



Executive Project Summary

September 2020



Selsey Community Forum

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Executive Summary

This report provides us with an opportunity to share with the residents of Selsey, our benefactors, and partner organisations our journey as to how the mutual aid group came about during the Coronavirus Pandemic of 2020. It provides insights to the process we followed, the partnerships that evolved and the work that was developed in response to something that would potentially impact hugely across our community. It demonstrates how a dedicated group was formed by a small established charity to provide a network to support and meet the needs of its most vulnerable people during a time of national emergency, whilst ensuring their safety and wellbeing.

This report will highlight the impact of the task force at different levels and will identify some very complex needs that required meeting. We are now able to identify future needs and will continue to work with our indispensable funders and partners in order to meet those identified needs of the Selsey Community. We are also pleased to be able to demonstrate how this situation provided us with a legacy of a community working together in a variety of ways to provide compassion, care, and commitment with spirit and tenacity. This has in turn enabled our community to be more aware of other people's needs, be more understanding, empathic and inclusive.

Setting the Scene

Selsey is a town 8 miles south of Chichester on the Manhood Peninsula with a population of circa 10,755. The town is well known for its fishing community and farming industry providing local produce for Selsey and as well as across the UK. The B2145 provides the key access road to Selsey, leading the town to by default be an independent and self-sufficient community. However, this can create a feeling of rurality and isolation and as such, can present its own challenges.



The town is home to a large caravan park, which brings a substantial number of tourists to the area, in addition to a great many holiday lets and airbnbs. There are numerous pubs, cafés and restaurants serving a wide range of different meals. These all support our local economy and provide employment opportunities for local people.

Due to the unique climate, the beautiful beaches, two RSPB Nature Reserves and the low cost of housing, it attracts a large number of visitors of all ages to settle in Selsey. There are many established family businesses in the two main shopping areas including Butchers, Bakers, greengrocers, Ironmongers, Electrical Supplies, Funeral Directors, Clothing, Furnishings and Flooring. In addition to more specialist services, including Insurance, Solicitors, Micro Brewery/Pub, IT Services, Car Sales, Vehicle Repairs, Accountancy, Stationers, Printers, Diving, Dentists, Seafood and Fishing Tackle. Other large stores such as ASDA and the Co-ops provide additional choice to shoppers and employment opportunities. There are a range of Nurseries, Primary Schools, and the Academy Secondary School. Care provision in Selsey is very good and offers Nursing, Residential, and Domiciliary Care. There are three Housing Associations, some of whom offer additional care support. There is one Medical Practice.

There are many Groups, Societies, Clubs and Associations providing opportunities to develop personal interests, friendship and maintain one's mental health and wellbeing. These include the Art, Dance, Yoga, Fitness, Sport, Gyms, Swimming, Diving, Craft, Reading, Theatre, and Singing. British Legion/Lions, Royal Naval Associations based in Selsey support and service to the community. There are also four Churches offering different worship styles.

As for transport, we are served by the Stagecoach 51 Bus offering regular passenger services. There are also two small Community Transport Services as well as two Private Taxi companies.

Demographics

see link on our website for full report 'Local Insights, WSCC'

Of a total population of 10,755 there are 3,935 people aged 65+ this is 36.6% of the population in Selsey. The West Sussex average is 22.8%. For more in-depth data please check the attached appendix.

Introduction

The **Selsey Community Forum** (SCF) is an umbrella charity that was established 10 years ago and works in partnership with a range of Local Organisations and Statutory Groups. Its aim is to offer opportunities to develop relationships and collaborate to meet local needs through monthly meetings and the development update of a community diary. This in turn develops services in synergy and without duplication, leading to careful use of scarce resources.

Members include the Medical Practice, Churches, Youth Service, Statutory Authorities (Town, District and County), Businesses, Schools, Clubs and Associations. Many services have been developed by the **Selsey Community Forum**. It is governed by a group of Trustees from a wide range of professions, knowledge and experience who are currently meeting monthly.

