

Here to help!

The Ross Good Neighbours (RGN) Buddy scheme is now up and running in Ross-on-Wye and it is proving a great success with both our vulnerable community and the volunteers, who are keen to support fellow neighbours. We are continuing to recruit volunteers and we're also keen to understand if anyone is vulnerable, lonely or self-isolating, so that they can benefit from the support of the charity. Please get in touch if:



- ◆ **You need help:** you may be isolating or need help with shopping, small household tasks like light gardening or pet care. The buddy team will help you if they can - and will know who else you can ask if they cannot. **Email help@rosscdt.org.uk or telephone 01989 313002.**

DONATE:

If you are able to make a donation to help us to continue our good work in the community, you can visit our donations page on our website www.rosscdt.org.uk and make a one-off contribution or even better, set up a standing order for any amount you can afford. We would be so grateful for your help!

- ◆ **You can help:** if you have a few hours' spare each month to help a neighbour with shopping or other small DIY tasks mentioned above, please get in touch. **Email volunteer@rosscdt.org.uk or telephone 01989 313002.**

>>See page 2 for information on how to become a Neighbourhood Buddy.



A new community group, the Ross Food Hub, is launching one of its services later this month. The group hopes to help people access fresh fruit and vegetables and encourage healthy eating. They want to encourage residents to grow their own food and to share any excess. The team is also looking to work with growers and stores to encourage more

local, seasonal and organic produce which would also reduce the carbon footprint. They are setting up a stall at the Community Garden in Old Gloucester Rd, Wednesday to Friday from 10.30am to 12pm, where free produce will be available, particularly for anyone struggling financially at this time.

>>If you would like to volunteer or would like further information, please email rossfoodhub@gmail.com or call Tim Shelley: on 07972 624378.

What our Buddies say

Our Neighbourhood Buddies link Ross Good Neighbours directly with our community and they are a great team who want nothing more than to help others and make a difference. We currently have around 20 Buddies actively involved in our scheme - shopping personally for customers and delivering directly to their homes. We are always looking for more volunteers to join our thriving and caring team so please get in touch - it's a very rewarding experience and one we all highly recommend.

Email help@rosscdt.org.uk or call **01989 313002** to join our team!



"I love being a Neighbourhood Buddy - you achieve real satisfaction through giving your time, which is far more personal than money which is limited. The social interaction we get from this is just great" ~ Ian



"I really enjoy being a Neighbourhood Buddy - it's rewarding in so many ways - you get to meet people, make new friends and help others" ~ Chris



"It's good to feel part of a team and to be given the chance to help people who need it" ~ Liz



"My elderly parents live 200 miles away and are relying on a similar service locally. I keep telling them to stay home. This was my chance to give something back to those on my doorstep and keep neighbours safe" ~ Jilly



Last month, Ross-on-Wye Tourism Association volunteers spent time working with Visit Herefordshire to get Ross noticed for its excellent food, drink & hospitality as part of the Apples for Autumn campaign. All businesses could take part by simply promoting themselves and their links to apples on social media (however tenuous!) using specific hashtags: **#rossonwye**, **#Herefordshire** **#madaboutapples** and **#applesforautumn**. Activities included new apple-based cocktails and desserts, apple themed welcome hampers for guests and apple themed shop windows. Details of the campaign can be found at <https://applesforautumn.co.uk>.

Ross Good Neighbours news in brief

➤ Phone Friends transfers to Age UK

Ross Good Neighbours' Phone Friends service transferred over to Ross Age UK in September after six months of helping local residents. At the start of lockdown in March, the Phone Friends service linked up people who felt cut off from normal social activities, with a local resident who would keep in regular phone contact. As lockdown eased, many residents felt they no longer needed the service. However - anyone who would still like to receive regular phone calls can now use Ross Age UK's Companion Line. Contact Laura Simnett on 01989 567165 or lsimnett@ageukhw.org.uk.

➤ Making a positive difference

In September, Ross-on-Wye Community Development Trust featured at a national conference - '*Passionate People Making a Positive Difference*' - run by Community Catalysts. Trustees Jane Roberts and Dr Simon Lennane were invited to discuss how the charity started out, how their volunteers delivered food and medicines to those shielding as well as offering phone support for the lonely. A video created for the conference is available on www.rosscdt.org.uk.

