



## Mashamshire Community Office

Supporting Mashamshire during COVID-19 Outbreak

[www.visitmasham.com](http://www.visitmasham.com)

Issue 1: 20 April 2020

Tel: 01765 680200

*Please share with anyone who might need help*

### ➔ Who are we and what are we doing?

We are a community-based charity located in the heart of Masham. Our normal functions – Tourist Information, Community Library, Blue Light Community Gallery, Community Info etc. are all on hold due to COVID-19 and many of our usual team of wonderful volunteers are over 70 and now self-isolating. Life has changed very quickly, but we have adapted to the current crisis to successfully support our community behind closed doors, Mon-Fri 10am-3pm. This is only possible thanks to our dedicated part-time staff and over 70 incredible volunteers, most of whom are new to us and responded to a call to help our community during the crisis.

We have been selected as a formal **Community Support Organisation** working with North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and local community groups to connect individuals with the support they need at this difficult time. This includes acting as an agent to deploy emergency support grants for households in difficulty, coordinating volunteers; distributing ID badges so they can collect prescriptions, food shopping and run other errands as required. Our volunteers are also making visits to households of medically shielded individuals who have not answered calls from NYCC to ensure they are safe and well.

Sue Palin (volunteer Trustee) and Neil McIntosh (employee) are both working hard behind the scenes whilst the building is physically closed to the public. They are answering the phone, emails and liaising with various businesses and organisations in the area to ensure people remain connected and supported in their needs during COVID-19.



Management and Trustees are communicating via Zoom and working closely to monitor the situation. A decision regarding the physical reopening of Mashamshire Community Office (inclusive of the library and Blue Light Gallery) will be made in due course in line with Government guidance. Presently, Blue Light Gallery exhibitions have been cancelled until mid-June.

### ➔ MCO Manager Maternity Cover

Hayley Jackson (MCO Manager) is currently working from home Mon-Fri a couple of hours each evening, taking the remaining hours as annual leave and is due to start maternity leave on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Management and Trustees are currently reviewing maternity cover arrangements considering the change in circumstances relating to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 outbreak and government guidance. The team will be in touch with more

information once a solution has been identified and the situation regarding our operating requirements develop over the coming weeks.

## ➔ Stay connected

Our volunteers are playing a critical role in sharing information with the community too. Roger Sarjeant is doing a fantastic job circulating relevant content to approx. 400 local residents via our e-newsletter (71% of readers opened our e-newsletter on 1<sup>st</sup> April and we've received some really positive feedback about the content of our updates).

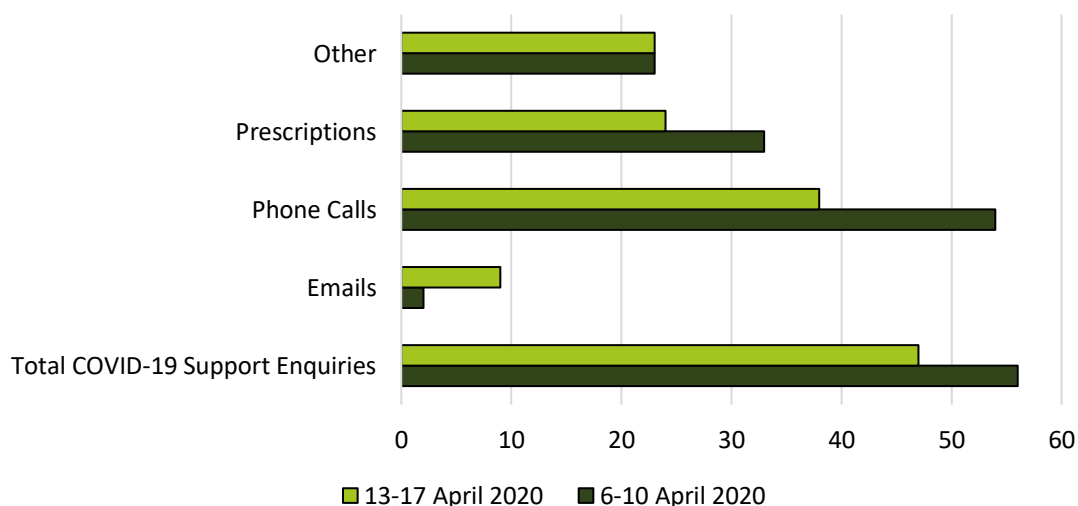
John Darby is constantly updating Facebook with useful info (the Mashamshire Life group now has 271 members and our VisitMasham page has 1,902 "likes" and 1,999 "followers"). Gaynor Pearson is also regularly updating our visitmasham.com website to ensure it is pertinent to your needs.

