



Dear Resident

Welcome to the first 2021 issue of the Gerrards Cross Community Association Newsletter.

On behalf of the staff and Executive Committee of GXCA, I hope you have all kept well and safe during this terrible period of our lives.

Firstly, the good news which is that, following our third lockdown, we will be reopening our doors again on Monday 12th April, albeit in a limited way until 21st June, when we expect to be fully back to normal with all our community activities.

We plan to reopen our **tennis courts on Monday 29th March**, and we have already tidied up the sheds ready to take in any Jumble donations you may wish to give us. Please call the office on 01753 883759 to book your court or to arrange drop off Jumble items.

GXCA Membership Renewal forms have been forwarded to all existing members. So far it would appear that the vast majority have already renewed for this year and we are very grateful for your support. If you are not a member but would like to join the Community Association, please give me a call, or send me an email and I will get back to you.

In addition to looking forward to welcoming back our numerous clubs, societies, and adult education classes, we are already starting to plan for this year's Jumble Sale, Family Fireworks Evening and Pantomime, as well as several Comedy Nights, Music Evenings, Quiz Nights, and numerous Christmas Parties.

We have received an unprecedented number of calls recently from people wishing to book our hall for birthday parties and Christenings that were missed during the lockdowns, and we have many weddings in the diary that should now be able at last to take place.

I would finally like to thank Eileen Powell who has kindly agreed to edit this newsletter. Although we have been closed for the last four months, we have still enjoyed lots of activity at the Centre which you can now read all about.

Kind Regards

Ken Piercy
Gerrards Cross Community Association Director of Services

01753-883759

07590-355470
www.gxca.org.uk



A warm welcome to the first edition of the GXCA newsletter for 2021. I am delighted to be able to contribute to the launch of the newsletter which I hope over the coming months you will enjoy. I would like it to be something you will find of interest and, as a member of GXCA, recognise what a great asset we have in our community that we should use and support where possible. As lockdown is gradually lifted, we will begin to return to using the Centre so I would like to hear from all the clubs and societies with some background information for our readers so that they can be further publicised.

I would also, in the coming months, like to receive any stories of interest re GXCA or 'The Memorial Centre' as it used to be known. Are there some new activities you feel you would like to see? The age range of those using the Centre is wide, but perhaps more is required to attract the growing younger generation. If you have any suggestions for events or classes that you would like to see here, we would love to hear from you. So, I hope you will agree there is great potential for the newsletter, but I need you to be part of its growth!! Please email your contributions to me, Eileen Powell, at editor@gxca.org.uk

We rely on volunteers to help with many of our functions, so my next question is '**Do you have any spare time?**' The pandemic has brought out our great helping spirit, visible here with the Covid Community Kitchen Project (see below), so let's carry on with it. However small a part you can play, you will be welcomed, I can assure you and, of course, you will make some new friends and probably be offered lots of tea and biscuits for your efforts!

If you want to receive future editions of our newsletter, we will need your email address as the production and delivery costs are too high to maintain regular contact via postal mail, especially in the aftermath of COVID-19. Please email us at office@gxca.org.uk

- **Have you downloaded the Zoe-Covid App yet? Help slow the outbreak.**
- Join millions of people helping to fight COVID-19
- Help scientists identify high risk areas in the UK

Covid 19 monitoring is being carried out by King's College, Guys and St Thomas' Hospital in partnership with ZOE Global Limited, a health science company. They also provide some very interesting webinars that you can log into. Downloading the Ask Zoe/Covid-19 app and reporting any symptoms (including 'none') will help them track the path of the disease, particularly among the elderly. It now has **4.63 million** subscribers so please be one of them and help the researchers. It only takes a minute to report each day and you can report for others as well. I am reminded of a song of the same title by Tavares in 1975! 'It only takes a minute'.

What else has been happening? Gerry has been busy keeping the place spruced up for our return and manning the fort for jumble. If you have good quality items to donate, please email him at gerrydomhar@hotmail.com to arrange drop off. Unfortunately, there are a few things which we cannot sell, please see the list below:

Coat hangers, old ring binders, duvet and pillows, travel guides that are more than a year or two old, anything that is broken or damaged, kitchen knives (other than the kind that are part of table cutlery), golf clubs and golf bags, child car seats, bicycle helmets.

