

# News and Views

May 2020



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Calendar of Services - March 2020 The Lavingtons, Cheverells & Easterton					
Date	Market Lavington	West Lavington	Easterton	Great Cheverell	Little Cheverell

### Church Services and meetings have been suspended during the current Cononavirus Crisis.

Bishop Nicholas has written to the Diocese in light of the latest guidance from the Archbishops that all public worship has been suspended.

"We are not stopping church, we are not closing anything, we ARE saying 'church is changing'."

**Bishop Nicholas said:**

"The headline is that public worship will have to stop for the time being."

### Church is changing.

**"Our usual pattern of Sunday services and other midweek gatherings must be put on hold.**

**This is with immediate effect.**

"Our churches will remain open for prayer." Anyone who would like prayer for any reason or situation should call Rev Marion Harrison 01380 816963 or email [lavingtonrector@gmail.com](mailto:lavingtonrector@gmail.com).

### The Bishop said:

"Buildings can stay open. We are not stopping church, we are not closing anything, we ARE saying 'church is changing'."

All Saints, West Lavington:  
St Peter's, Great Cheverell:  
St Peter's, Little Cheverell:

### CHURCHWARDENS

Robert Giles (813256)  
Andy Jenkinson & Pauline Jenkinson ( 813775)  
Peregrine Rawlins (816318)

### May Reflection

How suddenly our world can change. Only weeks ago, the shops were full, everyone was at work and all the schools were open. And we shouldn't forget, there was plenty of loo paper! For most of us our individual worlds have become very insular.

There is so much we don't know and so many questions running through our minds. So how can I or the Church help? Two things come to mind; one is Cpl. Jones from Dad's Army spinning round saying "Don't panic. Don't Panic. DON'T PANIC!" and the other, Jesus' interpretation of the Law as Love the Lord your God and you neighbour as yourself. My emotions run from one of these to the other and then back again. I think if we can all keep a little calm in our lives and as much common sense as we can muster, we will come through this as a much more united community.

While there are no services taking place in our churches, we are holding services on Zoom. If you wish to join us please send me an e-mail asking for access by the preceding Friday. I am also posting prayers and reflections on our website and our facebook page.

And finally, remember we the church community are praying for you, your families, your friends. Keep safe, and remember to stay inside your personal 6' bubble.

May the Lord our God watch over us at this time of trial, may He protect us from harm, help us to help each other, strengthen our NHS and all healthcare workers and love us to the last. Amen.

**Rev. Marion Harrison (01380 816963)**

Address 25 White Street, West Lavington SN10 4LW

[lavingtonrector@gmail.com](mailto:lavingtonrector@gmail.com) (Not available Fridays)

Benefice Office as above - [churchlavington@gmail.com](mailto:churchlavington@gmail.com)

Friday is the Rector's day off and from September she will be taking the last Thursday and Friday of the month as days off.

The Benefice Office is open on Monday mornings and Thursday 9.00 am to 2 pm.

### VILLAGE LINK

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Founded in 1982, The Care Group is a group of volunteer drivers who take people from the village(s)\* to medical related appointments at hospitals etc. if they have no other means of travel.

It is with much regret that it is extremely unlikely that we will be able to take people wanting transport at present.

The reason is that only 3 of our pool of 25 volunteer drivers is under 70 years old and are therefore particularly vulnerable to the virus.

If there are ANY under 70 year-olds out there who would be willing to supplement our now much reduced group of available drivers I would be extremely grateful. Please contact me on 818510 even if you have already volunteered to the Parish Council Initiative.

(We are obliged to apply for DBS certificates for you and you would need to check that your car insurance policy is still ok but not let this stop you applying).

These are challenging times, especially for our clients who have no other way of getting to hospital appointments etc.

\* "The Villages are West Lavington, Littleton Panell and Little Cheverell.

**Michael Page (Chairman)  
Telephone 01380 818510**



## CORONAVIRUS

### Additional Useful Information

Information and guidance is changing on a daily basis so it is important to pay attention to news outlets, government messages and healthcare updates.

The following is a selection of useful sources of information.