During normal service SCF provides, and continues to develop through the lockdown, the following:

- ✓ **Selsey Befriending Activities** - including a Film and Lunch Club, Sunday Teas, Daily Phone Support, Senior Selsey News publication, Christmas Day Lunch and Shop Talk.
- ✓ **Selsey Dementia Action Alliance** offers personal support, information, appropriate activities and seeks a community of understanding and kindness.
- ✓ **Carers Support Selsey** offers emotional support to Voluntary Carers. It also runs Support Groups and Social Interaction Activities. A new Stroke Support Club and Companions Group for former carers is being planned for this September.
- ✓ **Selsey Wellbeing Services** offers Parenting Education and Advice, 12 Counselling Opportunities per week, Supportive Phone Calls and 3 Self-Help Groups in Mental Health, Relationships and Loss.
- ✓ **Selsey Money Support** offers licensed Debt Support, Form Filling, Money Management and Benefits Advice.
- ✓ **Selsey Buddy Support** offers practical personal help, Individual Befriending, Food Distribution, a Lending Library (books and films) and various emergency supports.
- ✓ **Grow Selsey** is a project that has developed out of Selsey Vision and aims to create new Green Spaces on 3 sites for the Mental Health Benefit of Selsey's residents.
- ✓ **Selsey Care Shop** offers 39 hours per week access to these services and activities, being the visual face of the charity.
- ✓ A further office will be used at Star Advertising to enable us to be Covid secure.

- ✓ **Your Good Morning Call** operates in Bracklesham to offer daily support to vulnerable older people. It is one of a number of activities we support across the Peninsula to support people who are older and may have disabilities.

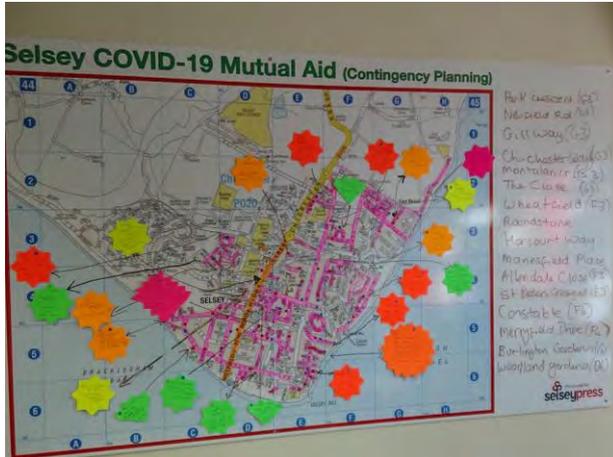
As a well-respected, established and trusted forum, it was able to initiate and lead the **Selsey Covid19 Mutual Aid** task force.

Timeline

Concerns about the possible pandemic began in January 2020. As numbers of deaths from the virus increased in Asia and Europe, the UK Government were watching closely as to how this would pan out.

- 16th of March the UK death toll from the pandemic reaches 55, with the number of cases of the illness passing 1,500. The Prime Minister Boris Johnson advised everyone in the UK against "non-essential" travel and contact with others, to curb coronavirus, as well as to work from home if possible and avoid visiting social venues such as pubs, clubs or theatres. Pregnant women, people over the age of 70 and those with certain health conditions were urged to consider the advice "particularly important" and would be asked to self-isolate within days. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport states "it is advised that large gatherings should not take place". It became obvious to the Selsey Community Forum Trustees the need to take this guidance seriously and begin working quickly on emergency measures. In order to ensure the safety of their volunteers and the vulnerable people it served it would cease current activities and offer an alternative model of support to those who would be needing to shield.
- 16th of March-social media request to Selsey residents asking for those who are under 70 and didn't require shielding to offer support as volunteers (buddies). The **Selsey Covid19 Mutual Aid Group** was born.
- 19th of March- meeting with partner organisations to explain plans and gather support. Representatives from Selsey Town Council including some Town Councillors, Local Businesses, Care Home providers, Medical Practice, the Venture Bus, Lions, Selsey Foodbank, our Community Warden, attended. Chichester District Council were kept informed as to any plans that were taking shape, along with the WSCC Community Hub which came about in early April.

- 20th/21st of March- Buddy enrolment took place at the Selsey Care Shop on the Friday and Saturday. We were able to register and process over 90 volunteers. References were taken up, Buddy Good Practice Guidance



was written, ID's given and areas were identified. **Operation Selsey Covid19 Mutual Aid** was launched.

A large wall map (*printed and donated by Selsey Press*) gave us a good visual sense of the areas covered by

our Buddies. As time went on all streets were covered by a Buddy or a Buddy Co-ordinator. A WhatsApp group was set up to ensure that all Buddies were able to obtain support from each other, or from one of the leads at the Selsey Care Shop.

