



LOCKDOWN NEWSLETTER 1

31st March, 2020

Dear volunteers and supporters.

We hope you are doing well in these extraordinary times.

This newsletter will give you a short update on the work being done by the trustees to continue developing the library offer. We will send a fuller update on developments very shortly.

The newsletter also contains detailed information from Ealing Council about a new community support website; about the Council's response to the crisis; and about assistance available for individuals and businesses. Some of you may already have received this information from other sources, but details are below for those who haven't.

(In the 'Ealing Council Response' section below, please see the bullet point regarding Ealing Libraries:

- **“The Library Service's digital provision is available to both new and current library members. This includes ebooks and audiobooks.”)**

NORTHFIELDS COMMUNITY LIBRARY UPDATE

In our last newsletter (dated 18th March) we explained that our work is continuing during Covid-19 restrictions and closures, in order that we can open our Community Library as soon as these measures are no longer necessary.

Work is ongoing with Ealing Council to finalise the Service Licence, Grant and Lease Agreements. The final elements of the library refurbishment will have to wait for a while but if you pass by you will see that the new flooring is down and the library is looking a lot brighter!

The Trustees are also working on a digital offer of clubs and activities for library users to access over the coming weeks and more details will be available soon via this newsletter and also on our website.

Thank you to those volunteers who contacted us after our last newsletter with suggestions for activities.

- There has been support for the idea of establishing a virtual reading/book club – more news of that soon.
- One useful recommendation from a volunteer was the Borrow Box App, which allows library users to download eBooks and eAudiobooks. Useful for book clubs! <https://www.borrowbox.com>

Any further ideas or recommendations always welcome . . . **We'd ESPECIALLY love to hear from any of you who could help deliver online Rhymetime sessions for babies and toddlers!**

EALING COUNCIL INFORMATION

1. EalingTogether.org:

The Council has setup a hub to receive offers of assistance, make connections with voluntary groups in the borough and also to receive referrals and requests for assistance.

The website: **EalingTogether.org** will enable connections to be made between the Council, voluntary organisations and faith groups and those who are both offering help and those seeking assistance. The voluntary groups involved with EalingTogether.org are: BEFriend, British Red Cross, Ealing CVS, Ealing Foodbank, Ealing Mencap, St Paul's Ealing, Ealing Community Transport Charity, NishkamSWAT, Salvation Army. Further work is being undertaken with faith leaders.

EalingTogether.org can receive offers of assistance and referrals concerning vulnerable individuals. **Over 500 volunteers have contacted EalingTogether.org within a few days. The recruitment of volunteers has been paused while the current volunteers are offered roles. Please do check the web site to check when volunteering opportunities are re-opened.**

The **Council's referral telephone number** for self referrals and to raise concerns is: **020 8825 7170**. Please note that this number cannot provide health advice.

If you know of a voluntary group who could also work with EalingTogether.org please email their details to: Cllr Peter Mason MasonPe@ealing.gov.uk

The website gives details of how to:

1. **Volunteer** - if you are able to offer assistance. There are options to offer a wide range of support - from making social contact to delivering food. DBS will be offered where necessary.
2. **Donating to participating charities**, who are currently: BEFriend, British Red Cross, Ealing CVS, Ealing Foodbank, Ealing Mencap, St Paul's Ealing, ECT Charity, NishkamSWAT, Salvation Army.
3. **Support in another way:** using social media, making connections and sharing ideas
4. **Help for residents** - if you need to request assistance or make a referral for a vulnerable person.
5. **Help for businesses** - advice on assistance offered by the Council and the government's website.

<https://ealingtogether.org>

If you want to help

The link below details a wide range of issues, such as:

- How to maintain social distancing while engaging with neighbours or those who might need support.
- Council contact telephone number if you are concerned about the welfare of an elderly or vulnerable person.
- Options for assisting several organisations

https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201262/coronavirus_covid-19/2667/i_want_to_help

2. Ealing Council's Response to the Covid-19 crisis

In addition to creating **EalingTogether.org** and a referral telephone line there has been a very deep and wide ranging review of Council services.

- Offering additional support for individuals, business and voluntary organisations. **details below**
- Working with the NHS to identify high need individuals with complex or long term conditions.

- Working with the NHS to ensure that hospital discharges can continue as promptly as possible with the necessary care packages in place.
- Street Services waste collections will continue. There are plans in place to adapt services if staff absence becomes an increasing issue.
- The Library Service's digital provision is available to both new and current library members. This includes ebooks and audiobooks.
- The provision of services has been reviewed to ensure that contact points with the public are maintained through call centres rather than face to face meetings.
- Social care providers have been contacted and additional support has been offered.
- Sourcing personal protective equipment for social care workers and other front line staff.
- The following services are now closed: libraries, areas within parks (e.g. playgrounds and other activity areas), Greenford and Acton refuse sites, leisure centres, community centres, adult education. In addition schools, colleges and childcare settings are closed with places offered to key workers and vulnerable children/young adults.
- Many council staff are working remotely to maintain services.
- Rough sleepers contacted with offers of accommodation.

3. Support for individuals and businesses

Ealing Council's £1.5million fund to support vital community services

Ealing Council has announced the creation of a £1.5m COVID-19 Emergency Fund to aid essential community services across the borough. It will provide support for organisations, providers and individuals where financial support is needed as a result of the unprecedented challenges created by Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Grant funding will be for:

- **Food assistance** - the council, voluntary and charity organisations delivering food provision to people vulnerable to COVID-19
- **Childcare provision** - providers of childcare including nursery schools
- **Community service providers** - carrying out vital services to the elderly, vulnerable and young. This includes transport providers such as Ealing Community Transport
- **Voluntary sector organisations** - which are working to address the challenges caused by COVID-19 and not covered by the above groups. This includes Stepchange and Ealing Community and Voluntary Service
- **Exceptional Hardship** - for individuals experiencing great difficulty due to COVID-19. This fund can be used to support a range of areas including enhanced Local Welfare Assistance provision.

In addition there is also further assistance for:

- **Additional consideration** for the payment of council tax and other debtors.

- **Support for business** - business rates relief and payment plans, grants for small businesses, providing payments and cash flow support to essential service providers.
<https://ealingnewsextra.co.uk/latest-news/emergency-fund/>

4. **Ealing My Account**

Residents with an Ealing My Account (which enables issues to be reported and transactions to be completed) will receive emails with details of developments. The emails are titled: Ealing News Extra from: updates@ealingcouncil.net. Please do check spam/junk boxes for updates.

To sign up for a **My Account** the link is: <https://www.ealing.gov.uk/signin>
The latest details can be found at: <https://ealingnewsextra.co.uk/coronavirus/>

That's all for now - thank you so much for your continuing support, and take care of yourselves and your loved ones.

With best wishes,

Jenny, Paul, Alison P, Alison S, Monica, Louisa and Tanya
The Northfields Community Library Trustees.

For more information about library developments:
<https://northfieldscommunitylibrary.org.uk>

For offers of help, and any ideas for making our offer even stronger:
getintouch@northfieldscommunitylibrary.org.uk