


COVID-19 NEWSLETTER 1



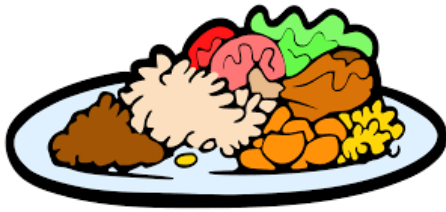
Things may have been put on hold at Weaver's Croft Garden Group and Men's Shed but nature is making the most of it. Though the groups have been suspended, we are still keeping an eye on our lovely tranquil spot. As we are unable to use the garden, some of the nurses, occupational therapists and support workers are taking time out individually to keep the garden ticking over which we are immensely grateful for. "To step out into this peaceful space is an absolute pleasure, a place of tranquility in these stressful times. If I can help by doing a little weeding or watering in my lunchtime I do, it's the best bit of my day."



We are pleased to say we have Blue Tits nesting in our Men's Shed bird boxes and honey being produced in our Golden Hive by our very busy bees. 

I'm currently living during this isolation in a house of 16 people which includes my elderly grandfather. We have really struggled to get food as most items are limited to 2 per person. Money isn't going far either and it's a struggle to make ends meet. So, we were sharing our meals and not eating as often as we would like to. I was linked to Independence Trust who organised for us to have a Food bank voucher and we had a food delivery the next day which was a life saver.

They told us about The Long Table who deliver meals and we contacted them. It was amazing, they sent out 48 meals - that was three days meals for all of us. I was so grateful for the support and information I received from Independence Trust. It really took the pressure off my Step-Parent and we all had good meals. More frozen meals are arriving today we are really happy as we thought that what we had from the Food bank was great. Thank you, Independence Trust, for everything.



I have been given the opportunity through the Independence Trust to volunteer at The Wiggly Worm and The Long Table. We are preparing lots of meals for people who are isolated and vulnerable during this period of lockdown. I volunteer on a Wednesday and we prepare and label over 100 meals ready for delivery. The meals are really delicious, nutritious and healthy. I'm planning to try making the butternut squash curry at home. Volunteering has given me a real buzz and after the lockdown I plan to do this on a regular basis.

Behind the Mask



Today I went out.

I have asthma and feel really anxious about leaving the house.

Whether the mask helps me or keeps others safe it makes me feel better.

Thank you Cathy for my funky mask.

Helen, Stroud

Cathy knows that the key to good mental health is to have a focus. That is easier said than done in these dark days. I know I need to keep occupied, to try and focus on a task as this keeps the dark thoughts out. I started making leather coin purses, and to my surprise I received orders.

I am part of a walking group and one of the group asked if I could make some masks as they were working in the community supporting vulnerable adults and couldn't get any masks. I made some masks and posted on Face Book and then more people asked if I could make some for them. To be able to make things that people need is such a positive thing to do. It's my way of helping out at this terrible time. If anyone needs a mask just let me know I would be happy to make one for them.

Cathy, Stroud



Creative Writing / Screenwriting Sessions

One of our peer leads, Guy Mortenson, is offering online Creative Expression (Creative Writing) & Screenwriting sessions for those who would like to partake. He is not just envisaging this being for existing clients; this is on offer for anyone out in the community who you may know, and also it might help to keep kids occupied (where this is the case), whom he is happy to accommodate also. Guy has said once he has sufficient interest, he will support people with the technical side of things. I believe he is thinking of using Skype or Zoom where people have the capacity to use this. So if you know of anyone who wants to participate, please send details to hugo.poyser@connexus-group.co.uk and he will link you up with the group.



My husband and I both have long-term health conditions and are in isolation due to Covid-19. It means that we are cut off from the outside world. My keyworker at Independence Trust is keeping in contact with me and supported me to make an application to Barnwood Trust for a laptop. This has made such a difference to contact and passing the time. Thank you for your support.

Food Parcel

A welfare call was made to someone who is self-isolating for 12 weeks. It was identified that the individual was struggling to obtain adequate food due to a recent reduction in benefits.



Following a referral to CCP they are now receiving a food parcel weekly. As the client doesn't drink tea the neighbour is also benefiting from the food parcel. The individual made this comment:

"Thank you so much for your help, I really do appreciate it!"

Art for All during Lockdown

(There's no stopping us!)

When we closed the four Art for All groups due to "the Virus", we thought it would be for a few weeks. However it soon became obvious that it was going to be like this for some time. I wanted a way to keep the important social connections, support and creative practice going on between the members, so I set up an Art for All WhatsApp group, which the majority of members have joined.