Useful websites:

- Stay at home advice at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice)
- Overview – what is it? [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19)
- Number of COVID-19 cases in the UK, [wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus](http://wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus)
- Common questions and answers [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)
- NHS 111 – information can be found at [wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus](http://wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus)
- This sort of incident could cause undue pressure and anxiety. The NHS Every Mind Matters website has some really simple useful tips and advice to support mental health [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/everymindmatters](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/everymindmatters)

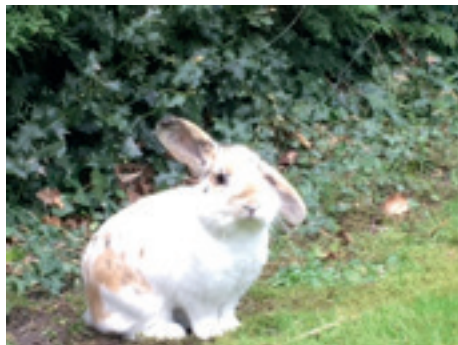
### Useful telephone numbers:

- NHS 111 – only call 111 if you cannot get help online
- Education queries –phone the Department for Education on 0800 046 8687
- Wiltshire Council – 0300 456 0100 Social media Social media is a valuable tool at a time like this but it can also contain misinformation and rumour.
- The following Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)) accounts will be regularly posting out the latest factual advice and information related to the disease
- Public Health England – @PHE\_UK • Department of Health and Social Care – @DHSCgovuk
- Wiltshire Council – @WiltsCouncil
- NHS England – @NHSEngland The NHS advises to only trust NHS organisations on Twitter that are 'blue-tick verified'
- Wiltshire Police – @wiltshirepolice
- Dorset and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service – @DWFireRescue
- Local radio is also a good and timely source of information especially for those without internet access.

### Helping others:

- Check on any vulnerable family, friends and neighbours; helping them with their shopping and checking they have everything they need can make a huge difference
- If you know someone who is self-isolating, contact them via phone, text, email or via social media and check that they're ok
- Public Health England has advised people who are self-isolating to do what they can to avoid visitors to their home and any deliveries of groceries, medications or other shopping should be left at the door.

## LOST RABBIT!



This adorable bunny visited our garden on Thursday 26 March. I tried very hard to find its owner with notices, social media and asking around but no luck. Eventually I became worried about it at night re predators and the cold so made a sort of hutch for him. I had no proper food or equipment.

After ten days with no luck re owners or offers of help, I invested in a nice hutch and run and all the food, hay etc. That I was told I needed. By this time, the rabbit allowed me to stroke him and he would take food from my hand. He enjoyed the freedom of the garden and I put him in makeshift cage at night.

New hutch was ready yesterday and he liked it. Immediately making bed in his "bedroom" and in no hurry to rush out. However, he obviously did venture outside and I haven't seen him since.

Apart from missing him because he was so sweet hopping about the garden and I would sit near him and talk to him, I am desperately worried in case he was caught by a fox. It was during the day though.

If he has managed to return to his original owners and he is safe, I will be happy. I would just like to know that he is well. I originally put a large sign on the pole outside our house and someone took it down almost immediately.

So... Can you solve the problem of the missing bunny? If you know where he is, please call 07785710617. Thank you.

Elfrida Fallowfield. Great Cheverell

## DEVIZES CARNIVAL 2020

Devizes Outdoor Celebratory Arts (DOCA) received the great news of being awarded funding from Arts Council England just before the Covid 19 pandemic lockdown. This will help us deliver our programme of much-loved events for the next year. When some of them will happen is still under discussion by our Trustees, but one decision that has been made is to move the date of **Devizes Carnival from July 11th to Sunday October 4th**. This will enable us to, hopefully, work with schools at the start of the Autumn term. The theme for Carnival 2020 is '**Go Wild**' which we will all need to do when we get to October after so much time in isolation!

We have commissioned the making of a fantastic large scale Ark to lead the Carnival, and are looking for **walking entries** to follow it, in two's as is traditional. It can be anything – 2 disco dancers, 2 sumo wrestlers – it's up to you. Why not join in; you've plenty of time to get your costumes together. We are posting ideas on our facebook page and on our website.

If you wish to enter the parade, please complete an entry form also on the DOCA website.

Eventually we will be keen to talk to groups who would like to be involved in free artist-led costume making workshops which will take place in August and September.

