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DAY

THORNTON HEATH

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EXCLUSIVE: ED SHEERAN GIVES THORNTON HEATH SCHOOL 'LOCKDOWN' MUSIC LESSONS

Pop superstar Ed Sheeran has been giving music lessons to Thornton Heath school children during the lockdown via Zoom.

Pupils at Ecclesbourne Primary School have been given one-to-one lessons with the multi award winning singer songwriter who has been teaching them the chords to his successful NO1 hit Perfect.

Ed who is an old friend of director of music at Ecclesbourne Primary School Timothy Spoerer, surprised the Djembe Kings and Jam-Bus music club of 10 and 11-year-olds when he dropped in on their weekly on line music lesson.

Not only did he play his guitar and sing the lyrics to Perfect but he also sang them a medley of other hits - showing how by using just four chords you can adapt any song.



Ed, who had the most number one singles and albums in the last decade - topping the charts 12 times - also answered a series of questions on how music made him 'happiest' but that he had only made it to



the top of his industry through persistence and hard work.

He also revealed he was taking a break from music after he had 'burnt himself out a bit' following his Divide Album, six collaborations with other artists, and his recent worldwide tour, which was the biggest ever and saw him named the most successful touring musician.

Mr Spoerer is working with Ed on creating an online performance of the hit song 'Perfect' with children from across the Pegasus Academy Trust, which has four schools in the Thornton Heath district, including Ecclesbourne.

The children have been set the challenge by Mr Spoerer to send in an entry filming themselves playing or singing along to a backing track of Perfect. The entries will then be amalgamated in to one long video which will feature the popstar.

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COVID CLUSTER IN THORNTON HEATH AS POLICE REPORT WIDESPREAD DISREGARD FOR LOCKDOWN

The Covid-19 death toll has reached double figures in Thornton Heath's three wards as police reported a widespread disregard for the lockdown.

As of Monday (4 May), 264 patients had died at Croydon University Hospital since March 19, as it emerged a further 127 had died in care homes in the borough taking the total to almost 400.

An interactive map produced by the Office of National Statistics, which revealed coronavirus deaths by postcode shows that there have been 54 deaths in wards covering the Thornton Heath postcode representing the largest cluster in the borough.

The government has launched a review, led by the NHS and Public Health England in to emerging data suggesting that BAME residents are disproportionately affected by Covid-19.



The Director for Public Health in Croydon Rachel Flowers has already engaged with national colleagues to ensure Croydon is involved in the review.

Central Croydon MP Sarah Jones in Parliament, called on the government to tackle the longer term underlying health issues that had got us to this place of 'gross inequality.'

She said: "It would appear that the high levels of deaths and hospitalisation in Croydon are down to the underlying

health needs of our population. We have a greater proportion of people with some of those illnesses that we've all been talking about whether that's, diabetes, hypertension or obesity.

"We also have people who are living in bad housing, that's overcrowded and who are living in poverty. These things have meant that this pandemic has affected those who are poorer and from BAME backgrounds more than other people and we need to get to the bottom of why that has happened so that we can put it right and make sure those levels of inequality, are not seen again."

The ONS found that between March 1 and April 17, the most deprived regions suffered 55 deaths per 100,000 people, compared to 25 fatalities in the

▶▶ TURN TO PAGES 2, PAGES 4 AND 5 FOR TRIBUTES

PLANS TO CONVERT EMPTY OFFICE BLOCK IN TO HOUSING 'UNITS'

The millionaire owner of Ambassador House has finally unveiled plans to convert six floors of the empty office block in to 66 one and two bedroom units.

The application submitted on April 3 by Sajid Bashir, of Copperstones Ltd, is under permitted development rights which is a government scheme allowing certain types of change of use such as B1 to C3 (from offices to dwellings) to be carried out without applying for planning permission.

This is meant to make the planning process simpler and more straightforward but also makes it virtually impossible for the council to legally refuse.

However, the property developer won't be able to convert two of the floors as easily as they are D1 use, so classified as community use, which is afforded "protected" status - meaning the applicant is unable to change the use of the property without a full planning application being made. The letter from Mr Bashir's planning consultant, Jon Murch, sets the council a 56 day deadline from the date of receipt of the application to confirm the case.



The mix of accommodation would provide 48 one bed and 18 two bed units with anticipated occupancy for 150 people. In recent months workmen have been stripping back the interior of the building and broken windows have been

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BLITZ SPIRIT LIVES ON IN VE DAY MEMORIES



The community fightback against Covid-19 has been compared to the blitz spirit of the wartime years.

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BANK TO BE TURNED IN TO STUDIO FLATS?



A property development company which owns the Thomas Farley pub has put in an application to convert the former Barclay's Bank in to five studios.

▶▶ TURN TO PAGE 8

This edition of The Chronicle is currently only available only as a pdf. The Chronicle has continued to provide regular coverage about Covid-19 and local issues throughout the crisis. Sign up to join the mailing list on: www.thorntonheathchronicle.co.uk

If you have a news item, want to pay tribute to a key worker, loved one, share an appeal for help or donations please contact Editor Andrea Perry.

Get in contact email editor@thorntonheathchronicle.co.uk or The Chronicle WhatsApp: 07930 354128

This edition of The Chronicle has been designed by Jo Dawson.

Last month's 16 page special edition of The Chronicle is still available to read as a downloadable pdf by visiting: www.thorntonheathchronicle.co.uk



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MAN SLASHED IN FIGHT AT SHOPS



A man turned up at hospital with a slash wound to his face after a fight broke out in Thornton Heath's shopping district on Sunday (April 19).

Police cordoned off Cotford Parade after they were called by the London Ambulance Service at 2.38 pm to reports of a fight in progress.

When officers attended the scene those involved in the incident had dispersed.

Police said a short time later a man presented to a south London hospital suffering from a slash injury to his face.

Our pictures shows officers manning a taped cordon opposite Tesco which ran the length of Cotford Parade, including Superdrug and the halal meat market.

A Scotland Yard spokesman said: "His condition is not life-threatening. There have been no arrests at this time."

HELP FOR BEREAVED FACING FUNERAL POVERTY

Croydon Council has reduced cremation costs for 10 weeks to assist residents facing funeral poverty.

In cabinet papers it is revealed that Croydon has the capacity within existing resources for 30 burials per week.

Croydon has developed and trained 12 volunteer redeployees to assist with the increased demand for death registration.

In a normal year the council oversees 300 burials, and 1,800 but there are no new graves available at either Mitcham Road or Queens Road cemeteries.

The council has instead had to offer reused graves in these cemeteries

where no burial has occurred for at least 75 years and where the grave is unvisited or neglected.

In January after a six year planning battle with Tandridge District Council, the Planning Inspectorate granted permission for Croydon Council to build an extension to Greenlawn Memorial Park, in Warlingham, inside Surrey's green belt.

In its application, Croydon council, which owns the cemetery, said 'its burial space crisis was the worst of any authority in the country', and that a study of 120 other possible sites had confirmed Greenlawn was the best solution.



The new part of the cemetery will have 3,216 individual plots for Christian and nonconformist burials and 261 plots for Muslim burials.

However, Greenlawn's is 10 miles from north Croydon and has poor public transport links.

Burial fees are also more than double £3,625 the cost of re-using graves.

COVID DEATH TOLL HITS DOUBLE FIGURES IN THORNTON HEATH WARDS

wealthiest areas with one in four of all coronavirus victims living in the capital.

In the wards of Thornton Heath and Bensham Manor there were 36 Covid deaths during this time and 18 in West Thornton. This was as of April 17 with the death toll expected to rise further.

The Chronicle reported last month that it was feared that north of the borough would be worst affected by the virus as cramped and overcrowded housing accommodation made it difficult for families to self isolate and distance.

In a letter to MP Steve Reed, Thornton Heath police have said a lot of residents don't believe Covid-19 exists. Officers have issued multiple fines over the last few weeks and issued warnings to shopkeepers flouting government guidelines.

In a recent Twitter post Thornton Heath MPS, wrote: "More fines issued by the teams for breaching Covid regulations. Lots of advice given. Unfortunately still a lot of people who think that Covid-19 does not exist. Very frustrating."

The police have also expressed concerns about the message not getting through to residents.



A free for all as customers (pictured) queued outside Heath Supermarket on the High Street on Easter Thursday , which was reported to the council's licensing team by police officers who filmed the violations on their body worn cameras.

Lockdown parties and social gatherings have also been reported to the council.

In a letter to MP Steve Reed, in response to a residents complaint about street drinkers ignoring the lockdown, Thornton Heath's new sergeant Andy Smith said: "The issue with Thornton Heath at the moment is there seems to be a pretty widespread disregard for the directions given by the government. We have spoken to a number of shops about social distancing and that the onus sits with them to manage the crowds that are drawn to their shops."



In another post Sgt Smith pictured in Grangewood Park says: "Took a bike ride out on the ward today, still lots of people out and about so lots of advice given. Also a house party dispersed."

Throughout the lockdown street drinkers have continued to gather and drink outside the Clocktower, Tesco and on Ambassador House forecourt. A half hearted attempt was made to tape off the seats at the Clocktower but the tape was removed.

The SNT say with limited resources, there are just three officers, they are trying to be reasonable and fair but despite being offered housing the street drinkers 'unfortunately ...don't seem to want our help and although fines have been issued it's not a long term solution.

COUNCIL REVEALS ITS RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC

In the four weeks since lockdown, the council has tripled resources to meet new requests for free school meals and seen the demand for food vouchers quadruple.

