

April 2020, a Month in Lockdown.

But not for the Rotary Clubs of Bognor Regis and Bognor Hotham. Those in Rotary are there to help the people of Bognor Regis, so that is what we have been doing. We are unable to meet, but we do have savings, which we now need to put to good use. Our research through Schools and other Organisations suggested that we concentrate our efforts on helping with Food Poverty and the huge increase in Domestic Abuse around Bognor Regis. Lockdown has increased those families suffering from Domestic Abuse in the Chichester & Bognor Regis areas and help was needed for many adults (84) and children (154) during April. Domestic Abuse in Bognor Regis is increasing more and more, so we, the Rotary Clubs of Bognor Regis stepped in with a donation of £4,000 to help those individuals and families where Social Services said there is a dire need.

Since the beginning of Lockdown Food Poverty in Bognor Regis and the surrounding area has increased. Arun Early Help Children's Services have been providing support for families, providing food parcels to those who really need it. 60% of those who needed immediate help live in Bognor Regis, so out came our cheque books again and we immediately sent them £2,400 in Tesco Vouchers – we have had great feedback from parents and children. Feedback such as, 'Mum said her food parcels were magical' and another, 'Mum said her food had a huge impact and had been lovely for the children to have good meals', and so on, more praise than we could ever achieve working alone without Children's services. And guess what, we have at the beginning of May agreed to send Children's Services another £2,000 in Tesco vouchers. Hard-working Rotary Clubs helping others in Bognor Regis, that is what we do and do well.

Children of key workers still attending school have also been helped. Following our research into Food Poverty, help was needed at Primary Schools looking after the children of essential workers. Research showed that some of the children living in poverty did not qualify for or claim their Free School Meal entitlement and in some cases, teachers were paying for the children's food. We could not allow this to happen to the most vulnerable in our society and those looking after them, so we acted.

Once again Rotary in Bognor Regis reached into their savings and sent our Bognor Regis Primary Schools £4,600 to cover their additional food costs in April. The thanks we have received from Headteachers has been extraordinary, one writing back to say 'we spent £464 today, we have a mini food bank now and a couple of children are very proud of their work setting-up, they chose this facility and are now in charge – we will do food parcels tomorrow. A Year 6 enterprise project with Year 5 assistance – Fabulous' Thank you Rotary.

The work put in by Rotary in Bognor Regis has not finished, we mean to carry on supporting the vulnerable in Bognor Regis, but we are running out of money and this is where you can help, we need donations to continue what we started, and we need them now. We need to help more vulnerable children in Bognor Regis.

To find out how you can help, or send a donation contact us through our web site.