

Ross CDT membership growing

The Ross-on-Wye Community Development Trust (Ross CDT) became a charity in October 2019 and has since gone from strength to strength due to the incredible support from our volunteer network as well as donations from our very generous financial supporters. Our work however is far from done and we continue to recruit volunteers, initiate projects that benefit Ross-on-Wye and support local organisations who have so much to offer the community.



Painting by Sara Herriott - Highly Commended in the 'Art' category of Ross in the Lockdown Photography Competition 2020

In just over a year, the Ross CDT has set up - with support from local voluntary organisations such as the Ross Lions and Rotary Clubs - a **Ross Good Neighbours Buddy Scheme** helping people in the community who need vital support such as **shopping** or **medication** deliveries; supplied **free facemasks** during the first lockdown and initiated a **Phone Friends** helpline to provide a lifeline to those in isolation; raised funds to provide **oximeters** to those who need them; raised funding for the **renovation** of an ancient wall on **Gloucester Road** which was dangerous and in disrepair; and set up a service to help those unable to use the internet to access **library books, garden waste bags and refuse tip passes**.

There is still so much more for us to achieve and we rely on continued community support to ensure our town and surrounds are able to support each other in years to come. If you would like to be part of our vision and support our work - and vote in our virtual AGM on 11 March 2021 at 7pm - Ross CDT membership is now open and **free** until **1 April 2021**.

BECOME A ROSS CDT MEMBER!

Complete your membership form at www.rosscdt.org.uk/home-page/membership or call **01989 313002** to find out how you can show your support. Be the first to hear about our next projects, vote in the AGM and help us to make our town a sustainable and flourishing community for years to come.



Show us your bloomers!

Spring is finally on its way with **snowdrops**, slivers of purple **crocuses** and **daffodil** leaves starting to peak through the cold, wet, winter ground. At this juncture, nothing starts to raise the spirits more than the promise of beautiful displays of blooms after what has been

a very difficult year for us all. With this in mind, we hope our community will get behind the revival of the **Ross in Bloom** scheme this July, to bring some colour and beauty to our town. **Rob Taylor** - Ross-on-Wye's very own **Tree Man** - has been appointed Chairman to revive the scheme, so if you would like to get involved, whether it's co-ordinating a display for your street, neighbourhood or just in your own front garden, please start thinking about your creations. You might have a wonderful window box or colourful planter, a cascading hanging basket or flourishing border - anything that will brighten Ross and give the pollinators something to feed on. These are very early and difficult days but Rob hopes, that with your help, we can get the ball rolling this summer.

>>**If you would like further information, please email robtaylor3456@gmail.com.**

Ross Good Neighbours news in brief

► Ross CDT Annual General Meeting

Ross-on-Wye Community Development Trust's first virtual online **AGM** will take place on **11 March 2021 at 7pm** and all members are welcome to join. In addition, members will be able to influence decisions regarding membership fees and the direction of the charity in the upcoming year. If you aren't yet a member, you can join by filling in the membership form on our website www.rosscdt.org.uk/home-page/membership - and don't forget, membership is free until 1 April 2021!

► First Facebook live event of 2021

Following the launch of our Facebook live events in October last year, designed to connect more effectively with the community and to address local issues, our first event this year - '*Staying Healthy in 2021*' - took place on 4 February and focused on how our local organisations can help to keep us more resilient during the pandemic by supporting each other and those more vulnerable in our communities. The panel, moderated by Dr Simon Lennane, included guest speakers Paul Flitney from Ross Sports Centre, Clarissa Hill from the Horizon Centre and Ali Fletcher from Age UK. Details of these local community organisations can be found on **page 6** of this newsletter and you can view the event online by visiting our events on www.facebook.com/rosscdt. **Join us for our next live Facebook event on Tuesday 9 March at 7pm.**

► Important reminder from Sarah and Elspeth, Ross Good Neighbours' Shopping Team!

For those who have been fortunate enough to have had their first Covid-19 vaccine, please be aware that **this does not mean you are completely immune to the coronavirus**, so please do still take care. Anyone who is vulnerable, shielding or self-isolating and in need of help with grocery shopping or other essentials, please get in touch - **our free shopping service** is available for you so please use it! Contact details below.

Your donations make all the difference:

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!

Ross CDT is grateful for a recent grant of £500 from the Masonic Charitable Foundation and the Provincial Grand Lodge of Herefordshire towards the operating costs of Ross Good Neighbours.

Knitters : Ross needs YOU!



Steve Betts' Highly Commended submission in the 'Outdoors' category of our Ross in Lockdown Photography Competition

- > Do you knit or crochet?
- > Do you have any spare or unwanted wool?
- > Would you like to get involved with a creative event in Ross this spring?

