

The Bucks Good Neighbour Guide

Ways to help your community amidst
the COVID-19 pandemic.



As the impact of coronavirus/COVID-19 on our community grows, different groups of all ages are at increased risk of isolation and loneliness, especially the elderly and most vulnerable in our society.

Times like these emphasise the need for us to offer help to those in our communities who may need the extra help during these worrying times.

We believe it's vital for Buckinghamshire communities to pull together to help those most affected at this time while, of course, adhering to the government's latest guidelines to keep ourselves and the rest of our community safe:

- **Stay at home**
- **Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home).**
- **If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times.**
- **Wash your hands as soon as you get home.**
- **Do not meet others, even friends or family. You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.**

There are still things you can do to help, though. These include posting postcards through the doors of local elderly people with your contact details, reaching out by phone call or video call to those who are most isolated or helping your neighbours with shopping (if you are currently going shopping for essentials for yourself, too).



Some examples of how you can help your neighbours and community

1. Offer help and support

It's simple things that can make a big difference to someone vulnerable or in need. Why not pop a postcard through your neighbours' doors with your contact details, offering them help with anything you're able to assist with (shopping, dog walking, bringing their bins in, anything helpful where you can keep a social distance).

If you're going for your daily exercise, perhaps you can arrange to bring an elderly neighbour's dog with you for a walk (while keeping the advised social distance in the exchange!) Or maybe you could arrange to have a socially distanced chat over the fence with a next-door neighbour on a sunny day?

2. Reach out on social platforms

Facebook community pages and platforms like Nextdoor can be helpful ways to keep connected to people.

However, please be careful about sharing too much personal information and never hand money or financial details over to someone you don't know or trust.



3. Stay connected

Self-isolation can be lonely. The good news is, these unprecedented times have encouraged all of us to find new ways to stay connected and check on one another. A friendly phone call or video call to check up on your neighbours who feel alone and isolated at this difficult time will mean more than you might think.

There may be some more creative ways to stay connected. You could organise an indoor picnic for your neighbours where you all connect via Skype and eat your lunch together, you could arrange a video call quiz and take it in turns to write the questions each week - you could even arrange to play some music out of the window and all have a dance from your front rooms!

4. Share accurate information

Support those in your community who may be anxious about COVID-19 by directing them to official websites such as the [**NHS England**](#) website and correct advice from [**Public Health England**](#). Please refrain from spreading inaccurate or sensationalised news from other sources.

You can also get the latest coronavirus support and information from [Buckinghamshire Council**](#).**

5. Continue practising good hygiene

A simple and effective way to protect yourself and others is by making sure you wash your hands frequently (for no less than 20 seconds each time) and use hand sanitiser if you are out for essentially groceries or exercise.



5. Be kind

Remember the saying “tough times do not last, but tough people do”? The kinder we are to each other, the more resilient we will be against COVID-19. We will all be impacted at some point, many with changes to our lifestyle from self-isolation to remote working.

Help others when you can and avoid panic buying or scaremongering.

If you know a local charity or organisation that is struggling at this time, why not direct them to our **Local Coronavirus Resource Directory**? Here they can find information for local funders who could help them at this time of crisis.



Local Coronavirus
Resource Directory



Some things not to do

Don't stockpile

Supermarkets have continually reassured the public they will continue getting daily stocks and are doing their best to stock up the shelves. Some have put in limits for essential grocery purchases so that everyone, especially vulnerable people, can get what they need. This isn't an indication that stocks will not continue to be replenished and there is no need to panic.

Don't cause undue panic

While it is great to stay connected, please don't share sensationalist information or pictures. These may not impact on you, but you could adversely affect someone who's more fragile.

Don't let go of good habits and routines

It's easy for any of us to shut down or go into panic mode. If you are self-isolating, try to keep to a daily schedule as best as you can, even if you're not working. Read, do household chores, get on with outstanding DIY jobs. When possible, try to get some exercise – even if it is just walking around in your garden.

Don't get locked into bad news

It's important to stay informed on the latest developments and know what's going on but no one needs to get locked into a cycle of 24-hours news. Try setting a time per day where you will look at the news to stay up-to-date and then follow this with a period of undertaking a relaxing hobby/activity to stay focused in the 'now'.



Don't give cash or share your bank account, debit or credit card details

Sadly, it's at such volatile times opportunists find ways to prey on vulnerable people. Practise due diligence and make sure you don't share financial details or hand out cash to anyone you don't trust.

Don't share personal details with anyone who's not from an official organisation

Much like with your financial information, practice caution if anyone who isn't from an official organisation asks for your personal details.

Don't make yourself vulnerable

If you want to help out with community efforts by helping those who are more vulnerable, make sure you always do so without putting yourself in danger.

Don't feel obliged to accept every offer of help

If you feel overwhelmed or simply feel you can't accept an offer of help for any reason, don't feel obliged. This is a difficult time for all of us and everyone responds to these situations in different ways.



#proudobucks

heartofbucks.org
Registered charity no. 1073861

With thanks to Milton Keynes Community Foundation

Disclaimer: This is not a document created by, for or with the UK government. Please visit the gov.uk website for the latest COVID-19 advice. Please note we make no representations whatsoever about any other non-official websites hyperlinked in this article. When you access any other website, you accept and agree that we have no control over the content or availability of that website. In addition, a link to any other website does not mean that we endorse or accept any responsibility for the content, or the use of, such a website and we shall not be liable for any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused by or in connection with use of or reliance on any content available on or through any other website or resource. Any concerns regarding any external link should be directed to its website administrator or webmaster.

