



Vanessa and Helen: working through the lockdown

Welcome to our summer newsletter. Our spring issue appeared in early March, when the world was a very different place.

In the early days of the pandemic, it was often said that we were 'all in it' together. Well, yes and no. For the elderly, and members of the BAME community, Covid has been a matter of life and death. For people living on their own, it has meant further loneliness and anxiety; for young people, a lack of schooling, socialising and sports. And for anyone living in difficult or abusive relationships, the dangers of a lockdown have been all too apparent.

As a Canadian health official put it: we're in the same storm, but in different boats. Covid has exposed huge gaps in our society – between different age groups, ethnic groups and classes – but also shown our community at its best. People have rallied round, come forward to volunteer, clubbed together for food banks and to offer support for the elderly and lonely. It's been terrifying occasionally, heart-warming most of the time.

How we get out of this, and what the world will look like in a year or two's time, is impossible to say. In the meantime, stay strong and keep in touch.

HOLIDAY PLAY SCHEME

We are offering 20 spaces for our summer holiday play scheme, which offers exciting activities and a free lunch. Please ring us to see if there are any places left; ask for Richard or Danielle.

INSIDE: Become a Grandnanny • Public health, your voice • Our food operation

WHERE TO GET HELP

Information on the virus:

www.gov.uk/coronavirus;
[www.islington.gov.uk?
coronavirus](http://www.islington.gov.uk?coronavirus)

Managing stress: www.good-thinking.uk

Loneliness: [www.mind.org/
uk](http://www.mind.org/uk)

Support of all kinds:

[www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-
mind-matters](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters)

Practical and emotional support: www.icope.nhs.uk

Heating, bills, health, benefits, debt:

www.islington.gov.uk/shine

Staying active: [www.nhs.uk/
live-well/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/)

Employment: 0207 527 2706;
iwork@islington.gov.uk

IT NEEDED

Loneliness is one of the main problems associated with the lockdown, and one way of keeping in touch is through social media.

Brickworks has launched an IT appeal, in partnership with Yes Outdoors, to provide people with laptops and iPads. If you have any unwanted items, please get in touch. We'll find a good home for them.

CARE WORK

Are you over 50 with child-care skills? Grandnanny, a new Islington agency, needs you. The agency, co-founded in February by Brickworks regular Adele Aitchison, finds suitable jobs in local families, and offers DBS checks and training, plus London Living Wage. The agency was set up February, just before the lockdown, and now has 150 people – carers and parents – on its books. Contact: www.grandnanny.co.uk

PUBLIC HEALTH

Have you been affected by the lockdown? Camden and Islington Public Health are looking for volunteers to take part in a survey to examine local needs and responses (survey link: <https://survs.com/survey/mqta0lwlu7>). They will be holding a prize draw for volunteers, with three £50 shopping vouchers to be won.

There will also be a number of focus group sessions throughout August. Anyone interested in taking part should contact covid19survey@islington.gov.uk or ring 07813545613. Participants will receive a £10 voucher.

AND FINALLY

A big shout-out to our wonderful neighbours who helped us through this most difficult time. They include Justin, Rachel, Micky, Missy, Andy, Russell, Anne, Katrin, all at Rigatoni and Absolute Print. And to everyone else involved with the Tollington and Hill Rise Mutual Aid group, whose 450 volunteers provide services and help for people in need locally. Apologies to anyone I've missed out.....

FOOD FIRST

Since March our main focus at Brickworks has been on food distribution. There were 25 emergency food centres in Islington and I'm the chair of the network, directly responsible for 11 of the centres, via the Octopus Community Network.

Each week we distribute emergency food packages, along with cooking and debt management advice, to 120 families in the neighbourhood. The food comes in from a variety of places: Edible London; Eglal and the wonderful staff at Girasole Italian restaurant; the Co-op Crouch End; Marks & Spencer in Hampstead (Neighbourly); Islington Council; and the Sobell Centre. I'd like to say a huge thank you to all of them, and to the Brickworks staff who have been working tirelessly to organise the distribution: Vanessa, Helen, Caroline and Amrik.

We would also like to thank our funders such as Arsenal in the Community, Neighbourly, Islington Council and The National Lottery—Community Fund without their grants we would struggle to continue to provide the support that is needed for the food bank.

The local community has also been involved: one street on the Ladder puts together a weekly collection for Brickworks; and Rhiannon and her daughter bring in a weekly contribution.

For further information – and to make a donation – please check out our new Just Giving page:

<https://www.youtube.com/watchv=6VaYx1P0ymM&feature=youtu.be>

If you know of anyone who needs help with food or other support, please let us know.

POLICE RESPONSE

Whilst crime rates have decreased, there have been incidents, such as the George Floyd murder and the recent arrest in Finsbury Park, that have increased tensions locally. These were the subject of a meeting I attended between the Borough Commander (Rav Kohli) and young people in the community.

The tone of the meeting was very positive. A number of actions were agreed including a scheme for young people to shadow the police and the Borough Commander agreeing to hold a series of public meetings in the future – watch this space!



A food delivery at Brickworks

Colin Adams
Director, Brickworks