



### Parish Council sets up support phone line and WhatsApp group

The Parish Council has set up a WhatsApp group and a special telephone number for use by people in the parish as a support line during the current situation.

#### WhatsApp Group

The WhatsApp group is a closed group for the parish, to enable people to receive or offer help to others or to provide essential information. We are encouraging everyone to join the WhatsApp group by emailing [jeffmottisfont@btinternet.com](mailto:jeffmottisfont@btinternet.com); don't forget to include your **mobile number**. The more people who join, the better it will work.

#### Telephone Support Line: 01794 236987

The support line phone number is there in case you just need to talk, or have some particular request, such as needing help with getting shopping or prescription medicines. This may be particularly useful if you do not have access to the Internet, but it's available to everyone in the parish.

Volunteers from around the parish are manning the phone line in 3-hour shifts from 9am to 9pm. Outside these hours a voicemail service is available for you to leave a recorded message, which should be picked up the following day.

### Struggling with keeping the children occupied?

Pat Francis has sent us a link to a site with dozens of excellent ideas for making all sorts of interesting things from materials and objects found around the home.

For example, make a hovercraft out of an old CD, a pen and a balloon. It really works!

The link is: [arvindguptatoys.com](http://arvindguptatoys.com). Check it out; it looks great fun!

### The Acorn

Due to current circumstances, this edition of the *Acorn* is somewhat reduced, compared to normal. However, we may publish another edition before next month, if there is the need. See also page 4.

Julia and Peter

### 10 ways to stay well when self-isolating

The Royal College of Occupational Therapists has recommended the following to help you stay well:

#### 1. Establish a daily routine

A routine provides structure and purpose.

#### 2. Balance your weekly routine

Have a good mix of work (activities that have to be done, not just employment), rest and leisure.

#### 3. Think about activities most important to you

Can you adapt them to carry out in the home? For example, instead of travelling to a fitness class, follow an online exercise routine.

#### 4. Set daily goals

This will provide purpose and a sense of achievement. Consider the list of things you never get round to doing!

#### 5. Identify triggers that make you feel low

Look for ways to reduce or manage them.

#### 6. Talk to family, friends and neighbours

Help them understand how you feel and how they can help.

#### 7. Take care of yourself

Eat and drink healthily with plenty of fruit, vegetables and water to support your immune function and energy levels.

#### 8. Avoid staying still for too long

Exercise and regular movement will maintain fitness and strength. If working from home, take breaks and eat away from your desk.

#### 9. Have a good sleep routine

If you are struggling with sleep, try avoiding tea and coffee in the late afternoon and evening, take a bath, try using blackout curtains, listening to gentle music, or doing deep breathing exercises.

#### 10. Keep in touch

Arrange to speak to some most days on the phone, through social media or over the garden fence.

### PARISH WEB SITE

We plan to update the parish web site, [www.mottisfontpc.org.uk](http://www.mottisfontpc.org.uk), in the next few days.



**National Trust**

Virtual greetings from Mottisfont Abbey!

I hope that you are all staying safe and well. What a strange time this is for us all! As you are no doubt aware, the Abbey is completely closed to visitors and most staff, so that we can encourage people to follow the government guidelines to stay home and socially distanced. The National Trust initially thought that the gardens could be kept open for people to have some fresh air while maintaining social distancing, but far too many people wanted to come for that to be possible. We closed completely a couple of days before the government introduced the more strict measures now in place.

Our countryside sites such as Spearywell woods are still open and accessible to the public, but we have closed the car parks. Again, this is to follow the government request that people do not drive to exercise themselves or their dogs, but instead go for a walk, run or cycle from home. Local people who can access these areas on foot via public footpaths are more than welcome to take their exercise there, of course taking care to keep 2 metres away from others you may meet when you're out.

We have a team of people checking our sites and buildings on a regular basis, and we are still able to support our tenants. As our contractors are now only able to do emergency work, we would ask that any small maintenance issues are parked for now if at all possible; do get in touch with us if there are significant concerns or something critical stops working, and we will do our best to sort it out as soon as possible.

I will keep you posted as things develop; for now, I know that the community is rallying round to make sure that those who are most in need get help with essential tasks and supplies.