>If you answered 'yes' to any of the above, please get in touch with Jola by messaging her on Facebook - search for 'Knitsey' - or Rob on 01989 563670 / robtaylor3456@gmail.com.

Bridstow & Weston-under-Penyard join RGN

The Ross Good Neighbours scheme has now been up and running since the first lockdown in March 2020, delivering weekly groceries and medication to people in isolation in and around Ross-on-Wye town centre. In September, the scheme moved up a level when its Buddy Scheme was finally launched - slightly delayed due to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Its network of dedicated buddies or neighbourhood friends now regularly provides shopping and support to anyone in the community who needs a little assistance.

Bridstow and Weston Parish Councils have now joined the scheme, which is wonderful news for those who are isolating a little further afield outside of Ross. Bridstow PC said it was 'delighted to be part of the Ross Good Neighbours scheme' as it will now enable the most vulnerable of its residents in Bridstow and Wilton to benefit from being part of a Neighbourhood Buddy scheme - providing befriending and practical support such as shopping or helping with small gardening and DIY tasks, as well as a source of information about other useful services in the area.



 For my mayoral term my focus is on **youth** - very often a forgotten part of our community - and with many youth services struggling, having seen funding cuts and in fear of closure, or set up as charities and self-dependant, I decided that for the **Ross-on-Wye Mayor's Charity**, I'd like to help improve and provide the continuous success of Youth Services for the town of Ross-on-Wye through fundraising and events.

Although this has had to slightly change as the pandemic has prevented us from organising events, I very much hope I can still raise a little to help many of these important groups in the town. It is really important to **connect** with the youth of the town - after all, they are our future. There are many organisations who need help, whether financial or through volunteering. Some of these groups provide **counselling** services, **employability** skills, a **safe place to meet** or perhaps provide **drama** or **dance** lessons as a way to help them express themselves. It's these types of services that helped me though my younger years so I really understand the importance of them. It's very difficult seeing many of them struggle knowing what a **positive impact** they make and if they were to close I worry where the youth of our town would turn. **These services are paramount in providing opportunities to help young people to make positive choices and to see a positive future.**

I hope you too can help me raise some funds to help these services and our youth in the town, by donating. Whatever you can spare will go to some very worthwhile causes and you can donate via the following link: <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/15658>

Thank you and keep smiling!

Cllr Daniel Lister, Mayor Ross-on-Wye 2020-2021

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News from St. Mary's Church

The ancient St Mary's Church in Ross-on-Wye, which for centuries has been a centre for the town in times both of joy and trouble, is still open daily for private prayer **from 9.00am to 5.00pm**. It provides a safe, quiet and warm place to pray, or simply to sit still. Please do use it.

During December 2020, the church was glad to be able to welcome people to its Christmas services, both physically and online and the carol service on the Sunday before Christmas was particularly popular and had to be repeated to accommodate everybody safely. As Covid infections increased, a hard decision had to be made to cancel some of the planned carol singing in the churchyard, but the Christmas services still went ahead, including a special 'Blue Christmas' service for the recently bereaved.

Due to lockdown, please note that all of the usual main services continue to be live-streamed to homes in Ross and beyond, so why not make a date and join them this Sunday?



>>For more information about St Mary's, including children's activities, and any changes to opening arrangements, please check their website at <https://rossparishes.uk>.



Toast & Toddle group

Under normal circumstances, St Mary's Church holds its weekly Toast & Toddle activity group for anyone returning from the school run, with or without a toddler, each Wednesday morning during term time from 8.45am to 10.15am. Due to lockdown, however, the group is currently unable to physically reopen in the church, and until they can do so, they are running their weekly Toast Club Story Time with a song or activity video for you and your children to enjoy, created by the familiar faces of the toast makers. The group is open to everyone in the community and they look forward to welcoming you. >>Details can be found online at <https://rossparishes.uk/toast> or on www.facebook.com/groups/toastandtoddle.

Free family play sessions

Ross Children's Projects is a community group based in Ross-on-Wye, committed to providing fun, open-access play opportunities for children locally. Their free parent and toddler sessions will resume in March, as soon as restrictions allow, on Monday mornings at Haygrove Community Garden. The sessions involve sensory and messy play, treasure hunts, games and other activities aimed at supporting families to get outside with their children. These sessions follow strict Covid guidelines so booking is essential. >>Further details can be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/RossChildrensProjects.



RGN joins Talk Community Hub Network

Herefordshire Council is delighted to announce that Ross Good Neighbours has joined the council's Talk Community Hub network.

This latest partnership will see Ross-on-Wye become part of a fast growing number of Talk Community Hubs across the county. The council has awarded RGN with a grant of £2,500 to enable the expansion of the community help line and to help towards the production of Ross Neighbourhood News.