Jumble Sale Update from Fiona Kennedy. Many of us will have missed the annual Jumble Sale, for all sorts of reasons. For those of us who volunteer, it is a great social event apart from anything else. Covid may have stopped the two-day sale going ahead at the end of last September, but this event is like a super-tanker that cannot be stopped in its tracks just like that! Donations have continued to come in, lockdown restrictions permitting, and a team of three - myself, Judy Mitchell, and Sue Hatrick - have endeavoured to sort and pack it all, and to ensure it is in good condition for when we are finally allowed to hold a sale again. We have also been selling some of the items online, with the income so far running at nearly £2500. Thank you for these wonderful donated treasures.



Summer School Latest news! Gerrards Cross Summer School is feeling very positive about being able to offer courses this Summer. Government guidelines permitting, the dates for your diary are 26th July to 6th August. Further updates will be posted very shortly on the Summer School website: www.gxca.org.uk/summer-school

Blood donor sessions have continued in the Centre and the GXCA car park has been used by a Mobile Covid Testing Unit at weekends. The initial high numbers being tested have now dropped dramatically.

GX Physio Update

The Centre may be closed at the moment, but we remain open and able to see patients for face-to-face appointments or via Zoom where appropriate. Strict guidelines for cleaning and PPE, as set out by Public Health England and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, are followed and, as health-care workers, we had our first vaccination doses at the beginning of February. We have been seeing more patients with 'new' aches and pains and this has generally been due to them being less active. With the prospect of golf courses and tennis courts reopening, we are advising people to go outside and practice a half-swing with a club or basic forehand/backhand; and to gradually increase the frequency and distance of their walks.

For appointments, please do not hesitate to call us on 01753 883044 or 07866 800658 or email on gxphysio@gmail.com

Imposing Entrance As the level of weddings and other celebratory events were steadily climbing before COVID struck, one of our Executive Committee members came up with the excellent idea of switching the entrance and exit to the car park. This will give a much nicer impression of the venue for prospective clients as well as for their guests when they arrive for their event. The view of the main building as you drive in is much more impressive than a row of sheds which, although very necessary, do not possess the wow factor! The change will cost very little and we are in the process of liaising with Buckinghamshire Unitary Council. Watch this space!

Michaela, our Events Manager, has news of our first wedding in over a year in April. Unfortunately, it will be low key, as only 15 guests can attend the happy day, but it's a great start to what we hope will be many more celebrations at the Centre.



Finally, I have saved some wonderful news until the end – our lovely Room Bookings Manger, Gemma, gave birth to a baby girl called Fern. All are thriving and we are looking forward to meeting her after Gemma's maternity leave. Congratulations to the family.



"We're really happy to tell you we will be funding your project following your application for National Lottery Awards for All. And we want to give Continuing survival of Gerrards Cross Community Association for GX and villages £10,000 to help your community thrive".

This is the part of an email we received, and what fantastic news!

As many of you know, GXCA has been either closed or severely limited in its operations for the past year. Times have been tough and our amazing staff have been furloughed for the majority of this time. Despite help from the furlough scheme we still have overheads and continuing maintenance. As with many businesses and charities, in the past year GXCA's income has reduced by an almost 80%.

We are working hard to reopen, as soon as we are allowed, outside or inside, we just want to get those doors thrown wide to welcome you in. This amazing Community funding will help support new ideas and events, and enable GXCA to thrive and evolve for all residents of all ages.

A huge thank you to The National Lottery Community Fund.



With love and thanks to YOU!
From GXCA Covid Community Kitchen

Sponsored by: The GXCA Membership, The Jordans and Seer Green Rotary Club, South Bucks Council, Tesco & The Worshipful Company of Chartered Accountants

Now you may be asking yourself what did **you** do to help in this Covid Pandemic? Well, as a GXCA member, you have enabled the launch of a much-needed Covid 19 Community Kitchen. This initiative has been supporting the vulnerable and those in need, by delivering convenience meals cooked by our very own GXCA volunteers.

With funding from your renewed membership, together with our other sponsors, the GXCA volunteer community cooks have produced over 3,000 meals for over 100 people in the local community.

So why and how did this come about?