- 23rd of March 5400 cards (*courtesy of Selsey Press*) were distributed by Buddies enabling people living in those patches to make direct contact with their identified buddy.
- 1st of April – Grumpy's Café who had been providing hot meals and other



treats for NHS staff at St Richards and meals for local residents stepped forward. The team at Grumpy's worked tirelessly in partnership with the Selsey Covid19 Mutual Aid group and were able to cook between 45 - 60 three course



fresh meals five days of the week. These were provided to those shielding in Selsey providing a nutritious meal, funded by The Ferry Farm Community

Solar Project, delivered by our Buddies. Enabling another opportunity to carry out a doorstep wellbeing chat and update.

- 2nd of April – WSCC Community Hub launched in partnership with District and Boroughs.
- 4th of April – 125 buddies were now at work supporting their neighbours, carrying out tasks such as picking up of essential shopping, medication, posting mail or providing a welfare call.



- 11th of April – we were mindful that our weekly “Resbite” teas at local churches and enjoyed by so many people living at home alone, would not be taking place. We therefore identified Easter Sunday as a good opportunity to provide a treat for those that would have attended one of these afternoon teas. With support from Waves, donations from our Southern Co-Op and the support of Buddies, we were able to provide 100 Easter Treats, including cake, an Easter Egg and an Easter Card.

- 13th of April - as our local library and charity shops were closed and people wanted to remain active and stimulated at home the Lending Hub was developed by a couple of our Buddies. Items including DVD’s, books, puzzles, and audio tapes were donated, quarantined, sanitised and courtesy of the Selsey Town Council stored in an unused office.





- 21st of April - A reminder card was distributed to all households. For some of the people living in Selsey they needed to be reminded that help was available. There were some perhaps with memory loss who hadn't understood that the Buddy system was in place to ensure they were safe. Some perhaps threw the first card away thinking

that at the time they did not need this type of support and now their needs had changed.

- 8th of May- VE Day – a community event to celebrate 75 years of Victory in



Europe had to be cancelled. The work involved in planning such an event as we know is huge and it was a disappointment to the organisers. To enable our community who were shielding an opportunity to reflect and celebrate in some way was for the Selsey Covid19 Buddies to provide our residents a goody bag. This included a freshly-made individual meat and potato pie from "Umble Pies",



a cupcake from "Irresistibly Scrumptious Cakes and Cupcakes" and a little flag to wave and feel part of the day. Putting together the gifts took part at East Beach Church and was supported by a couple of our junior Buddies.

- 16th of May- The UK Government gave indications that lockdown would ease. Social gatherings would be limited, travel abroad would continue to be restricted, track and trace was being discussed, pubs and restaurants could open with measures being put in place. Society, it was safe to say, was confused at the variance of guidance and whilst some people were coming

out of shielding, there was an overarching feeling of caution, anxiety and trepidation. Many of our vulnerable people in the community were still required to shield. The use of masks became apparent and was encouraged, social distancing was key.

- 29th of May – Selsey Press produced for us a 4-page booklet outlining the extensive range of support services offered through SCF. 5500 were printed and each property in Selsey received a copy.



- 18th/19th of June- Celebration of our Carers afternoon tea was provided for our carers registered on our Selsey Carers database, supplied by Grumpy's and Sue W's mother. Crossroads supported with deliveries.

- 20th/21st of June-Thank you to our Buddies. Without the support of our buddies this Selsey Covid19 Mutual Aid would not have worked. Twelve weeks in and we felt we needed to say thank you. We valued their response to this emergency, their time and their commitment to what we were trying to achieve as a Community.



- 26th of June- Selsey Shuttle Bus is back in business



- 1st of July 2020- the Selsey Care Shop was able to re-open following a detailed risk assessment that ensured that "Covid secure" measures were implemented.

- 31st of July 2020- Selsey Covid19 Mutual Aid goes into hibernation, able to reconvene if in the event of another spike or local

emergency. Some buddies had to return to work and were unable to commit any more time, some will continue to provide support with some of their new neighbours, some will continue to support the charity as Selsey Buddies as part of the new service: **Selsey Buddy Support**. This service has been set up in response of the wider needs of the community that emerged during lockdown.

So, who were the buddies? Many of our buddies were local people who had time available and were keen and able to support their community. Some were retired and had volunteered with other organisations previously, but a number were new to volunteering. Some people had been furloughed and were keen to use their time wisely, some had their own businesses but were not able to work. Many were working from home and had young families who required home schooling. Some were out of work, been made redundant and keen to focus their energies and own anxieties in doing something productive. People had a part to play, they had experience to bring and they were keen to provide care and compassion to our more vulnerable people within our Community.

