

Woodchurch Driving Group RDA

LOCKDOWN NEWSLETTER

Issue1

Hello everyone welcome to our first lockdown newsletter. After a very slow start I received a glut of articles accompanied by many images, so in order not to edit them too much or block your 'in boxes', this newsletter has rather like Covid-19 mutated into two may be three newsletters, which will come out weekly until all your articles have been included, so if yours does not appear in the first issue please do not panic!

Many of you I know feel you do not have any news because you have not been anywhere or done anything particularly exciting. This probably applies to most of us, especially those shielding and those of us of a certain age. Hopefully we will soon be able to confidently leave the confines of our homes and meet as a group again, albeit not driving.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed an article, piece of news or just a thought or two.

Just before lockdown and during we have acquired 8/9 possible new volunteers who are waiting in the wings to join us and I would like to take this opportunity to say welcome and thank you to them. Hopefully we will have an opportunity to meet soon.

J x



Lockdown Volunteers

Just as the group was in the final stages of bringing our four footed volunteers, George, Teddy and Winston back to full fitness for the driving season, everything came to an abrupt halt. WHOA!

Social distancing and a reduction in activities that might cause injury resulted in the group becoming non operational and the horses furloughed.

George, Teddy and Winston have been enjoying an extended holiday in the beautiful environs of Stone Circle Livery.

Unlike their two footed compatriots they have not had to forgo their personal grooming, mane and tail trims, pedicures, housekeeping or social interactions.

This is thanks to a very dedicated team of volunteers who have continued to visit every day of Lockdown to care for their well being.

Thank you to Susi, Jean, Helen, Jo, Kaara, Hazel, Charlotte and Tom and to the Duke of Edinburgh Award students Emma and Sophia.

And guess who else popped up this week? Yes that is Fred helping his dad. Apparently this was a birthday treat for Fred!

On the next page you will find the rest of the rogues gallery of poo pickers.

Who do you recognise?

Thank you to Helen for arranging the weekly rota and keeping us all motivated.



We are grateful to Emma and Sophia two Duke of Edinburgh students who cover the weekends.

Sorry you were not available for a photo shoot girls.

Luckily my family and I have all kept healthy during lockdown and I have been able to keep busy.

My garden is looking tidier than ever and I have finally made the veg patch I have intended to dig for years. I have also learnt how to successfully make sourdough bread. I have joined friends and family many times via Zoom and participated in so many quizzes that I never want to go to another quiz in my life, if only because I still can't answer most of the questions!

As well as pooh picking I have also been helping in the new community shop and post office. A real asset for Smarden. I would like lockdown to hurry up and end so that I can have a rest!

I hope you have all managed to keep well and look forward to meeting up with you hopefully in the not too distant future.

Hazel

How I have spent lockdown:

As I am a human being who prefers the outdoors I am grateful for my fairly large garden, which has helped me through the last 4 months. I now know how to sow seeds, how to do cuttings of roses and freesia's (the results will tell me if I am any good at it) Apart from gardening I had paints left over to paint a couple of my pots which I found very therapeutic whilst at the same time managing to give myself a different colour! Gloria has done a very good job with the hanging baskets.

When indoors I do colouring of birthday cards from a book we bought from National Trust bookshop or word search and have even attempted, with Gloria, 1000 piece jigsaws. Attended virtual KCC meetings, what an experience, as we have to adhere to government guidance

Of course, I try to control my intake of food and beverage but alas no willpower! I look forward to being together again soon and rebuilding our enthusiasm for carriage driving.

George Koowaree (Group Chairman)

Don't we all George! Thank you for your support

It's a pleasure for me, as the Mayor of Ashford, to be included in your newsletter! We are all adapting to a virtual world, which as social creatures takes away the pleasure of physically being together.

Nature and physical contact especially with animals create a feel-good factor that I have always noticed when visiting and being a part of your events. I have loved every visit and have appreciated being invited to be a part of the Woodchurch Driving Group. Seeing the exceptional driving skills, the most impressive art competition and seeing so many happy faces at the prize giving (I expect Neil has a room full) has been one of the highlights of my year as Mayor.

The Centre certainly lives up to the motto of 'Fun, Freedom and Friendship' as I had such Fun on my visits. The Freedom of seeing the volunteers and team doing what they love is a joy for me and the horsemanship is incredible. Sharing that passion with others is very special. But how can I ignore my 'Adopt-a-Pony' – cheeky George! He is a real character and to me he is a Friend.

During this difficult time, I notice how you have all managed to adjust and keep in touch and I know you will all be rearing to go when we all emerge from this unexpected pause; we are all enduring.

As my Mayoral role comes to an end after a busy but enjoyable time, I will be able to sit back and reminisce over the many exceptional engagements that I have enjoyed and remember you all with gratitude for the welcome and friendship that you have always extended to me.

