

Greater Stockwood Alliance Newsletter

May 2020



Dear Stockwood Residents and everyone involved in supporting the Stockwood Community

Firstly, to those of you who have not heard of the Greater Stockwood Alliance (GSA), we would like to say “Hello” and introduce you to this aspiring community association which has been steadily developing its service over the past couple of years.

The Steering Group currently consists of six local residents, all of whom bring a wealth of knowledge of what it’s like to live in Stockwood, along with many skills and experience of community development.

The Greater Stockwood Alliance is aiming to build a strong, inclusive and welcoming community. We connect people in the community and we engage with and support local people and a large number of small community groups that run activities for the Stockwood Community to promote health and well-being, and reduce social isolation.

Our goals are:

- Identify the hopes and aspirations of the people of Stockwood
- Communicate and establish working partnerships with other external agencies
- Inform the people of Stockwood about local issues
- Support local initiatives that will benefit the local community
- Develop and publicise a directory of local activities and events
- Encourage and provide ways for residents to share skills and talent

This is our first newsletter and we aim to produce one regularly to share with you the fantastic things that are happening within the Stockwood Ward.

“We’re delighted with what you’ve done for us, we don’t know how we would have got there otherwise. We appreciate you showing your ID, it made us feel safe. Thank you so much for the lovely chat too.”

Meet the Team

Sam Fox: A lifelong Stockwood resident, community activist and chair of the Friends of Stockwood Library.

Amanda Gallagher: Amanda and her husband Adam have been supporting the COVID-19 response by assisting as the first point of contact for any neighbours in need. In normal times, they are active in Stockwood and organise the Stockwood Repair Cafes each month – hopefully, these will be back soon!

Lance Mason: Local resident since 1985; one-time maths teacher and manager at Filton College and, since 2015, pastor of the Free Church in Ladman Road.

Graham Morris: One of the locally elected Councillors for Stockwood Ward and, as a father of 4 children, knows the difficulties that many parents are currently facing.

Jan Perry: Local resident, Community Development Worker (covering the Stockwood area) for St Monica Trust, and a member of the Steering Committee for the Greater Stockwood Alliance.

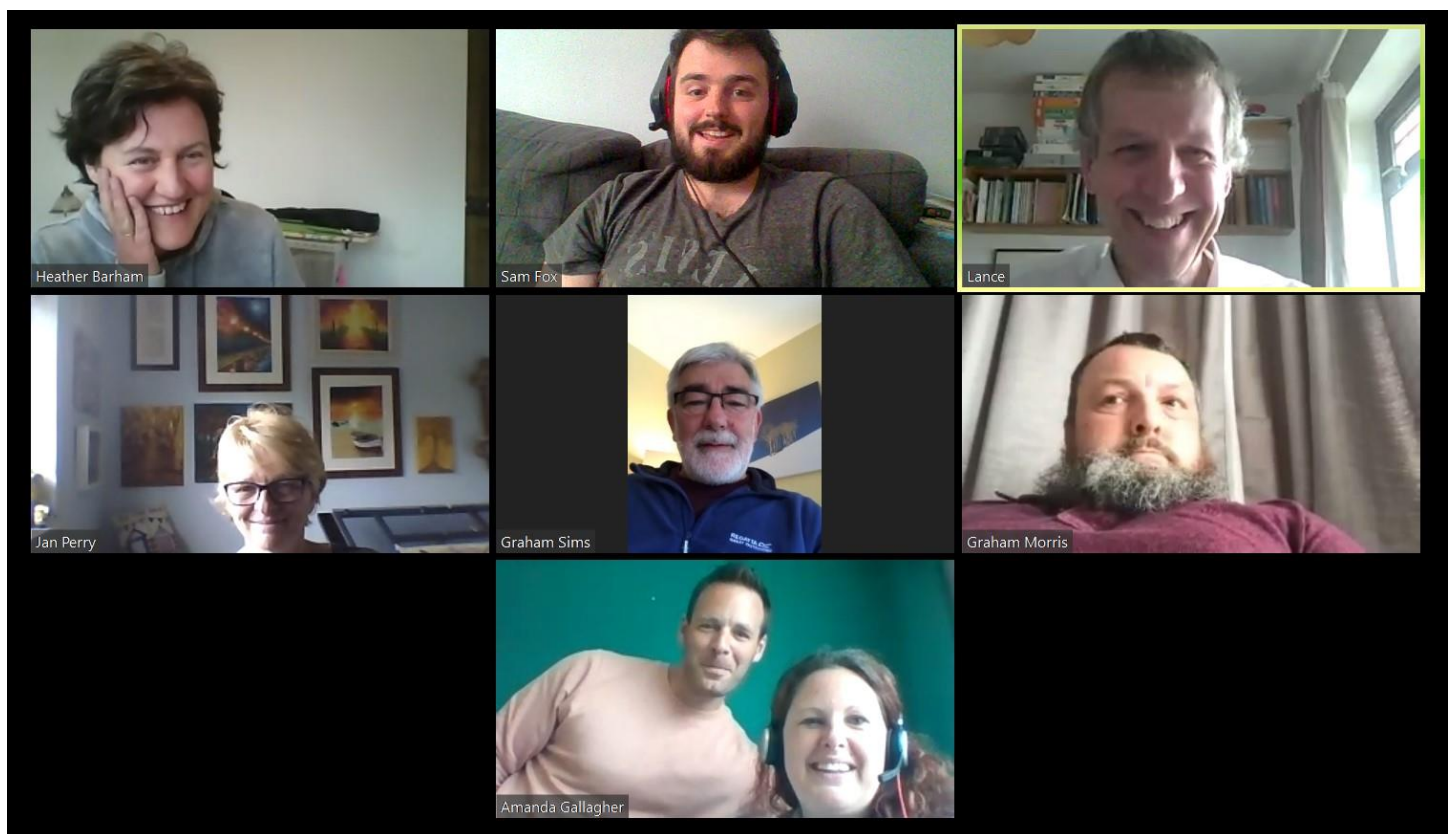
Graham Sims: Volunteer manager of the Counterslip Cares Food Bank. He is retired from a career in housing and environmental health with Bristol City Council and lives in Whitchurch.