If you get really fed up being indoors (and especially if the weather turns, as it's threatening to do), log on to the National Trust website and check out the 'blossom watch' feature – it has really beautiful pictures of some of the blossom that's out there at the moment, and it's lovely:  
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/blossom-watch>.

Stay safe and well,

With all best wishes,

*Louise*  
Louise Govier  
General Manager, Mottisfont &  
South West Hampshire National Trust Group

## Andy's recovery

As many of you may know, Andy Simmonds had a stroke caused by a bleed to the brain on the 15th February, and spent a month in hospital receiving rehabilitation.

He is now home and progressing well with the help of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and a speech therapist (he is still as chatty as ever!).

He is determined to walk again unaided and get back into village life ason as possible. Being positive has helped him hugely.

We would both like to thank everyone for all the cards, for visiting Andy in hospital, the offers of help, and all the kind words and support for both of us. We are grateful for it all.

We would also like to send everyone our thoughts and best wishes in these uncertain times.

Sheila and Andy Simmonds

## VILLAGE HALL NEWS

Fantastic news in these difficult times: we have secured a National Lottery grant of £8,928 to carry out work at the hall! The work will involve:

- Providing a new Building Regulations/Equality Act compliant metal ramp to the side entrance on the south side of the village hall;
- Carry out refurbishment of the old outside toilets to provide a secure store for the ride-on mower and other equipment used by volunteers;
- Sand and seal the timber floor in the main hall.

We hope this work can be completed over the summer months.

As far as the fete is concerned, we hope this can still take place, but obviously we are not able to hold planning meetings for the time being. Watch this space for more news.

Pat and Dave Francis

## SOCIAL CLUB

The Social Club is of course closed, but we send our best wishes to everyone to stay safe.

We look forward to seeing you all again soon.

## BROUGHTON BRIGHT HOUR

Dear Friends,

Due to the Coronavirus we have made the decision to suspend Bright Hour until further notice.

We look forward to the day when these uncertain times are behind us and we are able to meet up once again for our weekly meetings. In the meantime, do take care and keep safe.

Barbara Perry

## Council tax assistance from Test Valley Borough Council

Test Valley Borough Council has agreed new measures to help families with their Council Tax through the Covid-19 crisis.

If residents are struggling to pay their Council Tax, they are advised to contact the council at [www.testvalley.gov.uk/ContactRevenues](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/ContactRevenues) or call on 01264 368000 and the council will assist residents with their payment options.

Residents on a 10 month direct debit are able to opt for April/May this year as the non-payment months instead of February/March 2021.

Residents currently on a 12 month direct debit are able to condense payments over 10 months, so that they do not have to pay anything in April/May this year.

Following the government's announcement of a new Hardship Fund to help vulnerable residents to pay their council tax, the council has received guidance that working age residents who benefit from our current Council Tax Support Scheme will receive an additional £150 reduction to their bill in line with the government's hardship fund criteria. Those households eligible for this reduction will automatically be re-billed.

The council's website outlines a variety of help and support available for residents and businesses at [www.testvalley.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/coronavirus).

## Parish WhatsApp group

The parish WhatsApp group has only been running a couple of days, but already is active and finding answers to people's questions.

To join, email [jeffmottisfont@btinternet.com](mailto:jeffmottisfont@btinternet.com), and don't forget to include your mobile number.

## Mottisfont and Dunbridge WI



At the March meeting the speaker was Stephen Hackett from Horatio's Garden at the Spinal Treatment Centre at Salisbury Hospital. The Garden was opened in 2012, and the centre covers from Kent to Cornwall. Studies have shown that there is a positive effect that the garden has on patients' rehabilitation. It is a place where they can leave their wards and enjoy a time outside with family and friends to enjoy the sights, sounds and scents of nature. The paths are built so that even patients who are bed-bound are still able to enjoy this garden. During Stephen's talk we were shown slides of the flowers, etc., in the garden at different times of the year.

We have taken the decision to cancel our monthly meetings for April, May and June as a result of advice from both the Government and WI.

We will take a decision about resumption of meetings later when life manages to get back to normality.

Mary Batten

## Free video conferencing

Sue Holder, the Parish Council's clerk, has passed on to us a link to a free video conferencing solution called Jitsi Meet. It's extremely easy to use, and requires no sign-up or account.