Council cabinet papers drawn up by Chief Executive Jo Negrini reveals Croydon has 11,616 'shielded' residents that have been identified by the NHS as needing to stay in their homes for at least 12 weeks with 5,765 registering, and 2,305 unable to secure basic supplies. New referrals are being made every day as new vulnerable residents are identified with staff using telephone and text to contact all those needing to shield ask what support is required.

Croydon has received £19.9m in emergency funding from the government but that will not cover all the anticipated costs faced by the council.

To date (May 4), 908 emergency food packages have been delivered by the council. It has provided £22,300 in food



vouchers, £2,200 emergency amenities funding, and £49,000 to facilitate moves and furniture in to new homes.

The council's four Foodstops which help struggling residents have been overwhelmed with demand and so far three tonnes of food has been distributed with queues outside the Food Stop at the Parchmore Centre.

Closely working with schools, the voluntary sector and other council services to meet vulnerable residents and has seen 83 per cent of requests come from families.

Croydon's statutory single homeless

service (SHS) has placed 62 people, including 23 rough sleepers in to temporary accommodation. The GLA provision has housed 98 local people, including 16 rough sleeping in Croydon.

On PPE, despite a significant demand, the council has maintained supplies for council staff and at no stage has services been impacted by a lack of equipment. The weekly PPE requirements for council services runs in to thousands of items: with 15,071 facemasks, 9,583 aprons, 22,148 gloves, 290 eye protection spectacles, and 805 hand sanitisers.

Croydon has been allocated £60.6m to support businesses with grants of £10k or £25k payable, based on business rate values. However, it has proved challenging to get businesses to complete the application process. So far £36.42 million has been paid to 2,684 Croydon businesses (as of May 4) with 1,100 further businesses identified as being entitled to apply for aid.

SCHOOL CHILDREN TO FEATURE IN MUSIC VIDEO WITH MUSIC LEGEND

Mr Spoerer thanked Ed for being an 'incredible sport' as he answered questions about his music career during the 50 minute lesson.

Philip asked: "What inspired your singing and your music?"

Ed replied: "I basically wasn't very smart at school I thought I was an idiot for a very long time. I couldn't do maths, science and English and I was told to be successful in life you had to do those things."

"I loved playing music, that's what made me happiest. My dad always said to me 'if you want to be a musician work really hard at it'."

"I wanted to make music my job but it was a lot of hard work and struggling; essentially the way I got my income and paid my bills was by playing covers at weddings."

Mr Spoerer, met the musician at a pub in Holborn in 2009 when Ed was playing shows all over London and Mr Spoerer supported him on stage playing the Djembe. Mr Spoerer has now taught his Jam Bus musicians to play the same African drum.

Mr Spoerer went on to explain to his class how he used to give Ed a lift to London and remembered asking his dad if he was Ed's manager? "He laughed at me and said 'he knows what wants and

he goes for it'. That's what impressed me with Ed when first getting to know him."

The star who is a long term supporter of the school paid for the Jambus, a Mercedes Citaro bendy bus which was transformed in to a classroom in 2016.

Since then he has been supporting fundraising efforts to buy more instruments for the music department and personally sent a signed guitar valued at £20,000 which was auctioned off.

Another child, Romero asked: "What age did you start playing music?"

The superstar responded that he started playing aged nine or 10 and writing songs when he was 11 or 12. He said he was 'really bad' but wrote loads of songs, playing and performing every single day.

He said that he believed in Malcolm Gladwell's '10,000-Hour Rule', that the key to achieving world class expertise was practice and that if he put in 10,000 hours by the time he reached 21 he'd be an expert at it.

He said it was 'tough' and at times 'boring' but added: "When you get there you feel as though you have earned it."

Kelly asked when are you releasing your next single?

"Not for a while some time next year ... I need a year off not doing anything..."

getting back to normal life," he replied.

The highlight of the lesson was when Ed took the children through the four chords of his song 'Perfect' telling them once you have learned the chord: G, E minor C and D you are 'good to go'; explaining that most songs are written only using these four chords.

He then showed the 'shapes' the children needed to use, while strumming on his guitar and singing the lyrics from his hit tune before switching in to verses from the songs: Standby Me, Unchained Melody, No Woman No Cry and Lewis Capaldi's Someone You Love, showing how easy it was to use these chords adding: "Every song ever has these chords."

Ending the lesson Mr Spoerer introduces his game "Nominate" where members of the Djembe Kings and Jam-Bus Club play some of their own beats and Ed is asked to give names to some of the tunes.



One young girl asks for help naming her new Djemba? Ed suggested naming it after her favourite crisps, which he said is how he came to name his cat! so she called her drum: Walkers.

Each child is then nominated to perform a silly dance which the others have to copy including the teachers, though Ed was more than happy sit and watch!

BLITZ SPIRIT SHINES THROUGH AS WE REMEMBER VE DAY

As we mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, older residents have shared their memories of VE Day and spoken of the lessons which may help the younger generation get through this latest crisis.

Older people supported before and during the Coronavirus by Age UK Croydon have been reminiscing with volunteers from Croydon Voluntary Action.

The two charities have been working in partnership during the crisis to support elderly residents with deliveries of food parcels, medicine and telephone chats.

Volunteer Maisie Johnson interviewed Harry now 88, who is celebrating 63 years of marriage with his wife Cecilia, and over 40 years living in Croydon.

Most stories of VE Day flash back to people dancing in the streets or gathered in crowds to see Churchill, but, looking back, London-born Harry - who was living as an evacuee in Manchester at the time - remembers it a little differently.



Photo credit: Urszula Soltys



Gerald Iles

The fight against COVID-19 has been compared to wartime efforts, but is there anything we can learn from those who lived through the real thing? Harry shares his advice on how to cope in the current crisis. "It's such a complicated and unsettled situation, and so what you've got to do is take the line that we did in the war. Accept that the war is on and we can only do what we can to make it less trouble for us."

Volunteer Mark Collier interviewed Gerald Iles, who worked as a performer during the war years helping his impresario father to stage productions designed to entertain and delight the beleaguered residents of East London.

Gerald said of VE day: "They hadn't had much to laugh about, but now they were laughing and they were happy."

After V.E. Day these productions continued - "People thought life was

To celebrate VE Day today (Friday) residents are planning lockdown street parties.

The idea is you place a table and chair outside your house on the pavement or front garden and make your own picnic food....have a few drinks with your neighbours; while observing the two metre distance rule!

Janet Goodman posted these pictures on Thornton Heath Reconnected (Turn to page 10) from an original VE Day street party in Moffat Road featuring her mother-in-law cutting a cake.



Bette Andrews on the same Facebook page recalls her own memories of May 8 1945: "I was only seven but I remember we had a wonderful street party in Winterbourne Road.

"Everybody did sandwiches cakes jellies etc all hand made and each deciding what each family would supply.

"Everybody took their own tables and chairs and a piano was wheeled into the street and it was my dad that played it.

"He couldn't read music, you had to sing a line and he would pick it up and continue playing. Everybody was so happy. If I

remember rightly the children were sent into bed and the dancing went on well into the night ...wonderful days."

Celebrations will be muted because of the lockdown and events which had planned to take place in Croydon had to be cancelled.

There will be a national two minute silence at 11am, with war time Prime Minister Winston Churchill's victory speech on the BBC at 3pm, then at 9pm a nationwide sing along to Vera Lynn's 'We'll Meet Again' followed by the Queen's address to the nation.

TRIBUTES PAID TO HUNDREDS OF CROYDONIANS WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES TO COVID-19

Tributes have been paid to hundreds of local people who have lost their lives to Covid-19 with a doctor, retired hospital worker, bus driver, council worker and paramedic among those named.

Croydon has been one of those worst hit in the capital having the most people; 1,310 tested for coronavirus jointly with Brent, which compares to 152,840 testing positive overall in the UK.

The death toll has continued to rise with over 264 deaths recorded by Croydon Health Services NHS Trust with 127 more in Croydon's care homes.

More than 500 people have recovered out of more than 850 patients who have been admitted to Croydon University hospital since the start of the outbreak.

The Thornton Heath hospital had to increase its critical care capacity to cope with the crisis which has seen nearly four times its normal demand.

Those who have recovered include Johty Kesavan, 51 who had spent weeks in intensive care at Croydon University Hospital battling the virus.



She became the first patient to be discharged from the unit on (April 14) and staff filmed her walking out on her own to a round of applause.

The latest figures were published in a document outlining the trustees response to the pandemic which were discussed at a virtual meeting.

In the update, chief executive of the trust Matthew Kershaw (pictured with hospital staff on right) writes: "It is testament to the levels of care, attention and expertise of our clinical teams that more than half of these have overcome their own personal battles with this terrible disease.

"Sadly, despite the very best efforts of our staff this is not always within our gift."

He adds: "Sadly, we have also lost some of our own colleagues and volunteers



across Croydon. Our thoughts and condolences are with all of the families affected at this very difficult time."

Last month Sky News visited wards at the hospital once used for looking after elderly orthopaedic patients which are now filled with those suffering from the virus.

Pictures showed some of the stricken coughing and wheezing into oxygen bags, and these were the less serious coronavirus patients with half of the hospital devoted to caring for patients hit hard by the virus.

Sky reported that of those who have been admitted, about a quarter hadn't survived - and that has had taken its toll on the staff who are battling against their own fears over the disease.

Chief nurse Elaine Clancy told Sky: "Patients are understandably frightened, staff are frightened as well...frightened that they can't automatically make patients better, they can't make this better...and they're frightened for themselves, their loved ones and their colleagues."