Heather Barham: Community Development practitioner working for Bristol City Council who has been working in Stockwood since Jan 2019.

We weren't ready for this current situation – were any of us? – but we thought that now was the time for us to step up to the plate. So, approximately 6 weeks ago, GSA launched its very own 'local community response team.' Our driving ambition is to ensure that every single home in Stockwood has access to the help and support that they need for the duration of the crisis, with particular concern for the many people in the community who have little or no access to the internet, many of whom are very isolated.

GSA are absolutely thrilled to let you know that since we asked for people to come forward to offer to help those most vulnerable and isolated people within our community, we have engaged over 100 volunteers (further details below!) We would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work in this extremely challenging period. We are thrilled to be working with so many agencies and individuals who have such commitment to the people who live in the area. Stockwood is brimming with talent and energy, we have seen so much evidence of this in the past weeks.

We would like to thank Bristol City Council, St Monica Trust, Quartet Community Foundation and the Counterslip Foodbank for their support with this ongoing project.



“As someone who is considered to be in the ‘at-risk group’ for Covid 19, I was delighted to discover, through my local church, that several local organisations had come together to form the Stockwood Community Response Team. As I need help with shopping, I contacted the number given and sent a shopping list by text. My shopping arrived the same day. That kind of service has continued, I have never had to wait more than a few hours to receive my shopping. To say I am grateful to the Team is understatement, it is a ‘godsend’. And I hugely appreciate the shopping team who put themselves at risk so I don’t have to. A BIG ‘thank you’ to all concerned.” - Roger

Projects & Volunteer Force

“No organisation is being left to fend for itself.”

We are currently engaged in several projects. At different times and to differing degrees we have supported the Health Centre, Co-op, pharmacies, Post Office, the various residences for older people (e.g. Haberfield House, Bluebell Gardens and Chestnut, Linden and Maple Closes) and the local foodbank. No organisation is being left to fend for itself.

Our volunteer force – and we are so grateful that you are helping your neighbours – have been involved in many tasks, for example delivering those wonderful “Here to Help” postcards, shopping, delivering medications, doing the occasional odd job and offering a listening ear through telephone befriending to those who are socially isolated, lonely, and feeling anxious.

We fully realise that some of our volunteers have not yet had the opportunity to offer help. This may come soon. In the meantime, we are exploring the possibility of offering help to one or two neighbouring areas that are not as well off as we are. We have already had frequent requests from other communities around South Bristol to share some of our skill, resources, and experience.

To give you an idea of the scale of the Stockwood operation, so far, we have recruited 100 volunteers.

To date we have received a total of 169 requests for help of which:

- 112 people contacted our own helpline number
- 21 sent an e-mail to our dedicated in-box
- 30 were referred to us by Bristol City Council’s “We are Bristol” helpline
- 6 came to us from other sources

Volunteers have so far been called upon to respond to 127 requests of which:

- 63 were for shopping
- 20 were for delivering medications
- 30 were for telephone befriending
- 14 were for various other jobs

An incredibly happy and grateful Sylvia receiving her shopping.



Round up

“Greater Stockwood Alliance will continue “to build a strong, inclusive and welcoming community.”

In all aspects of our work we have tried to make sure that both our volunteers and the agencies and neighbours we are helping are kept safe. We have a safeguarding policy and risk assessment which have been approved by the core team and we are seeking to give our volunteers further support and training as time goes on.

No-one knows quite how long this period will last. Be assured that we will continue to offer help and support for as long as Stockwood is challenged by the situation. After all this is over, well who knows? One thing is for certain, though, our Greater Stockwood Alliance will continue “to build a strong, inclusive and welcoming community.” Perhaps some of you will want to continue the journey with us; we certainly hope so! Do drop us a line if you would like to join us.

Next month's newsletter will focus on the work of the Counterslip Cares Foodbank, which currently supports 92 households a week, feeding 278 people."

Look after yourselves and each other.

The Greater Stockwood Alliance Team

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Some fantastic feedback from people who have used our telephone befriending:

“I really look forward to you calls and enjoy our conversations.”

“Thank you for thinking of me. It is very difficult times and I much appreciate it. It's nice to know there are caring people who would like to help.”

“I've really enjoyed this conversation. It's not often I can reminisce about the good ole days. I feel much better. Thank you.”

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