To use it on a PC, open a browser and go to [jitsi.org/jitsi-meet/](https://jitsi.org/jitsi-meet/). (On a phone, you will need to install an app.) Click on the orange button to start a call. On the next page it will offer you four words to uniquely identify your call (if you don't like their choice of words, wait a few seconds, and they will be replaced by four more). Click "Go".

On the next page it will ask for access to your microphone and camera. Click "Allow". Move the cursor to the bottom right of the page, and click on the "i" in the circle. This will show you a link, at the end of which is a copy symbol (two rectangles). Click the copy symbol, and then paste the link into an email, and send it to all the people who you want to join your call. When they receive the email, they just have to click on the link, give access to their microphone and camera, and that's it!

We have only used it a little, but are thinking of using it for Parish Council meetings. **So, please let us know how you get on by emailing [acornnews@mandercom.co.uk](mailto:acornnews@mandercom.co.uk).**

## **HANTSHELP4VULNERABLE TELEPHONE SUPPORT SERVICE LAUNCHED**

Hampshire County Council has announced that a new helpline is now available to provide information and advice, as well as practical support to frail or vulnerable Hampshire residents.

The Coronavirus Hampshire Helpline – Hantshelp4vulnerable - can be contacted on 0333 370 4000. The helpline is available seven days a week, from 9am-5pm, and is for vulnerable people who do not have support from families, friends or their local community, and who need urgent assistance with practical issues. For details see: [www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/coronavirus/volunteer-welfare](http://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/coronavirus/volunteer-welfare).

In addition to the above, the Government has also identified some people who are 'extremely vulnerable' to getting seriously ill from Coronavirus because of an underlying health condition such as COPD, certain cancers and auto-immune conditions, and pregnant women with underlying health conditions. Those in this group will have been contacted by the NHS to request that they should not leave home for at least 12 weeks, and have been advised that if they do not have friends, family or neighbours who can provide support, they can register for help to access food, medicine and social contact via [www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable).

### **Coronavirus: what you need to do**

The government has published a useful list of FAQs describing the things you can and cannot do, which can be found by going to [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus), and then clicking on the link "Read more about what you can and cannot do".

### **Hansards**

Hansards in Awbridge stocks fruit, vegetables, eggs, milk, bread and pet food. They will deliver to the parish, but please phone them on 340654 after 3pm when they are less busy, to place an order. They should then be able to deliver on the following day.

### **Lockerley Village Hall Post Office**

New opening times: 9am to 11am,  
Mondays and Thursdays only.

## **Anxiety and mental health**

There's no doubt that the current situation is quite stressful for many people, and may have an impact on mental health. The World Health Organisation recently shared advice on how to deal with stress during the coronavirus outbreak. Some of the advice included:

- Avoid watching, reading or listening to news that could cause you to feel anxious or distressed;
- Seek information mainly to take practical steps to prepare your plans and protect yourself and loved ones;
- Seek information updates only at specific times;
- Think about switching off or limiting what you listen to, watch or read.

Others have suggested being careful to avoid misleading and fake information by only getting news from trusted and reputable sources.

Further guidance is available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing).

### **The Acorn**

The editors of the *Acorn* are in regular contact with a number of local village networks, and will try to distribute local information as soon as we are able. Our thanks go to them for their support and willingness to share information with us.

We are publishing the *Acorn* as usual on the parish website, [www.mottisfontpc.org.uk/acorn/acorn.php](http://www.mottisfontpc.org.uk/acorn/acorn.php), and delivering it to some people by email, but it will not be delivered to everyone on paper, as is our normal practice. We know that not everybody has access to the internet, so we will be leaving a small number of printed copies of the *Acorn* in each of the three village noticeboards as well as a copy pinned to the noticeboard to read there.

***We are reliant on you, dear reader, to find out if your neighbour would like a printed copy, and if so, to arrange for one of your exercise outings to take you past a noticeboard, so you can collect one for them.***

***We also ask that you forward the email delivering the Acorn to neighbours who are not listed as having received it directly from us. If you would like to be added to the distribution list for future editions, please email [acornnews@mandercom.co.uk](mailto:acornnews@mandercom.co.uk).***

Stay safe, stay well,

Julia and Peter