What was their role during lockdown? Whilst the key activities on offer were to provide essential shopping, picking up of prescriptions, telephone welfare checks and posting letters or bills- it would vary across Selsey as to how many activities each buddy was providing. We encouraged the buddy to determine and agree with their neighbours, so they didn't become overwhelmed. If the buddy felt that the person may need additional support, or they were concerned, then the query went back to the Selsey Care Shop to follow up. In some cases, an additional or more experienced buddy was deployed to support a person with more complex needs. In some situations, there was a need to engage with or refer to statutory services, agencies, local support groups, or an additional well-being organisation. The Selsey Care Shop "Good morning" volunteers who were shielding continued to work from home.

What was the impact on the Buddy? We asked what being part of the Selsey Covid19 Mutual Aid group meant to them and how it impacted on them.

"A good and worthwhile experience that has made me more aware of the isolation some people feel and how a strong community spirit can help to keep people feel included. This applies to both those who benefit from the volunteers and the ones volunteering."

“It has been rewarding being able to support people who really need it. Talking to neighbours who I had not before and becoming friendly with them and learning more about their lives. Built community spirit within the road”.

“I have found it a wonderful experience, to be able to help people during this vulnerable time has been so satisfying. It has also given me to have a sense of purpose when the world is completely upside down”.

“I enjoyed the community spirit and helping others. In terms of population in Selsey I learnt there are a lot of older people struggling on their own or trying to look after themselves and a partner with disabilities or dementia and in some cases both”.

“I found the whole experience uplifting. To be able to help my neighbours in a period of uncertainty was the least I could do. I have made new friends & believe it has brought our development together. Our estate is fairly new & we have grown as a community. I think that the pandemic will inject a revitalised community spirit throughout the village & surrounding areas. Even when life returns to normal, I think things will be different & create a new commitment to helping our vulnerable residents.”

“Helping some of my folk has been truly rewarding as they have been so incredibly grateful and thankful saying that 'they have no-one else to help them'. Personally, I have been amazed at how terrified many of them were and how little support they had. I have no doubt that I will remain friends with one or two.”

“I have loved being able to help people & to just offer support in a very frightening time. Only a handful of people responded to my cards & so I didn't intrude, they had my number if necessary. Of those that replied, 7 required weekly support in one way or another. I think that the Selsey community have pulled together in a fantastic way & for me, I focus on the good that has come from this pandemic. I have found that people talk to one another more & perhaps some feel more included within the community, especially those that live alone. Knowing that there are buddies out there that they can ring in times of need must offer them comfort. There is more good than bad amongst the community & if ever people were in any doubt, the pandemic highlighted this. I feel lucky to live in Selsey & be a part of this spirited community”.

“Rewarding, with so much negativity in the media recently, it was good to know that people step up and support their communities. The people we have assisted are appreciative of all we've done. In most cases it's been their only lifeline in making contact with someone on a regular basis.”

Activity through lockdown

During the **19** weeks we:

- ✓ circulated information throughout the pandemic **6000** Selsey Senior News to those shielding
- ✓ delivered **1980** meals made by our local Grumpy's Cafe (3 meals a week to 60 people)
- ✓ **15,900** leaflets dropped (3 times with updates to 5300 households – with 10,000 provided by Selsey Press)
- ✓ provided **100** Easter treats to those who would normally come to church afternoon teas- supported by Waves Cafe and the local Co-op
- ✓ provided **VE Day Treats** to **100** of our service users – supported by local businesses **Umble Pies**, and the **Irresistibly Scrumptious Cakes and Cupcakes**
- ✓ said thank you to our **140** buddies with treat boxes celebrating “**Volunteers Week**”
- ✓ said thank you to our **108** Carers on our books already during **Carers Week**
- ✓ worked with Bunn Leisure to deliver **300** Harvest UK food boxes to **25** people
- ✓ provided around **7,980** services (essential shopping, medication and welfare checks)
- ✓ made **6,916** telephone calls to those on our books already by the volunteers working from home
- ✓ developed a Lockdown Lending Library of donated **1000** x books, **70** x jigsaws, **800** x DVD's and **30** x Audio Books, based at the Selsey Town Council Offices (kindly donated use of until November) all items were quarantined for **72** hours and individually sanitised by two of our Buddies delivered by Buddies and gratefully received and reused after sanitising by our residents needing meaningful methods of mental stimulation to promote wellbeing. We lent out; **328** books, **51** puzzles, **16** DVDs and **7** audiobooks

Communication and keeping people informed

We acknowledge that at the best of times people living at home alone can feel very isolated and cut off. The additional fact that many of our residents were unable to see their families or friends or attend their local groups added to these feelings. News received via the television or radio was overwhelming, confusing, and frightening at times. This impacted on many people's mental health and wellbeing. We needed to ensure that we could keep people connected. We did this through a variety of ways.