During the pandemic Ross Good Neighbours' help line and newsletters have become a lifeline to many Ross residents. The team of Helpline volunteers handled almost 1,500 calls from residents in the first 7 months of the pandemic and are continuing to support approximately 100 people a month. The volunteers have all received Talk Community training through the council. This training enables the volunteers to provide residents with information that will help to support their wellbeing and independence.

>>For more information about Talk Community Hubs please visit Herefordshire's WISH website www.wishherefordshire.org and search for 'Talk Community Hubs' or contact the council's Talk Community Team by emailing talkcommunityhubs@herefordshire.gov.uk or call 01432 383770.



Volunteer with Ross's finest!

A personal message from Ross Rotary and Lions Clubs:

"If you are reading this it is probably because you are interested in what is going on in the Ross-on-Wye Community. You may also have thought about volunteering, but are not sure how to go about it or which type of organisation would suit you best. May we invite you to consider joining either of Ross's best established organisations, Ross Rotary or Ross Lions?"

Both are made up of people like you who want to give something back to their community whilst being part of two of the largest charitable organisations in the world. Despite what you might think, there are no qualifications or bars to joining either Lions or Rotary. All we are looking for is people of action who want to make a difference to their local community, make new friends and have fun doing it."

>>If you would like to know more please contact info@rossonwyelions.org or info@rossrotary.com



Ross Care Group

Ross Care Group was set up in 1998 and is a collaboration of local care agencies - Total Living Care, Ashfield Care and Hands - working together to improve care services within our community.

The group is focussed on working with local health services to share learning, develop efficiencies and reduce the risk of spreading the virus to our more vulnerable neighbours. The team have been leading in building bridges between Health and Social care and cementing foundations for a collaborative approach to care in our local community.

>>For more details about how Ross Care Group can help you, please visit www.facebook.com/rosscaregroup/ or www.rosscaregroup.org. They are also currently recruiting for carers - email Hugh at hugh@ashfield-care.co.uk for information.

Age UK's Doorstep Companions

Age UK's **Companion Line** service offers those who may be lonely or isolated a regular chat on the phone with one of our friendly volunteers. In December some of our Ross-on-Wye volunteers were able to meet with their clients for a socially distanced '**Doorstep Coffee Break**'. Equipped with a coffee and warm clothing, the volunteers visited their clients and chatted with them on their doorsteps. It was a wonderful opportunity to put a face to a voice and to meet in person, in some cases after many months of chatting on the phone. Thank you to all our wonderful Companion Line volunteers who are providing such a valuable service.



>>If you know anyone who would benefit from our Companion Line service or would like to volunteer with us, please contact Age UK Ross Office on 01989 567165 or 01989 763887 or visit www.ageuk.org.uk/herefordshireandworcestershire for more info.



Supporting you in lockdown

Established in 2017, the Horizon Centre in Ross-on-Wye is a day centre that offers a wide range of activities including wood working, craft making and exercise groups as well as new opportunities, depending on individuals' interests. The team have activity 'bubbles' to enable social distancing and have established effective infection control measures, including staff wearing PPE, to keep everyone safe.



'We have worked very hard to maintain a covid-secure environment so that people can attend the Centre during this difficult time', said Director Maria Barnett. Even during lockdown, the Horizon Centre remains open and has spaces available for adults with learning and other disabilities. Prices start at £40 per day and they offer free taster days to help people decide if they would like to attend.

>>For more information please contact Clarissa or Maria on 01989 253131 or you can email maria@horizoncentre.co.uk.



Ross Sports Centre refurb

Paul Flitney, Director of Ross Sports Centre joined our panel on Ross CDT's Facebook live event on 4 February and described the devastating damage that the floods wreaked on the building during 2020. Fortunately, due to incredible support from the local community and organisations such as Vanstone, the centre is due to re-open in March 2021 with an exciting line up of events and sporting

& social activities, including an appearance by footballer Lee Sharpe this summer. More details to follow once the final refurbishments have been completed. **>>If you missed it, you can listen to Paul's story by clicking on the 'Staying Healthy in 2021' video in 'Events' on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/rosscdt.**

Ready, Steady - Let's Cook!

Ross Food Hub, a local community group launched its first project in November 2020, the **Zero Waste Stall** which distributes surplus food from supermarkets to the community for free. The stall is located at the Community Garden in Old Gloucester Road, Ross-on-Wye and is now open **Monday to Saturday from 10.30am to midday**. So far the team has saved an incredible three tonnes of food from going into landfill and they now want to build on this success by adding another stall which will tackle some of the aims of the group. Tim Shelley, project lead, commented, “*We want to address food poverty in our town and encourage as many people as possible to grow their own*



*food and have the support to be able to cook it as well. The new stall will be located next to the Zero Waste Stall and will provide a facility for two projects - **Let's Cook** and **Grow Your Own Food**. The Let's Cook project will give people useful advice, meal ideas, tips on cooking, free second hand kitchen utensils and, if you are struggling, some free food as well. The Grow Your Own Food project will give people practical advice on how to grow vegetables and fruit, free starter growing kits, free second hand tools and advice to close the gap between garden and kitchen.*” The team is hoping to start these projects on the new stall in early March.

