

# #Northants Together

## Community Resilience Update

6th July 2020

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This week the Community Resilience Hub has been in action for 100 days and we felt it was an important time to reflect and take stock of the work the hub has been doing. One of the workers from the hub has kindly written an article about this.


This significant milestone is a timely phase to thank all of you, the amazing volunteers who have gone above and beyond to help and support the most vulnerable residents in Northamptonshire.

Northamptonshire County Council Leader, Matthew Golby has issued the following open letter to you all.

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**LRF**

**Northamptonshire  
Strategic  
Coordination Centre**



Dear Volunteers,

## **Thank you**

As life in the county is starting to return to a new kind of normality and many of our amazing volunteers are returning to their jobs, it is a good time for us to take stock of everything we have achieved in Northamptonshire over the past three months.

Faced with a pandemic none of us have experienced before, the county has risen to the challenge and we have seen fantastic displays of generosity, community spirit and energy. Over 13,000 people have come forward to support those affected by the lockdown, in a variety of ways.

Together with other volunteers, you have helped thousands of people, making a real difference to their ability to stay safe and well. Whether doing shopping and delivering essential goods, collecting prescription medication or by getting in touch for a friendly chat, you have helped someone in times of great difficulty. And for that, my colleagues and I in the Local Resilience Forum want to thank you.

No organisation could have achieved this by working alone, and the real heroes of this pandemic are you, those who have stepped up to help those around you.

This has been a time for our communities to shine, and your contribution has made it possible for us to stand up to the challenge, with the energy and commitment displayed by all our volunteers.

I know that the positive impact of the work carried out over the past few months will continue to benefit the people of the county. We hope to build on this and continue with a community offer beyond COVID-19 and we would like to keep as many volunteers available to help our vulnerable residents, so they continue to live safely and independently with these simple but valuable offers of support. We will be communicating on this further, but hope that if you are contacted you will consider continuing to help us to help others in any way you can.

But in the meantime I want to thank you for all that you have done and are doing and the difference you are making.

*Matthew Golby*

Councillor Matthew Golby



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# 100 days in the Community Resilience Hub

When I was asked if I would write something about my involvement in the Community Resilience Hub (CRH) I found it hard to believe that we were coming up to 100 days!

In the very first days/weeks of operation I can specifically recall not knowing what day of the week it was and the time of day had no particular relevance. I am sure that was the same for many people as it was such a strange time.

The CRH team increased in size progressively over the first few days as the impact of what was happening across the world, the country and Northamptonshire escalated, and the demand upon what this this cell needed to deliver became more apparent and important.



We were set up at Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) head office at One Angel Square, mindful of the social distancing rules and adapted very quickly to how we needed to operate to keep ourselves and each other safe and well. The commitment, energy and determination from my new colleagues was evident from the onset, as was a really positive team spirit.

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Initially the cell was focused upon the recruitment of volunteers, since without these individuals and groups in place across the county, we would be unable to fulfil requests for support from residents who were experiencing difficulties and worries in relation to the situation they were now facing due to the pandemic. The speed with which voluntary groups and individuals registered was amazing and it was so heartening to know that there were people out there willing to help their communities – we knew many would be well utilised.

Alongside the above, other colleagues were overseeing and co-ordinating food supplies and distribution – there were goodwill gestures from a variety of sources and it was important to accept these generous offers and ensure these were forwarded to the services/agencies supporting people who were in need.




My role within the CRH was working on the support requests, e.g. urgent food deliveries, medication collections, support to overcome their loneliness/isolation, posting mail, help to get online. I don't think I was fully prepared for the volume of requests and initially the process set up to manage these was not as efficient as we had wanted, or needed them to be.



I can honestly say in the first few days (back when I didn't know what day it was) I did have a few restless nights waking up thinking all sorts of things. Has Mr X received his food parcel? how is Mrs Y, who is shielding, coping? Did Joe Bloggs get the urgent medication he needed? What if we do things this way?

However, the 'process and techy gurus' in the team worked hard to alleviate these initial pressures by ensuring systems and additional resources were in place. There was a concerted effort made by all and a determination that we would overcome these issues and sure enough we did. The pressures eased, I began to feel relaxed and my sleep was restored!

**29,867**  
Shielded people supported




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We have also been involved in following up on queries relating to the government food parcels which are distributed across the county to those referred by their GPs as they are identified as 'extremely vulnerable' and therefore were needing to shield.

Whilst this was clearly well intended it has, unfortunately for some people, been quite frustrating as the guidance as to who is/was eligible was not as clear cut as it could have been.

However, for some it has been well received and many have been pleased to receive their boxes and unpack items which they didn't know they needed!

**325,000**  
COVID-19 information leaflets distributed to residents



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There has been an 'army of callers' making welfare checks to those on the shielded list and they have deservedly received many thanks from people who are pleased to know someone has taken the time to check up on them. I have been able to hear some of calls made and I know they have really made someone's day!

Thankfully the requests for support have started to ease and I am able to resume some 'normal duties'. I will take with me many things from this experience but the main ones being the feeling of camaraderie, sense of purpose and the overwhelming generosity from the volunteer organisations, groups and individuals across the county.



Throughout I have needed to liaise on a regular basis with other teams working within NCC e.g. the Customer Service Team, Adult Services, Children's Services, as well as people within the District and Borough Community teams, volunteers from the British Red Cross and Northamptonshire Emergency Response Corps – all with the same determination and purpose.



I can honestly say it has been a real pleasure to work together with them all. They have been so professional, supportive and helpful towards the residents of Northamptonshire who needed support in what has, and continues for some to be, a very traumatic and unsettling time.

Kay King  
CRH Team Member