- Daily Good Morning calls made by our volunteers continued as volunteers were working from home. Numbers increased as people became known to

the charity via the Buddy's. Volunteers informed us that the length of time the call took increased. Quite substantially for some people.

- Selsey Senior News- that is well received as a light-hearted, and informative monthly publication was turned into a bi weekly publication and distributed by the Buddies.
- Buddies were updated by a "WhatsApp" group. This became an important method of getting hold of a buddy who was available to meet a specific need (including urgent medication pickups, food delivery or redistributing an emergency box from the Government, it also initiated the development of the lending library) as well as peer support and answering queries.
- Social Media- the SelseyCovid19 Mutual Aid Facebook Page was set up and this enabled local people to get involved, gain support and enthusiasm and provide motivation. We had over 1000 people join it and this included families of people living away providing reassurance and hope to many. It was also a valuable method to keep connected with key public health and government messages from reliable sources.
- Emails-keeping connected with our funders was vital. Many of the projects that were led by the charity were unable to carry on in the same way. We needed to ensure that our funders were made aware of the activities we were putting in place. This ensured our credibility and enabled additional funding to be made available to us. Our partner organisations were also kept informed including the central WSCC Community Hub and the Social Prescriber.
- Door drops-the first buddy door drop took place at the start of the operation and we followed it up with a Reminder leaflet just in case a person's needs had changed and they required the support. The pandemic was thought to be a short-term situation however we were now looking at months not weeks. People were running out of cash and buddies needed to purchase essential items using their own money. Some came to their own arrangement of the person paying the Buddy back via a bank transfer if they had access to online banking. However, this was not appropriate for all those shielding and we set up a system that reimbursed the buddy immediately, and funds were reclaimed from that person at a later date or via a member of the family.
- Leaflets-to keep people up to date with what services the Selsey Community Forum could still offer it was important to provide an up to date leaflet. These were circulated by the buddies.
- Selsey Life-we are very lucky to have a local community publication. Monthly updates continued to be written to ensure that support and and reassurance was only a phone call away. As people were unable to pick up their own copy we purchased some and gave them to some of our people shielding.

Impact on the recipients using the services offered: Kate Grant is one of the Selsey Care Shop volunteers. As many of our volunteers had to Kate had to shield

at home. Being able to work from home not only provided a lifeline to those receiving calls but provided a lifeline for Kate too. She said it most definitely helped her not to go “stir crazy!”

Her regular call list grew from one call list a week to three call lists a week. As a volunteer the other staff and volunteers kept in good contact with her via telephone or email and felt she was well supported and valued by the charity.

Kate informed me that the people she called were so grateful to receive the calls. She said that many were grateful to talk to others who were in the same boat and welcomed a friendly chat throughout lockdown. Some remarked that they were amazed as to how quickly the Buddy system was put in place. One buddy would do a fish and chip run for her patch and this was very much appreciated. The picking up of prescriptions was a relief for many in particular for those who were at home in a caring role. In some situations, they were supporting a person with significant health care needs and dementia. For carers there was no opportunity of a break from their caring role. A couple did in fact need to seek GP advice and were prescribed anti-depressants. Kate said that some did complain about their sleep patterns not sleeping at night and tending to fall asleep during the day. It appeared that this had been affected by the ongoing anxiety and the fact they were not getting out and about.

As time went on some were starting to get frustrated by the inactivity and wanted to go out. Kate would remind them of the importance of remaining safe shielding at home. Kate also explained that some people who were receiving calls were aware of the buddy system but felt that as they did not need the service. They were fortunate to have family or friends nearby who could help them out.

Kate said that some people did feel confused as to what they were seeing on TV. They received their regular copy of the Selsey Senior News. They said that updates via the daily calls and buddies were most helpful and reassuring. Kate has noticed that things are beginning to pick up now. Although for some they are still feeling unsure about going out and about effectively having been institutionalised within their own home. Mobility has also been impacted due to the lack of activity at home and the regular walks. Confidence needs to grow again. Some people had experienced loss of a loved one during lockdown. This was also difficult to deal with as funeral services did not take place and there was not an opportunity to say goodbye so there was no closure for some. Thank you to Kate Grant and to all our volunteer good morning callers who took on many more calls during this challenging time.