➤ Launch of live Facebook events

On 22 October, we launched our first in a series of live Facebook events, designed to connect more effectively with the community and to address local issues. The first event, '*Keeping Ross-on-Wye Safe*', focused on how the threat of a second wave of coronavirus and possible UK-wide lockdown would be handled locally. The panel, chaired by Cllr Jane Roberts, featured Dr Simon Lennane alongside guest speaker Dr Sarah Aitken, a senior public health director. A video of the event can be viewed online at www.facebook.com/rosscdt - which has now accumulated nearly 3,000 views.

Our new shopping co-ordinators



Elspeth Keeling (left) and Sarah O'Neill (below) are now Ross Good Neighbours' dedicated Shopping Service Co-ordinators and are both delighted to be taking on their new roles with immediate effect. They are responsible for overseeing the running of the

shopping service on a daily basis and are very much looking forward to working with the shopping team, our customers and the wonderful Buddy volunteers in Ross.



Sarah and Elspeth both volunteered during lockdown earlier this year alongside Jane Roberts and helped to run the huge volunteer shopping team based at The Venue three days a week. Neither is new to the role and responsibilities this brings but they thrive on the idea of building community spirit and bringing people together.



Anyone who is vulnerable, shielding or self-isolating and needs help with grocery shopping or other essentials, please do not hesitate to email

help@rosscdt.org.uk or call our Helpline on **01989 313002** - the team will do their best to assist you.

A very different Christmas

The effect of the pandemic on our lives has been huge and we have had to adapt to the new rules to stay safe. One of Ross-on-Wye's local consortiums of voluntary groups - including Ross Lions, Environability, Age UK, the Larruperz, Ross Action Bus, RVS, Gamber produce and Sun Valley - who have organised a Christmas Day meal for the lonely or vulnerable for over 25 years have sadly announced that they won't be able to provide this valuable service in 2020. Everyone involved is extremely sad but realised it was the only sensible option this year.

The good news however is that **Gay at the Rumbling Tum** has kindly offered to provide a hot meal delivery service for the whole week including Christmas Day, so please contact her on **01989 567660** to find out more.

Calling volunteers!



Christmas Day is not just about a hot meal - it can also be a very lonely time for many people. The volunteer team recognises the importance of social contact on this special day and are offering to call anyone who would

like a chat on the 25th December.

>>If you, or someone you know, would love to receive a telephone call to share Christmas wishes - or if you'd like to volunteer to help - please call Paula at Enviroability on 01989 763388 to register your details.

Churches Together in Ross & District

Churches Together in Ross-on-Wye & District is a group of representatives of all of the local Christian churches. They meet regularly - currently via Zoom - to share news of activities and to plan joint events.

In recent years they have worked together to publicise Christmas services, have held open Pentecost lunch celebrations in Ross marketplace and also organise the annual *Light Up a Life* service in conjunction with St Michael's Hospice (see back page for event details).

As with other groups, they are constrained by the impact of Covid-19 and are now live-streaming

their services and using email to keep in touch with residents.

>>Contact Marie Elaine Clarke on mec_bvgs@hotmail.com for further information or log onto <http://ctrd.org.uk>.

Grants for local students

Ross Educational Foundation offers grants to students for books, equipment and transport relating to their studies. The trustees meet twice a year to consider applications for funding and in 2019 they awarded almost £3k in grants to students. Any student under the age of 25 whose home is in Ross-on-Wye can apply.

>>Further information available from Nick Richmond: nick.richmond2015@gmail.com or tel 01989 563472. You can also apply online at www.rosscdt.org.uk/ross-educational-foundation.



Warm welcome for all

St Mary's Church in Ross-on-Wye is a welcoming, worshipping community in an ancient building which has served the community for centuries.

Over the past few years, the church has been remodelled to make it a more effective, practical, flexible and welcoming community building with easy disabled access.

The church is now warm, draught-free, light and open with wifi access and can be used for a host of new activities.

It is open daily so why not pop along and have a look around?' With the onset of Covid-19, new ways of bringing the Church into every home in the town have been introduced. Services are now held in a Covid-secure space in the Church and are live-streamed to homes. The team is working to reach out to the whole town to bring friendship and fellowship wherever it is needed, including, through the Chaplain to Commerce and Industry, local businesses, many of which face difficulties.

>>Full details can be found on St Mary's website: <https://rossparishes.uk>.



It's good to talk



What is the Talk Community Hub? It's an approach to bring residents together and connect them to services in their local community and other countywide voluntary, health and social care provision - helping people stay independent, happy and healthy for longer. Hubs are usually groups that are already running from an existing setting, eg a church, pub or community centre.