- **Facebook Group (for locals):** [www.facebook.com/groups/734485157082267/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/734485157082267/)
- **Facebook Page (for visitors):** [www.facebook.com/visitmasham/](http://www.facebook.com/visitmasham/)
- **Email Bulletins - click this link to sign up to our mailing list:** <http://www.visitmasham.com/signup/>
- **Website for info on what local businesses are offering, funding support and other useful information:** [www.visitmasham.com/](http://www.visitmasham.com/)

## ➔ Our impact

We responded to 56 COVID-19 enquiries during the week of 6<sup>th</sup> April and a further 47 during the week of 13<sup>th</sup> April. The majority of which related to prescription collection requests amongst other queries. For every support request, we then need to make several outgoing calls to connect our volunteers with those that need assistance – that's a lot of calls but feedback from the community tells us it's all worth it!

### **MCO COVID-19 Enquiries: Summary**



## ➔ Feedback from the community

We have received some great feedback from people over the past few weeks. It is encouraging to know we are on the right track. Here is what a few of you had to say...

- "You're doing a great job in your daily briefing emails. I've found them really helpful and have saved previous copies for future reference. Thanks so much for an efficient and informative service."
- "Just wanted to say thank you for these emails 😊 they're fabulous, a great mix of news, information and points of local interest. Thank you!"
- "You are doing a brilliant job! I'm self-isolating, so appreciate all the information and find it both helpful and uplifting to the spirit! Well done! Stay safe."
- "Team are doing a brilliant job at the Community Office!"

## ➡ Library Service Update

- From 24<sup>th</sup> March - 7<sup>th</sup> April, 214 calls were taken at HQ and 204 emails received
- Across the county 474 new library members joined remotely
- Digital resources have been replenished by NYCC with 1400 new copies of eBooks now added to stock
- Remote access to Family History resources (Ancestry and Find My Past) are now available and active engagement in digital resources has skyrocketed
- Items currently on loan have been automatically extended until the end of June so that customers do not accrue fines
- The NYCC HQ library telephone helpline is available to support customers with accessing online resources and membership (tel: 01609 533800)

## ➡ Useful Contacts:

### **Mashamshire Community Office**

Email: [info@visitmasham.com](mailto:info@visitmasham.com)

Tel: 01765 680200

### **NYCC Customer Service Centre**

Tel: 01609 780780

### **NYCC Library**

Digital content:

[www.northyorks.gov.uk/ebooks](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/ebooks)

HQ Helpline: Tel: 01609 533800

### **Masham Surgery**

Tel: 01765 689317

### **Businesses**

MCO Local Business List:

[www.visitmasham.com/summary-business-current-services/](http://www.visitmasham.com/summary-business-current-services/)

NYCC "Buy Local" website:

<https://buylocal.northyorks.gov.uk/>

### **Citizens Adviceline**

Tel: 03444 111 444

## ➡ Thank You

Mashamshire Community Office is a charity that operates with part time staff and the help of dedicated volunteers, on a very small amount of core funding. I want to thank those involved in supporting MCO and for pulling together in the current crisis AND those volunteers isolated at home and itching to do more. Current demands mean we are now doing very different things but look forward to more normal times when your work, knowledge and experience will be needed more than ever. Our strength, always, is in our kindness and community spirit – you are all doing an incredible job, thank you and stay safe.

Hayley Jackson, MCO Manager