Get in touch via email if that applies to you [info@docadevizes.org.uk](mailto:info@docadevizes.org.uk)

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Day Rate, 9am to 6pm	£60
Evening Rate, 6pm to 12pm	£60
Child's Party, 2½ hours	£30
Use of kitchen facilities, Including crockery, glasses etc.	£30 (in addition to the above rates)
Wedding Package Includes all the facilities from 8am to 12pm and access from 6pm to 9pm the day before and 9am to 12 noon the day after.	£295
Optional clean 9am to 12 noon the day after.	£30 (in addition to the above rate)

\*Including regular users

\*\*From outside the parish boundaries

Booking and enquiries: Amber Hayward  
tel: 01380 818545 email: [roberthayward5@btinternet.com](mailto:roberthayward5@btinternet.com)

## THIS MONTHS COVER

This month's front cover is a photograph of a front garden in Great Cheverell. For those who have not been past, Sue Austin has created a series of scenes that makes passers by smile. Thank you Sue for cheering us up in these difficult times.



## FRONT COVERS

We are always on the lookout for eye-catching photographs for the front cover of News & Views, with the focus being on local people engaged in local events or clubs. We print our front covers four months at a time.

They need to be portrait, hi resolution 300 dpi and CMYK colour.

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Giles Meeting Room - Eve	£6.50	£8.50	£7.50	£9.50
Library Room	£4.00	£5.00	£5.00	£6.00
Additional Rates: Kitchen Cooker - £5.00 Stage & Stage Lights - £10.00 Hall Projector and Screen - £10.00 Giles Room Projector & Screen - £5.00				

- Day rates apply from 8am until 6pm, evening rates apply from 6pm until midnight.
- Bookings are accepted and charged in half hour increments. Bookings must include event preparation and clear up time.
- Changing Room rates are day rates. Actual times required must be entered on the booking form to avoid conflict with Hall bookings.
- The Playing Field (including pitches), for which there is no charge, must be booked on the booking form even if the Changing Rooms are not used.
- Local rates are for village clubs and societies, registered charities and local private hire only.

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## A MESSAGE FROM RICHARD GAMBLE

### Wiltshire Councillor for The Lavingtons & Erlestoke Division

I hope you are surviving in these unusual times!

Wiltshire Council is very active in supporting the residents of the county and Wellbeing Hub is continuing to work at pace to provide support and guidance for the most vulnerable members of our community.

The Wellbeing hub has, at the time of writing:

- delivered over 793 food parcels
- contacted over 9,541 people
- received 2,563 calls
- received 1,065 emails

For more community and volunteer information, including details on how supermarkets are supporting communities, information about food banks, and contact details of our Community Engagement Managers please visit the 'Community information: support, volunteering, information packs' section on our Covid-19 webpage <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus>

We have also created an online interactive map that allows people to see what COVID-19 community support is available in their neighbourhood and throughout the county. The map can be found at [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus).

The council has designed some posters for residents who are unable to answer the door due self-isolating or social-distancing measures. The posters, which provide instructions to for people making deliveries, can be downloaded from our Covid-19 webpage.

The community response to the ongoing COVID-19 situation has been, and continues to be, fantastic and we thank local businesses for their kind help and support.

Any shops or businesses that can help with the supply of bed linen are asked to email [HeadsofServiceAdultcare@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:HeadsofServiceAdultcare@wiltshire.gov.uk) with the subject line **Bed linen support**. The supplies are needed at County Hall, Trowbridge and at Monkton Park, Chippenham and can be delivered during office hours or alternatively the council can collect items.

The Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP) NHS Trust has provided an update on the provision of mental healthcare services in the region. It's crisis and intensive teams and urgent and emergency referrals continue to operate and respond as usual, and a **new mental healthcare helpline (0300 303 1320)** has been launched, which operates in Wiltshire seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Some other services have been suspended but I hope you are getting all the support you need.

**You may contact me about this or any other matter by email to richard.gamble@wiltshire.gov.uk or by phone on 07762 018209.**

**You may contact me about this or any other matter by email to richard.gamble@wiltshire.gov.uk or by phone on 07762 018209.**

## CHEVERELL MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

Hello to our GREAT Cheverellites and all our lovely neighbouring villages.

Right now, it's hard to think of ANYTHING which isn't either COVID-19 or related to COVID-19. Life has changed hugely for us all in such a short period of time and, for the time being anyway, there's a 'new normal'.

Wiltshire Council have been doing a massive amount to support the communities in Wiltshire and a lot of information comes out from them which we attempt to disseminate through the media of Facebook and the Parish Council Website. Please do take a look on them to see what Wiltshire Council is doing and what support is available. Of course, you can always look on the Wiltshire Council website too if you want!