Face masks and keeping people safe: we ensured that our buddies were aware of the local guidance to keep themselves safe. For example, effective use of gloves, and masks. Many creative residents of Selsey were offering to make masks,

uniform bags for NHS staff, and scrubs for care and healthcare staff. These were supplied to care homes and St Richards Hospital. Some were given to the shop to enable people to feel safe when attending hospital or doctor appointments. When the shop opened, we made sure we had a small supply at the shop. Visors were also made locally and donated to homes. Thank you for those people who contributed to this.

Partnership Working- acknowledgements

We were keen to keep it local and supported by many of our Selsey businesses and grateful for their time, swift support and kind donations – in particular, Raycrafts, Selsey Press, Star Advertising.

Organisations who worked in partnership with Selsey Covid19 Mutual Aid and throughout the lockdown:

UKHarvest: *“As a Food Rescue Charity, UK Harvest supported The Selsey Covid-19 Mutual Aid Group by supplying great quality surplus food. We have been working incredibly hard since the outbreak of Covid-19 with a dramatic increase on our services. As we continue to help our existing partners, we have received a vast increase of requests for help from charities, vulnerable groups and individuals. To put this into context we delivered over 50% of our normal annual tonnage of food in the first 4 weeks of lockdown.”*

Andrew Meredith, Communications and Partnerships, UK Harvest

Apetito: *“We saw an 83% increase in new customers in the first few weeks of the lockdown which we reacted to by employing more staff and bringing in new vans to meet this demand. A service which many depend on we needed to ensure that we kept our high standard of service for our existing customers as well as for our new customers.*

Operationally we implemented social distancing procedures within the depot and provided PPE and sanitiser to our drivers. We also had clients with Covid and so extra precautions was put into place to ensure the safety of our staff. Where possible our deliveries became contactless but for customers where this is not possible we put the necessary procedures into place for the safety of both our clients and staff.

We continue to keep to our new procedures and both clients and staff have adapted to well to this.” *Apetito Services Depot Manager*

Bunn Leisure: *“Bunn Leisure have been delighted to assist UK Harvest Deliveries and the Selsey Community Forum in the transportation and delivery of foods to a*

number of people and families over the last few months and will endeavour to support any future requests for assistance". Jo Short, Bunn Leisure. "We were pleased to help. I know that the guys, particularly Olli really shone in doing this". Philip Mitcheson-Smith, Bunn Leisure

Selsey Press: *"Selsey Press stayed open throughout the lockdown, but with a skeleton team and reduced customer access, so we could fulfil orders for our customers. It also meant we were able to get involved in projects such as this. So good to see local businesses and individuals pulling together to support the community." Robin Tyler, Selsey Press*

Umble Pies: *We are a small family company "Gourmet Hog Kitchens".*

We started our business in May 2019, catering small weddings with bbq's and hog roasts. We were ticking along nicely and then suddenly Covid19 hit us. Our events were pushed along until next year or cancelled.

We were determined to stay positive and thought what can "Gourmet Hog Kitchens" do to help the village of Selsey? Chef Tom decided to make pies, "Umble Pies" and supplied the 100 pies for the VE Day.

We make any pie, to order and deliver to your door, with social distancing in place. We wanted to mainly help the elderly. We started to get phone calls from people who had grandparents and parents in Selsey, ordering pies to make sure they had homemade food. Mainly because they could not visit them. If they had special birthdays or an anniversary, we would also supply not just the pies but also the veggies and a small cake to mainly say, enjoy your special day. It wasn't much but we like to think we did our bit to help our wonderful village of Selsey. And made many new friends in the process.

Debra Harker Business Owner

Irresistibly Scrumptious Cakes and Cupcakes: *"It was an honour for us to be asked to support and supply VE Day cupcakes for the community.*

The reaction we had to them was amazing and helped support our family business throughout lockdown in uncertain times.

We're so thankful for the support we've received and the customer base we've built as a result." Jenny and Gemma Business Owners

The Old Piggery Farm Shop 🚚 *"The day COVID-19 closed our tearoom was a sad and worrying day, how long could it last, could we stay in business?"*

We very quickly realised we were able to do something positive so we turned the Tearoom into a distribution centre for our veg box and food box deliveries to those in need, we were also blessed that from nowhere buddies stepped forward Tori,

Paddy, Rachel and Shelly without them we could not have done it. The most humbling aspect of the whole experience was the older people in total lockdown could not have got food without the Selsey team's help. Looking back it was incredible how a local community came together and at break neck speed to the benefit of some pretty helpless people. This was a direct contrast to the chaos in the farm shop of fit and able folk arguing about how much yeast they could have!
"Martin Bowley The Old Piggery Farm Shop Proprietor

Grumpys Café: from the start Nigel Horrigan and his team at Café Grumpys provided sustenance and treats to staff at St Richard's Hospital. He then went onto raise further funds to provide meals to residents of Selsey. The **Selsey Covid19 Mutual Aid** group requested him to provide 60 meals three times a week. Three course meals freshly made and delivered by the Selsey Buddies to our grateful recipients. When lockdown eased Nigel was able to get his café back up and running. Thank you to Nigel and his team at Café Grumpys.