Every single person who is discharged is treated like a lottery winner explained ward leader Marion Spence: "We cheer them on... if this was a football field, it would be filled with people cheering. We give them a good clap and cheer them on... and even on the phone, we tell the relatives 'It's good news... she's coming home!'"

The reporter spoke to Pamela Mills, who was sitting attached to an oxygen mask next to her hospital bed and had already been in the hospital for a fortnight. She said: "It sort of goes in sections... if I get up, go to the bathroom and come back, I have to fight for breath for a little while and then it all eases down.

"I seem to go through, sort of like a really horrible day when you think, you know, I just want to go to bed and stay there. And then you get a few days when you're a bit more light than the dark... you just can't tell."

....AMONG THOSE NAMED ARE A: BUS DRIVER, DOCTOR, PARAMEDIC AND COUNCIL WORKER

Bus driver Mervyn Mally Kennedy, who passed away on April 7, just three days after his 67th birthday, moved to Croydon from Zimbabwe in 1999.

Mr Kennedy was based at Thornton Heath bus depot for 16 years and leaves behind, three daughters and seven grandchildren.

His daughter Penny Palmer, 33, a paediatric nurse at Lewisham Hospital, remembers him as a "family oriented man" who was always working to provide for them.

As a "proud and independent" man, Mr Kennedy refused to attend A&E until he the illness left him struggling to breathe.

Ms Palmer and her sisters said their final goodbyes to their beloved father on the phone on April 6.

"He never wanted people to worry about him," she said, "He always wanted to reassure people that he was OK. We did really lose a gem."

Ms Palmer has set up a Go Fund Me appeal to raise £5,000 to pay for her father's funeral costs and plans to donate any extra money to providing non NHS essential workers with personal protective equipment during the coronavirus pandemic.



Mervyn Mally Kennedy



Dr Krishan Arora



Ian Reynolds



Asha Walrond

Croydon GP Dr Krishan Arora - a senior partner at the Violet Lane Medical Practice who had worked in the area for 27 years - passed away on April 15, after testing positive for COVID-19.

South West London CCG confirmed that Dr Arora, 57, had followed national guidance and self-isolated at home when he developed symptoms. He was not at work in the time before he died.

It is believed that Dr Arora, who studied at the University of Cambridge, is the first NHS doctor in Croydon to die from Covid-19. Colleagues, patients and friend have paid tribute to Dr Arora.

Dr Agnelo Fernandes, from the Parchmore Medical Centre in Thornton Heath said: "Krish was extremely well liked and worked tirelessly to care for his patients and improve services for everyone in Croydon.

"Our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with Krish's family, friends and close colleagues at this difficult time. We will miss him."

Friends of Dr Arora have also set up a Go Fund Me appeal to raise £6,500 to support his widow with funeral costs.

Crystal Palace Football Club has paid tribute to one of its match day paramedics after he died from coronavirus.

Ian Reynolds, 53, a committed Unison union rep and Crystal Palace fan, fell ill last month before finally passing away from Covid-19 on April 21.

The paramedic, based at New Addington, dedicated 32 years of his life to the London Ambulance Service.

The flag at Croydon Town Hall was flown at half mast in honour of much-loved council worker who died after contracting coronavirus.

Asha Walrond was a customer service assistant at the Timebridge Centre in New Addington. She passed away on April 21 at Croydon University Hospital.

Visit: www.gofundme.co.uk

NHS STAFF CLAP FOR RETIRED HOSPITAL WORKER FONDLY KNOWN AS 'SID'

In a moving tribute a retired hospital worker who lost his life to COVID-19 was given a standing ovation by staff outside the Croydon NHS hospital he gave four decades of service to.



friends and colleagues.



"It is our way to pay tribute to our father and every Croydon and Thornton Heath resident lost to Coronavirus. "

The family has also set up a crowdfunding appeal on Just Giving to raise £4,001 to provide emergency funds to help NHS Croydon University Hospital staff cope with the extraordinary demands of fighting COVID-19 and have so far raised £6,841.

"We are truly overwhelmed with the response that we have received. Our sincere thanks to all of you for your contributions and support. We have now gone over our target and are truly

grateful! Anyone still wishing to donate, sky is the limit for us and we have slightly raised our target so please feel free to keep the contributions coming in. The NHS really needs our support at this difficult time."

To donate visit: www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/always-in-our-hearts-sid-nhs

The campaign set up by Perdeep reads "Our utmost gratitude and thanks to the NHS and all key workers for their incredible services and support during this time.

"We would like to say a special thank you to Consultant Nephrologist, Dr Soper and his ward team who did their utmost to help.

"Thank you Dad for being our biggest inspiration and strength. We love you."

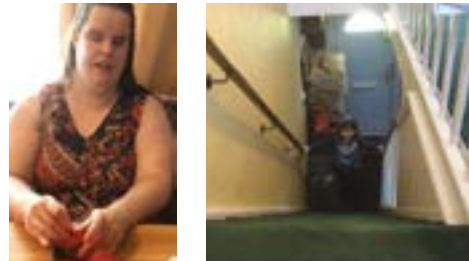
He was admitted in to the care of the hospital, which had been a part of his life for 40 years, but sadly passed away on April 1 after testing positive for COVID-19.

Sid leaves behind his wife Santosh Sidar, two sons Perdeep and Niten Sidar, daughter Seema Bagga and grandson Shyan Bagga.

Seema said: "Our father dedicated over four decades of his life to Croydon and Thornton Heath and we want to make sure that support for our community continues.

CLIMBING STAIRS AND MAKING HEARTS FOR CHARITY

A visually impaired mum and her daughter have taken on the 2.6 challenge to raise funds for Croydon Vision.



Staff, volunteers and members have been doing a range of challenges from felting 26 hearts, climbing 26 flights of stairs a day, running a marathon over a week, and doing 26000 steps a day.

Danielle Cleary, is finishing off a garland of hearts while her daughter Erin completed the stair challenge to support Croydon Vision which works directly with people affected by sight loss. During Covid-19, the charity has had to adapt its service provision providing cooked meals, essential shopping and phone calls to clients.

Danielle, who is Information and Assistance officer at Croydon Vision explained that the pandemic had put a

huge strain on charities such as Croydon Vision, as fundraising activities have halted but adapting its services to cope with demand have increased costs.

The 2.6 Challenge is a national campaign to raise funds for the charity sector which is facing a £4 billion loss in income as a result of the pandemic.

To support Croydon Visions visit: [www.https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/my-2-6-challenge-3d937cf8-154c-418b-a14a-34a233721172](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/my-2-6-challenge-3d937cf8-154c-418b-a14a-34a233721172)

GIFTED EYE DOCTOR LOSES COVID BATTLE

A gifted eye doctor based at Croydon University hospital has died after a month long battle with coronavirus.



Paul was a dedicated church pastor for over 30 years, providing support to those in his

local community and in the DRG.

David Probert, chief executive of Moorfields Eye Hospital, said: "Paul was a much-loved member of the Moorfields family. Through the past decade, he provided an exceptional level of care to his patients. He was incredibly hardworking, kind, gentle and a joy to work with. He will be sorely missed by many and his death is a huge loss to us all. Our thoughts are with Paul's family and friends at this incredibly difficult and heart-breaking time."

Dr Paul Kabasele, 58, worked for the Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust at its Croydon Hospital site for a decade. The ophthalmologist treated patients with a range of conditions including glaucoma and uveitis as well as providing urgent care. Much loved by his patients and colleagues alike, Paul provided an exceptional level of care to his patients, thanks to his warm, reassuring and generous nature.

Alongside his vital NHS contribution, Paul also worked tirelessly to improve the eye health of people living in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), his home country.

TEACHERS MAKE MASKS AND SCRUBS FOR NHS



Thornton Heath school has produced hundreds of masks for health workers and a dressmaking teacher is making much needed scrubs for NHS staff.

Teachers from the art and English department at Norbury Manor have been busy manufacturing personal protective equipment for NHS staff . While, Anne Blanchard, normally based at CALAT's Zion Road site in Thornton Heath, where she teaches dressmaking is turning her hand to making NHS scrubs.

A team of volunteers led by Daneil Spiegel, head of the Art faculty at Norbury Manor used the school's laser cutters to create masks from modified patterns. Around 200 protective masks have already been donated to King's College Hospital with staff aiming to create a further 500 masks for Croydon-

based healthcare workers. Students attending the school during the lockdown, the children of key workers, have been helping to assemble the masks.

Anne who also runs a bridal wear business started has joined an army of volunteers makers throughout the country, using their skills to make a difference. • CALAT courses are now online with the college using Zoom, Padlet and Google Drive to deliver lessons and they are being 'really well received', said Creative Arts and Crafts Programme Manager Mark Huggett. This includes all the Saturday Thornton Heath classes and Wednesday dressmaking classes. Students will soon be able to access an online knitting class and a Wordpress develop your web site for beginners. www.calat.ac.uk

Anne Blanchard

MAN CHARGED WITH DOORSTEP MURDER OF GRANDFATHER



Detectives investigating the fatal stabbing of a Thornton Heath grandfather on the doorstep of his home just days before Christmas have charged a man.

John Kennett, 60, was found suffering from knife wounds at 9.30pm on December 23 at his Woodcroft Road home and died 20 minutes later despite the best efforts of police and paramedics who raced to the scene to try and save him.