Most, if not all, Wiltshire Council and Town and Parish meetings in 'live' venues have been suspended for a while during this current national emergency. However, moves are afoot to hold some of these meetings 'virtually' now that there have been legislative changes which allow this. Cheverell Magna Parish Council will be doing similarly in the not too distant future. You will be able to 'attend' by linking in to the online meetings, should you wish to. Please look out for notices of that on our website, noticeboard and the Facebook page – the links to which can be found below. The dates and timings of these may change from the previously published programme of meetings.

### On the 'what did the Parish Council ever do for us' front.... well....:

The Parish Council and Clerk continue to co-ordinate the volunteer effort in Great Cheverell. Fortunately, whilst there have been a number of requests for support, these have been at a manageable level. The West Country has been, so far, reasonably fortunate with a lower level of infection rates than in many other parts of the country and this has meant less of a need for support. Let's hope it stays that way for the good of the community. What we do want people to know is that **You Are Not Alone!** Where people do need help, please get in contact with the CMPC Volunteer Action Group. The Great Cheverell community has had a couple of leaflet drops about this with the contact number of your local Volunteer Co-Ordinators but, if all else fails, just give us a call on 07770 904179 and we'll get you the help you need.

The Parish Council would also like to give a 'shout out' to the Great Cheverell Store in the village who are taking grocery orders directly from villagers and delivering those orders. They have been providing a great service to many and particularly those who may be needing to self-isolate. A big thank you to them! Also, a vote of thanks to The Bell pub who have 'pivoted' (in the vernacular of the moment) and instead are offering delivered takeaways to those in the village. It all helps the community hugely through these strange days....

Updates about what is happening will continue to be posted on the Great Cheverell Parish Council Facebook Page and on the Website. Please check there regularly for the latest information. These are the fastest ways of the Parish Council getting information to the Community.

Facebook Page address: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/198785743958067/>

Parish Council Website: <https://www.greatcheverell.org/index.php>

I hope you are all well and that you and yours will continue to enjoy good health. Take care of yourselves. #StaySafe,StayHome

Until next time and may your God be with you.

**Jan Sargent**  
Parish Clerk, Proper Officer and RFO

## LITTLE CHEVERELL PARISH COUNCIL

1. We have a new website <littlecheverellparishcouncil.org.uk>.
2. There will be no Annual Parish Council meeting in May and our regular meeting on 13th May will be a 'virtual' one with the agenda and minutes published on the website.
3. The Parish Council and all villagers are extremely grateful to the ladies of the village who have organised such kindnesses and thoughtful help via a Whatsapp group.



### LAVINGTON PRE-SCHOOL

We hope you are all staying safe and well and that everyone managed to enjoy a lovely Easter in the sunshine. We really do live in a beautiful part of the world, especially at this time of the year. Lavington Pre-school would like to thank all our parents who have, so far, found ways to safely care for their children at home.

During these very strange times we have had some lovely correspondence from our pre-school families, pictures of the children enjoying workouts at home, photographs of their amazing artwork and even video messages to all the staff. Well done to all the parents for remaining so positive, creative and engaging, if you are looking for inspiration, we are continually updating our Facebook page with activity ideas and messages so please keep an eye on that. All the staff are missing the children and send them our very best wishes, hopefully it will not be long before we can safely return to some normality.

Unfortunately, as you are all no doubt aware, we will not be opening as normal for the beginning of the summer term. But we continue to stay in touch with our families and can't wait to see them again as soon as we can.

Stay safe, stay home and stay well.

**30 HOURS FUNDING:** All 3 to 4-year-olds in England are entitled to 570 hours childcare per year but can get up to 1140 hours if eligible. More information regarding what funding for 3 to 4 year olds is available at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/child-care-free-early-education-for-3-and-4-year-olds>

**2 YEAR OLD FUNDING:** If you have a child between 24 - 36 months old you may be eligible for 15 hours a week of 2 year old funding. For more information see: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/child-care-free-early-education-funding-for-2-year-olds>

We currently have spaces available at our Outstanding Pre-school, if you would like to find out more information about us you can visit our website [www.lavingtonpreschool.co.uk](http://www.lavingtonpreschool.co.uk) or contact our Manager, Julie Langlands, on (01380) 812551 or Email: [info@lavingtonpreschool.org.uk](mailto:info@lavingtonpreschool.org.uk) – Please come and have a look around.



