

Our Covid Year and The Power of Partnerships



Our Covid Year—The Formation of Charnwood Community Action

- John Storer Charnwood was approached to act as the lead VCS organisation in supporting the residents of Charnwood with information and help via a centralised hub and including a foodbank based at John Storer House. This became Charnwood Community Action (CCA), a partnership between Charnwood Borough Council, Fearon Community Association, Gorse Covert, The Bridge East Midlands and John Storer Charnwood.
- The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) has been at the forefront of the community-based pandemic response. John Storer Charnwood has taken on so much during this year, fulfilling its obligations and more as a key strategic partner of Charnwood Borough Council.



Rising to the Challenges we Faced

- Co-ordinating and meeting the demand for support
- Operating safely and within regulations
- Communicating support provision to those in the borough
- Telephones
- Home delivery
- Food Supply
- Social Isolation



<p>I need help or know someone who does.</p> <p>If you need help with shopping or a prescription delivery, click here to register with Charmwood Community Action.</p> <p>Click Here</p>	<p>I can volunteer my help.</p> <p>If you are interested in volunteering for John Storer Charmwood please click the link to register an interest. As we reopen our activities we now have a wide range of volunteering opportunities on offer, for more details see our Volunteering page.</p> <p>Click Here</p>
<p>I need specialist support or know someone who does.</p> <p>Click here to request food parcels, have prescription issues or want to log concerns about someone you know or care for.</p> <p>Click Here</p>	<p>We can help.</p> <p>Companies or Local Community/Volunteer Groups click here to register.</p> <p>Click Here</p>

Christmas 2020

- A difficult time as the reality of not earning money through the pandemic began to hit home.
- More families began to suffer hardship and we had constant requests for help.
- Mental health was suffering too as they realised they would be unable to see their loved ones during the festive period.
- As a staff and volunteer team we were beginning to feel it ourselves, the pressure to make sure that no child went without a toy and that everyone had enough to eat.
- However, we were bowled over by the generosity of individuals, community groups and companies big and small as the donations of food, gifts and money rolled in.



VCS Support

- No face-to-face training during lockdown
- Assisted smaller organisations and mutual aid groups as they set up and became more organised.
- Helped organisations obtain PPE for their volunteers and advised on policies and procedures where necessary.
- Invaluable peer support of the Community Centres Group. We worked together to produce a pack giving us all the information and templates for procedures that we would need on re-opening..



Allotments and Well-being

- Regular telephone contact with all of our well-being clients and with some of our more vulnerable volunteers.
- Started Well-being back in late August 2020.
- Bookable lunch clubs back from 30th September until the 4th November – which stopped when the government guidelines changed once more.
- Small socially distanced from the beginning of November with 27 Service users, however because of changes in Government guidelines by the end of March we only had 12 services users accessing our Well-being sessions on a regular basis.



Community Transport

- During the initial lockdown we had no volunteer drivers and were unable to provide a dial-a-ride service.
- Paid drivers re-deployed to deliver food parcels to those in hardship or shielding.
- July 2020 one of our minibuses—the one we had been using to complete our supermarket shops for the foodbank, was found vandalised.
- The story was featured in the local newspapers and TV news and we are pleased to say several companies rushed to our aid, one providing repairs free of charge and another a replacement bus whilst ours was off the road.



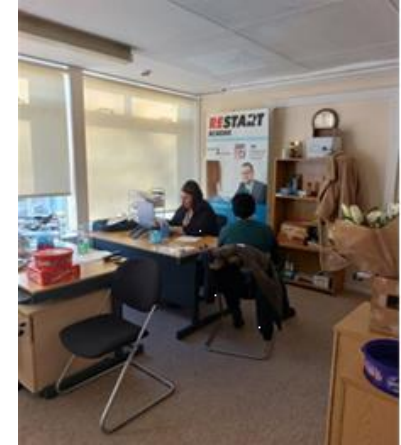
Volunteering

- With John Storer House closed to the public and only a small number of core Well-being activities running, many familiar faces were missing.
- Volunteers helped with the Telephone Befriending Scheme, essential Dial A Ride journeys and the Foodbank
- When the first lockdown ended, Charnwood Community Action took on 50+ remaining LAC volunteers and their established neighbourhood tasks.
- Coordinating volunteers and their unfamiliar activities largely by phone and e-mail was a challenge for staff and volunteers alike.



John Storer House and Room Hire

- John Storer House was not open to the public and so the community café and peer-led activities were suspended.
- Small number of organisations still hiring rooms through lockdown for essential services, such as St John Ambulance, AA and Al-Anon.
- We also took the opportunity to redecorate some of our hireable rooms and completed a long-awaited upgrade of toilet facilities thanks to a CBC Facilities Grant and a LCC Changing Places grant.





Shepshed Volunteer Centre

- During the lockdowns, Shepshed Volunteer Centre worked moved its befriending scheme to a telephone service.
- Books and jigsaws were supplied to the local community, with over 3000 books and over 500 jigsaws delivered to Shepshed residents by 12 volunteers.
- Volunteers also helped with food parcel delivery, while another five were telephone befrienders.
- Scare Sheep festival still took place in October 2020. Visitors fed back that it was good to get out and attend a community event after such a long lockdown.