Kenny Pitcher, 51, of Woodcroft Road, Thornton Heath, was arrested at the scene of the incident and was later released on bail pending further enquiries.

On April 8, he was charged with the murder of 60-year-old John Kennett and appeared in custody on April 9 at Westminster Magistrates' Court.

- A 33-year-old man arrested on January 16 is currently released under investigation.
- A 41-year-old man has been released with no further action.

LOCAL CREATIVES ‘LOCKDOWN’ ART PROJECTS INSPIRING SUPPORT AND RAISING FUNDS FOR THE NHS

Artist PINS has brought humour to these dire times with his panic buying loo roll inspired limited edition prints ‘don’t be a greedy sh*t’.



He got a huge response when he posted the design on Instagram in response to the mass buying up of toilet rolls which left supermarket shelves empty early on in the pandemic. The aim he said was to ‘capture the rather ‘smelly’ moment in history & spread the message to Be. More. NICE!’

PINS is giving 20 per cent of sales from 10 giclee prints to help local art services and support communities in India.

He has been keeping himself busy during lockdown doodling and came up with this protect the NHS logo which is made of pins.

He wrote on his blog: “ We can all do many things when we put our minds

to them – like the NHS staff, doctors and nurses, they deserve all the praise and help possible for going that extra mile and literally saving lives. Amazing. The way people are supporting and volunteering is beautiful too.”

He created his own ‘Keep Going NHS’ rainbow trainer doodle which you can print, colour and stick up in you window

and has also been pinning up art while on his once a day walk, containing messages for people to find and keep.

He added: “Keep seeing lovely rainbows and positive messages on windows which has really brightened up the area during my morning walks, nice to see everyone getting creative ”

www.pinspired.com/art/illustration/

NEW PUBLIC ART AT STATION

There is set to be a new public art installation at Thornton Heath railway station and residents have been asked to submit words promoting a positive insight in to local life to be included in the design.

Many of you will have come across the symbol of London Transport ‘The Roundel’ translated into mosaics at stations such as Chingford, South Tottenham, Leyton Midland Road, Highams Park (see image) to name a few.

The good news is that funding has been approved for Thornton Heath to have its very own mosaic Roundel installed by artist Maud Milton and her DBS approved team of artists Arty Face (www.artyface.co.uk).

Maud appealed for positive words from the community to sum up what they liked about the station, their favourite place in Thornton Heath and what word best summed up Thornton Heath.

Locals took part in a brief survey along with children from Whitehorse Manor Primary school and chosen memorable words will then be etched on to soft clay tiles of the mosaic that are textured and glazed in the house colours of Southern Trains.

The artist is keen to get going with her backlog of roundel installations as soon as lockdown is lifted.

The Roundel has become a symbol of London transport and was unveiled in the early 20th century and is both a genius piece of art and advertising, guiding travellers to their nearest TfL service. The art installation will be sited under cover on Platform 1 and will be graffiti proofed with a longevity beyond 25 years.

LOCKDOWN BABY BOOM

Budget retailer Poundland has reported a surge in demand for its pregnancy test kits from people in Thornton Heath.

The discount retailer, which has kept most of its stores open to sell essential items, saw weekly sales of £1 pregnancy tests rise by 25 percent since the first week of lockdown. Poundland’s findings show Thornton Heath is in the top 10 places where sales have soared.

Tim Bettley, trading director at Poundland, said: “Based on our sales, Britain should be preparing for a baby boom as couples found more entertaining ways to relax than watching box sets or doing jigsaws.”

Poundland’s buyers have already started planning Christmas ranges, with baby clothes and teddy bears likely to be top of the gift list.

- Top ten includes: 1. Sutton Coldfield 2. Slough 3. West Bromwich 4. Wealdstone 5. Kilburn 6. Nottingham 7. Woolwich 8. Pitsea Essex 9. Londonderry 10. Thornton Heath



The print can be purchased from www.etsy.com/your/shops/SceneInCroydon

Scene in Croydon has also organised a Colour Croydon colouring activity which is being hosted by the Museum of Croydon. More details can be found on www.museumofcroydon.com/colourcroydon

Scene in Croydon is selling off one of their best selling ‘Croydon heart’ prints to raise funds for Mind in Croydon.

Thornton Heath textile artist Samantha Warren runs Scene in Croydon with fellow artist Danni Livett.

Samantha said: “I saw a recent call out from Mind for donations and wanted to help by creating something special that can be cherished and act as a reminder of when our community came together to support each other.”

Mental wellbeing is so important and Mind’s services are in very high demand during the current pandemic. The charity has had to close their shops so will probably lose at least £15,000 a month of funding so is in need of donations.

Samantha and Danni have sketched some of their favourite landmarks in Croydon for you all to colour in. All the entries are then featured on the museum’s online gallery with their top picks.

Simply tag @sceneincroydon and use #colourcroydon (on Instagram, twitter or Facebook) in a photo of your coloured masterpiece. You also have the chance to win a Scene in Croydon print and your own design printed professionally.

To get involved download you free colouring in sheet: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tQ3oHBYIAIrEAcB_Cmo-1yI7RSABn/view



Professional photographer, Dominic Marley, www.domicimarley.com who specialises in sport, fashion and lifestyle, is auctioning off some of his prints to raise money for the NHS.

When he is not taking pictures of England football stars and top athletes, Dom’s labour of love is taking photos of these beautiful birds of prey, and other animals, found at the bird sanctuary Eagle Heights in Kent.

The local photographer has had a few exhibitions with this project, ‘Flight’ and recently showed them in Reunion Cafe in Crystal Palace as part of this years Open House event. He is now auctioning off these prints on his Instagram account, https://www.instagram.com/dominic_marley/?hl=en, with 100 per cent of the proceeds to be donated to NHS Charities Together.

Each week five prints will be announced and interested parties just need to send Dom a direct message with which photo they would like and their bid. On Sunday the next week, Dom will contact highest bidders to say they won. And a further five prints will be announced.

Prints are framed in glass and available for collection.



The photos include this stunning shot of a cheetah.

THIEVES PILFER PLANTS IN NIGHTTIME RAIDS ON GARDENS AND PLANTERS IN THORNTON HEATH

Brazen thieves have been caught on camera pilfering plants, raiding planters and stealing trees.



A man and a women stole a plum tree from a garden on Grange Road and then walked off with it down Thirsk Road and on to Whitehorse Lane where they were captured (LEFT) on camera at 7.30am on April 18.



The owners of the tree put this note on their door appealing for its return writing: “It was a gift to our daughter when she was born.”



The woman thief is similar in appearance to a trio who came equipped with their own pots to scoop up shrubs from front gardens.

The, man and two women, were captured on CCTV on Luna Road where they stole plants from a planter leaving behind a trail of soil as they headed off down the road towards Milner Road where the trail went cold.

They are unfazed by security lights flagging up their activities at 1.25am on Sunday(April 26) and the footage shows they had already bagged two plants from further up the road.

Two of their number are carrying shrubs and third has an empty pot ready to use to steal the Luna Road plants.



Wooden community planters, part of a scheme set up by the THCAT (Thornton Heath Community Action Team) to spruce up street corners and deter fly tippers, are also being targeted by the plant pilferers.

Michael Daniels who spotted the Grange Road appeal sign while walking his dog, asked for help on Facebook locating the missing plum tree for the owners. He was inundated with offers of plants to replace the stolen tree including this planter made and donated by Graham Mitchell. Graham and Michael have been responsible for the roll out of many of the planters around Thornton Heath. Michael fixed and planted up the planter with the assistance

CAR THIEVES WORKING IN PAIRS ROAM THE STREETS LOOKING FOR EASY TARGETS

Thieves working in pairs are roaming the streets at night trying car doors and looking for valuables to steal.

Some residents have had their vehicles broken in to multiple times and car crime is still the top reported crime across all three CR7 wards.

While crime has fallen during lockdown the levels of car related crime has remained consistent with almost 100 vehicle crimes being reported each month, since December, with many more likely unreported.

This footage captured (RIGHT) shows the modus operandi of one of the car thief crews operating across the wards.

A man in a cap is captured trying car doors on Mersham Road at 6am on March 12. He tries and opens the driver’s door on a white car and gets in. He can then be seen searching the car. Undeterred by people passing by he then gets out, opens the boot to look for more items to steal. He acknowledges an accomplice on the other side of the road. He nods at him



shuts the boot and then they both carry on up either side of the road. In this case he got away with a small amount of cash.

One victim said: “Our car self locks after 10 minutes so even if we didn't lock it last night, I don't know how they got in??”

On Norfolk Road at 2.25am on April 26, a door camera picks up two men walking on along on either side of the road trying car doors. Also reported to police similar activity on Kynaston Road at 4.30am on April 27. The suspect reported to the police was described as blonde haired, with blue jacket, jeans and white trainers.



In December there were 45 thefts from cars in Thornton Heath, 23 in Bensham Manor and 35 in West Thornton

In January 29, 25 and 38. In February 32, 19 and 38. In March it significantly rose in West Thornton to 51 with 21 in Thornton Heath and 23 in Bensham Manor.

Thornton Heath Safer Neighbourhood Team have executed a number of decoy vehicle operations in the ward as well as plain clothes patrols in an attempt to catch and deter criminals who engage in car crime. As part of this, officers have been using predictive mapping technology to identify the most at-risk areas.

Thornton Heath Police told The Chronicle: “We are aware that vehicle crime is an issue and one of our top priorities. Last week we apprehended someone shortly

of his daughter who are pictured (left) with the grateful family.

