they were so grateful and happy for that gesture. It really warmed my heart. I don't think most of people realise that they don't need to cope on their own and go out to risk catching the virus. I hope many of them will contact me for help. I'll be more than happy to do something for them, as someone did to me when I was in self - isolation. I just wish there was a test to find out if I already contracted and got over the virus, so I could fully immerse in volunteering without a fear."

**To join the Whatsapp group: [bit.ly/CR7MutualAid](https://bit.ly/CR7MutualAid)**



## SCHOOL DELIVERS LESSONS FOR KEYWORKER CHILDREN AND FREE SCHOOL MEALS

**Schools are on a steep learning curve as they devise new ways of teaching away from the classroom.** Parents have also realised just how difficult the job of a teacher is as they take on home schooling full-time. The Pegasus Trust, which includes the primary and infant schools: Cypress, Ecclesbourne, Beulah and Whitehorse Manor, like many other schools has created an online learning resource [www.pegasusacademytrust.org/online-learning](http://www.pegasusacademytrust.org/online-learning) to help children and parents navigate these unprecedented times. However, it's not just children's education which needs to be maintained

but also their physical development which is why the school is continuing to provide hot free school meals. "We are serving hot meals for our most vulnerable pupils from Whitehorse Manor School but as a takeaway service," said Jolyon Roberts, Trust Executive Head and CEO. The school is opening from 1-6pm but only for the children of 'key workers' and have limited numbers. He added: "I think we'll be well used to dealing with remote learning as we go on. We are still on a steep learning curve here and will have to break down some of the traditional 'professional distance' if

we're to keep in touch with our children properly by, for instance, giving them our e-mail addresses or chatting through apps which would have been out of the question in the past. "I think it's important that families establish some kind of routine but we are well aware that they are not teachers and the current thinking is that setting around a third of what would normally be done in school is about right." **Children's authors are offering online read-alouds and activities on social media. Here are 50 of the best: [www.weareteachers.com/virtual-author-activities/](http://www.weareteachers.com/virtual-author-activities/)**

### Mr Spoerer has long been an inspirational teacher at Ecclesbourne Primary School.

Last summer he took a group of children from the school to perform at the Albert Hall and most days after the school day has finished he is to be found running 'Jam Bus' music clubs.

However, on the last day of school before the shutdown he excelled himself. With unfailing patience and good humour he sent the children and parents who came to him away with a smile and something to keep them going over the uncertain weeks ahead.



Every child who came to him left with a musical instrument and a link to classes online where they could practice and improve. The enthusiasm of the children was palpable and they were queuing up to get the guitars, ukuleles, djembes and

keyboards that Mr Spoerer was handing out.

Whilst this was going on, he still had a music club to run, and the children in this club waited patiently and with good humour for him to be finished so he could work with them. All of this is a culmination of the hard work and passion that Mr Spoerer has poured into his teaching of music at Ecclesbourne Primary School.

It also really shows the value of music education at school and the children of Ecclesbourne School are very lucky to have any music teacher, let alone one as inspiring as Mr Spoerer.

## TEACHER WITH TWINS DELIVERS LESSONS VIA WEBCAM TO SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

**Secondary school teacher and mother of two-and-half-year old twins Lauren Eells is trying to keep her students motivated despite GCSE and A-Level exams being cancelled.** The history teacher has found that online communities are providing vital resources for learning.

She has also offered to help parents via the Thornton Heath Local Facebook page if they needed assistance in understanding something that has been assigned for their child or if they need more resources to reach out. She told The Chronicle: "My school was closed down two days before the government announced the closure of all schools and with no notice we were sent home to teach digitally.

"This has proven to be inexplicably difficult as the twins are also at home. Navigating the world of working at home, delivering lessons via webcam to 11-18 year olds when you have two small humans running riot around you is not ideal.



"To make matters more difficult, the government also announced they were cancelling GCSE and A-level exams. That now means that 10 hours of my week is spent teaching Year 11 and Year 13 classes who have now been told there are no exams at the end of the year which has proven to be highly demotivating and thus a real challenge to maintain. "Nonetheless I have discovered a world of online one-off classes and courses which have boosted my spirits. Classes for me have ranged from yoga to Zumba and then there are the virtual, interactive

toddler groups which have us singing and dancing together almost as if there is nothing in the world to worry about! "There is so much criticism levelled at social media but at a time where social distancing is paramount, I have found these online communities to have healing and uniting powers!"

Lauren has been keeping her little ones happy with help from Mama Tribe Let's Stay at Home free live classes on Facebook which have offered a busy week of activities including: Zumba, ballet, forest school activities, baby massage and much more. There is also Cole Chance Yoga on YouTube and Lauren said the twins have been glued to @Captainfantastic on Instagram who on Saturday had a 24 hour party, with live magic, science experiments as well as singing and dancing! @Cliptheatre also does bed time stories with puppets and singing every night! •Lauren can be contacted on Facebook @ Lauren CE

## TREMENDOUS SADNESS FOR CHILDCARE WORKERS AT THORNTON HEATH NURSERY

**Child care workers have expressed 'tremendous sadness' at not being able to see the children they have formed such strong bonds with.**

Staff at the Ministars Day Nursery which provides care for children aged two to five-year's-old and is based within St Paul's Church Hall in Thornton Heath, closed their doors on Friday (March 20), due to the 'very low intake' of children whose parents are classed as key workers.

Manager Marie Long said: "As nursery practitioners, we create strong bonds with our children so the prospect of not being able to see them for a long period of time saddens us tremendously.

"Not only do nursery staff provide care and support for our children, but we also invest in providing support to our



parents.

"During the lead up to the closures, the staff were becoming increasingly anxious and emotional. "Our parents also felt the same with the major issue being the uncertainty as to when the nursery will reopen.

"Households where there are two parents, have had to plan ahead to manage their day and balance it

between looking after the children and working from home.

"For those single parents, this is much more difficult, especially for those living in flats where there is no outdoor space. "The Covid-19 has created a rippling effect all round, from the financial aspect right through to the children's education in preparing them to transition into big school.

"We have since set up a Facebook page, where we share activity ideas that could be done at home as well as story sessions conducted by the staff prior to our closure.

"Our aim was to help maintain friendships amongst the children, their families and staff as well as reducing the anxiety when it comes to reopening the nursery." [www.ministarsltd.com](http://www.ministarsltd.com)

**Here's what various celebrities are offering you and your kids for FREE daily to help with their education while schools are closed.**

- 9.00am - PE with Joe Wicks [https://youtu.be/6v-a\\_dpwhro](https://youtu.be/6v-a_dpwhro)
  - 10.00am - Maths with Carol Vorderman [www.themathsfactor.com](http://www.themathsfactor.com)
  - 11.00am - English with David Walliams <https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses/>
  - 12.00pm - Lunch (cooking with Jamie Oliver) <https://www.jamieoliver.com/features/category/get-kids-cooking/>
  - 2.00pm - History with Dan Snow (free for 30-days) <https://tv.historyhit.com/signup/package>
  - 4.00pm - Home Economics with Theo Michaels (Mon/Wed/Fri) <https://www.instagram.com/theocooks>
- Other online activities for children include:
- Science with Professor Brian Cox, Robin Ince & Guests <https://cosmicshambles.com/stayathome/upcoming-schedule>
  - 9.30am Wednesday 25 March - Geography with Steve Backshall <https://twitter.com/SteveBackshall/status/1242058846941712385>
  - For older kids, 50 free revision resources for 11+, GCSEs and A-Levels: [http://www.eparenting.co.uk/education/50\\_free\\_revision\\_resources\\_for\\_gcse\\_a\\_level\\_11\\_plus\\_and\\_sats.php](http://www.eparenting.co.uk/education/50_free_revision_resources_for_gcse_a_level_11_plus_and_sats.php)

## VISIT THE LIBRARY ONLINE

**Residents can use their Croydon Library card to unlock access to a tens of thousands of free books, magazines and films online even though libraries are closed.**

More than 40,000 eBooks and audio books are newly-available and thousands of up-to-date newspapers, both national and regional, can also be read online, in over 100 languages and more than 700 magazines.