Back in May 2020 – yes it has been that long! Sue Stone, wife of our GXCA Chairperson, Richard Stone, identified a number of people in the local community who, whilst shielding, were really lonely and struggling to get their usual level of support especially, food deliveries. Also, due to age, ill health and other reasons, many found cooking or getting help to cook meals a major challenge.

With their strong commitment and love of serving the community, the team approached the GXCA Executive Committee and the Covid Community Kitchen was born. The volunteer cooking team of Sue Stone, Stuart and Bibi Crawford, armed with PPE, new safety procedures and a healthy dose of passion and enthusiasm, launched the initiative and went into production without delay.

Initially, with food supplies being a bit disrupted and limited, the team created a basic menu consisting of two soups and four main course meals, all classic dishes such as cottage pie, a chicken meal and a couple of vegetarian options. Each option needed to be wholesome and easy to reheat. With that in mind, the team ensured and continue to ensure that meals are cooked using fresh ingredients which they select and shop for.

Once cooked, the meals are frozen and the team personally deliver direct to the clients, so they can then defrost and simply reheat the meals at their convenience.

The service has had such a positive response and the clients seem delighted to receive the meals, along with the love and care with which they are delivered. Whilst aiming to delight with the meals, it is important that people feel comfortable using the service and that is why there is a small charge for each dish. This option ensures clients have the opportunity to show their appreciation by making a contribution to the cost of the ingredients.



Stuart adding a finishing touch to the dishes



Sue preparing the popular chicken broccoli bake

The Covid Community Kitchen runs on a ‘not for profit’ basis. This means that contributions from clients, alongside funding from sponsors, enables the operation of a meals support scheme for those who are facing financial challenges. In addition, funding has equipped the GXCA Kitchen to match production needs.

At the start of the initiative, the team couldn’t anticipate how long it would be needed, or how many people it would support. However, as the magnitude of the Covid Pandemic unfolded, the team realised this initiative was going to run a little longer than anyone had anticipated. It was then that they looked to South Bucks Council for a small donation to help purchase a chest freezer and equipment. Additional donations were received from: Tesco, Jordans and Seer Green Rotary Club and the Worshipful Company of Chartered Accountants. All of these very kind donations have enabled the team to expand both the menu and client base.

The Community Kitchen is a 'well-oiled' machine! The kitchen now has three chest freezers, so the team can cook and hold good stock and cater for many new clients. They also cook at least twice a week and are able to create and offer a much wider variety, in fact they now have around 18 items on the menu!

The team are constantly challenging themselves with new ideas and additions to the menu and even managed to create a fantastic three course Christmas dinner which went out to 96 people. Last minute Government regulatory changes to Christmas gatherings meant that many clients had to abandon plans for a family Christmas, so this meal was really appreciated.



Bibi cooking up some of the tasty choices



"The Christmas lunch from GXCA was a triumph! Absolutely delicious & faultless! I am so grateful for this initiative, it has made my life a bit easier"

"I just wanted to thank you for a generous meal, having a meal like that kept the loneliness at bay"

"A highlight of our day was our scrumptious lunch. Never thought 'meals on wheels' could be so tasty!! The roast potatoes were to die for!!!"

"Staceys Court would like to thank you all for our Christmas lunch which hit all the spots!"

One of the legacies of the pandemic and consequential lockdowns is loneliness. The personal delivery element of the service has brought doorstep conversations and care to some who have been isolated for the best part of a year. Until this pandemic, we took for granted personal contact and now isolation has become the sad norm for many.

Seeing the joy on clients' faces and being able to exchange a few words of kindness and encouragement, is a real bonus for the team who also feel it is such a privilege to be able to serve the community.

Sadly, some clients have not made it through Covid. However, knowing that the work of the team and the support from sponsors and the GXCA Membership has made those last few months or days a little easier, reassures and encourages all involved to continue with this work to make a positive difference.

So what next?

As we start to see many in our local area get the vaccine and lockdown rules relax, we wait to see how the GXCA will begin to reopen its doors to the community. What the Community Cooks would like to do is to help members of our community re-engage in social activities safely and confidently.

The GXCA Kitchen is well equipped, and, with the continued help and support from the GXCA membership, the team would like to hold events such as community lunches and, who knows, even a Christmas Lunch.

There is so much we can all do when we finally regain our freedom and use the opportunity to show our love for our community. Until then the Covid Community Cooks will continue to show their hearts on the doorsteps and love through their food.