There have been a series of other plant thefts in recent weeks with another THCAT planter targeted on Buller Road and plants stolen from outside homes in Norfolk Road. The THCAT planters are looked after by guardians, local residents, who ensure they are kept fresh and watered - paying for the planters to be kept topped up.

One guardian warned on Facebook: “I can't believe that even during times like these it is still deemed acceptable to steal!

“We have had so many positive comments over the years about the planter and then you encounter this! It's truly sad!”

Are you missing plants? Do you know who the thieves are? Contact Thornton Heath Safer Neighbourhood Team: SNTZD-ThorntonHeath@met.police.uk. Report online: www.met.police.uk/ring 101or anonymously: Crimestoppers 0800 555 111.

after they had broken into a vehicle, this investigation is ongoing.”

Police advise not to leave valuables in vehicles, or your vehicle unattended and unlocked even for a moment plus try and park either in a lit or visible area.

Clive Wain, head of police liaison at Tracker, stolen car recovery experts, warned that car crime could increase during the coronavirus lockdown due to a shortage of car parts. Ninety-two percent of the vehicles Tracker recovered last year were stolen without the thief having possession of the vehicle’s keys.

Many keyless entry and start systems can be temporarily switched off to prevent electronic compromise and keyless theft. You can consult your local dealer to help do this.

As ever, call 999 in an emergency or 101 for non-emergency situations. You can also report a crime online at www.met.police.uk/. If you wish to speak to the Thornton Heath Safer Neighbourhoods team, contact sntmailbox.thorntonheath@snt@met.police.uk.

CRACKDEN FINALLY SHUT BUT NOT BEFORE FIGHT WITH METAL POLE

A house of multiple occupancy which was being used for open drug dealing and had been the subject of endless complaints for more than a year about tenants anti social behaviour has finally been shut down.

In the last few weeks the council removed all the unauthorised occupants at 50 Melfort Road which has now been secured but not before multiple police units were called to deal with a fight between residents involving a metal pole during lockdown.

Eye witnesses reported seeing a short white man in his 50s putting up a fight before police were able to place him in the van and remove the metal object.

A Scotland Yard spokesman said: “Police were called at 07.40am on Wednesday April 9, to a man with a metal pole behaving in a threatening manner in



Melfort Road, Thornton Heath. Officers attended and arrested the man who was taken into police custody. There was no report of any injury.”

Residents had told The Chronicle that the “occupants” of this property had taken ASB to a whole new level - open drug dealing, smoking “crack-pipes” on the wall outside the property, fighting, intimidation, and theft.

Another said: “We see people looking like zombies coming in and out of the house constantly. We sat in our car

watching these zombies and they are off their head and worst. We see dealers coming in and out with these BMW and Audi every other day.”

A local business told The Chronicle that the occupants had syringes and he had to stop them coming in to his premises.

Various council services along with the landlord and the police had been working to resolve the issues at 50 Melfort which has been converted in to six flats and was licensed with the council’s landlord licensing scheme. The freehold of NO50 is owned by property developer Murtaza Ali Abbas.

• A recent FOI revealed that during the last year only three HMO or private rented property had licences revoked for being inadequate though many don’t even get a licence because they fail to meet the criteria.

COVID SPITTER BANNED

A man who said he was infected with Covid-19 and threatened to spit at police has been issued with a two-year Criminal Behaviour Order banning him from Crawley town centre.



Odiaka Ikpade, 24, of Dunheved Road West, Thornton Heath, was later charged with failing to comply with a community protection notice, criminal damage and three counts of assault by beating of an emergency worker.

Police say he was taken into custody where he again threatened staff and spat over the floor of a police cell.

Ikpade was also given a six-month drug rehabilitation requirement and a 12-week suspended prison sentence.

Thornton Heath clothing designer and photographer Wesley Jordan Anthony Baker, has designed his own heart shaped print as a homage to all key workers.



The design can be downloaded https://1drv.ms/u/s!Ah3AYZvz1D7hgAlTZWmleHrqAkPhw?e=Nb9Z9Y to print and put in your window.

He said “My dad’s a postman, brother’s a chef in a care home and my mum will be back working at Asda when she can get back in the country. Rightly the focus of appreciation has been directed towards health workers but I thought I’d repurpose a design I created for my clothing brand to show all the key workers some love as they head to work. If you want to display your appreciation of the members of our nation who’ve also been highlighted as key workers

you can download this design, it comes in four A4 sections to cut out and join together to make an A2 sized heart. “

He added: “If I’ve forgotten any key workers please feel free to let me know. Would be really cool if you do decide to put this up in your window to see a picture of it up. Please share this with anyone who might want to use this. “

PLANS TO TURN AMBASSADOR HOUSE IN TO HOUSING UNITS FOR 150 PEOPLE

▶ **TURN FROM PAGE ONE**



patched up with artwork left behind by squatters who were evicted from the 1960s building last year.

The housing is described as units rather than apartments so its unclear who they are intended for but they will be for the rental market not for sale.

Network Rail holds the freehold for the site and The Chronicle understands there is a condition on the lease which would prohibit Mr Bashir from carving up the building for sale as individual properties.

The drawings show two bedroom 'units' for three people with two toilets with a floor space of 66.8sqm. The average one bedroom for two people has a floorspace of 50.17sqm.

There is a minimum government space standard for new homes which is 50sqm metres for two person one bedroom flat and 61sqm for a three person two bed.

In a letter from Mr Murch of Davies Murch, acting for Copperstones Ltd, he

writes: "Whilst the quantum of proposed homes is not a matter for consideration as part of this application, it is nevertheless provided for completeness..."

Mr Murch goes on to state: "The scheme can be implemented with no changes to the exterior of the building. However, it is the applicant's intention that a planning application will be submitted in due course to improve the exterior of the building."

The application is for change of use and conversion of the second, third, fifth, sixth, eighth and ninth floors within Ambassador House from Class B1 to C3.

These floors are unused and were previously used as offices until they were vacated years ago. The remaining floors: fourth and seventh, are also vacant but are D1 use. The first floor was used as a crèche for the benefit of the occupiers of the building as recent as 2000.

The application also includes the provision of associated on-site parking on the lower ground floor, and refuse and cycle storage.

The residential

accommodation will be able to utilise the 54 car parking spaces associated with the previous office building.

The Chronicle reported last year that Mr Bashir had avoided paying almost £300,000 in business rates because of a legal loophole. Ambassador House was sold at auction in October 2012 due to liquidation. Mr Bashir acquired the balance of the 120 year lease from December 1967.

Mr Bashir is the CEO of Copperstones, which an upmarket estate agents which says on its web site it has offices in Marleybone, Mayfair and Lahore. His company Red Wing, which is based offshore, had the squatters evicted.

Mr Bashir is pictured with friend the Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan.



RESIDENTS OBJECT TO BRICK BY BRICK SCHEME TO REDEVELOP GARAGES IN TO AFFORDABLE HOMES

The council's house builder Brick by Brick is facing objection to plans to redevelop garages behind an existing block of flats in to affordable homes.

The application - to transform 16 garages, which are in a state of disrepair and green space behind Atlanta Court at 65 Parchmore Road, in to 20 one and two bed flats for council rent - has received 13 objections.

The four storey building will provide 14 one bed and six two bed flats with 21 car parking spaces, 33 cycle parking and play space for residents of both the proposed and existing blocks.

The original proposals were revised after BxB carried out a series of public consultations including public events in November and January attended by 26 people; with a 89 visiting a dedicated web portal and 18 completing a questionnaire.

Of those that responded 45 per cent were against or unhappy with the proposals, with 40 per cent unsure and 14 per in support.

Many mentioned the poor condition of the existing estate and the lack of



general maintenance. Leaseholders felt that the new proposed development would affect the valuation of their current home as the new development would be 'better in appearance'.

Atlanta Court is made up of 32 flats which are a mix of leaseholders brought under right to buy and council tenants with the garages rented out by the council to people outside the area.

Others were more concerned about anti social behaviour, flytipping, overdevelopment, car parking and the

location of the amenity space.

BXB is a private company, with Croydon Council acting as sole shareholder and has faced controversy over the redevelopment of a number of sites identified for use by the council.

The council has a corporate target to ensure that across the borough and across the public and private sectors, 1,900 new homes will be started each year over the next five years.

BxB has the goal to deliver around 500 high quality new homes on multiple sites per year from 2020 onwards.

Data provided by the council showed that of those on the waiting list for Thornton Heath: 83 wanted 1-bedroom properties, 162 needed 2-bedroom and 41 had opted for 3-bedroom, which said the applicant demonstrated a far greater need for both 1 and 2 bedroomed homes in the area.

An accompanying planning statement by property consultants Carter Jonas says: "This data is considered relevant as the scheme is proposed to be 100 per cent affordable rent for the council to manage and allocate according to their waiting list adding that the: "... revised

NEW PLANNING POWERS SEES PROPOSED HOUSE OF MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY REFUSED IN THORNTON HEATH



An application to carve up a family home for use as a House of Multiple Occupancy for six occupants has been refused by the council.

This is believed to be one of the first application where a proposed HMO

has been challenged in Thornton Heath using new planning guidance introduced after a year long consultation exercise.

Sue Balmer, of property management company Trevelyan Tooting Ltd based in Brixton, put in the application for change of use to turn the three storey five bedroom terraced house at 31 Norfolk Road in to a HMO for six occupants.

The 16 objectors cited: too many HMO's already in the area, which were not properly maintained and the loss of a family home.