## NEWS FROM HOLY TRINITY C OF E PRIMARY ACADEMY

### Covid 19 – the school response

We continue to open our school to children of key workers and vulnerable children, with staff coming in on a rota to look after this small group of children each day, including the Easter holidays. As well as a bit of academic work, we are doing lots of other lovely activities with these children – painting a huge

rainbow on the glass hall doors, gardening in our raised beds to grow vegetables, chalk art on the playground and lots of sports.

Meanwhile, the vast majority of our children are staying at home to help win this battle against the virus. We have been hugely impressed with how our families have embraced the virtual learning platform, with children carrying out their daily learning tasks, submitting projects to their teachers who assess them and return with comments, and having some contact with their teacher and with each other in this difficult time. When we re-open the school, our children will be very well placed to take up their school learning journey again with all their skills honed and rehearsed.

### Bags for A&E

When our staff heard that staff in a local A&E would benefit from having drawstring bags to put dirty clothing in after a shift, to prevent contamination of their homes, they set out to make as many bags as possible – in between their day jobs of managing the distance learning and caring for the children of key workers. Within a few days, heaps of bags had arrived at school made by our staff and their families and friends, and were sent on to our precious and valued front line workers. We had a lovely photo of delighted NHS staff holding our bags, and saying thank you to our staff. Working together as a community of love and support is the best way to win this battle.

### Meanwhile

Our wheat has germinated beautifully and is flourishing on the school field. We look forward to harvesting it in September, grinding it and making our own bread. We are very grateful to the Peplers, farmers in Edington, who support us with this project.

We are also going to grow our own calabashes this year, for harvesting in November, and we hope to use them as musical instruments if they dry out satisfactorily. All our vegetables and flowers will be planted and will grow, ready for September, as ever.

We will be preparing for the new children due to start in our school in September. Whilst we hope that they will be able to come into school in summer, as usual, we have to plan for the eventuality that schools might not open until September, and we shall then have a different sort of induction for these children. At this stage, we have no idea at all when schools will re-open.

### From all at Holy Trinity

Stay home, stay safe and stay well.

Mercedes Henning (Headteacher)



Our meetings have had to be cancelled for the foreseeable future. For everyone this is a time of great uncertainty. Those of us lucky enough to have a garden can use it as an extra bit of space into which we can retreat. Some will be using this time to catch up on weeding and repairs.

Others will be just relaxing and enjoying the birdsong and watching the butterflies. For those of you who have never attended any of our garden club meetings I am taking this opportunity to describe some of our activities. Our garden club meetings over the past years have covered a wide range of topics. We have covered the history of a walled garden in Erlestoke, which is now a cricket pitch. We had a talk about the history of several National Trust walled gardens. We receive regular, interesting updates about the local weather statistics from one of our members who records the rainfall and frost incidents and temperature etc. We have learned about community projects; to introduce young people to gardening, to collect apples for juicing, to establish wildlife corridors, to allow wildlife space in churchyards, to distribute bird boxes. We have had talks from experts on trees, clematis, bulbs, vegetables, orchids and other plant groups. We have visited specialist nurseries, vineyards (and yes there was wine tasting), an organic vegetable smallholding, commercial flower growers and private gardens. We have been taught how to prune, willow weaving, how to clean garden tools, compost making, flower arranging and how to make Christmas decorations. We have learned about permaculture, raising chickens, the elements of garden design, the use of plants in medicine and how to forage for food in the wild. Sometimes our speakers bring seeds or plants or garden tools for sale at reasonable prices.

Some people are a bit frightened about joining a garden club as they feel that it is for people who already know about gardening and that they will not recognise the plants as it will be all latin names. That certainly is not the case with our club. We are a small, friendly club and our members range from complete beginners to experienced gardeners. Some of the experts do use latin names in their talks but nearly always mention the common names as well and more often than not show photos of the plants.

True gardeners love to share their knowledge and help others to learn about gardening. They are generous with their advice and quite often will share their plants too. Our club usually has a plant sale each year. It is a good and inexpensive way to pick up some new plants. If the plant has been growing in a local garden, you will know that it suits the local soil. And there are people on hand to advise you how to care for the plant if you would like that help. And there is nearly always delicious homemade cake and coffee at these events. When we do visits to nurseries or gardens we share transport to help people who cannot drive and also to reduce the number of cars for parking purposes.

