

ROBERTSBRIDGE & SALEHURST HELPING HANDS



It is almost two months since we started work in responding to the Covid19 pandemic and we would like to share with you what has been happening ...

Your local community friends' group, Helping Hands have been working in close partnership with the Parish Council since the beginning of the lockdown in Britain. The Parish Council immediately agreed to financially and practically support the needs of the village and the two Parish Council Clerks, Karen Ripley and Gill Colquhoun, have provided extensive administrative support. The Helping Hands Committee and also a joint team from Helping Hands working with the Clerks continue to hold frequent meetings.

New volunteers Helping Hands, now six years old, already had a reliable system of volunteers doing tasks for residents in the Parish of Salehurst and Robertsbridge, but with many of those volunteers over 70 and some self-isolating, we were able to recruit more help with 70 wonderful Robertsbridge residents coming forward to offer help. An initial circular and 'Hello I can Help' card were delivered to every home. There is now a dedicated database to help manage tasks requested during this emergency. It has been set up respecting data protection rules.

Street Champions In total there are 50 volunteers known as Street Champions and a further 25 who have offered to be back up. Any request for help either goes to the Street Champion or to the Helping Hands Phone Holder.

Volunteer Checks Helping Hands' volunteers are already checked for criminal records using the DBS checking system and new volunteers have been offered a free DBS check if needed. The volunteers are in contact with each other and also have access to a Frequently Asked Questions sheet. This useful information has been shared with other volunteer groups in Rother.

Prescription Team There is a Prescription Team of nine volunteers (see contact below) and through April they delivered 119 prescriptions entailing 40 journeys. Although these volunteers never enter a home and stay two metres away, they have been provided with masks, gloves and hand sanitiser. Everyone can request help from this service as it helps reduce the number of people visiting the dispensaries, keeping everyone safe.

Chat Line A separate team of volunteers are available to contact any resident young or old who might like a friendly chat on the phone. (See contact below.)

Generous donations 70 masks have been made and donated by local resident Sue Farrant for use by our volunteers. A generous donation of £50 was raised by Gez Gold. All our local shops have been so good at providing food locally. Volunteers have been helping Dawn Hill at the Village Stores with deliveries including 100 eggs and 15 frozen chickens donated from the Village Stores and distributed to more needy families. Also, several food parcels donated by residents who are shielded have been delivered to families in the village.

Other Help There are volunteer dog walkers. There is a puzzle swap outside 63a High Street. When the station is open there is a book swap there. If you need to access the Robertsbridge Food Bank contact Rev Jan Vidler in confidence. (See number below.)

One of the challenges has been to understand how the national scheme is working as well as the Community Hub which is run by Rother District Council. Our information directory on the Helping Hands website is updated daily. It has a wide range of useful links to local services including local shops and delivery services, personal and business financial support etc. Do take a look.

Grant Support A grant of £1,850 was successfully applied for from the Sussex Crisis Fund administered by Sussex Community Foundation. This funding will be used for protective equipment, payment of the DBS checks, printing, travel expenses for the Prescription Team, cost of setting up virtual meetings etc. There may be other needs such as financial donations to the Food Banks.

Thank you There are so many people who should be thanked for their kindness, generosity and time. We are particularly fortunate to have in our village the Darvell Bruderhof Community and Henry Domer has been with the team every step of the way and they have helped in so many different ways, including delivering some of their famous cookies to front line ambulance drivers and staff at the Conquest.

If you need help or have suggestions on how we can support our community, please get in touch.

Anne

Anne Wells
Co-Chair
Helping Hands

Sue

Sue Prochak
Co-Chair
Helping Hands

Nick

Nick Brown
Chairman
Salehurst & Robertsbridge Parish Council

Useful Contacts:	
Helping Hands	Call 07726 592 739
Helping Hands Chat Line	Call 07726 592 739
Helping Hands Dog Walking	Call 07726 592 739
Helping Hands Prescription Team	Email davidrtodd@hotmail.com or Call 07726 592 739
Latest local information and support	www.robertsbridgehelpinghands.co.uk
Robertsbridge Foodbank	Call Jan Vidler on 07941 381207
Salehurst & Robertsbridge Parish Council	Call 01580 882066 www.salehurst-pc.org.uk