Previously multi-bedroom properties could be converted to small HMOs (houses occupied by between three and six unrelated individuals) under permitted development – which meant planning consent was not required for the change.

But the recent introduction of Article 4 by the council after a two year campaign by local people removes this ability, requiring owners to seek planning permission for the change of use.

In refusing the application the planning officer Sera Elobisi says that the:

FORMER BARCLAYS TO BECOME STUDIO FLATS

▶ **TURN FROM PAGE 1**

The council received the application for 'alterations' for use of the first floor of the two storey bank as five one bedroom studios on December 2 but it was only validated on April 3.

The change of use application from office to residential is under permitted development rights and was submitted by Danish Hanif, of Golfrate Property Management Limited.

Golfrate Property, owned by the Aziz family controls more than £2.5bn of real estate including large portions of the West End as well as lots of empty pubs.

The freehold for 1 Brigstock Road was brought in May 2015 by Fort Properties which paid £48,085,000 (million) for it.

Iconic Properties Ltd, which is the company which owns the freehold for The Thomas Farley is also incorporated in the Isle of Man. Work has been going on behind the bank's window blinds for sometime since it closed in 2017. The lower ground floor which contained the cash desks will remain unchanged. The proposal is car free with cycling provision.

The Farley has also been redeveloped in to flats. All that is left of the original pub is the bar area which remains empty.



proposal will allow the estate to work more cohesively once development is completed, whilst also minimising disruption during construction.

"The overall quantum of development has reduced and the revised single block approach will reduce the overall appearance of the proposal responding to overlooking and appearance issues raised by existing residents."

Residents also complained about inadequate amenities, including insufficient bin capacity and fly tipping adjacent to the pram sheds, which attracts foxes.

The applicant adds: "Should the development receive planning permission, Brick By Brick will continue to engage with the relevant teams to assist in addressing these issues" It is noted that there has been a programme of repairs and improvements to the building over the past few years that have improved some of the conditions on the existing buildings."

development would fail to provide a replacement family dwelling conflicting with the Croydon Local Plan and London Plan. It was also refused because of sub-standard accommodation with inadequate floorspace for the proposed self-contained studio unit in bedroom three contrary to the national space standards. There was also a failure to provide off-street parking or cycling provision.

MP AND MAYOR JOIN BANGLADESHI COMMUNITY IN DELIVERING HOT FOOD TO HOSPITAL STAFF

North Croydon MP Steve Reed helped volunteers from Croydon's Bangladeshi community deliver hot food to staff at Croydon hospital who later Tweeted their thanks for keeping 'busy staff fed'.

The MP was joined by Croydon Mayor Humayun Kabir, after an earlier visit to a food bank being run by the British Bangladeshi Society Croydon at Queens Community Hall based at 1 Turners Crescent.

He met with its president Nasar Ali and Mohammed Islam at the food bank which is open every Sunday between 12-2pm and has helped supply food parcels to dozens of people.(Ring 07984876193 to register for a food parcel).

The MP said: "People can come and collect food who would otherwise be going without. This is a wonderful



service available to the whole community."

The BBSC has also been providing hot meals for the homeless in Croydon.

Earlier the MP visited Age UK's food hub in Brigstock Road where he met with the chief executive Jill Kyne and heard about its new Companion Call Line service (0208 686 0066). It is



MCDONALD'S BACON FEEDS HUNGRY FOOD BANK COMMUNITY

His Grace Food Bank on Beulah Road has gone from opening one day a week to six, with people who have never used a food bank before turning up at 11am to queue for food.

Hundreds of local people have received help but more donations are needed and as Pastor Bola Thomas explains: "we are short of money as we are having to buy many supplies."

An exhausted Pastor Bola spoke to the Chronicle about how one week they distributed food to 50 other organisations as other food banks were forced to close either because they were run by older people who are now vulnerable or had run out of resources.

His Grace were fortunate enough to have received a donation from fast food chain McDonald's who gave away free food to charities after it had to close all its restaurants because of the coronavirus outbreak and delivered boxes and boxes of bacon to Thornton Heath food banks.

Meat is in short supply and so the bacon was much appreciated.

The food bank has provided food

packages to individuals and families in need via pick up and volunteers have been making deliveries to elderly and other vulnerable individuals with at least 50 benefiting each day.

Volunteers are using their own cars to deliver resources as the food bank doesn't have a delivery van. They also go out each morning to supermarkets to collect food.

When The Chronicle visited the food bank a couple from a baptist church in New Addington arrived by car to collect meat, bread and milk for food parcels to distribute in their locality. Pastor Bola, explains how no one gave them



PPE and they had to buy masks and gloves for all their volunteers to ensure they are protected. She has stopped taking new volunteers in the food bank and is relying on a small team because she knows who they are in contact with so is able to ensure there is no contamination.

Pastor Bola knows many of the recipients by their first name and knows their back story. She says hello to one user telling him to 'look after yourself' and many stop to say a personal 'thank you'.

Some of the stories are heartbreaking; a husband and wife aged 82 and 79 turned up having been unable to get help and they were sent home and told their food would be delivered to their door.

Welling up Pastor Bola added: "They shouldn't be on the street. It is so sad to see those things, elderly people struggling people with mental illness. I don't want to cry."



Contact Pastor Bola on: 07946 546507.

THE VOLUNTEER ARMY LEADING THE COMMUNITY CHARGE TO HELP THOSE IN NEED

Volunteers and organisations across the borough have united to support hundreds of people in need.

Croydon Voluntary Action has been coordinating efforts since the COVID-19 outbreak and has supported 400 vulnerable residents in isolation with 91 medication collections, 74 shopping collections and more than 200 food parcels deliveries.

It has proudly supported more than 15 Croydon food banks and soup kitchens, that have picked up supplies from its London Road centre for the residents they serve. These include: Good Food Matters, Revivify, Croydon Food Bank, Holistic Wellbeing Hub, Elim Pentecostal Church Thornton Heath, Nightwatch, Age UK Croydon, Francis Church Food Stop, the British Bangladeshi Society Croydon, and the Shrubland Trust.

Weekly Zoom meetings are held with

food banks, soup kitchens, Food Stop shops, Social Prescribing professionals and link workers.

It has also been working with organisations such as Whitgift Foundation who are providing vans and volunteer drivers for deliveries, UK Harvest, local businesses and charities donating items for distribution.

Alison Lawton, who works for the NHS, liaising with Croydon GP practices, said: "Croydon-wide, I have been very impressed by the weekly, now fortnightly zoom call that CVA have organised. It has been a really good opportunity to bring everyone together, to share key information, case studies and lessons learnt. That, from my perspective, has been the most positive outcome of the awful Covid situation."

CVA has also been organising webinars providing information on supporting

existing volunteers during COVID19 and funding opportunities.

With lockdown extended and food supplies under pressure donations and contributions to the Relief Fund (www.localgiving.org/donation/cva) are even more appreciated.

CVA Chief Executive Steve Phaure, said: "In terms of the months ahead, it's about moving from an emergency service to one that tackles the underlying health inequalities that have clearly made some people – and some communities – more vulnerable to the virus."

www.cvalive.org.uk



SAFE SPACES FOR VICTIMS

Supermarkets are offering safe spaces within their stores to victims of domestic violence seeking help.

Those experiencing domestic abuse can ask staff in participating stores including Lidl and Tesco in Thornton Heath for access to a phone, to use to call for support and advice.

New statistics have revealed in the six weeks up to 19 April there were 200 domestic abuse arrests – almost five a day – in Croydon.

The police were also called to 561 domestic abuse offences in the borough during this period – around 13 offences a day.

Posters publicising where domestic abuse victims can seek help, as part of a new awareness campaign are being put up in every one of the borough's 400 off-licences and supermarkets.

Lidl on London Road and Tesco on Brigstock Road are participating in the campaign which is being run in partnership between the FJC, Croydon police and independent domestic violence advisors.



Police officers were at Thornton Heath's Lidl store on Monday morning handing out leaflets and talking to staff and customers to raise awareness.

Victims of domestic abuse will also be able to access safe spaces at Boots pharmacies consultation rooms.

Croydon FJC team has increased its opening hours and is now providing a seven day a week service during lockdown to ensure week-long support is available to domestic abuse victims.

Councillor Hamida Ali, cabinet member for safer Croydon and communities said: "The safe spaces will give survivors the time and space to access support when they may not be able to use their phone freely or reach friends for help."

If you need help, support or advice please call the FJC on 020 8688 0100. Those needing support outside of the centre's opening hours can call the free 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Hotline on 0808 2000 247. In an emergency, call the police on 999

• A single mum fleeing domestic violence who moved to Thornton Heath and was in desperate need of furniture was inundated with offers of help after Rowenna Davis put out an appeal via Croydon Covid Mutual Aid. She had asked for donations of beds, a sofa, washing machine, freezer, Hoover, dining table and chairs but got more than she expected with offers of clothes and books as well as financial support.

Rowenna said: "Thanks to everyone who has been so generous and offered to help here. Mum told me she had tears in her eyes when she received the list of all of these donations!"

SOCIAL MEDIA GROUP RECONNECTING THORNTON HEATH THROUGH MEMORIES NOT MOANS

A social media group has encapsulated the bygone years of Thornton Heath

Thornton Heath Reconnected gives an amazing insight in to the life and times of Thornton Heath over 100 years and includes pictures of residents from the First World War.

Set up by former Thornton Heath resident Tadhg Crozier, the Facebook page aims to bring together people of Thornton Heath past and present to share memories not moans.