We have a modest membership fee of just £10 per person per annum or £18 for a double membership. But if you just want to attend one or two talks you can pay £2 per visit to attend most events as a non-member. We usually meet on the second Tuesday of each month at Great Cheverell Village Hall, at 7.15 for a 7.30pm start. New members are always welcome. We look forward to seeing some new faces when normal life resumes. In the meanwhile, stay safe!



## WORTON AND CHEVERELL F.C.

Soon after writing last month's newsletter, we received news of the complete shutdown of football activities across the country. Since then, we have also heard that for junior football, our league has ended the season and expunged all results.

The club are now in the position of waiting for any reduction in lockdown to see if we can start activity again with the players.

In the meantime, we are starting preparations for next season (fingers crossed) and identifying the teams we will have, coaches, equipment and pitches so we will

be in the best position possible.

Teams are looking for players for next season. It doesn't really matter what standard players are as they will receive training from our FA approved coaches.

Teams are always looking for more parents to get involved with helping teams in supporting roles or in coaching roles, the club will enable training for those who wish to get involved. Please speak to your managers to help support them.

Teams are looking out for sponsors so if interested in publicity by sponsoring a team then contact Dave. If any companies would be interested in advertising at Davis Field then please contact Dave.

### Contacts

Badger Cubs – Dave Kiddle - 07843 678781

U8/9/12 - Mark Goddard – 01380 813160

U10 – Sharon Black 01380 818193

U11 – Paul Miller – 07917 582873

U13 – Dave Kiddle – 07843 678781

U14 – Neil Black – 01380 818193

Adults – Pete Drew – 07885 527546

Follow us on Facebook – Worton and Cheverell Youth Football Club (No other pages are approved by the club)

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PLEASE NOTE - DATE FOR HANDING IN COPY IS ALWAYS THE 20TH

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**BENEFICE 200 CLUB**

April's winners are Monica Sainsbury from Easterton for 1st prize and Robin Preece from Market Lavington for 2nd prize. There is no skill whatso ever in winning, it's just the luck of the draw. I hope the winners will put the money aside and enjoy spending it on a treat after this awful lockdown has come to an end. Stay well and safe.

**Bonnie Matters (01380 722024)**

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## EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH

'A very present help in trouble'

As I write (20 April) the government has announced that lockdown will continue for another three weeks. Ministers insist that they will follow the science when it comes to deciding when to ease measures designed to combat coronavirus. The trouble is that responding to Covid-19 is an inexact science. Experts don't always agree on the best way forward. Some public health advisors worry that the economic and social effects of prolonged lockdown could be devastating. Maybe by the time you read this the Prime Minister will be back at the helm and an exit plan will have been announced.

Who knows? Christian believers have been just as affected as everyone else when it comes to the current pandemic. Our faith gives us no immunity from viruses, or the disruption of lockdown measures. All of our church services and activities have been suspended. Fellowship is maintained by means of phone calls and Skype. Messages from the Bible are no longer proclaimed in church buildings, but posted online via YouTube and Facebook (see our website for more info: [www.pbc-ebc.org.uk](http://www.pbc-ebc.org.uk)).

Covid-19 has exposed the limits of human knowledge, political leadership and scientific expertise. Hopefully we'll get out of this eventually, but no one can be sure how, or when. Our sense that, 'I am the master of my fate and captain of my soul' has taken a serious knock. The fact is that we were never really in control. Our best laid plans were always subject to disruption by unforeseeable events. Coronavirus has just brought this home to us in a big way.

In a changing and uncertain world, we need a message of hope that has stood the test of time. For generations believers have found encouragement in the words of Scripture. Psalm 46 assures us, 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble'. The psalm affirms, 'The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress'. God came to be with us in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is 'Immanuel, God with us' in human form. Jesus entered our world of suffering and grief to break the powers of sin and death. He died on the cross and rose again that we might be forgiven and have the hope of eternal life.

Psalm 46 points beyond this passing world to the City of God. The Book of Revelation offers a wonderful vision of that city where God will dwell with his people for ever: "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.'" (Revelation 21:3-4).

One day pandemics will be a thing of the past. In the meantime, it is good to know that we can turn to God and find him 'a very present help in trouble'.

**Pastor: Guy Davies**  
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