Waves Cafe: Adrian Joseph decided to close his café during lockdown to spend time with his family. However, he did provide some food at cost price that we distributed to people in need. He also provided us with the cakes for the Easter treats and allowed us to use his shop to distribute to Buddies. Thank you Adrian.

Costa Coffee: needed to close immediately and they donated some perishable foodstuff to us. This was stored in Cat and John's fridge until distributed by the Lions. Thank you all.

The Seal Hotel: kindly shared with us some cake in the early days of lockdown. Our Buddies distributed to those in need of cheering up and our residential care home staff who were working tirelessly. This led us to use them to provide us with cake when we were thanking our buddies for their hard work.

Comments and thanks from those the SCF work in partnership with including other statutory and voluntary sector representatives across Health and Social Care

"Thank you and I have to say a massive thank you to everyone involved it really has been a fantastic local response in such weird times. Without a doubt the actions of Selsey have saved lives."

"Just wanted to say a great piece of collaborative and proactive piece of work – well done. I have sent this great work onto my providers, dementia action alliances and CCG staff members for cascade."

“What an amazing example of a community coming together to deal with the challenges of Covid, congratulations! I think the volunteer development and peer support programme sounds like a really good idea and I look forward to hearing more about it.”

“Thank you for sharing and what a great community effort – the people of Selsey are lucky to have such a great local community.”

“Really well done, something to be proud of. It’s great that some are continuing to volunteer/care post crisis.”

“Fantastic piece of work – I think if we captured all that the COVID 19 support groups provided across West Sussex it would be incredible numbers. As your report states that if there is a second spike things can be ramped up quickly.”

“That is a great report showing what an amazing team of people can achieve - you have made a real difference.”

“Selsey Care Shop is a central lifeline to the elderly residents of Selsey offering a range of services which is extensive and are all essential to the prevention agenda in West Sussex. The response to the COVID outbreak by the team at the Care Shop was highly impressive with the speedy galvanising of an entire team of volunteers acting as “Buddys” to every single street, covering a range of activities from wellbeing checks, sourcing of puzzles, jigsaws and books, medication collections and essential shopping. Absolutely outstanding!”

Comments from the Community and those relatives who perhaps live away

“Thank you for everyone volunteering to help elderly and vulnerable in any way. It is reassuring both for the recipients and their relatives who are not able to support due to isolation or travel restrictions.”

“Many thanks to a kind person who donated food to our Selsey parents.”

“A big thank you to the Selsey Covid-19 Mutual Aid group, especially Jo Hughes and Karen Pirks in organising an amazing support network for our most vulnerable.”

“Grateful thanks from daughter of new arrivals to Selsey who have been made to feel very welcome with our community support.”

“Grateful thanks from daughters whose parents live in Selsey and are receiving buddy support as they are unable to visit their parents.”

“A thank you to everyone who delivers, couriers, shops, posties and volunteers. We are very grateful to you all.”

“A great way of working, as carer for my elderly mother in Selsey I was very reassured to know there was someone looking out for her. Thank you for all your support with her as well.”

“A massive thank you from Councillor Val Weller to all our local heroes.”

Thank you letter from Gillian Keegan MP, to recognise work of then Selsey Care Shop and Selsey Community Forum volunteers:



“VE celebration HQ - thank you to everyone including our younger Buddies who got involved to ensure our vulnerable folk in Selsey got an opportunity to join in”

“Monday Charity day. Two course meals: home-made sausage casserole and homemade treacle tart and custard, this will be delivered this afternoon by Selsey Buddies.”