Music videos are available to watch, and hundreds of films can be streamed, including classic and animated films, dramas and comedies.

Croydon library cards also offer access to a variety of online courses including languages, and for the borough's younger residents, there are children's stories, quizzes and games available to enjoy. Access all of the virtual library online offering through the MyLibraryApp, which can be downloaded for free from the App Store and Google Play.

Anyone without a library card that would like to access the resources can apply: [www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/join-the-library/joining-borrowing](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/join-the-library/joining-borrowing) and will receive instant access to the services.

The Museum of Croydon will be offering a digital Inside the Clocktower programme, offering behind-the-scenes looks at the collections which have not been seen before: [www.museumofcroydon.com](http://www.museumofcroydon.com)

**The National Theatre is switching to its YouTube channel from April 2, under the banner of National Theatre at Home.**

Every Thursday at 7pm will see a new play released along with bonus content including cast and creative Q&As. The line-up kicks off with Richard Bean's farce 'One Man, Two Guvnors', starring a pre-chat-show-days James Corden. [www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/at-home](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/at-home)

# USE YOUR COMMON SENSE AND KEEP YOUR DISTANCE IN PARKS

In these times of lockdown our parks and open spaces are more important than they have ever been. Undervalued for many years they are now being rediscovered by cooped up residents desperate to get some fresh air while they carry out their daily exercise routines.

The council issued an update on March 23 saying that all outdoor gyms, playgrounds and public toilets were closed but parks remained open to fulfil the: 'important role in the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents and are lifeline for those without gardens and others needing fresh air or exercise.' The parks department reaffirmed the advice about two metre social distancing their hands before leaving their homes and as soon as they return from being outside.

They asked those exhibiting symptoms of coronavirus to avoid parks and asked that dogs be kept on leads to avoid unnecessary contact with other users.

Initially, this advice was not heeded and outdoor gyms had to be taped off in Thornton Heath Rec and Grangewood



*Pictured: Children have been using the paths in Grangewood Park to do cheerful chalk drawings*

Park because groups of people were continuing to use them.

The guidance issued by the government stipulates groups of no more than two and from the same household and exercise just once a day. However, the abuse has continued with groups playing football, basketball, cricket and one woman observed teaching a young teenager how to use a crossbow right next to a main path in Grangewood.

At Thornton Heath Rec, residents complained about the large groups using the Rec.

One resident appealed for caution stating how his sister had lost a colleague and very dear friend, who was



*Police move on irresponsible gym user from Thornton Heath Rec.*

only 32-year's-old.

He said: "The virus was only in its early stages in England when he was infected, but cases have soared since. We need to stay at home as much as possible. Nobody likes it, but the death of someone who means something to anyone you love, isn't worth it. Remember last summer school holidays, when it rained constantly? We all managed (just about) to entertain our kids. The people of Thornton Heath have survived hardship for centuries, let's continue."

On Friday police were then observed moving along people in the Rec who were breaching the new measures



*Walks have uncovered Spring treasures like this Snake's Head Fritillary.*

and returned again over the weekend (pictured). Lambeth Council was forced to close The Rookery in Streatham after a request from the police because people were not physical distancing.

The majority of people have been observing the new rules and posting glorious Spring pictures of our parks and green spaces.

Friends of Grangewood Park issued this statement: "It's great to see so many people using the park which we have so long promoted because of its beauty and magic. But in these challenging and unprecedented times we just have to be more appreciative of other people and keep our distance.

"Just use your common sense. Ultimately the park isn't a lockable park and so if it is closed it would require enforcement and the police, I am sure have more important matters to be dealing with. PLEASE follow the government guidance about social distancing and exercising once a day with members of your own household.

"We need to all work together. Ultimately be responsible and use your common sense so we can all continue to enjoy our green space in the weeks ahead."

# THE PUPPY LOVE STORY PUT ON HOLD BY CORONAVIRUS

Tashi and Harp's one year anniversary is fast approaching.

Tashi, a handsome street dog from Turkey and Harp, a cheeky rescue from Ireland first met in a local park and have been in love ever since, meeting two to three times a week for cuddles and fun. From sending each other Valentine's cards to leaving scent messages in the park for each other, their anniversary celebrations are sadly on hold for now.

It's not just humans who are finding these times challenging, animals also find themselves suffering in many ways. At best, pet's day to day routines are completely disrupted which can cause them to feel unsettled and anxious as pets thrive on routine and structure. They will not be used to having the whole family at home all the time and while some may enjoy the company others may find it difficult. At some point life will return to normality and those pets will find themselves suddenly alone while the kids are back at school and adults return to work.

More significantly, there are people with pets who have chronic illnesses that require regular treatment and medication that may suffer as a result of vet closures and social distancing guidelines.



Worse still is the situation for pets with sudden illness or injury or reaching end of life situations. All local vets are doing

their best but it's important we all put routine concerns aside for now and give them the time and space to care for those who desperately need it right now.

Another effect that is that felt acutely by animal rescue charities with the RSPCA's cruelty hotline receiving a 60 per cent increase in reports.

Their ability to routinely do home checks for prospective new homes and to physically rehome abused and abandoned pets is almost impossible to carry out during this crisis. This is also the case with animal charities abroad who rehome a significant number of pets to the UK, now impossible with routine travel severely restricted.

If you're lucky enough to be able to have so many pets that you regularly bulk buy their food, you may not struggle as much as those who shop for it week to week. Online pet food

suppliers as well as local supermarkets are experiencing significant pressure from demand despite there not being a gap in the supply chain. If your pet's friends or families are struggling then it's important to help them and share as pets are all in this situation with us.

If you're new to exercise or new to using local parks for exercise please think of all those dogs that were walked in parks before corona - if you don't like dogs or are scared of them try to understand their needs more and the limits on where they can be properly exercised.

**Mark Nelson vets on Woodville Road is still open but can only see clients face-to-face in emergencies.**

A vet or nurse will greet you and take your pet to a consultation room with post assessment done over the phone or via Skype.

Place orders for medication at least one week before it is due to run out as there may be delivery delays. Some medication may be able to be posted.

Routine vaccinations and health checks have been suspended with no additional charge when they are able to restart.

Cat or dog neutering is unavailable so keep all unneutered cats inside.

**Message from The Mayor of Croydon Humayun Kabir**



*I wanted to send everyone my best wishes during this difficult time, and to reassure you that the Council is working hard to continue to deliver the vital public services you depend on and to support the most vulnerable people in our communities.*

*The council website has Covid-19 web page which is being updated daily with information including any changes to service and if you do not already receive the weekly Your Croydon newsletter <http://news.croydon.gov.uk/subscribe/>*

*The recent response to the request for volunteers to support the NHS is a fantastic example of how ordinary people across the country are determined to contribute and help and advice is also available from our borough's excellent voluntary organisations.*

*My message to you all is follow central government's advice and that way as many as possible can stay safe and healthy through this pandemic.*

# DAY SIX OF LOCKDOWN: A WALK IN THE PARK

At the time of writing it has been six days since the coronavirus aka Covid-19 lock-down for me, writes Chetna Kapacee.

I am aware I am in the fortunate and privileged position to be in a secure job (for a change!), have a roof over my head and no kids to be homeschooling!

However, it's still not easy being isolated, especially for someone who is so used to being around people both professionally and personally.

Keeping in touch with friends and

family via video calling, phone calls and of course Microsoft Teams as the tool of choice connecting with colleagues whilst working from home has kept some of my sanity.

Knowing we are allowed to go out for exercise, I decided to make a conscious effort to do this - taking a walk at the end of every day (even when I don't feel like it sometimes), initially starting out in Grangewood Park.

To commit myself to this every day of the (scheduled) 21 days of lockdown and to try and take something positive

away from this difficult time, I decided to post a little update on social media every day. I have lived here for 16 plus years and have noticed something new every day in the park.

