

Dornoch Area

Response to Pandemic Emergency UPDATE



Helpline and Response Volunteers

Dornoch Firth Group maintained and operated the Dornoch Area Resilience Project, this had about 120 volunteers ready in case of emergencies and linked to the Highland Council Resilience Team. On 19th March, we contacted the volunteers but unfortunately most of them were in the vulnerable group that made their participation in this emergency impossible. We then put out a wider request for volunteers and now have an active list of over 200 of whom 87 have been allocated streets in order to be the local "Buddy" for the residents and can fetch Shopping etc. Some volunteers are specifically allocated to Chemist prescription Collection and Delivery, some are used for phone conversations to isolated individuals, some are used for delivering and collecting for the Food Bank, others are in reserve and are called upon individually by the helpline team to help resolve any requests from people who call in for practical help.

Food Bank

At the end of March, we started a Food Bank to supply families and isolated people in need with food parcels that are delivered by our volunteers who are delivering 100 bags a week at the moment. This number will only increase and we anticipate to reach 150 deliveries a week very soon. We have the use of the West Church Hall in Dornoch for free. It has a large hall suitable for the safe storage of groceries and preparation of food bags. The volunteers drive to the adjacent car park and have their deliveries loaded into their cars to minimise contact. We collect food from Cfine in Aberdeen and purchase supplies from Bookers in Inverness, Home Bargains in Tain and Grants of Dornoch. We have an arrangement with the local shops, Dornoch Stores, Dornoch News, The Co-op and The Chemist who will take in grocery donations from local residents. We have food waste systems in place with the local Co-op supermarket as well as working through FareShare for food waste supplies from Asda and Tesco in Tain and have just purchased a freezer to store donated bread etc.



Ready Meals and Hot Food



We were anticipating developing a meals on wheels service with dedicated volunteers delivering food. For now, a couple of local restaurants The Eagle and Links House stepped up and produced ready meals for a number of residents with free food we received from Cfine. The meals have been distributed to supplement the food bank supplies. However, we have now arranged with Connecting Communities for them to extend their "Dinner to your Door" service into this area with our help,

Connecting Communities have just received Gov't funds to extend their service. They are set up to prepare and deliver meals at a very reasonable price to those who order. We have an arrangement where we can purchase meals from them and have them delivered for those in need. Many residents attended lunch clubs before the emergency and are quite happy to pay for delivered meals. This will free up funds to allow us to purchase meals and help those individuals and families most in need and to supplement our Food Bank deliveries.

Funding

To date, we have secured funding for all our initiatives from North Highland Initiative, Supporting Communities Fund, Foundation Scotland, Local Highland Council Grant Fund, GoFundMe fundraising and Royal Dornoch Golf Club as well as pre-existing Dornoch Resilience Funds and Community Council Funds.

Activity Packs.....Art and Craft Boxes

We are going to supply Art and Craft boxes for children with paint, chalk, paper, colouring books pens etc and to some adults to include adult colouring books pens, pencils, Soduko, Wordsearch etc. There are 306 schoolchildren who will benefit from these packs which are funded by Royal Dornoch Golf Club.



Helping Hands Hardship Fund

We have started a Helping Hands Hardship Fund similar to the one run by Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust who have an established process of delivering their fund and have a very good relationship with East Sutherland Citizens Advice Bureau who undertake evaluations of applications. We anticipate having a fund to help about 20 people / families over the next 3 months.



Care Home Communication

Royal Dornoch Golf Club have kindly lent us some Internet enabled Tablets. We have distributed them to local care homes so that more of their residents can communicate with their families and friends using video calling.

“Give and Take” Scheme

We would also like to have community “Give and Take” Fridge/Freezers and larders to reduce food waste where people can bring food and groceries and where they can take food and groceries. We anticipate having several of these around the community in Churches, Halls and other sites where people can have near anonymous access, this will be for later on as the curbs on movement are relaxed.

Beneficiaries

There are 2300 residents, at least a quarter are elderly, there are vulnerable families and individuals. There are families who are no longer working also those who are self-isolating and fall through the net of the NHS Shielding food delivery service. In the coming months, those who are now out of work or unable to earn money will be in increased financial strain, these are the people we aim to help further down the line. We have many ways to refer and self-refer for help. The food bank has already proved itself to be needed although we didn't have one until a few weeks ago. We aim to provide a service that removes the old stigma linked to foodbanks and will offer to anyone who may benefit from it. We do not need official referrals or evidence of benefit receipt etc as there will be a whole new range of people needing a boost at this time.

Our Partners

We have partnered with Dornoch Community Council, Dornoch and District Community Association, Dornoch Area Community Interest Company, FareShare, Embo Trust and working with Highland Council Resilience Team, NHS Care for People Team, All local Churches and many local businesses.



Our helpline

We have two helpline numbers:

Call or Text 07752 290 229 or 07395 902 764 or email : charles@dfgcommunity.com