So, I look forward to being able to meet with you all again before too long, but in the meantime, take care and keep safe.

Cllr Jenny Webb, the Mayor of Ashford

Thank you Jenny for your kind words and the support you have always given the group

Thoughts from the editor

Normally the clock rules us, as we have timetables to obey and deadlines to meet and schedules to keep. But the subjective time of lockdown has replaced all that and time seems to just drift gently but also quickly by.

One of the many things that have surprised me about the past four months is how little I've achieved. Yes I have done what I was already committed to doing but did I transform my garden by digging out all the weeds and redesigning the border's as I'd promise myself? No. Instead I spent more time contemplating the garden and recognizing that the weeds have a charm of their own and the bees love them. Despite my lethargy the plants have survived. However the need for a new fence has galvanised me into action as, it entailed digging out half the herbaceous border, which now needs reinstating.

Yesterday much to my delight I saw not one but two small frogs near my pond which is a miracle in itself as I have also got grass snakes in the compost—yes the two are connected as one predate on the other. May be the rapid and regular evaporation of the pond water in the recent heat has kept the snakes looking elsewhere for dinner!

Jean

Our groceries now get delivered but only every week or two. I've taken to baking so we can still have fresh bread. Here's a snap of me with an early example. It's great straight from the oven.



That looks yummy Jenny

My Story by Liz Jarvis (Wednesday Group Driver)

The thought of writing an account of the last twelve plus weeks fills me with a sense of the, containment that ha happened to us all. The big picture for me was actually not the containment a gentle contentment. A disability has the opportunity to stop you doing what others do, the normal people. If a disability is overcome by the use of a wheelchair, then we, I, am stuck indoors anyway. To go out is a drama in this un-flat world! The Lockdown, hate that expression gave us no change here, just the lovely idea of staying put. I am grateful to be given the label of "vulnerable" which opened the opportunity to food shop on-line. When delivered arrives in plastic bags to the door, this is okay, plan meals for the week using the 'use by date', becomes a little fuzzy. Apart from the idea of food poisoning, we eat our main meal at three o'clock at the moment. The longer daylight hours is working to achieve the other stuff (sewing) that is now so important. I have finished the shoe bag for my Grandson. He has a Library book bag with his name embroidered on it. And both have the pattern of a Polar Bear on them, his favorite creature. Superwoman fabric remnant fashioned itself into a cloth shopper for the first daughter with embroidered name. A delightful flower pattern fabric became another cloth shopper for my other daughter. The above finished with postage on-line purchased we then had to the queue (Social distance) at the Folkston Post Office to deposit said items. Tackling the array of parcels through my front door is no mean feat Gloves on, washing of hands. Fabric of all shapes and composition flooded in. In the old days fabric was sold folded. Nowadays it's a long bundle. With the aid of Rodger the fabrics were duly folded and wrapped around a board so I struggle less offering up the paper patterns. These many lengths of fabric now resplendent on the boards, like a fabric shop display, waiting their turn to be cut and stitched to wondrous articles. The sewing room was moved to the larger lounge area, better daylight too. "Needs Must" My companion for sewing, normally is BBC Radio Four until Covid-19 the news updates, scary, gloomy, I returned to Classic FM. The move to the lounge gave access to the music system where with the half decent speakers complete with LP deck I have blasted out the neighbours. Have even bought extra CD's on line – disgraceful! Yes, masks, different ones, fabrics, washable. The hair had to be tamed," tame the mane " Hair growth, I cover up this mass to go out now. Thursday 20.00hrs, warm evenings the community applauded with what ever made the most noise. My tool of choice a box with a medium wooden spoon, right racket! Five minutes of bangs, fireworks, clapping with a man hidden from my view making a wonderful call sound like an Aboriginal "coo-wee" which had an echo effect round this area of smooth warm chocolate. Our feathered friends dazed, flew round and round woken from their slumber, From the big building behind us came the extra encore once the applause had slowed, a single instrument sounded in the still air, just a few bars of a poplar tune. On V.E Day we all joined in and sang, the White Cliffs of Dover, very moving. I miss the few minutes of social distance but together we are all grateful for the "key workers" who keep us alive, or sweep the streets, pack the food packages etc. The POO pickers of this world. Shameful, but very happy to say I can live many more weeks of sewing ahead yet. Happy Days. Sat in the shared garden to hand sew in the sun. Magic. Twelve weeks we met with our Grandson last Sunday. Magic. Hair appointment booked July 4th. Magic. A return to "normal" will happen, as Sir Tom Moore said, "tomorrow will be a good day". I feel normal people have entertained us; I look forward to normal life, the carriage driving and the coming together of our group, until then, STAY SAFE.

Thank you end of issue 1 Issue 2 to follow