

7th April 2020



Dear fellow Romsey resident,

These are strange, unsettling times but it has been heartening to see how many people have been trying to identify ways to help others - and then form groups to make that help better organised. The City Council has some money to assist the process but needs to allocate it to an identified organisation with a constitution and a bank account.

In Romsey they have identified Romsey Mutual Aid as the key organisation. This has developed from the Over Mill Road Bridge group which was set up when the bridge was closed last summer. I have been invited to join their organising committee and I have been pleased to see how carefully they have been dealing with such matters as safeguarding, insurance and dealing with money.

They are trying to work with others in the area to prevent overlapping. Personally, I am less concerned with over-lapping than with gaps where people may be over-looked by all.

For many the most acceptable help is being provided by a known face - family, friend or neighbour. But not everyone is so lucky and often it is just not possible. If you know of someone needing help, please suggest they contact romsey.covid@gmail.com or, if they prefer to use the phone, the best phone number will be the City Council Access centre at 01223 457000.

As you would expect, all party campaigning has ceased but Lib Dem councillors are very busy working with the groups in their wards.

The City Council all-up elections have been postponed for a year. Next May is going to have a heavy load of local elections: the postponed City Council all-ups, the postponed Police and Crime Commissioner election, the County Council election and the election for the Elected Mayor. We are going to need lots of help - but that is for another day.

The other thing we are going to have to do is to explore how things are changing and if our policies will need to change as a result. We are hoping to organise some kind of virtual Policy Forum to start thinking about this - but I will come back to you when I know more.

Wishing you the very best, and please stay safe.

Catherine Smart - Romsey Liberal Democrats