

Chorlton Voice Bulletin August 2020-08-20

We would like to hear your views on the return of Chorlton Voice following the lock down and ideas for future activities. Please fill in this short survey by September 20th. Thank you very much.

<https://forms.gle/uoKPtfhZLoJg2awHA>

Introduction

Well, here we are, nearly five months after the beginning of the full lockdown. We may be bubbling, we may be isolating, we may (still) be shielding, we should certainly still be distancing. In Chorlton folk are doing really well at interpreting the plethora of guidelines, guidance and contradictory messages coming from the Government and filtered through the different media channels, which makes it all particularly hard. In the June Bulletin, I talked about community resilience as being best understood by looking at connections between groups in order to, not only face adversity but to change the conditions that gave rise to the adversity in the first place. We are lucky here, because not only do we have lots of groups, with strengthening connections between them, we also have good links with the Council via our hardworking Councillors. But groups and connections are only as good as the people involved make them, so we often hear about the importance of community engagement. Engagement – now, that’s another tricky idea. Engagement can mean that a few, self-selected people are able to assert themselves and become mouthpieces... but for whom? Engagement can mean people organise events that other people join in with. Engagement can mean talking to other people about what matters, locally. Engagement can mean taking an interest in what goes on and maybe filling in a petition or two. All these forms of engagement are crucial. Not everyone can get involved in everything, or be busy organising and ‘doing’. But equally, if community engagement is to mean anything, those in a position to be active must find ways of involving others, however they can. Of course, over time, those of us who are active, may take more of a back seat and in turn, those of us who have a relatively passive interest in things now, may well become more active. The doors to all community groups and activities in Chorlton are always open – see a listing of groups in the Open Up magazine. In the Chorlton Alliance, we are discussing ways to make sharing information across groups and events more easily. We will let you know if we come up with anything.

In this Bulletin you will read about a number things that are coming up, offering opportunities for different kinds of involvement. If you are not able to take part directly, we hope that they will, nevertheless be of interest to you.

But first, some planning issues.

Not many planning issues have come up. A proposal came up to convert shops on Barlow Moor Rd (corner of High Lane where balloon shop is). There are so many shops in Chorlton we think we should support turning shops into residential units where relevant. However, this proposal was to terminate rolling leases of viable shopholders and turn productive gardens into a car park, so we

objected. The Councillors have been working with the tenants of both the shops and the flats above, and have secured an extension for comments.

It looks as if the Council will be forming its own Development Company, which might make some movement on the baths site happen.

It was noted that the planning permission for Mauldeth House has lapsed. Ordinarily, this would mean that having taken advantage of the automatic permission to turn offices into residences within the Government's rules, they would now have to seek full planning permission if they still want to convert the building.

We say ordinarily, because you might have heard that the Government is planning to change the planning rules in favour of developers. There is a consultation open and we will almost certainly be responding to it. It can be found at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907647/MHCLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf Please let us know via the survey if you would like a meeting to discuss these proposals.

If you do respond, please look carefully at what is being suggested. There is a lot of talk of greater local community involvement (and less LA involvement): this will need to be looked at critically. We say this because we have seen how the Government Planning Inspectors overrule local views about developments. A case in point is the recent ruling in favour of an electronic, moving advertising hoarding on the gable end of a building on Barlow Moor rd, against local and Council objections.

For those who have been following the saga, permission has at last been given to the building of a Passivhaus on Stockton Rd just round the corner from High Lane.

Building Back an even Better Chorlton

The easing of lockdown provides us with an opportunity to reimagine the kind of Chorlton we would like to live in. Chorlton Alliance (of which we are a part) is proposing to hold a zoom meeting to enable anyone interested in discussing changes in Chorlton to come along and share ideas. This is likely to be on Sunday 27th September. We will forward details when we know them – or ask your street connector if you have one.

As part of the reimagining of Chorlton, Roads are being encouraged to apply to close for a few hours on the weekend of 19-20 September. Signs are that lots of roads are planning to join in. Applications to close can be made at http://manchester.gov.uk/directory_record/384980/play_street_scheme/category/355/highways_and_pavements

Chorlton Connected has been awarded money from the BUZZ service <https://buzzmanchester.co.uk/> to make a video about Lockdown experiences. Chorlton Voice is supporting this project and will act as the project 'banker'.

A report has been issued on the experiences of Mutual Aid groups in central Manchester, including Chorlton. It can be found at

<https://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/sites/manchestercommunitycentral.co.uk/files/Learning%20from%20covid%20Mutual%20Aid%20Groups%20in%20Central%20Manchester.pdf>

Virtual Arts and Book festivals

If you never managed to make it to a face to face part of the Arts festival, perhaps you will make it to the Virtual Arts festival. There are currently about 20 artists designing virtual spaces to exhibit their work, whether this is paintings, sculpture, performance, music concerts. Keep your eye on www.chorltonarts.org for up to date information. Festival weekend will coincide with the national Fun Palaces weekend on 3rd and 4th October.

And Virtual Book festival will take place on 18th-26 September.

