

**THIS weekend, the Chapmanslade community opened their front doors to a heart-warming surprise. Over the course of Easter Saturday, bunches of daffodils were delivered to over 300 houses, and every child under 18 was gifted with an Easter egg (special thanks to Morrisons Westbury).**

*Egg-citement all round*

There was joy and delight all round, with one village member saying that “it was just the best to see excited and surprised little faces when the front doors opened to see what was on their doorstep!” This was the work not of the Easter bunny but the local coronavirus action-group, COV-AG, who are making it their mission to prove that now, more than ever, community spirit can go a long way.



Since their first meeting in March, Chapmanslade’s COV-AG group has been busy organising all things coronavirus-related. Their first actions were to create an outreach programme to contact all members of the local community, and to establish a support system to provide assistance to the residents who needed it most. The village community reacted amazingly, and COV-AG soon had a network of over 50 volunteers ready to help with all things from prescription collections to dog walks. In a time defined by ‘isolation’, they have been determined to maintain unity, and communication has been vital in facilitating this: via virtual newsletters, Facebook forums, and a buddy system of phone calls, they have tried to involve everyone in the project and received heartening responses. Dozens of phone calls, delivery-runs, and food collections later, they are working as hard as ever to keep spirits up during lockdown. They are still expanding their horizons – they have just launched their fund-a-box campaign and are always open to new ideas – but they are also trying to improve their central system by strengthening their communication with high-risk residents and tweaking the process of their pick-up service.

*Daffodils with a special message*

The Easter daffodil deliveries were the embodiment of COV-AG’s mission to bring smiles to faces, and each bunch was tied with a personal safe by both staying at home and checking up on one another’s wellbeing. Charlene Ridler, the group’s commander-in-chief, believes that “maintaining the mental wellbeing of residents at this time is as challenging as tackling the virus itself. We set out to boost morale and that is exactly what we have achieved, but we will need to do more to sustain this as the weeks then become months.” Charlene is especially grateful for the committed enthusiasm of the volunteers, and credits the group’s success to its “good mix of members of all different genders and age groups [which] really helps us to look at ideas broadly and lets us move quickly, especially with technology”.



Looking at all their achievements – past, present, and future – Chapmanslade’s COV-AG can leave us in no doubt that when a community pulls together it truly can achieve the incredible.