Who runs Talk Community Hubs? They are supported by Herefordshire Council but run by staff or volunteers from the community or a combination of both.

Where can I find further information?

>>Contact the Talk Community Project Team by emailing:
talkcommunityhubs@herefordshire.gov.uk or search 'Talk Community Hubs' on the Wish website www.wishherefordshire.org.

Stay well this winter



This year, it's more important than ever for us all to try and look after our health and wellbeing. The healthier we are, the more likely we are to beat viruses like Covid-19. There are a few simple steps we can take to look after our health when the weather gets colder:

- Have your flu vaccination, especially if you receive a letter from your GP because you're in a high risk group
- Keep your home heated to at least 18°C (65°F)
- Keep active at home with virtual exercise classes
- If you start to feel unwell, get advice from your local pharmacist or call NHS 111
- Don't forget to look out for elderly relatives or neighbours who may need extra help

>>Learn how to stay well this winter by visiting www.wishherefordshire.org/winter

That Friday feeling

The Friday Lunch Club has been running for over 30 years in Ross-on-Wye, meeting every Friday at The Larruperz Centre from 12 to 2 pm for a cooked lunch, a catch up with friends and a game of bingo. Many of the 30 members, mostly over 70 years' old, have been attending for a long time and the group always offers a friendly welcome to any new members living locally. Sadly they have not been able to meet as a whole group since lockdown began in March and for many members this has been a very hard and isolating time. The volunteer team continues to visit



each member individually from a safe distance as and when invited and reach out to them by way of weekly phone calls, bi-weekly quiz packs and organising small scale meet ups for groups of up to four if members feel safe to. Other activities have included puzzle or book swaps, shopping trips and errand-running for those of our members who have needed support.



>>If you are interested in finding out more, including free transport to and from the venue, then please give Sarah a call on 01989 720627.



Strong young minds

The CLD Trust's Strong Young Minds programme aims to improve the mental health & wellbeing of young people aged 10-26 in Herefordshire by providing early intervention, support and activities and facilitating access to therapeutic intervention where needed. The team's two youth workers Meg and Ryan are available for anyone who needs to access support providing first line intervention.

As part of the SYM programme the team is also keen to hear from young people about their experiences this year of the Covid-19 pandemic and how they have been affected, how their future might be affected and the kind of support that they might like so that they can tailor their services to better help them. **>>For further information you can log on at www.thesymproject.org, call 01432 269245 or email symproject@thecldtrust.org. Details of the CLD Trust - counselling, learning, development - can be found on www.thecldtrust.org.**



Ross Namutumba news

Although the Crested Crane charity shop has had to close, the Ross Namutumba Link Organisation is still assisting our four current projects in Ross's Ugandan twin town - the Disability Group school, a Micro-credit loan scheme for local business start-ups, a piggery run by the local farmers' co-operative and a fishery run by local



man, Joel Mubi (pictured left at his market stall). Joel was struggling to set up a fishpond to rear fish so that he could sell at the local market. By doing this he hoped to add to his meagre earnings to support his parents and his own family as well as provide a much needed healthy addition to the diet of Namutumba's residents. With our financial help, Joel has been able to develop his fishery so that he is now accredited by the Uganda Fishery Board and his business is thriving. **Further details: <http://rossnamutumba.org.uk>.**

The show must go on

Are you aged between 8 and 18 years old and would like to develop your confidence and acting skills with a local, friendly drama group? The Drama Company is a not-for-profit drama group for children and young adults and have been based at the Larruperz Centre in Ross since 2019.

There are week day classes and they also meet weekly as a group, performing large scale, family-friendly theatre shows for the local community. They recently wrote their

own first interactive murder mystery play entitled *A Murder in Scarlett* and last year kept busy performing major shows including *Charlotte's Web* as well as a bespoke play specially written for them entitled *A Twisted Tale*. They are now rehearsing for their next show in November 2021.

>>Further information is online at www.dramacompany.co.uk.



Becoming a hedgehog-friendly town



Connecting with nature and wildlife is one of the best ways to stay healthy, both physically and mentally - so venturing outside and looking after our wildlife is even more important during lockdown. Hedgehogs, the ancient emblem of Ross-on-Wye, need our help if they are to survive and there are several changes we can make now to help our gardens become more wildlife-friendly, particularly for hedgehogs who will be busy in our gardens preparing for hibernation in November.

Mind the gap!

Hedgehogs travel around a mile at night in search of food but solid fences and gravel-boards prevent this. Make sure there is a small gap in or under your fence so that hedgehogs can move easily between gardens.