Climate Action – great news

A local partnership, consisting of WalkRide GM, GroundworkGM, Open Data Mcr has won a bid from the Lottery to create a number of projects. Money will be used to monitor traffic patterns and emissions and design solutions to our traffic problems in three locations – one around a school; one around a retail hub; and one around a residential street. See the Evening News article about it: <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/chorlton-project-greener-healthier-climate-18782960> or read more at <https://walkridegm.org.uk/2020/08/17/walk-ride-partnership-wins-200k-for-clean-and-green-community-project-in-south-manchester/>. Chorlton Voice represented the Chorlton Alliance on the bid team. It's a fantastic project that will cover both Chorlton and Chorlton park wards and contribute to the local climate action plans and give us all lots of opportunities to discuss climate issues and take local action.

Chorlton Bike Deliveries

Chorlton Bike deliveries are working towards becoming a workers' coop. They are still in operation and can collect things from a range of places in Chorlton and deliver to your home. Email at chorltonbikedeliveries@gmail.com Ring 07561737986 or see their facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/chorltonbikedeliveries/>. At least one good thing to arise from the lockdown!

Chorlton Alliance

This is an alliance of groups in Chorlton, all with an interest in Chorlton-as-place. Lots of groups have signed up and both share and receive information. One of the things discussed at the last meeting was the possibility of pulling together all the information about the different groups in Chorlton, possibly using the Coop's *Cooperate* platform. Let us know what you think – chair@chorltonvoice.org

Chorlton Community Land Trust

The CLT will be holding an AGM on October 22nd 7.30 – virtually. Their latest newsletter calls for volunteers to be willing to be nominated to join the Board. They say

“We are looking for candidates who are strategic thinkers and creative problem solvers who are in tune with the values and ethos of a community-led organisation. You will ideally have a good working knowledge of housing and regeneration issues or, in any event, are keen to learn. We also want our Board membership and wider committees to better reflect the diverse socio-economic make-up of the Chorlton community and would like to attract more women, younger people, and people with a BAME background. Finally, we are particularly interested in candidates who have experience in marketing & communications and in planning / housing development, to add to the current skills of Board members.

If you are interested in applying either to be on the board or on a sub-committee, please fill in an [application form](#) by **Monday 5 October** confirming you comply with the qualification criteria, as well as providing a statement of no more than 250 words on why you feel you would be a suitable candidate. Drop us a line on hello@chorltonclt.org if you would like to arrange an informal chat about the roles. Further information about the CLT is on our website including the [findings](#) of our board and membership demographic survey.”

Gaumont Picture House – the CLT is now submitting a new proposition, with developers Brook Finch, to the Coop. Full details can be found at: <https://www.stayinalive.org.uk/post/refreshed-proposition-for-stayin-alive-scheme-under-consideration-by-co-operative-group>

Ryebank Fields – MMU has decided to go through with the sale of the land, which is very disappointing. However, asbestos has been found on the site which is now closed off pending further investigations.

Open Up Magazine will be producing a bumper on-line issue, full of stories about positive things to arise from the Lockdown. See <http://openupmagazines.co.uk/read/> for their last on-line edition. We expect the next edition will be posted here too.

‘Safe’ ways to maintain social contacts whilst social distancing

The Ambition for Ageing project, hosted by GMCVO has published some reports that give lots of ideas about how to maintain social contacts in a ‘safe’ way, still following the COVID rules. You can find the reports here <https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/publications/developing-social-contact-models-time-social-distancing>. The reports covers inside and outdoor activities as well as service provision. So if you wondered how gardening, drumming, coffee mornings can be managed, see the report. There is also a handy set of principles and guidance and a checklist for starting any new activity or project.

COVID Recovery

COVID-19 Recovery Peer Support Group

Manchester Health and Care Commissioning has set up a Manchester COVID-19 Recovery Peer Support Group. If you are recovering from COVID19 and interested in talking to others who are going

through a similar experience, please text **07702-668169** with your name or email val.bayliss-brideaux@nhs.net

The group are meeting every Wednesday evening from 6pm. Expenses are being offered to support people joining the group.

Your COVID Recovery is a new NHS website designed to help people recover from the long-term effects of COVID-19 and support them to manage their recovery. It includes information from rehabilitation experts about how to manage ongoing symptoms and health needs at home, and signposts to sources of support.

Anxiety and COVID

The COVID experiences and the lockdowns have left many of us feeling anxious and worried about going out and carrying on safely. The NHS has some pointers for those experiencing anxiety <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-tips/>

Furthermore, Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (GMMH) continue to operate their 24/7 helpline, but their telephone number has changed! You can now call their free phone number: 0800 953 0285 Self-Help Services continue to operate as normal for support with mental health needs. All assessments and therapy sessions are currently conducted over the telephone and they will now be adding video calls to their options for support. All referrals can be made via professional, GP or self by calling 0161 226 3871 or through the website. An initial assessment appointment will be offered within 1-2 weeks of referral.

In an emergency call 999 or visit A and E.

Urgent Help available <https://www.manchestermind.org/urgent-help/> or from Samaritans can be called for free on **116 123** or e-mail jo@samaritans.org

Street Trees

Tree planting season is coming up so if you and your neighbours want to get some trees planted in your street, contact your councillors in the first instance. (note the Council is in recess for August)

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We may be resuming our Newsletter soon, so if you have any items you would like to contribute, please let us know at chair@chorltonvoice.org or phone 0161 881 6887