I am seeing my neighbourhood with different eyes, taking the time to appreciate the nature and unique things about this place. Despite the issues that we are challenged with, the streets falling silent and empty give us all an opportunity to look at our locality in a new way.

[www.instagram.com/antehc](http://www.instagram.com/antehc)

# PARKING CHARGES SUSPENDED

Parking charges in Croydon have been suspended until further notice.

Croydon Council has announced that drivers do not need to need to display a permit or pay-and-display ticket to use parking bays in the borough.

The decision has been made amid the coronavirus crisis and is expected to last as long as restrictions are in place. It applies to on-street parking and all council run car parks.

And the council has also suspended the issuing of all new permits.

# TRIBUTES TO REMEMBER COMMUNITY STALWART: ALDERMAN ADRIAN DENNIS

**Tributes have been paid to Adrian Dennis who has been described as one of Croydon's finest devotees to civic duty.**

Adrian passed away in his sleep on Friday March 27 after a short spell in hospital following an operation aged 67.

Adrian, who was born in Penzance in Cornwall, was a long time resident of Thornton Heath ward and was passionate about the area having served as a Labour councillor for 20 years.

He was elected as a Labour Councillor for Thornton Heath Ward in 1986 having moved there with his family in 1979. As a councillor he held many important positions, including Labour Chief Whip and Chair of the Planning and Environment Committee.

By 1997 he was appointed Deputy Leader of Croydon Council and was Cabinet Member for Planning, Environment and Regeneration between 2000 and 2006.

It was during this period that Thornton Heath's £8m, then state of the art,



leisure centre was built.

Adrian began his working life at Westminster City Council where he was responsible for developing area plans, planning policy and research.

In 1980 he moved to Southwark Council as a Town Planner, where his work included the planning of the London Bridge Quarter, London Bridge Station and other major schemes including the Tate Modern extensions.

One of his proudest achievements before retirement was fulfilling his role as lead case officer on the London

Bridge Tower, now known as The Shard, where he enabled its completion from start to finish.

Adrian's commitment to civic duty and contribution to public service was exceptional. This was formally recognised in 2006 when he was made an Honorary Alderman and Freeman of Croydon. The latter is the highest award a council can give to a resident and Adrian is still only the second Labour Councillor to achieve this accolade in the 130 years since Croydon obtained its royal charter.

In recent years Adrian worked as a planning consultant and was a formidable opponent in planning hearings. Adrian gave freely of his time organising Thornton Heath's Festival. He was a Trustee of Croydon African Caribbean Family Organisation UK, a Thornton Heath based charity that provides a Day Centre for the elderly and a school for pupils excluded from mainstream education.

The charity was founded by his long-time friend and colleague from Southwark Council. Honorary

Alderwoman Gee Bernard. Adrian was one of its staunchest supporters over the years, even serving as Chair in 2013/2014.

He was Chair of Croydon Disability Forum from 2014 onwards, a passion he continued from his time as Unison's disabled staff health safety representative at Southwark Council. It is a hallmark of Adrian's character, that he championed the rights of excluded and disadvantaged groups to his last.

Adrian will be dearly missed by his family, friends, political colleagues and resident alike. Adrian loved his family dearly. He is survived by his wife Flim Dennis; daughter Nening Dennis; son Philip Dennis; and brothers Robert and Martin Dennis. His funeral is currently being arranged but will be a small, private affair, given limitations on the size of gatherings due to the Coronavirus crisis.

A memorial service is planned for when the crisis passes and a date will be announced in due course.

**Councillor Pat Clouder said about the man she described as her mentor, colleague and friend.**

"I have known Adrian and his family for nearly 30 years. I first met him when I became an activist in the Labour Party when I first came to Thornton Heath. He was not only the Chair of the Ward of Thornton Heath but also my Local Councillors and it wasn't long before he had me delivering leaflets and knocking on doors.

After a few years he encouraged me to stand for the local elections to represent Thornton Heath. With his support I was elected and joined the team with Adrian and the late Wally Garrett becoming a member of a very formidable team. Adrian's knowledge in many areas particularly planning, and planning applications and historical knowledge of Croydon and Thornton Heath was amazing.

He was always there for me and over the years we worked closely together to improve Thornton Heath and work for all our residents utilising his amazing organisation skills. Adrian I will miss you so much as my mentor, as a colleague but mainly as my friend. Rest in peace."

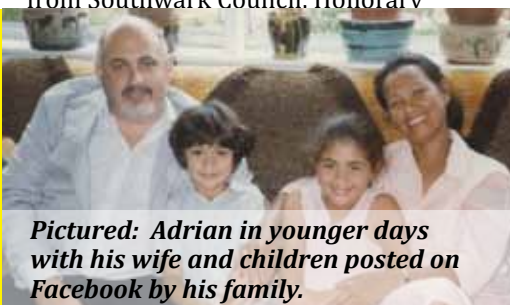


*Pictured: Adrian with Cllr Pat Clouder and Cllr Toni Letts.*

**Cllr Callton Young OBE and Chairman of CACFO UK said:**

"Adrian was my 'civic duty rock', whether helping me to navigate local politics, manage the challenges of Charing a local charity through difficult times or pulling off another successful Thornton Heath Festival, he was always there. He was Thornton Heath's first among equals and I will miss him dearly."

**Cllr Karen Jewitt said:** "Adrian was my go-to person on anything to do with planning in my ward, his knowledge was second to none. He would guide me in the right direction, is advice was always spot on. I first met Adrian and Flim in the mid 80's through Thornton Heath Labour Party. I would pick up leaflets to deliver in the ward. My son and daughter in the



*Pictured: Adrian in younger days with his wife and children posted on Facebook by his family.*

buggy and off we would go, he taught me how to fold leaflets properly as seemingly I was not doing it properly, especially his 1986 election campaign ones!

"We were always fundraising, jumble sales were a favourite, our children would dress up in the old clothes and play with the toys. They were good times filled with exceptionally fond memories that I will keep forever."

**Cllr Tony Newman current Leader of Croydon Council said** "Adrian always had time to help and support others, but he did expect you to grasp the details of what he was explaining first time around, which was fine if it was the minutes of the previous meeting, and somewhat more challenging if it was all 900 pages of the Councils local plan. And if you then got an email on the issue at 3am you

knew you were in trouble. But nobody really minded because underneath everyone knew he had a heart of gold."

**Valerie Shawcross former Leader of Croydon Council said:** "Adrian was my deputy leader 1997-2000 and led the way on planning and regeneration for the Council. He was so much more than that though. He was my thoughtful, wise friend, adviser and confidant. He had a vision and a heartfelt yearning for a better future for Croydon and was the best example to be found of a good, capable and decent man doing public service as a local Councillor. I have so much to thank him for, not least for his kindness to me, and I am desperately saddened by his sudden death. I am sure that everyone who worked with him will remember his wry good humour, his deep knowledge and fascination with all thing technological and his steady, calm nature. As I sit here writing this I'm looking at the music centre he 'built' for me when I moved to my flat. An act of kindness that still makes me smile every day."

**Mayor of Croydon Humayun Kabir said:** "Adrian Dennis will be hugely missed in Croydon's civic society. He was great advocate for disabled community. Always helpful with a lovely smile. Condolences to his family."

## HELP FOR HOUSEHOLDS USING GAS AND ELECTRICITY TOP UPS

**According to latest government figures 23,670 Croydon households pay for their electricity using pre-payment meters, needing to go to the shops to top up their key card.**

The government has issued guidance about supporting residents using pre payment meters who cannot leave their homes due to the coronavirus. This applies to key gas and electricity meters: [www.gov.uk/government/news/government-agrees-measures-with-energy-industry-to-support-vulnerable-people-through-covid-19](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-agrees-measures-with-energy-industry-to-support-vulnerable-people-through-covid-19).

The guidance asks residents to contact their energy suppliers, to discuss options for keeping them supplied.

This could include nominating a third party for credit top ups, having a

discretionary fund added to their credit, or being sent a pre-loaded top up card so that their supply is not interrupted.

