

An Easter Message from Chapmanslade

How the Chapmanslade community has connected during COVID

AS SPRING COMES WITH THE BREEZE AND AS FRESH
LEAVES GROW ON THE TREES WE WELCOME IN THINGS
BRIGHT AND NEW AND HOPE THAT JOY WILL FIND
YOU, TOO.

WE WAVE GOODBYE TO ALL THE FEAR OF WHAT HAS BEEN
- WELL, QUITE A YEAR. WE HOPE YOU HAVE A LOVELY
SPRING, AND FIND PEACE IN THE DAYS IT BRINGS.

Much love, Chapmanslade
COV-AG Group



This Easter was one of mixed feelings. On the one hand, it was a celebration of family, friends, and community; of all the joys that we hope to see more of as the weather improves and restrictions relax. On the other hand, it was Britain's second Easter celebrated in lockdown, signifying the yearlong struggle with COVID that has impacted us all. However, whilst the circumstances of this Easter bore striking similarities to the last, our mindsets did not: a year ago, we were looking towards a future overwhelmed by unknowns, but in 2021, we are looking towards a future infused with hope.

This time last year, Chapmanslade's Coronavirus Action Group (COV-AG) had only recently formed, and its first mission was to turn an Easter of confinement into one of community. Over the course of Easter 2020, bunches of daffodils were delivered to over 300 houses, and every child under 18 was gifted with an Easter egg. Charlene Ridler, the head of COV-AG, said at the time 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." As the weeks did indeed become months, this is exactly what COV-AG achieved: via organising food deliveries, prescription collections, and buddy-systems for Chapmanslade's more isolated residents, the group transformed what could have been an extremely isolating time into one during which the community grew closer than ever before. It seems symbolic, therefore, that a year after this initial gesture of community spirit, COV-AG should choose to repeat it.

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On the Easter weekend of 2021, all of the village's children received another Easter egg from COV-AG – kindly donated by Morrisons Westbury, who have supported and worked closely with COV-AG throughout the year – and all households received their second bunch of daffodils. However, these gifts came with a different message, one in the form of a poem ending in the lines: “we wave goodbye to all the fear of what has been, well, quite the year. We hope you have a lovely spring and find peace in the days it brings.”

In the traditional spirit of Easter, this message was one of hope and of finding solace in the light ahead. However, it was also a reminder that as the ‘new normal’ gradually fades back into the ‘old normal’, we should hold onto one of the few benefits brought by a year of Coronavirus: the gift of community spirit.



Surprise bunches of daffodils distributed in the village by local volunteers of all ages

An article written for Chapmanslade COV-AG by Meg Lintern