Comment from Selsey Town Council

C.136/20 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

This being the first meeting of the Council since 23rd March 2020 when the UK Government had placed the country under lockdown following the outbreak of Covid-19, the Vice Chair took the opportunity to thank the community of Selsey for its resilience, co-operation and kindness during this time of unprecedented global challenge. She noted the way that local groups and organisations including the Care Shop, the Community Forum, the churches and the Council had come together to form the Selsey Covid-19 Mutual Aid Group and the dynamic early work that had been undertaken to implement the buddy system which had been so crucial in ensuring that the town's vulnerable residents were able to access provisions and services. The Vice Chair also acknowledged the work done by the District & County Council teams in the protection of essential services and ensuring early access to grant funding and advice. Thanks were given by the Council to all.

Emerging Needs and how we will as a charity address them:

Throughout the crisis it has become evident as to the effect the pandemic has had on individuals. This was seen immediately the lockdown took hold and there will no doubt be a future impact.

Mental Health and Wellbeing: We noted a low level of anxiety amongst many and needed to be mindful as to the impact on our own staff and volunteers. As most services disappeared, the support that people received reduced - for example face-to-face consultations or self-help groups. This led to people, particularly young men, reverting back or increasing their use of drugs or alcohol.

The impact of being furloughed or made redundant caused financial worry for many. Not knowing how long this would go on for increased people's anxiety levels.

We noted an emergence of domestic violence rising where there were situations of being locked down with an abusive partner.

People who worked for themselves were finding that their work had dried up. They were then either forced to use scarce savings in order to keep going or face finding themselves with additional debt problems. It was becoming evident through the conversation Buddies were having and the referrals coming through via the telephone, that the situation was impacting on people's health and wellbeing.

Access to Healthcare: We are fortunate to have a medical practice within Selsey, but it is the only one and serves the whole community of nearly 11,000 residents, many with some debilitating complex care needs. They put incredible measures in place to try to continue to give good medical support by using technology to carry out "virtual appointments". Whilst some people happily embrace technology for others this can also create more anxiety particularly for our older residents. Fortunately we have contacts with some Primary Care Teams and were able to navigate a way round some of the issues that arose, such as making referrals on the person's behalf, or speaking to a medical professional

who knew their way around the system and could advise. The use of technology has been an area that our young Age Fusion were involved in and something to take up again in the future - supporting people to be more tech savvy. People were also speaking to us incredibly concerned as their usual treatments were being cancelled due to the hospitals being so busy with the coronavirus. We know that this will all have longer term impact on health. There were some towards the end of lockdown who were called up to attend a clinic but were very scared at how they could do this and feel safe.

Loss and Bereavement: During the pandemic there were a number of losses. Although this was not due to Coronavirus but other issues. This of course did not make the loss any easier to bear. Primarily due to the impact that people could not grieve together, there was no one available to comfort. If death was imminent people couldn't go and visit the person either at their home, a residential home or hospital. Funeral directors had to manage the situation – limited numbers at the funeral, no singing, no hugs. Many churches were directed to close their doors too, leading to no opportunities to join their parish community for support. Some of our churches produced online services throughout and prayer opportunities as well as support through their websites.

Social Media: Whilst it has its place, it was a platform that became the only way some people seemed to vent their anger or frustration at others who were not observing any of the recommendations and safe distancing rules in shops, leading to rudeness to shop staff who had put themselves at risk throughout the pandemic. We heard of people being shouted at as they weren't wearing a mask whilst entering shops, totally unaware of some of the hidden disabilities that a person may live with. To help combat this, we introduced identifiable lanyards and made these available to people who had hidden disabilities. However, if you lived with dementia, then quite often you would forget to put this on. Reminders went out to people to "Be Kind".

Hidden Disabilities: We will use this as an ideal to drive forward to be an even better Dementia Friendly Community, informing people along the way about other hidden disabilities which can be degenerative (such as Huntington's Disease, Parkinson's Disease). Hopefully this will enable Selsey to be a more caring and compassionate community.

Photo Gallery





References

1. Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI), www.ocsi.co.uk 01273 810 270. ©OCSI 2020
2. Selsey Community Forum website: www.selseycommunityforum.uk

Finally, I would like to finally say what an honour it has been to be working with the staff and volunteers to lead this project along with Jo Hughes Charity Administrator through such challenging times. I have experienced first-hand a community coming together to meet emerging needs and will continue to do so. I am proud to be able to write this report on behalf of the Selsey Community Forum and to share amongst our partner organisations, funders, and key agencies, knowing that we have risen to the challenge, and will be able to do so again if the need arises. If you have any further questions about this project, please contact me via the Selsey Care Shop (01243 201616).

Best wishes

Karen Pirks

Volunteer Operations Lead

Selsey Covid19 Mutual Aid Group *and* Deputy Chair of Selsey Community Forum