For families who need urgent help with food vouchers, utility tops or with rent arrears you can refer to the Discretionary Support Team.

Firstly email: [dhp2@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:dhp2@croydon.gov.uk) or only as a matter of urgency phone 020 8604 7226 – operating from 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday .

Gateway is offering e-vouchers for food: for the following supermarkets:

- Next day delivery: Tesco, Sainsbury's
- Within 2 working days: Morrison's
- Within 3 working days: Asda

Residents can then take that email e-voucher to the supermarket to use to buy essential items.

## COUNCIL'S IMMEDIATE HELP TO RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

**The council is offering help to those in receipt of Council tax support for their bills for 20/21 which will be reduced by £150 and no money will be collected before June.**

For those not in receipt of Council tax support, but affected financially by Covid19 they can defer their 20/21 payments by two months, by a simple online request.

This will not only help in the immediate, but give time to benefit from government schemes and make benefit claims. Anyone needing greater help than this should contact the council and each case will be considered.

For business rates; businesses eligible for the additional rates relief announced this week, this will be applied automatically and direct debits for 20/21 will be suspended.

For businesses eligible for the £10,000/£25,000 grant, letters and emails will be going out this week, with a simple form to be completed and returned and then payments will be made as quickly as possible.

Where residents or businesses have other amounts owing, the council would encourage all residents and business experiencing financial hardship to take action and contact the council to ensure help and support.

Additional services include: no council evictions, parking for NHS staff, online library services, support for the voluntary sector, domestic violence support services are open, schools for vulnerable children and key workers, six hubs supporting the most vulnerable residents in Croydon.

# SOCIAL DISTANCING DOES NOT MEAN SOCIAL DISENGAGEMENT

**Croydon SocialP is determined to find ways to remotely support the community and continue to connect people.**

The team has put together a resource pack called Reachout 2020 at [www.croydonsocialp.com/news](http://www.croydonsocialp.com/news) which says social distancing does not mean social disengagement.

It sets out a huge range of online resources, helpful numbers and advice on how best to spend your time over the weeks ahead.

It covers a section on what's available through online exercise and mindfulness amongst key topics which are really relevant to the current situation.

Croydon SocialP which started at the Parchmore Medical centre prescribes



sessions offering fitness, coffee mornings, debt advice and counselling to combat illness such as diabetes, and social isolation. Thirty-seven GP practices in Croydon, have prescribed over 30,000 social sessions but all those activities, which provide a lifeline for many elderly and vulnerable residents, have had to close during the crises.

Instead there are online exercise and activity sessions updated daily on the

Croydon SocialP Facebook page.

Janey Williams, who runs senior exercise classes at St Paul's Church says she has been asked by a few of her class attendees to do a livestream and they're already using the internet for free online exercises on Youtube.

Here are some online resources giving older people fitness at home:

- Body coach Joe Wicks (PICTURED) has devised a 10 minute chair work out for seniors <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybVMu31DLQU>

- [www.nursenextdoor.com/blog/6-easy-and-safe-exercises-for-seniors](http://www.nursenextdoor.com/blog/6-easy-and-safe-exercises-for-seniors)

- [www.evelo.com/exercises-for-seniors](http://www.evelo.com/exercises-for-seniors)

There is also support on the telephone if you feel lonely or isolated.

Silverline is a free confidential helpline

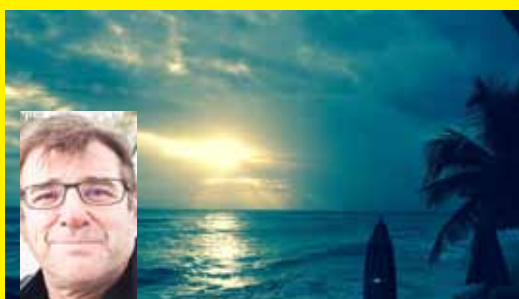
## STAY MINDFUL WITH PETER'S MEDITATION SESSIONS ON ZOOM

**During this worrying time, looking after your well-being is even more important, and one way some people have been doing this is by participating in on-line Mindful Meditation practices, lead by Peter Lawrence, a qualified and highly experience Mindfulness Meditation teacher.**

Peter runs sessions through the Zoom app, or their website [Zoom.us](http://Zoom.us), where a meeting is set up and people can join in and listen to meditations helping with feelings of anxiety, stress and of becoming overwhelmed with living through this unsettling time.

Peter says "The meditations are designed to bring a pause of soothing in an overwhelmed mind and bring some peace in a chaotic world.

This doesn't mean that things are being ignored by meditating, it's quite



the opposite, it helps in understanding and bringing our attention our feelings and then helping to and sooth ourselves in self compassion, kindness and tenderness, and then, help in understanding the importance of keeping safe, while having a daily routine and not being drawn into the news throughout the day'.

"This has helped a lot of people. Participants have fed back to say it's been a great help, and has helped them

in coping during this time, helping them sleep, making use of the day, and fully involved in activities rather than being distracted at the time, understanding they feel scarred and worried, but also reassuring that they are doing the right things in keeping themselves safe.

"At this time it's very important not to lose our hearts and minds with worry and fear, and by being Mindful we can help ourselves to become mindful and focussed on our lives and others."

These are the list of times and ID numbers you will need to use to gain access to the sessions: Monday 1pm: 352-579-466; 6.30pm: 151-459-729; Tuesday: 11.30am 148-500-994; Thursday: 6.30pm 967-413-776 and Friday at 11.30am: 624-619-877.

If you would like to participate please contact Peter by his email [peterlawrence@ymail.com](mailto:peterlawrence@ymail.com)

## KEEP CREATIVE WITH ARTIST ELLIE SCANALON

**Artist Ellie Scanalon (pictured) like many creatives has seen her show Moon Face advertised in last month's Chronicle cancelled.**

To cheer herself up and (hopefully others) she created 'Isolate and Create', a website that has links to culture and arts events that you can access on your computer.

She is also doing a daily creative challenges to help distract during these difficult weeks ahead.

"Each day I will also be posting a creative challenge with the hashtag #isolateandcreate



"Feel free to join in and share your results, I will be sharing mine! Good luck to all, let's create something new.

"It's been a difficult time as a freelancer who works in theatres and schools, all of my work has gone, and we have no income coming in.

Things feel very uncertain at the moment, but all we can do is take one day at a time.

The site also links to online screenings of productions at the Globe Theatre, Paris Opera House, West End production of Wind in the Willows and a Social Distancing Festival which gather live streams and videos of all different types of performances in one place.

You don't need to go to a gallery or museum as it will come to your house with 278 pieces of art to see at the Musée d'Orsay, in Paris or take a peak inside the National Gallery of Art in Washington Dc along with our own National Gallery in London.

[www.elliescanlan.com/isolate-and-create](http://www.elliescanlan.com/isolate-and-create)

## CANNABIS FACTORY FOUND NEAR BLOODY FIGHT SCENE

**Police are appealing for witnesses to a fight after traces of blood were found near a cannabis factory on a residential street.**

Croydon Police posted on Twitter they were called at 6.58am on Friday (20 March) to reports of a group of males fighting at Kynaston Avenue, Thornton Heath.

All suspects had fled prior to police arrival, but traces of blood, indicating that someone had been injured, was found nearby. In addition, an address was identified as a cannabis factory. One eye witness said she saw a man with lots of blood on his face and four men fighting

Another woman told The Chronicle: "I asked a policewoman at the scene what had happened not long after they arrived and she said there'd been an incident and someone was thrown from a car." The area was taped off and the aftermath was witnessed by parents and children attending a school breakfast club.

A spokesman for the Met said: "The two incidents are connected; no arrests - enquiries ongoing."

Anyone with information, call 101 quoting 1065/20MAR, Tweet @MetCC or call Crimestoppers. anonymously



**A driver involved in a hit and run fled before police arrived.**

Police were called at 4.36pm on March 25 to Whitehorse Lane, junction with Clifton Road, to a two car crash. One man, in his 30s, was treated for minor injuries. The other motorist left the scene. Enquiries are continuing.

providing information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. 0800 470 8090 [www.thesilverline.org.uk](http://www.thesilverline.org.uk).

