

## Hermitage Covid Support Group

As you are aware, this group was set up at the start of the pandemic in April 2020 and is still operating today. The group was set up by Andy Murray, Jon Turner and Carolyn Purchase (on behalf of the PC).

A brief resume of things that the support group has done:

1. Prescription delivery
2. Shopping for shielded residents
3. Befriending -phone calls to various people
4. Food bank
5. Ready meal delivery to vulnerable and key workers
6. Newsletters to every household in the village

We managed to raise through a Just Giving Page approximately £3000 with a further £2500 through grants from Newbury Building Society, SSE, West Berkshire Council and Hermitage Parish Council. This has been spent on ready meal manufacture, supplying the food bank and supporting people who may have lost jobs with payment of unexpected or essential bills.

The volunteers have been recognised for their achievements with two awards – one from West Berkshire Council in which we were highly commended in the Covid Response Community Group of the Year category and the other from the High Sheriff of Berkshire. Individual awards also went to Andy Murray, Sara Disson and Lydia Hogburn (who has supported the community in Wellhouse). There are many other un-sung ‘heroes’ from the past year that deserve the thanks and gratitude of the community. The Parish Council extends an enormous vote of thanks to everyone who has been involved with the support group.

As we hopefully ease out of restrictions the way forward with the support group has yet to be decided but the food bank will continue to operate until at least June 2021. Hopefully we will be in a position to enjoy some sort of community get-together in the not-too distant future.