The group has over 1,200 followers including some residents who are in their 90s!

Members share stories of their schooldays, adventures in Grangewood Park and Thornton Heath Rec, long gone cherished pubs, and memories of the many rich and wonderful characters. The page also provides the opportunity for former residents to reconnect with old friends.

Posts are accompanied with pictures of Thornton Heath streets, many unrecognisable in gentler times when the roads were free of cars and lined with trees and gardens.

Posts recall the Second World War bombing raids and the deadly Doodle-bugs which caused devastation in 1944 demolishing whole streets in Thornton Heath.

One member recalls: "My dad was born in 1933 and during the war helped deliver milk in Thornton Heath. One day whilst doing this he looked up to see a V1 whose engine had cut out skim over the roofs of the houses and explode further down the street. The explosion lifted him off his feet and threw him across the road. He was cut by flying glass and had to be taken to a first aid station."

Pictures of children fishing in Thornton Heath Pond in 1951, along with recollections of learning to swim in the old swimming baths and The Pavilion Cinema which one contributor recalls "...



was mostly referred to as The Pav or Flea Pit. This was in the forties and fifties. Went there quite a few times. A bit different from the showcase cinemas we have now". There are memories of former famous residents like: Mickey Finn, of the glam rock band T-Rex, funnyman Roy Hudd and David Jason's brother Arthur who lived above a hairdressers on Furze Road! Even Arnold Schwarzenegger was a short term resident of Thornton Heath while training for the Mr Universe competition.

Tadhg said: "I do still have a soft spot as I spent all of my younger years in Thornton Heath so lots of good memories. Still it has changed a lot over the years but I do love looking back to see how it's changed. The group has been really positive so far and I think



it's because we try to keep it from being a place where people moan about the changes and just focus on their own good memories of the place.

"I've been in too many groups where people spend all their time complaining about how much things have changed."

Tadhg who went to school at Beulah Infants worked in The Grange pub, on Norbury Road which has been derelict for many years.

He moved away years ago due to work and added: "I think my fondest memories were of the shops before Tesco was built and how it had a village feel.

"Once Tesco was built it felt like it was out of context with the older buildings in Thornton Heath."

THORNTON HEATH IN BLOOM RETURNS FOR FIFTH YEAR OF GARDEN COMPETITION

Organisers of Thornton Heath in Bloom are hoping for a bumper year of entries as people spend more time on their gardens during the lockdown.

This years hotly contested categories include: best front garden, business frontage or organisation, concrete front space, children's plants or vegetables and most attractive THCAT street planter.

Thornton Heath Community Action Team, which organises the annual event are looking for the best planting in Thornton Heath with prizes awarded for the top three in five categories.

Around 80 entrants came to the prize-giving last year with 117 entries, including street planters, compared to the 39 entries in the first year.



Chair of THCAT Linda Watson said about the competition which is in its fifth year: "We need to stay positive through this peculiar time and there's no better way than sprucing up your front garden with beautiful, varied and bright plants."

"While people are isolating or distancing, growing and tending plants is very therapeutic and particularly good for children."

Entry forms need to be submitted by Friday July 10 with judging taking place between July 14 and 22.

The awards ceremony for entrants will be held when possible so make sure you supply your contact details.



For more information and for the entry form visit: www.thorntonheath.net.

Either email: action@thorntonheath.net or post your entry form through the letter box at The Salvation Army at 66 High Street.

THE SUNFLOWER CLUB



The lockdown has brought with it a resurgence in growing with streets setting up seed and plant swaps

THCAT has set up The Sunflower Club handing out 140 seed packets and challenging recipients to grow the tallest sunflower and has also recently launched an adopt a tomato plant scheme.

While residents on The Drive, Ross Road, Woodville Road and Hamilton Road have set up food growing initiatives. To join the network of local growers visit: www.foodresilienceproject.co.uk

WIN A FREE HAIR CUT IN THE #NOTRIMCHALLENGE

A charity providing mental health support is offering young people a free £15 barbershop hair cut at the end of lockdown if they feature in the #NoTrimChallenge.

All you have to do to is embrace your hair growth and send your #NoTrim look to Off The Record: www.talkofftherecord.org/no-trim-challenge.

A number of familiar faces have already shown off their lockdown hair and beard growth to launch the #NoTrim Challenge including: Ben Eckett of Gloves Not Gunz Gloves; chef Craig McNuff from Original Flava (pictured); You Tuber and comedian: Smurfing Turk, Myke Catterall from Legacy Youth Zone (pictured).

OTR has worked on a number of projects with local barber shops around mental health including Mind My Hair



Hear My Mind project, launched last year with the Croydon BME Forum which responded to high rates of serious

mental health conditions, in African Caribbean and Asian boys and men.

OTR devised the challenge after staff 'noticed that a lot of young people are feeling rough as they can't get to a barber' during lockdown and wanted to offer young people something to look forward to.

Submit your entry to https://www.talkofftherecord.org/no-trim-challenge/

THE COMMUNITY HUB BROADCASTING LIVE

An award winning entrepreneur who created a community hub for young people to stay safe has turned his hand to radio presenting and creating fashionable face masks during lockdown.

Dexter Simms who runs the Mula Cake community hub has spoken of his concern at the level of support being given to small businesses.

Dexter who transformed his retail business premises on London Road at 7 Brigstock Parade, Thornton Heath in to a community hub offering a creative and 'safe haven' for local youths was forced to temporarily close up shop like so many other community organisations.

But the ever resourceful Dexter who also runs the Mula Cake clothing line (www.mulacake.com) has turned his hand to presenting ww.mulacakeradio.com- providing daily chat and tunes for young people. He has also designed a Mula Cake mask line which he says: "Yes we have got to be safe but we also have got to be fashionable!"

Dexter who was last year awarded Entrepreneur of the Year along with his company Mula Cake being awarded Business of the Year at the Croydon Business award, said: "Being self

employed and a company owner at this time is very difficult as I feel we are going to be looked after last if at all. After doing a little

research on the loans and grants they are offering to us small businesses they are not only long winded but in my opinion only fit for big business that stay in profit.

"Most small businesses profits vary from month to month especially January to March where by our income is much slower than the rest of the year. I don't think it's fair to base it off the last three months or even off profits in general as most small businesses just make enough to keep them going awaiting better days of growth.

"This is a very challenging time and being a community leader as well as a business owner has also had a slight effect on myself as I am unable to offer as much support or my services as usual so the community is also suffering.

"All we can do is have faith that this will change for the better sooner rather than later."

APPLY TO TURN YOUR STREET IN TO A CAR FREE ZONE

Residents living on quiet residential roads can apply for their street to temporarily close for an hour or two a day to create a safe space to exercise.

The initiative is part of a series of new temporary schemes introduced by Croydon Council which aim to reduce rat running in residential roads, improve road safety and better facilitate social distancing making it safer for those walking and cycling.

Notices have gone up on selected roads, warning motorists and residents of the temporary 21 day road closures.

Road markings will be used to create a turning circle at the bottom of affected roads, enabling access to be maintained for residents and for any essential journeys.

The first closures were introduced on Sunday (May3) in: Holmesdale Road at the junction with Park Road (stadium side); Dalmally Road at the junction with Blackhorse Lane; Elmers Road at the

junction with Blackhorse Lane; Lancaster Road at the junction with Southern Avenue; and Woodvale Avenue at the junction with Avenue Road.

A second scheme to be trialled from Monday (May 4), will see residents nominate their road to be considered for the Exercise Street pilot. Email council's highways team highwayimprovements@crocydon.gov.uk.

If approved, volunteer residents would become responsible for closing their section of road for a couple of hours a day to give neighbours a chance to exercise safely during lockdown.

To further aid social distancing during lockdown, parking is set to be suspended outside some shops with barriers installed to increase space for queuing shoppers and pedestrians.

The first barriers are being installed outside Tesco Express on Portland Road, South Norwood, and between numbers



temporary cycle lane to improve road safety and encourage essential journeys to be made by bicycle.

Cllr Stuart King, cabinet lead for environment and transport, said: "At this challenging time, residents must continue to follow social distancing guidelines and temporarily widening footpaths will make it easier for pedestrians and shoppers to safely share the space."

61 and 87 and 243 and 257 on London Road. The final pilot initiative will see a 20mph speed limit introduced on London Road and a new

SUPPORTING THE ARTS

Croydon Council is backing its creative community with a fund to help cultural organisations impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The £135,000 Cultural Relief Fund will provide emergency funding for closure threatened organisations and for creative activity during the crisis. The worst hit in Croydon are smaller charities or not-for-profit organisations, ineligible for large-scale Government support who deliver important outreach work. The borough's creative community has responded swiftly to the pandemic, providing a host of: free online activity from concerts to group dancing, choirs, colouring competitions and more. Grants will be available to groups who are based or work in the borough, with most bids expected to be around £2-5,000. Email: culturegrants@crocydon.gov.uk to discuss their application.

COVID-19 HELPLINE

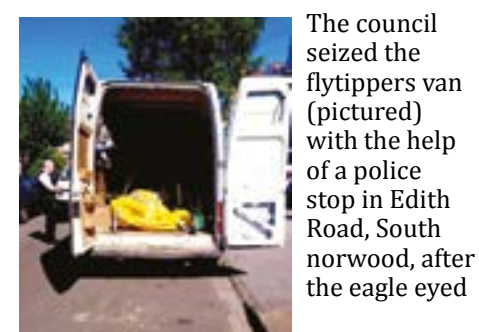
A helpline to support those impacted by the coronavirus pandemic has been launched by Croydon Covid-19 Mutual Aid (CCMA).