**•The video-conferencing app Zoom is now being used by millions for work and for social gatherings.**

The virtual hangout allows everyone to dial in with video and audio, providing the next best thing to meeting up in person and allowing you to converse in real time. It has even been used to livestream weddings and was used at a recent cabinet meeting.

Others are using it as a way of keeping in touch with families. You can download the Zoom app on your computer or phone for free and join any meeting or gathering with a supplied ID. The free package lets you hold an unlimited number of meetings with up to 100 participants but they are capped at 40 minutes in length with paid packages for greater usage. <https://zoom.us>

## LOOK AFTER YOU



**There has never been a better time to spend time on yourself.**

Why not set up a coping calendar with 30 actions to look after yourself and each other during this global crisis: [www.actionforhappiness.org/coping-calendar](http://www.actionforhappiness.org/coping-calendar) or put together a five year plan?

Learn a new language, or sign up to one of the thousands of free online courses. A new career may beckon [www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue](http://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue).

Instead of lamenting the hardship and boredom of this weird time in history why not use it to rejuvenate and or discover new passions by creating a tick list of things to do from: pampering yourself with something as basic as a scented bubble bath to designing your dream home.

Research your next holiday, write a poem, start a dream journal, catch up on great movies, join an online choir, phone old friends and think about helping others by volunteering or delivering supplies to neighbours in need.

- Go on virtual tours of famous museums you've never had time to visit: [www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours](http://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours)

- Create your family tree and family timeline: [www.famberry.com/](http://www.famberry.com/)

- Watch wildlife on live webcams: <https://therevelator.org/covid-19-wildlife-livecams>

Get fit dancing by joining an Instagram dance class every Saturday at 10am@ BUMP\_DANCEFITNESS or relax with a free yoga classes: [www.freeyoga.co.uk](http://www.freeyoga.co.uk).

If you are lonely or struggling then don't be afraid to ask for help.

Get in to a routine and be kind to yourself and those around you.

There's so much to do and now there's so much time to do it in!

## COMMUNITY SHOWS 'BIG HEART' AS IT RESPONDS QUICKLY TO PANDEMIC

**The chief executive of Croydon Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Forum has praised the efforts of the volunteer and charity sector movement who have united to ensure that 'no one person is left behind' in the wake of this pandemic.**

Andrew Brown, said: "March 2020 has proved to be a month like no other in the history of our planet. Coronavirus (COVID-19) reared its ugly head out of nowhere and has caused havoc around the world and in Croydon. With jobs being lost, businesses closing and people being told to self isolate this pandemic has brought volunteers and the Voluntary Charity Sector to the forefront of everyone's mind.

"The last time this happened was the Croydon Riots back in 2011 which saw the community come out the day afterwards to help sweep and clean the streets of Croydon.

"Roll on March 2020 and the community has once again come together, even stronger this time to



**Pictured: Faiths Together soup kitchen on London Road kept open only through donations from a local café.**

make sure that no person is left behind."

Three groups that have assembled to reach the needs of the community in Croydon are:

Project 4 Youth Empowerment (P4YE), a Community Interest Company supporting young people and families in the Croydon area.

In light of the current situation they have had to adjust their working practices. They are now providing community outreach work to families in need, along with a hot meal delivery service.

Cassandra Centre which is offering

free online counselling for individuals who are finding life difficult. With domestic abuse expected to rise, they are concerned about the long term effect on families.

The Centre is also cooking and delivering meals to the vulnerable and not forgetting the young people who falls within this vulnerable group.

Revivify CIC initially responded to the Covid 19 crisis by operating from their offices based at the Alms Houses where they tried serving by appointment or delivery, but within days were overwhelmed with requests.

By week three, in partnership with Good Food Matters in New Addington, they sourced, redistributed and cooked meals for over 100 residents and made up 107 food parcels that were delivered with the support of volunteers from mutual aid groups and the local community. The cooked meals went to a variety of different client groups including the old and then young all around Croydon.

Mr Brown added: "During this time they

have had to adapt their procedures at faced pace, but are confident that even in this crisis there is opportunity to upscale their operations to cope this situation we all find ourselves in.

"Each of the above groups along with the hundreds of other Voluntary Charity Sector groups and over a thousand registered volunteers have shown that with little time and money but a big heart help can be provided at a quick pace if the will is right."

He also mentioned the four infrastructure groups who I know have been working tirelessly over the past three weeks to coordinate and support initiatives.

Asian Resource Centre Croydon, Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association, CVA and Croydon BME Forum are working with Croydon Council on bringing a cohesive approach to helping the local community.

Full information can be found on their websites and if you would like to volunteer or donate to the Croydon Initiative, please contact one of the infrastructure groups to get more information on how you can get involved.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES SET TO REMAIN OPEN

**The council is keeping its domestic violence service open amid fears of a huge increase in abuse during the coronavirus lockdown as victims self isolate with a violent partner.**

Domestic abuse experts are calling on the government to provide emergency funds as refuges prepare for an influx of referrals due to concerns the Covid-19 outbreak will fuel violence in the home and France is relocating women beaten by their partners in to hotels and has created a secret code word for them to discreetly seek help in pharmacies in response to a huge increase.

Croydon's Domestic Abuse Service, the FJC continues to be available for drop in's Monday to Friday 9am-5pm and booked appointments though they are advising clients who book an appointment that it might be completed over the phone in the event that the centre has to close to the public.

If you are aware of a victim who is having to self isolate reassure them that the FJC will continue to support them in

their safety planning.

Some of the things you can advise anyone you know living in fear:

Always keep phone charged and close by. If you are feeling threatened in the house, try to go to low risk areas- places to avoid are the kitchen and bathroom. If you have a family member or a friend you can provide a safe word which informs them to call the police without your partner knowing (e.g I need my red jumper back?)

If you have neighbours you trust, inform them of what is going on, and ask them to call the police if they hear sounds of a violent attack. Teach the children to call 999, if possible depending on age, to say their full name and address.

iPhone users can set up a quick emergency call button on the side of the phone. Make sure to turn the sound down. Encourage women to think about a safe place to go to, such a refuge, family or friends house.

Contact: 020 8688 0100

Email: fjc@croydon.gov.uk

## NEW GYM SET TO WAIT EVEN LONGER TO OPEN

**The long awaited unveiling of the new gym on the Ambassador House forecourt had already been delayed until April prior to this crisis.**

The Energie Fitness branch was meant to open at the beginning of March but had to be postponed because of: "Unavoidable delays with the construction to make the new gym as amazing as the plans."

The gym which is due to open in the old Flora Sandes pub is intending to offer state of the art Precor equipment with 30 plus classes.

On their Twitter feed the gym which is a franchise reassures members who have signed up to the gym, saying there is: "NOTHING TO PAY until we open so don't worry. We are sorry, but the gym will be awesome and well worth the wait."

It is now unlikely the gym will be able to open in April with gyms across the country shut indefinitely, including the council's Better Leisure facilities,



because of the lockdown.

Energie is instead offering free home workout ideas and healthy recipes on social media Facebook and Instagram: energiefitnessthorntonheath including smoothies and fitness challenges.

Their latest post is full of positivity: "Every day is another chance to get stronger, to eat better, to live healthier and to be the best version of you".

## COUNCILLOR PROVIDES VITAL LISTENING EAR TO ELDERLY LUNCH CLUB OLDERS

**A part from being a councillor for the Thornton Heath Ward I also work part-time managing a local older peoples lunch and social club, writes Karen Jewitt.**

We have one other part time staff member, the rest are volunteers. This past fortnight has been a challenge to us all, most of our volunteers are retired so fit into the over 70 group, keeping the service running has been a difficult task to say the least but so far we are managing.

