



news release

PR 14931

For Immediate Release

22 June 2020

West Sussex County Council thanks businesses for their continued support during the Coronavirus pandemic

Attachments

- Vitacress crate containing food parcel for delivery [Vitacress crate containing food parcel for delivery](#)
- Stored goods and food parcels at Drayton depot [Stored goods and food parcels at Drayton depot](#)
- Food parcels being packed into a West Sussex Libraries van for delivery [Food parcels being packed into a West Sussex Libraries van for delivery](#)

Since the end of March, The Community Hub established by West Sussex County Council has been assisting vulnerable residents through the coronavirus outbreak and lockdown with the support of a number of local businesses.

The Community Hub is a joint effort with district and borough partners working alongside the voluntary sector.

The work of The Community Hub and the Community Response Team has included:

- assisting residents to access community-based support,
- delivering medicine and food parcels to individuals who are shielding and can't leave their home,
- contacting people on the shielding list to check in and make sure that they have everything they need.

The County Council wouldn't have been able to do this without the support of their staff, many of whom have been redeployed from different service areas to support the hub. But also a number of local businesses and organisations who have offered their support, including K2 Crawley, Vitacresse, Aldi, Goodwood and Fontwell Park Racecourse.

In April, the Environmental Health team at Crawley Borough Council coordinated the purchase and packing up of 2,150 food boxes on the County Council's behalf at K2 Crawley leisure centre.

This involved taking the government's delivery of food and stocks, as well as purchasing consignments from Aldi supermarkets. The stock was then picked and packed into family sized emergency food parcels for distribution to vulnerable residents by the Community Response Team.

The Aldi food was supplied at cost price and any specific top-up items (such as nappies and baby milk) were purchased by the Environmental Health team to personalise specific deliveries.

Fontwell Park Racecourse and the Reuben Foundation also supported The Community Hub by donating over a thousand emergency supply boxes, each containing a range of store cupboard and bathroom essentials. These were donated free of charge to the County Council.

In May, Vitacress, a West Sussex based horticulture business, donated 600 black plastic crates to support the food supply response to Covid-19. The donation was organised by Tomasz Czopek, Transport & Logistics Manager for Vitacress. It was a great way to join the local Covid-19 effort and to recycle the crates that are used to deliver some of their farm grown herbs.

This month, Goodwood has come on board to show their support by offering their Call Centre staff to assist with contacting 'shielded' residents. They will also be checking with customers who receive food parcels on a regular basis to ensure their delivery is meeting their needs.

In addition, they are helping with calls to care homes to help roll out the government programme to enable all care homes to test their staff and residents for coronavirus.

Goodwood has offered their support free of charge and will be supporting from June to September from the Goodwood Estate, using their own IT and telephone systems.

Duncan Crow, Cabinet Member for Fire and Rescue and Communities, said: "The Community Hub was set up at very short notice to respond to the coronavirus outbreak. Alongside the tireless efforts of our officers, who have been the backbone of the entire operation, we could not have done nearly as much without the support of our district and borough council colleagues and local businesses from across the county.

"Their offers of help and support in this unprecedented time of need really shows what the people and businesses of West Sussex can do when we put our minds to it.

I feel that there has been a real 'war-time' spirit during lockdown and I hope to see this carry on as we continue our work to support the most vulnerable individuals in our area."

More than 45,000 contacts have been made to The Community Hub since it was set up at the end of March and they are still operating seven days a week, from 8am to 8pm.

If you or someone you know still needs support, there is a web page where residents can complete an online form for assistance, just visit www.westsussex.gov.uk and search for 'Coronavirus advice and information' or there is a dedicated telephone helpline: 0330 22 27980.

Ends

For further information please contact the news desk on 0330 222 8090 or email pressoffice@westsussex.gov.uk.

For urgent out-of-hours enquiries please call 07767 098415.