Embrace mess

A garden that is too neat and tidy will not hold much appeal for wildlife. Make sure you leave a wild patch where they'll be able to find shelter and food.

Wood you mind?

A pile of leaves, garden trimmings or logs makes a safe place for hedgehogs to rest during the day and a cosy nest for the winter months.

Join the plots

Chat to neighbours about how to help hedgehogs in your gardens - **spread the word** - one hog-friendly garden can become a wildlife corridor with another, and benefit the many creatures which roam our town and countryside.

>>Find out more about how to help our hedgehogs at www.playross.com/ross-hedgehog-care.html

You can be serious!

If you've ever thought about getting fit playing tennis but weren't too sure about taking your next steps, Ross Tennis Centre is the perfect choice. The centre is run



voluntarily by the members and is open for everyone in and around Ross-on-Wye. The four courts have recently been resurfaced and courses are run by Head Coach, Steve Barnett (left). Players of all abilities (and none!) are welcome and there are regular coaching sessions as well as social tennis sessions. Information about the courses change regularly, so please check the website for the latest details. The best value is to become a member, but non-members are also welcome to play on Courts 3 and 4 at £10 per court per hour. If you're serious about getting fit, it's easy to book online - just visit the website www.rosstenniscentre.org for details (please note the courts are closed during lockdown).



Events

Date & time	Event	Location	Further information
20 December at 5pm	St Michael's Hospice 'Light up a Life' service to celebrate your loved one's life	Online. If you'd like your loved one to be included, make your dedication by 9 December - see website for details	www.st-michaels-hospice.org.uk/event/light-up-a-life/
22 December	Blue Christmas service for the recently bereaved	St Mary's Church Ross-on-Wye and streamed live for access from home	http://rossparishes.uk
24 December	Midnight Eucharist	St Mary's Church Ross-on-Wye and streamed live for access from home	http://rossparishes.uk
25 December	Christmas Morning Eucharist	St Mary's Church Ross-on-Wye and streamed live for access from home	http://rossparishes.uk
Every Sunday at 9.30am	St Mary's Church Service	St Mary's Church Ross-on-Wye and streamed live for access from home	Details of all events: Online at https://rossparishes.uk , on the church notice board or call 01989 562175

If you would like to advertise your group's event in the February newsletter, please email details to comms@rosscdt.org.uk

Volunteer opportunities

>>Ross Children's Projects is searching for a Chair of Trustees to lead and support the existing team of Trustees to develop the valuable work of this small, but energetic constituted group. They work with partners to organise and run play sessions aimed at children aged 0 - 11 in and around Ross-on-Wye. Sessions are inclusive and we welcome those with children who may have additional specific needs. This is a voluntary, but highly rewarding role. An interest in providing positive opportunities for children is essential. Experience of applying for funding would be an advantage. For more information or to submit your expression of interest, please contact us via email at rcp.enquiries1@gmail.com - or find us on facebook www.facebook.com/RossChildrensProjects

>>Ross Tennis Centre is always looking for help with gardening, edging and weed control! If you'd like to help occasionally, please email them at info@rosstenniscentrecic.org.uk.

>>Ross Food Hub: this new initiative is looking for volunteers to help out with food distribution. Tasks will include boxing up food items and serving at a counter. If you have 2-3 hours a week on one morn-

ing to spare they would love to hear from you - particularly if you have a Food Hygiene Level 2 Certificate. For more information, please contact Tim Shelley Tel 07972624378 tim.shelley@haygrove.co.uk.

>>St Mary's Church, Ross-on-Wye runs a host of events and activities including a Job Club, choir, needlecraft group, youth club, Mothers and Toddlers group, Bell-ringers, Bereavement Group, Befrienders, a film group and much more. We are always looking for volunteers to help with these activities and to identify new ways in which the church can support the community. If you are interested in volunteering to help or participate with any of these activities, please contact the church office administrator rossparishes.uk or 01989 562175.

>>Ross Good Neighbours Buddies: if you'd like to become a Neighbourhood Buddy (see page 2), please call our Helpline on 01989 313002 or email help@rosscdt.org.uk.

>>Ross Good Neighbours Helpline: if you can spare a few hours a month to man our Helpline, please leave a message on 01989 313002 or contact help@rosscdt.org.uk. Credentials are patience and ability to answer the phone and talk with a big smile!

 Call our Helpline
01989 313002

 help@rosscdt.org.uk

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