I have had the work telephone transferred to ring in my house so my folks have contact when they need it, and they have rung, constantly. Once they found out they could they did! I get calls from morning till night. My daughter is getting to know them all! There is no filter on who they talk to, if I am not available she gets the whole story, sometimes it is important but mostly it is nothing, they just need to



**Pictured: Staff at Rupali Ruchi restaurant, Croydon donate hot food for elder folks.**

hear a voice. On top of making calls to me our lunch club members and shoppers (we also offer a door to door shopping service to the supermarket) are getting phone calls at least once a day to let them know we are still supporting our 60 members.

We are especially targeting those people who will not have outside contact or a real person to speak to, it is essential for their mental health that we keep the conversation going.

Our local community has been amazing. An Indian restaurant provided us

with hot meals delivered last night by one of our volunteers. Our folks were thrilled at this act of kindness. The Asian food restaurateurs are coming together across the UK to work with community hubs delivering hot dinners to every vulnerable person who needs it. I cannot thank them enough for this huge act of kindness, commitment and generosity.

I am working with the Cllr Patsy Cummings who is organising the food hub from Stanley Halls to make sure all my clients get a shopping bag full of 'rations' on Saturday. We have a mini bus that has been offered to the hub with drivers when it is needed to transport goods or people. These bags of food are life savers to those who have no families at all or any who live local so please donate, you have no idea the difference it makes.

Trying to get food delivered using on line facilities is difficult just now as

most of what is needed is either out of stock or takes too long to arrive. If needed some of our ward budget will be donated to help.

I would like to thank one of our locals Mickey Harris who offered to cook for anyone on their own, he will be delivering bags for us on Saturday. Mickey checked up on someone we could not make contact with (glad to say everything is okay) and today is delivering hot food to an elderly woman who is struggling. I am very grateful for his kindness.

I can honestly say this working from home isolation has been harder than physically being there. Trying to reassure our elders and in quite a few cases their relatives that we are doing our best and that no one will be left behind is emotionally tiring but we will get there. If I am a bit slow in responding to some ward issues please understand I am prioritising what is important to our vulnerable residents first.

## LEGACY YOUTH ZONE: SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

The £6.5million state-of-the-art Legacy Youth Zone, which has been opened less than seven months is now sitting empty with services being forced on online to provide continued support and activities for young people during the Covid-19 crisis.

It is using its online platforms to keep in regular contact and interact during this time with members and their families providing entertainment through a variety of games, challenges, positive conversations and trends to engage with at home and a laugh here and there.

The social media activity aims to create a 'Youth Zone at home' and Legacy are working with other Youth Zones across the UK to create and share content to inspire and engage young people across the network.

Young People are able to engage with Legacy daily on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snap Chat, Tik Tock and YouTube.

Legacy has also set up an email for young people in case they want to be in touch which the team. The email is [Talk2us@Legacyyouthzone.org](mailto:Talk2us@Legacyyouthzone.org)



**Pictured: Head of Youth Work, Myke Catterall making deliveries to members.**

A spokeswoman for Legacy said: "Our members may be experiencing anxiety during this time so we are also getting in touch with them via phone to check in."

In order to best support the community, Legacy have partnered up with the Croydon Voluntary Action to donate some of our produce from Fareshare to help support local families.

The spokeswoman added: "We have food packages that we are also putting together for our members and their families in are in need and most need the support at this time, if they would like one, they just need to email on the address above."

"We are encouraging everyone to keep being positive, that we are in this

together, and we can get through this together."

There is more detailed information along with contacts for the Shout text line <https://www.giveusashout.org> which is a free service for anyone in crisis and The Mix [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk) which gives advice and support for under 25s. Links to both and more useful information of members is on the Legacy web site [www.legacyyouthzone.org](http://www.legacyyouthzone.org)

\*In March, the council's children's services previously rated "inadequate" by Ofsted was raised to "good" in less than three years

Inspectors praised the council's services for children in need of help and protection and said senior leaders have "created an environment in which staff feel valued and enjoy working in the borough".

The Ofsted report praised the council's £6m investment in its new youth work building, Legacy Youth Zone noted that it "ensuring increasingly swift and well-targeted responses to reduce risk" faced by young people.

## CHARITIES STRUGGLE

Many charities have been hit by the fallout from the pandemic which has seen fundraising income dramatically drop and activities hit.

Despite the closure of shops and offices the demands on charities to provide support to service users is rising.



MPs and peers from seven different political parties have asked the government to provide support for charities.

Unlike restaurants and cafes, charities providing frontline services need to stay open, and so cannot transfer furloughed staff onto the government's wage scheme.

Joseph Jeffers, CEO of Thornton Heath based charity ASKI (Advice Support Knowledge Information) which provides a wide range of services to the older people said: "We have had to close our office in Brigstock Road. I am working from home where I have the data base of all 147 members of ASKI.

"We call approximately 15 people each day on a rotational basis and we send out updates on what services are available on line. Thankfully 97 per cent of our older members are on line and are able to use social media.

"People are calling or texting each other as the main issue is finding things to do that keep people active. The majority of our members are over 70 and are getting support from family members. "The Board of ASKI is doing everything possible to make certain that we can continue to support our users and importantly that we get support to insure that we remain open after this crisis. Although we are closed we still need to pay rent for the premises which for a small charity is a significant drain on resources when we are not able to operate."

## YOUTH CHARITY IS USING THE POWER OF MUSIC TO ALLEVIATE BOREDOM

The chief executive of a youth music charity has described how it is experiencing the most 'unusual and unexpected difficulties' of its existence.

Magdalene Adenaike, who is also the founder of Music Relief which recently opened a base at Thornton Heath Leisure Centre will have spoken for many in the youth sector facing similar uncertain times.

She added: "As a face to face charity, closing our doors as a result of this pandemic is something that is proving very difficult for us and on the young people, because this has deprived us from the energy and buzz that comes when we gather together, the hands on support and mentoring we offer, sharing ideas together and hearing the young people teasing each other in playful manners. It has also caused us to lose out on some of our financial streams purely because we are unable to meet



**Pictured: Music lessons are now being delivered on line.**

for now.

"As a result of this, we are having to think creatively and move some of our services online to ensure that we are still meet the needs of the young people and providing them with levels of comfort during this unprecedented time.

Services being offered include: music and vocal lessons; lessons in how to make a documentary, a mentoring service, introduction to multi dimensional motion art and how to create a DIY multi dimensional

experience using Unity and Adobe.

The charity is asking all young people who want to register for any of these services to send a Whatsapp message to: 07535990735 with their name, age, parents name and contact details and staff will get back to them with further information.

Magdalene added: "We strongly believe in utilising the power of music because we understand the benefits and its ability to alleviate boredom, improve an individual's mood, reduce stress and anxiety, improve memory, ease pain and provide comfort. This is very relevant now in a period of uncertainty and anxiety."

Music Relief is asking for support to ensure it can continue to serve the young people and also the tutors many of whom are freelancers and deeply affected by the lockdown. [www.music-relief.org/covid-19-music-stars-support/](http://www.music-relief.org/covid-19-music-stars-support/)

## OFF THE RECORD GIVES SUPPORT IN STRESSFUL TIMES

A charity providing mental health support for young people is expanding on line counselling in these "very stressful and disorientating" times".

Croydon has the highest youth population and Off The Record offers free counselling and mental health support to children and young people aged 14 - 25 year olds.

Assistant director Geoff Jones said: "This is the first time in 25 years that we were not open for business as usual to meet young people in Croydon in order to support them with their well being.

"We have contacted all the young people that we are working with to offer them telephone support. Our on line counselling is still operating and expanding.

"We recognise that for many young

people these are very stressful and disorientating or strange times. We work with young refugees and asylum seekers as well as young carers and believe that these groups are particularly vulnerable.

"In the coming weeks we are working to ensure that we have a dynamic and creative offer to young people with particular focus on our online offer and virtual resources.

"We want to stay in touch with local young people and provide uplifting and positive information as well as continue to be the "listening ear" for young people who might be feeling cut off, lonely or isolated."