The members use the group to stay in touch, support



each other, post arty information, TV programmes and Virtual exhibitions, and it has been an opportunity for the four groups who don't usually meet, to see each other's work and

communicate sharing experiences.

I set a weekly art project for those who want to take part, and the work gets

posted and the group share thoughts about it. The standard of work has been incredible. I look forward to a time when we can exhibit this work as such a positive message about how people care about and



support each other through the power of art.

Some examples of the artwork that have been made during this time, are shown here.

You can follow the artists on our Instagram page 'Art for All Cheltenham artists'

Shelley (Tutor), Art for All



I have COPD and during lockdown I cannot go out as the risks are high. When my keyworker contacted me to see if I was ok, I said that I was struggling to get my prescription and also food. I was feeling anxious and isolated and more than anything I missed my guitar. My



keyworker explained all about GCC

Community Help Hub that can arrange for food boxes and collecting medication and offered to refer me to get the extra support. I

thought this was a brilliant idea. The keyworker also suggested I might like to

think about applying for a grant from Barnwood Trust to purchase a guitar. I was so pleased to hear about these services as I had no idea and a guitar would really help my mental health at this time. I also told my keyworker that I needed a fridge as the other one was on its way out. The hub also check in with me weekly, that's on top of regular contact with my keyworker. I also got a grant from Barnwood and got a fridge/freezer. I am just awaiting the guitar. All of this has really encouraged me and helped ease my anxiety and my situation. I am so pleased that my keyworker is in regular contact. Without their support and knowledge, I don't know what would have happened. I'm so grateful to Independence TrustThank you.

During this difficult time with Covid19, a keyworker has been having weekly phone support with a client who has been struggling with lockdown. The client has had to reduce from meeting with two keyworkers from different organisations, once a week, to no face to face meetings. The client has been struggled with occupying time and going for walks due to anxiety.

As the weather was nice it was suggested that the client sit in the garden and the keyworker would ring to have a chat. It was also suggested that the client participated in therapeutic colouring. The client agreed to give it a try, so a variety of books and pens were purchased and delivered to the client's doorstep. The client fed back that the colouring had helped to fill the time and take their mind off other things. The client was thankful for the delivery of the materials.



Video call has now been set up so the client can see the keyworker as the client was still struggling with not having face to face contact. The keyworker will also continue to adapt services to meet the client's needs through this difficult time. The client ended the call by saying the flexibility of the service was appreciated as well as the introduction of video calling as it helped enormously to keep anxiety lower than it had been.

Covid-19 Zoom Fun

Great to see people are organising their Zoom community groups. In this very challenging situation, users of Independence Trust find themselves in even greater need of this service. However, because of the restrictions, staff and volunteers have to be more inventive and creative to fulfil this need. It was suggested that I start a Zoom group, with a few people to begin with - regular attendees of the Centre, including myself, who made contact with the Centre and its events a part of our routine; a part of our lives and who know other regular attendees well and have become a social support for each other.



I firstly set up a Messenger group, called "**Inde Chat and Zoom Group**". This means that the

group can chat, call or video everyone and know that their remarks will be acknowledged at some point.

My initial idea for this Messenger group was so I could let everyone know dates, times, suggestions etc for the Zoom meetings. However, not everyone feels up to, or can attend the Zoom, so they can still get support or social interaction with the corresponding Messenger group. So far, everyone in the group has been on the

Messenger group. The weekly Zoom is an opportunity to see each other which is for some, more of a comfort than just listening on the phone. I aim to include an uplifting exercise on the Zoom meeting next time. Hopefully, this will be a little chink of light in the sometimes dark experience of Mental unwellness.

Help in Isolation

At the present time I am vulnerable and living in unsuitable housing. I am frightened to go out normally due to people hanging around in the corridors. They will sometimes knock on my door but I don't answer. Owing to the Covid-19 situation, I find it difficult to link in with some organisations, so Independence Trust has been helping me to deal with this issue as I feel it is urgent for my mental health and wellbeing, particularly as we are on lockdown and I cannot get out. Independence Trust contacted my GP and mental health nurse to get medical evidence to help my case. Independence Trust have also done a statement of support for me to be moved to another house. All this helps to escalate my case. My keyworker has supported me to access a grant from Barnwood to purchase a cooker and a laptop, both of which have been a lifeline. I can now eat properly and link with Qwell counselling. During this time of being isolated in my home, Independence Trust has given me a lifeline and I can now cope a little better knowing they are there.

**Contact the teams on:
0345 863 8323 or
info@independencetrust.co.uk**