The telephone helpline gives residents without internet access a vital tool to reach out for help from residents in their immediate community

Since March the CCMA network has grown massively with over 70 local Mutual Aid whatsapp groups, including one in Thornton Heath, formed to support residents with over 3,500 people joining the borough wide Croydon Covid-19 Facebook group. Volunteers have helped with shopping or picking up urgent medical supplies Since forming in March CCMA have worked closely with Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA) and Croydon Council. The line is open from 8am until 8pm daily: 020 3322 8379 -

FLYTIPPERS USE LOCKDOWN AS AN EXCUSE TO DUMP EVEN MORE WASTE ON STREETS

A flytipper has been caught red handed after a council officer made it his personal mission to track the lawbreaker down after he unloaded builders waste at a notorious dumping blackspot next to Grangewood Park.



Neighbourhood Safety Officer located the vehicle which was involved in an alleged fly tip in Grange Road. The park

perimeter is seen as an easy dumping ground for builders waste (pictured bottom right) last week.

With the country in lockdown and many local authority tips forced to close, fly tipping has spiked. In Croydon, which also suspended its free bulky waste collection, residents have praised the efficiency of Veolia, the council's rubbish collection contractor, but as quickly as staff remove fly tips more appear.

Frant Road and Meadowview has also seen a huge surge in fly tipping with 23 large plastic bags dumped along both roads. Many of the bags contained decaying food and used diapers. The amount dumped is increasing with fresh littering daily including three shopping trolleys.

Last year, more fly tips were reported in Thornton Heath than anywhere else in

Croydon with 2,997 reports which equates to more than 11 per cent of all 25,940 fly tips reported to Croydon, according to a Freedom of Information request.

Croydon didn't have figures for the exact number of fly-tips, which means people may have reported the same fly-tip multiple times.

In January Croydon's cabinet passed a motion calling on the government to run a national media campaign against fly tipping that spells out the environmental impact and the waste of public money clearing up after flytippers.



CPFC STAKES CLAIM TO BEING THE OLDEST LEAGUE CLUB

Crystal Palace is staking a claim to be recognised as the oldest league club in existence still playing professional football.

New research has found a direct connection to the team established in 1861, who were founder members of the Football Association.

Historian Peter Manning research was triggered by the discovery of a Crystal Palace tankard presented in the 1873-4 season, which is believed to be the oldest association football club trophy in existence.

He also uncovered how CPFC started out as a cricket club and that legendary cricketer, W.G. Grace was the sporting director of the company that established today's CPFC.

The well-founded claims have raised a lively and interesting debate but are unlikely to see Notts County, formed in 1862, dethroned as officially the oldest professional football club.



The FA, who were sent an early copy of Palace's findings are not expected to recognise 1861 as Palace's official founding year as the sticking point for the governing body is that, while there may be a link between the amateur side and the professionals, the former were not paid as footballers and did not compete in any official league, only playing friendlies and in the FA Cup.

Palace are already planning to mark the 160th anniversary of their formation in 2021, instead of their 116th, having discovered the true origin of the club.

Discussions over how best to celebrate the findings and the anniversary have already

begun, and could include a new badge from the 2021-22 season. The current club crest includes the date 1905 and could be updated on future kit to recognise the findings, though with next season's kit all but finalised, any change would likely have to wait until the season after.

In 1871, Crystal Palace's captain Douglas Allport was closely involved in the inauguration of the FA Cup, proposing an FA sub-committee that drafted the rules for the cup competition; he was also one of three FA members who selected and bought the first trophy. Crystal Palace played in the first ever round of the FA Cup reaching the semi-finals in 1872.

Steve Parish, club chairman said: "As a lifelong supporter of Crystal Palace, it's amazing that we have a legitimate claim to be the oldest professional league club still in existence, that we were in the very first FA meetings, and that our history dates all the way back to the Victorian cricketers of 1861 at the Palace even involving the great W.G. Grace."

PALACE OWNER BACKS RETURN OF FOOTBALL TO BOOST NATIONS MENTAL HEALTH

Crystal Palace chairman Steve Parish has argued the return of Premier League football could boost the mental health of the nation and help define the 'new normal' for other industries.

The multi-millionaire businessman defended attempts to get the season back up and running amid the pandemic, stressing not doing so would be a major financial blow to taxpayers and the wider football community.

He explained in his column in The Sunday Times how he feared legal challenges if matches were voided and how he wanted current leaders Liverpool to be crowned champions.

Eagles owner Parish is the latest figure in football to have their say on Project Restart as bosses plan the return of top-flight football amid the coronavirus pandemic with the Premier League still understood to be working towards a best-case scenario of play being able to resume from the week beginning June 8.

"Isn't it all just about the money? Well, not entirely," Parish wrote for the article which has been published in full on



Crystal Palace's official website.

"I want to complete the competition for reasons of sporting integrity. I want to crown Liverpool champions and give every other club a fair crack at the best league position they can achieve

"I certainly don't want to have difficult conversations about curtailing, voiding and points per game. The ramifications of each are complex and could involve legal challenges that run on for months, if not years.

He said he would respect if the nation decided that it was inappropriate for football to return, but he argued that it would help no-one if football or any industry 'come out the other side in a worse state than we otherwise could have'.

Parish said: 'Football cannot occupy any paramedic or ambulance that the NHS

needs. We must do our best not to create a public-order issue with supporters attempting to get close to grounds. Perhaps most importantly, we cannot take testing capacity from one person in greater need.'

But he added: 'I believe that just as Formula One is often the precursor to developments that become standard in general road vehicles, so Premier League football with its physical science, medical infrastructures and resources for looking after its people, can begin to define how the 'new normal' might look for a lot of working environments.

'Not only that, in our country and beyond, people need to find ways to move forward mentally, to experience some small relief from the worries of this crisis.

Parish claimed that player welfare and safety proposals would 'render Premier League football one of the safest places in society to co-exist, much safer than a journey to the supermarket at present'.

And he added that nobody would benefit if Premier League clubs faced major financial shortfalls by not completing the season.

GUAITA MEET FLANIMAL

Palace keeper Vincente Guaita, has made two young Palace fans very happy inviting them to Selhurst Park to meet him after they created a character in his honour.

The Bassett brothers Harvey and Jasper, posted a drawing of their creation Flanimal called Guaita who is seven-year-old and has a red and blue tummy and wears a CPFC badge.



The fictional character lives at Selhurst Park and is friends with the Palace goalkeeper because they both have the same name and they share snacks left over after football matches including hot dogs and delicious pies!



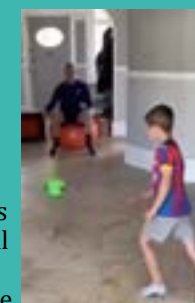
Guaita on Twitter said: "Harvey and Jasper, thank you very much for your new creation, a 'Flanimal', and also its history. I loved it. I would like to meet you both

in our house, Selhurst Park. I hope you say yes. I love you guys. You have made me very happy."

The delighted brothers responded: "Thank you for your message. We would love to meet you too, we are so excited! Love from Jasper and Harvey."

Flanimals are a book series written by comedian Ricky Gervais.

The Spanish goalkeeper has over 10,000 Twitter followers and has been keeping his fans entertained with footage of him being put through his paces by his new goal keeping coach - his son Paco - who can be



seen firing shots at him. Guaita jokes 'he won't let me rest for a second', as the star is seen doing strength training including squats with Paco on his back!

FOOTBALL CLUB CHEFS SERVE UP HEALTHY MEALS FOR FRONTLINE NHS STAFF AND FAMILIES IN NEED

Chefs from Crystal Palace Football Club are creating healthy meals for frontline NHS staff, families and vulnerable people in south London.

The programme is being funded by the club and individual shareholders, who are covering all the costs of purchasing fresh ingredients, preparing nutritious meals and safely packing and labelling them ready for collection and distribution.

In a unique partnership with food surplus redistribution charity, City Harvest London, and the Palace for Life Foundation, club chefs are preparing and packaging up to 900 nutritious and nourishing meals a week in the kitchens at Selhurst Park.

Following the strictest hygiene and social distancing measures the meals are collected each day and distributed by City Harvest vans.

The food packages are being delivered to four key groups:

- * Frontline workers. NHS doctors, nurses and other staff are working relentlessly to save lives in this pandemic to eat whilst on breaks or when home after long shifts

- * Elderly and vulnerable people forced to stay at home. Meals will be delivered to new and existing emergency aid organisations in the area to distribute accordingly

- * Families facing food poverty. Meals are distributed to various local charities who will put food on the tables of hard-pressed families who need it most

- * Homeless people. Many rough sleepers have been put in hotels and hostels around London, with no cooking or food storage facilities. City Harvest will distribute the club's meals to partners running temporary hostels to ensure



guests have regular meals.

Mike Summers, chief executive of the Palace for Life Foundation, said: "We are delighted that the club has asked us to help deliver this initiative along with City

Harvest to provide meals to heroic NHS staff working on the frontline and to the most vulnerable members of our communities. It is in keeping with the club's mission to be a force for good in South London."

City Harvest is covering distribution costs with the service continuing for as



long as possible during the COVID-19 said its CEO, Laura Winningham who added: "It's wonderful to see people coming together to help their communities. We couldn't be happier to work with Crystal Palace FC and the Palace for Life Foundation to ensure more meals are made available to those in such great need. We have a wide outreach in South London, this partnership makes a huge impact."