If you have any thoughts or ideas about how Off The Record can help young people with their mental health contact us through our Facebook page or leave a message on 0208251 0251.

## COUNCILLOR AVAILABLE TO TALK AND PROVIDE HELP

We are now living in unprecedented times. Never have we witnessed such a situation that we now find ourselves in, writes Thornton Heath councillor Pat Clouder.

The council is working hard to ensure all the information people need is on the council website on support, hardship difficulties, benefits, council tax, paying your rent, debt advice and many more with all contact details the website is <https://croydon.gov.uk>

While I myself am in self isolation there is still lots to do. I've remotely been working with faith groups, carers, voluntary organisations and residents to ensure they have the resources they need. We know this is going to be a while before we get back to normal, but I have been and am available to talk to people and try to ensure they are safe

and that they have what they need on a day to day basis and to address any queries they have. Also, to ensure our elderly and vulnerable residents have that contact with friends and family that is so important for their wellbeing and mental health.

As the Labour Group Secretary, I have been helping to set up an alternative communication system now all council meetings are cancelled; working with group officers in setting up video conference calls. We have held out first executive and looking in to our first Labour Group Meeting as it is imperative we continue to do the job you elected us to do.

If you need to talk to your local councillor contact either myself, Cllr Karen Jewitt or Cllr Callton Young. If you don't have access to the internet contact Cllr Clouder on 0208 604 7026.

# THE ART MOVEMENT GIVING A WELCOME FEEL TO 'EVERYONE' IN THORNTON HEATH

**A** year ago, as an artist, I felt so lucky to have the opportunity to paint a mural at a prime location, right in front of the station in Thornton Heath, writes Vân Dang.

What came out of it has left me feeling that I think it is a high point of my life. I had a chance to work with a group of young people from Thornton Heath last summer thanks to Young Croydon's summer activity programme. The young people came from all backgrounds, brought personalities, lives, energy and colours to creating the design. This year, when I continued to paint the left front walls, many local residents came and helped. Each letter reflects a name,



an activity, a contribution many of us did in Thornton Heath. Each of the letter tells a story.

One of the high points was when I saw a little boy holding his mum's hand and spelling out 'Thornton Heath'. I hope when he grows up it reminds him of a good childhood memory. I still need to

paint the steps for sitting at the bus stop which says 'kindness lives here'. I can't wait to be able to get out and do it!

I love it when people drop by saying 'hello' when I paint and by the time I finish painting these murals, I think I will have chatted to half of Thornton Heath!

Thank you everyone for giving me this chance to brighten up where we live and a chance to know many of you!

- Vân is one of the artists appointed by the council as part of a project to reimagine the Ambassador House forecourt.

## GOVERNMENT HIGH STREET TASK FORCE VISITS THORNTON HEATH

**T**he government High Street task force visited last month (March) to help develop a strategy to look at ways of making the best of Thornton Heath's shopping district.

Thornton Heath was selected to take part in a government pilot where a task force of leading business experts provide on the spot advice on how to vitalise the High Street which will now be more needed than ever after the crisis is over.

On March 6 three members of the Task Force: Simon Quin, a former High Street manager and co-chair at the Institute for Place Management (IPM), HSTF Executive Director Graham Galpin, a town centre changer and international speaker and Tom Hindmarch, coordinator for IPM and Industry Body for Business Improvement Districts came to Thornton Heath.

They met (pictured) with councillors Pat Clouder, Callton Young, and Paul Scott, the council's cabinet member for regeneration along with council officers and community representatives.

A clear message came across - they were here to "help us do things for ourselves, not do them for us." In addition, the visit was described as being "designed to identify the barriers



that could stop your plans to transform your High Street".

Chair of Thornton Heath Community Action Team Linda Watson, said: "After attending this meeting I was excited about the possibilities for our High Street and seeing all the expertise, strategies and research findings being put to good use.

"However, since then, the health and economic crisis has struck and everything will need reviewing once we emerge from lockdown."

Before the visit, time had been spent looking at relevant data such as crime figures, life expectancy, fuel poverty, together with key issues and opportunities as well as economic activity including figures for economically inactivity.

HSTF academic researchers had also

looked into perceptions of Thornton Heath's on social media, which were not 'very positive'.

From research here in the UK and abroad, how to make change happen was related to 4 R's : Repositioning, Reinventing, Rebranding and Restructuring with 237 factors influencing the vitality and viability of High Streets identified.

These have been ranked by experts, condensing them into 25 which are controllable locally - some for the council, some for business and some for the community to lead on.

These include:

Activity opening hours: footfall, shopping hours, and evening economy; Retailer offer and representation; Vision and Strategy: the experience i.e image, customer service and satisfaction;

Visual Appearance: such as cleanliness of pavements; Necessities like car-parking and general facilities; Non Retail Offer: so attractions and entertainment.

Networks and Partnerships with the council and community; Accessibility and diversity of shops; Attractiveness: shown by vacancy rates and retail spend.

Markets and street trading, Recreational

space; Barriers to entry because of the perception of safety and crime; Adaptability: retail flexibility and rents turnover.

Possible support options for the council going forward are: a one day expert visit to address issues that block progress; place making programme for up to 70 people to decide on suitable actions; a visioning workshop with around 30-40 people and distant support which Thornton Heath could be a pilot for the HSTF.

Other offerings include courses for council officers to develop place analysts; online learning covering the 4 R's and 25 factors for vitality and viability.

- The council team will be developing the next steps but first will have to advertise for new regeneration manager for Thornton Heath as Zohra Chiheb has recently left to take up a more senior post in Camden.

- A firm of consultants have also been appointed to oversee plans to develop a project providing a regeneration framework for Thornton Heath to bid for future investment. Plans for finishing off the Ambassador House forecourt project including planting a bus stop garden and planters have been further delayed by the virus until at least May.

For more info: [placemenagement.org](http://placemenagement.org)

## ECO PROTEST OVER PLASTICS AT TESCO

**I**ntrepid eco warriors shopped at the Tesco Thornton Heath store to convey the message: "No more plastics please!"

In very different times, just a month ago on Sunday March 1, Sustainable Thornton Heath campaigners filled their trolleys with products wrapped in pointless plastic, paid for their goods, unwrapped the items and then returned the offending wrappings to Tesco staff.

With thought-provoking slogans pinned to their backs, onwards they marched around the store, picking up multi-packs of bottled water, baked beans and tissue boxes unnecessarily wrapped in the undesirable stuff. Also cabbages, courgettes and cauliflowers, wrapped in artificial second skins, were finally allowed to breathe!

By the end of their mission, two trolleys were filled with all their discarded single-use plastics. The team leader, Edi Ska, who is a committee member of the newly formed group, discussed her concerns with the duty store



manager, who was presented with these unwanted items.

The team is awaiting a response from Tesco's national management to make sure their message is heard. If not, they had planned to continue their campaign by returning to the store for another assault on pointless plastics, though this is now on one hold given the current situation. There are lots you can still do to recycle and reuse items while we are on lockdown. To find out more about Sustainable Thornton Heath, have a look at their Facebook group or contact them via their email address:

[sustainablethorntonheath@gmail.com](mailto:sustainablethorntonheath@gmail.com)

## POLICE CRASH: NO SERIOUS INJURIES

**F**irefighters pulled a police driver to safety after officers responding to a 999 call were involved in a crash.

This pictured was posted by Cllr Callton Young on his Twitter feed alongside the comment: "I was alarmed to see the fallout of this road incident on Parchmore Road...and hope it looks worse than the reality."

Thankfully it wasn't as bad as it looked with both officers escaping without serious injury.



A police spokesman said that the police car was en-route to an emergency when it was in collision with a vehicle being driven by a member of the public. Two PCs sustained minor injuries. Firefighters cut the roof off to enable the driver to safely exit. The member of the public driving was unhurt.

## KNIFEMAN ARRESTED

**A** 30-year-old man was arrested for carrying a knife after a stop and search in broad daylight near Thornton Heath station.

