

## **Parwich Helpers**

By the middle of March last year, it was very quickly becoming apparent that the Covid-19 virus was sweeping across the country at an alarming rate. The elderly and vulnerable were being told to shield, supermarket shelves were emptying as quickly as they were being filled and rumours were abound that the UK would soon be going into some kind of lock-down.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of March, Lucy Burlinson put out an appeal on Facebook Messenger to many of her friends, asking if they would be happy to be part of a group of volunteers to help those in need of assistance. The answer was a resounding 'YES' and so **Parwich Helpers** was formed.

A Facebook page was created, and leaflets were printed and posted through the letterboxes of all villagers and people in the outlying communities. Whilst we were required to register as a group with the local authority, we were never an official organisation – just a bunch of friends wanting to do their best for friends and neighbours.

As restrictions were eventually announced on 23<sup>rd</sup> March and the 'Stay at Home' order was put in place, the group became an essential service to a large number of people. Messages flew backwards and forwards on who was making essential journeys, in order to coordinate shopping trips and medication collections. The takeaway service at the Sycamore became a small chink of light relief to the daily constriction of social isolation.

Some 16 months later, these memories may have faded somewhat as we have all learned to adapt, but Parwich Helpers is still there for anybody who still feels anxious or needs our help – for whatever reason. The group is still active on Facebook and telephone numbers are still pinned to the top of the Parwich.org blog page and on the village notice board.

One of the things that 2020 and 2021 has hopefully taught us is kindness.