>>If you would like to volunteer at one of these stalls, or would like to donate items please email Tim at rossfoodhub@gmail.com.

Rental homes for Ross

Across England, towns and villages are building new homes owned by the community for local people in housing need, using government money available to Community Led Housing schemes. If enough people come forward to help, we could do this in Ross.

By setting up a Ross Community Land Trust we can act together to build the housing Ross needs. We could build new affordable homes for rent, for local people who cannot afford to buy. These homes would be protected from being sold and therefore always remain available as rentals.

If you would like to learn more about how to make this happen in Ross-on-Wye, email jane@rosscdt.org.uk or visit www.communityledhomes.org.uk.



Could you be a 'Virtual Volunteer'?

Onside is a local charity that works on the belief that everyone has the right to be treated in a just and fair manner. They have over 150 active volunteers who support over 5,500 local vulnerable people across Herefordshire and Worcestershire who may be vulnerable, disadvantaged or discriminated against. They are currently looking for people to take on volunteer roles of **Relevant Persons Representatives (RPR)** to safeguard the rights of vulnerable people who don't have the mental capacity to consent to care or treatment. The roles involve ‘virtually visiting’ local people in residential care with, for example, dementia or learning disabilities. The video calls take place once every 4 weeks and last no more than an hour (full training given). **Volunteer Manager, Claire Watkins**, said “*Our volunteers give their time, passion and enthusiasm - they need to be good listeners and have an hour a month to make a huge difference. This particular role is very worthwhile and extremely rewarding.*”



>>Call Claire on 07592 737303 or email claire.watkins@onside-advocacy.org.uk for details.

Events

| Date & time | Event | Location | Further information |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|
| Tuesday 9 March at 7pm | Ross-on-Wye Community Development Trust Facebook Live event | Online live Q&A event with Dr Simon Lennane and panelists from local organisations. | www.facebook.com/rosscdt |
| Thursday 11 March at 7pm | Ross-on-Wye Community Development Trust AGM | Online meeting for members - register for free until 1 April 2021 | www.rosscdt.org.uk/home-page/membership |
| Thursday 1 April | Maundy Thursday Service | St Mary's Church Ross-on-Wye and streamed live for access from home | http://rossparishes.uk |
| Friday 2 April | Good Friday Service | St Mary's Church Ross-on-Wye and streamed live for access from home | http://rossparishes.uk |
| Sunday 4 April | Easter Service | St Mary's Church Ross-on-Wye and streamed live for access from home | http://rossparishes.uk |
| Every Wednesday at 8.45am | Toast & Toddle | St Mary's Church Ross-on-Wye and online during lockdown | http://rossparishes.uk/toast |
| Every Sunday at 9.30am | St Mary's Church Service | St Mary's Church Ross-on-Wye and streamed live for access from home | https://rossparishes.uk , on the church notice board or call 01989 562175 |

If you would like to advertise your group's event in the May 2021 newsletter, just email details to comms@rosscdt.org.uk

Volunteering opportunities

>>Ross-on-Wye Cancer Support Care

is seeking a volunteer **Group Co-ordinator** to help to run its self-help group. "We are a small and friendly group of people living with cancer, family and friends. Our group has met monthly at Ross Community Hospital and during Covid-19 we have struggled to stay in contact with each other and have realised that we need more help to run and promote the group to attract more members. We need help with: maintaining an email & telephone list of members, currently about 20 people; organising meetings either by Zoom or at our regular venue, Ross Community Hospital; promoting us via publicity materials and social media. We have a small grant from Macmillan Cancer Support to enable us to do this." Volunteer expenses available. Contact Paul Baker - Tel: 07867 987992 or Email: rpsbaker@gmail.com



>>Ross Food Hub: is looking for volunteers to help out with food distribution & to run their stalls (see page 7). Tasks include boxing up food items and serving at the counter. If you have 2-3 hours a week on one morning 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 07972 624378 / tim.shelley@haygrove.co.uk.

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

>>Ross CDT is constantly expanding its activities - and you can check out our volunteering opportunities at www.rosscdt.org.uk/volunteer/volunteer-with-rcdt. Current vacancies include Neighbourhood Buddy and volunteer team leaders for some exciting new projects, including debt advice, well-being activities and anti-loneliness campaigns.