

St James Church Taunton

Caring for our community safely in these strange and unusual times

It has been very evident over the past week that as a church we have been caring and supporting each other in many different ways. It is also clear, as Fabian has advised us, we are in for a Marathon not a Sprint and that it will take a while for us to get to a "New Normal". It is therefore important that we look after ourselves as well as others, and that we do it safely.

There is a lot of advice, guidance, information out there on the web and this can be confusing. We all will want to show compassion and help as will many others and it is fantastic to see what good things are happening. However there is always a need to be alert to concerns.

So we have put together a little bit of information to help if you are assisting friends, family, church members or neighbours. This is based on information from the Church of England and other reputable charities such as the Council for Voluntary Service. The CVS guidance can be found at: www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/i-want-to-volunteer/volunteering-coronavirus

No doubt there will be more guidance over the weeks ahead, and we will update this document.

Volunteering and coronavirus – how can you help?

Look out for your neighbours

The simplest thing everyone can do right now is look out for their neighbours and offer help with shopping and other errands.

It's not just about neighbours who are self-isolating or vulnerable. Other people in the community who might also appreciate help are:

- stretched medical staff and volunteers
- staff and volunteers in key worker roles
- supermarket workers
- delivery drivers.

Remember it's a marathon not a sprint – your help will be even more crucial in a few weeks' time. For now, the best thing to do is to check in on neighbours.

Stay safe when supporting others

1. Keep washing your hands often for 20 seconds.
2. Stay at least two metres - about three steps - away from people you're helping.
3. If you're trying to help someone with very serious issues – don't be afraid to flag with appropriate statutory services.
4. Support family, friends and neighbours by phone or video call.
5. Offer to run errands for people but stay outside of people's homes.
6. Let family and friends know what you're doing.
7. The Cof E advises going in twos where practical
8. Be very careful about payments – this is potentially a difficult area as housebound people may not have ready cash on them, but they won't want to be indebted to you. Make clear

arrangements for reimbursement, give a receipt and tell someone else what you have done.

9. Don't take on too much - it's often better not to offer at all than to let someone down.

Follow safe guidelines – the Church of England guidance for keeping safe is set out in the **Parish Safeguarding Handbook 2019** and covers a range of areas including home visiting, social media, codes of practice. It can be found at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

If you need advice or have concerns about this, call Jenny Wakefield, your Parish Safeguarding Officer, on 07796248369 or the vicar, Fabian Wuyts, on 01823 333194. Or you can refer directly to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team:

Glenys Armstrong: 07834514842 e mail Glenys.Armstrong@bathwells.anglican.org

Andy Duncan 07736903855 email Andy.Duncan@bathwells.anglican.org

Helen Humphreys 01749 685103 email Helen.Humphreys@bathwells.anglican.org

Volunteering with organisations

There'll be more information on the best opportunities to volunteer in the coming days. Charities are working with the government and local authorities to create ways for people to get involved.

Don't get involved in something that makes you feel uncomfortable or out of your depth. Talk to your family so that they know what you are doing and are supporting you.

If you involved with a local charity you will probably already know what they are doing and how you can help.

There will be Government and NHS sponsored schemes, and there is already an opportunity to sign up. You can sign up to [NHS Volunteer Responders](#) who are recruiting volunteers to support the NHS in a number of ways.

All these organisations will have their own codes of practice you will need to follow.

Some useful Numbers and addresses

AGE UK <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/discover/2020/03/ways-to-help-older-people-coronavirus/>
has useful guidance for helping the elderly

For practical information and advice, call Age UK Advice: **0800 169 65 65**

For a cheerful chat, day or night, call Silver Line: **0800 470 80 90**

THE SAMARITANS 0330 094 5717 have had to close their drop in but are available by phone.

MINDLINE Somerset 01823 276892 and online <https://www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/> **for help with mental health issues.**

Local Coronavirus Facebook groups in Taunton

https://www.facebook.com/groups/205973310624650/213610126527635/?notif_id=1585174221396975¬if_t=group_nf_highlights

Health Emergency Number is: 111

The NHS have a lot of useful information on line <https://www.nhs.uk> and links to help you stay healthy in the Coronavirus Emergency.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

It is really important to keep healthy and active at this time when we are confined to our homes.

EMERGENCIES

IF DURING THIS TIME YOU BECOME OF A SITUATION WHERE IS AN IMMEDIATE RISK TO A CHILD, YOUNG PERSON OR VULNERABLE ADULT YOU SHOULD CONTACT:

the Police on 999 or 101 or the Local Authority Social Care Service on 0300 123 2224 (out of hours 0300 123 23 27 (children) / 01823 368244 (Adults and Mental Health)

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/report-a-child-at-risk/>

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/report-an-adult-at-risk/>

These other organisations can provide help and support

[Childline](#) 0800 1111 (for children)

[Silverline](#) 0800 4 70 80 90 (for older people)

[Family Lives](#) (formerly Parentline) 0800 800 2222

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 200 0247

Action on Elder Abuse: 0808 808 8141

Services may be more limited during the crisis but most organisations will be posting details on their website of their operations during the crisis.