Eye witnesses reported seeing an incident at the station near the junction with Iceland after school Thursday (March 19) which was attended by officers from the Met's Territorial

Support Group (TSG). Scotland Yard said officers who attended the incident were in possession of Tasers but they were not deployed during the arrest of the suspect and there was just one arrest. A police spokesman added : "Police stopped and searched a 30-year-old man near Thornton Heath BR Station at around 15:15pm on Thursday (19 March).

## PALACE STAR WILFRIED ZAHA OFFERS PROPERTIES TO NHS STAFF

**Crystal Palace star Wilfried Zaha has opened up 50 properties he owns across the capital for free to NHS workers battling the coronavirus outbreak.**

Zaha, who grew up in Thornton Heath and went to Whitehorse Manor School owns 50 apartments as part of his ZO Properties company that the Ivory Coast international runs with business partner Obi Williams.

The Palace winger, via Williams' Twitter account, put out a message calling for NHS staff who needed housing to get in touch and were inundated with requests. They have now passed on the allocation process



to NHS management with the apartments already full in days.

The duo are now appealing to other landlords or property companies out there, to come forward and offer help.

Zaha has also urged more people to make significant donations to the collective fight against coronavirus.

He said: "If people are willing to help we will welcome them with open arms, people just have to be willing to do it."

The football ace, who contributes 10 per cent of his salary to charity, has also been using his Twitter account to ask people to donate to local food banks and repeating the message #stayhomeSavelives.

He said: "During these challenging times let's all try to do our bit for those who are not as fortunate. Donate to your local food bank."

## RAMS HOPEFUL OF BEING BACK PLAYING FOOTBALL AT THE MAYFIELD SOON

**AFC Croydon Athletic have agreed a new groundshare for next season which should guarantee much needed income as clubs across the country struggle to survive in the lockdown.**

The Rams are also mourning the loss of one of its Directors, Grahame Jarrold (pictured), who died after battling bravely with cancer. Grahame was a founder member of the Club in 2012 and joined the board in 2016. He turned his hand to any job that needed doing and until this season he rarely missed a game, **writes Paul Smith.** The condolences of all at the Club are extended to his wife Pat and family.

There are so many parts of our everyday life that we take for granted and if there are any lessons to be learned from the last few weeks it is to value those things a bit more. There are many people who are becoming unwell and there



are those who have tragically died of this virus pandemic and in those

circumstances it seems churlish to talk about football but already there are discussions about how we get through and make sure we are in a position to pick up again in the new season.

The decision of the Premier League to postpone their games at the beginning of March did not filter through to AFC Croydon Athletic's games for a couple of weeks. The last game being on March 14, with the visit of Deal Town followed by a number of junior games taking place the following day. Since then the FA called a close to all grassroots

football until further notice.

The immediate impact is a financial one. We were scheduled to host the Croydon Municipal Sunday Football League Cup Finals in May and cup finals at five different age groups of the Tandridge Youth Football League. Add to that the loss of various other fundraisers and events the anticipated income has taken a real hit.

Nevertheless, the main focus was to ensure that all our players and volunteers remained healthy. The decision has now been made to call the 2019/20 season to a close. For once there is plenty of time for pitch renovations although this is also one of the most expensive things the club has to do.

Many clubs are having to face these uncertain times. Hopefully we will be able to get through and before too long will be back to playing football again.

## RUGBY PLAYERS FUNDRAISE THEIR WAY THROUGH PANDEMIC

**Streatham-Croydon FC have been holding quarantine quizzes and karaoke events to raise funds for Age UK and players worst hit by the pandemic.**

The club will face many challenges, with significant overheads that are not helped by money not coming in through the bar, so keep an eye on this space for fundraisers and events that will be held once we're out the other side, **writes Millie Ross.** In the meantime, the players are doing everything they can to stay fit and healthy.

Ben Cowl hosted the first Quarantine Quiz, raising money for players whose incomes will be significantly affected by

the pandemic, and the second is due to be hosted by Paige Abbs on April 2.

Men's player Will Ballentine hosted a "WhatsApp Karaoke" event, which was won by stalwart club player Max Thomason with a 'stunning' rendition of an Elton John classic. The event raised £929.86 for Age UK.

The first cancellation for Streatham-Croydon RFC was the ladies' fixture, due to be played against Southampton Ladies on Saturday March 14.

It seems baffling now that this was a mere fortnight ago, the team were getting into cars en route to the match when it was cancelled. The team got together for a run

around playing some rugby related games, which ultimately turned out to be the final training session. The ladies finished third in the table, having had a successful return fixture against Guernsey Ladies on March 1, running in five tries to secure the bonus point and win 29-5. It was a shame to be unable to play the final fixture for captain of two years Paige Abbs, and not to have a final runout for one of the top try scorers Alicia Wyke who returns to university next season.

The men were on a break weekend when all rugby was finished, and had more games to play, so it is yet to be called what the RFU plans to do regarding final fixtures of the league the league.

## PALACE FOR LIFE STAFF OFFER SUPPORT TO YOUNG AND OLD

**Palace for Life mentors are using video calls to check in with young people who are at risk of crime.**

Staff at the charity which helps 13,000 people each year, inspiring them to find a better path and to lead a healthier life, are also supporting the football club to contact season ticket holders aged over 70 to offer practical help, or simply have a chat and check they are OK.

Coaches are continuing to support schools delivering curriculum subjects like English and Maths, but with a football twist.

The Foundation which runs a number of sessions at the Salvation Army on the High Street for young people, are



also supporting parents and children at home with video challenges and activity plans for the whole family. Visit: [www.palaceforlife.org](http://www.palaceforlife.org); Twitter @palaceforlife  
Palace for Life CEO Mike Summers said: "Our very reason for being is to support those people in our south London

community who need it most. Right now the demand is higher than ever and we are determined to adapt what we do and support as many people as possible.

"Despite the challenges, our coaches are delivering in 10 local primary schools, running activities for children of key workers and others who remain in education, using the power of Palace to bring joy to young lives. They have also been creating videos and resources for those families at home.

"We have unfortunately had to cancel many sessions in line with Government advice, however, our team has reacted quickly to change the way we work and offer a support network where we can.

## BRODIE GETS TO WALK OUT WITH JOEL WARD

**Fans have taken to social media to praise Crystal Palace player Joel Ward after the club tweeted out a video about the defender looking after a young mascot who was recovering from a serious illness.**



The five-year-old called Brodie was invited to walk out with Ward for Palace's match against Newcastle after meeting him along with midfielder Max Mayer when they visited the children's ward at Croydon University Hospital over Christmas.

The two loved how happy and energetic she was despite her situation, so arranged for her to be a mascot.

Brodie was diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma, a cancer that develops in the skeletal or voluntary muscles of the body but the great news is she is now in remission.

The youngster was living and attending nursery in Essex before her mum Cherie, a life-long Palace fan moved the family back to Croydon, where she grew up, to get care at Croydon Health Services.

Cherie said: "I wasn't getting the answers I wanted in Essex, so I moved us back home to Croydon and the fantastic doctors here found that Brodie had cancer within 24 hours of bringing her into the Emergency Department.

"We are hoping we are over the worst now and little surprises like this help us to stay positive."

Brodie chose to walk out with the Palace player at a game which saw the Eagles claim all three points in a 1-0 victory against Newcastle and was the last home match before all football was cancelled across the country.

Cherie added: "I grew up in Croydon supporting Palace and I used to go to Selhurst Park to see them play when I could. Since having children, that's changed and I haven't managed to get back there, so this is like a dream come true."

"One of our key focuses this season has been mentoring young people who are at risk of crime and we are committed to continuing this. Our mentors will be using video calls to check in with the young people they have been supporting to listen to any concerns and flag these to the appropriate services when necessary."

The Foundation is also committed to continuing its 'Super Draw' match day lottery, and raises money to support its work.

The Foundation now have plans in place to run this virtually, with fans encouraged to play online, with proceeds going to the Norwood and Brixton Foodbank <https://palacesuperdraw.matchplus.co/>