

## COVID-19

### North Warwickshire Borough Council – Labour and Co-operative Group

#### **‘Click and Collect’ Covid-19 Village Shop**

Provision of subsidised food boxes to residents at height of lockdown using an innovative click-and-collect model of purchase and supply.

##### **Context**

For people living in the former mining communities of North Warwickshire, the social and economic impact of Covid-19 has been more significant than the impact of the disease itself. When lockdown was imposed, Dordon village, which is centred on the former Coal Board estate, became silent and deserted. A new street-based system of named volunteers was organised for people who didn't have support through social media, flyers and Zoom calls. This included setting up a village food shop because of the long supermarket queues and the challenges of shopping online. This built on work in the adjoining village of Polesworth which had set up a new subsidised and popular honesty shop for their residents. A video was made and shown on BBC Midlands.





## Review

The Covid-19 Click and Collect village shop ran without any serious operational problems and the scheme was extremely well received by local people. Over eight weeks, more than 400 different households took advantage of the scheme; over 700 food boxes were ordered and over 18,000 food items distributed. Financially, the scheme broke even. From its street-by-street analysis of demand and from demographic information available about income poverty and deprivation, the Council knew that most of the demand for these food boxes came from low-income households, the elderly and from families in need living in social housing on the former Coal Board estate. When the scheme ended there was no protest; people accepted it was time limited. There were three key lessons. First, not every initiative has to be sustainable. Second, small council grants can be great catalysts for fostering volunteering and community leadership. Third, politicians must be prepared to take risks in order to encourage innovation. These risks are reduced if they listen to local people and choose, trust and back community leaders who can make it work.

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