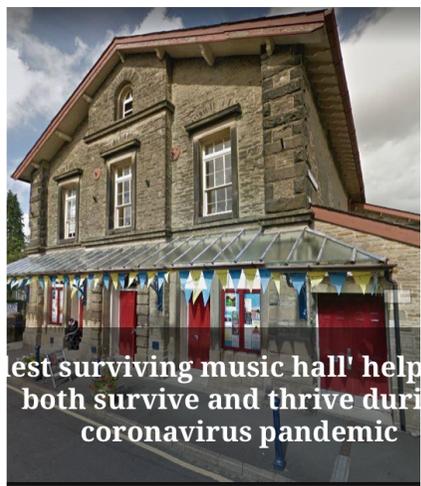


Settle Community Response Project Report

March-June 2020



oldest surviving music hall' help both survive and thrive during coronavirus pandemic

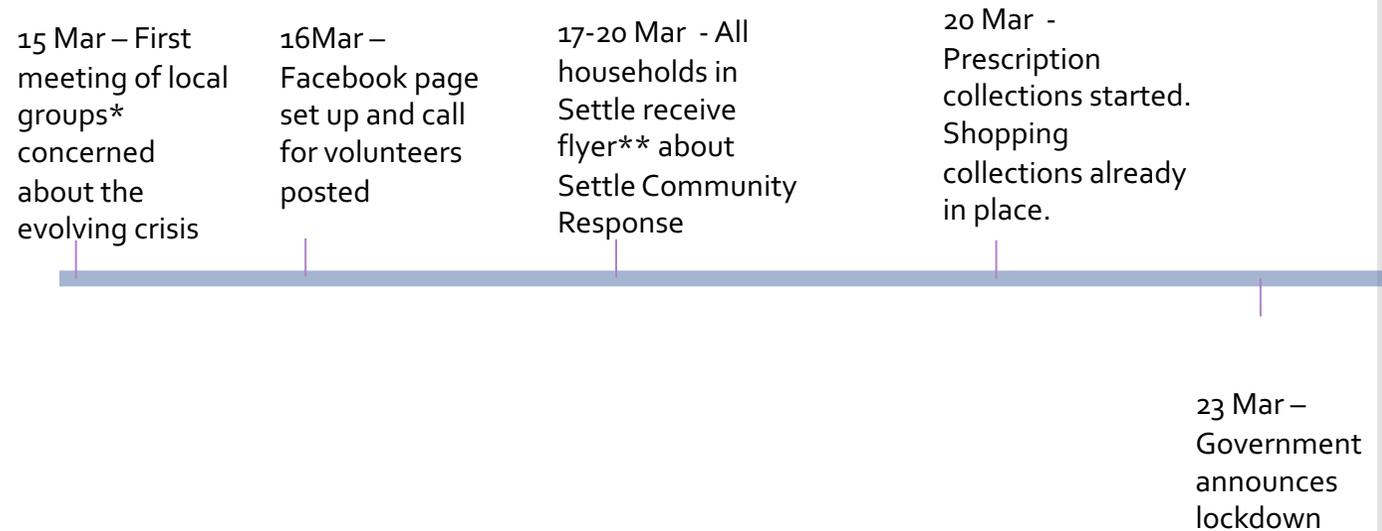


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Big picture

Settle Community Response was launched in response to rising local concerns about the Covid-19 Pandemic. Settle Victoria Hall had to suspend normal activities at short notice, for an indefinite period. The opportunity of having its substantial assets, including substantial premises with a strong, willing and flexible volunteer base, and the need for community action resulted in a fast mobilization of the Settle Community Response project



* Settle Victoria Hall, Settle Town Council, Settle Community Hub, AgeUK Settle, Settle Timebank, Quaker Meeting House, Settle.

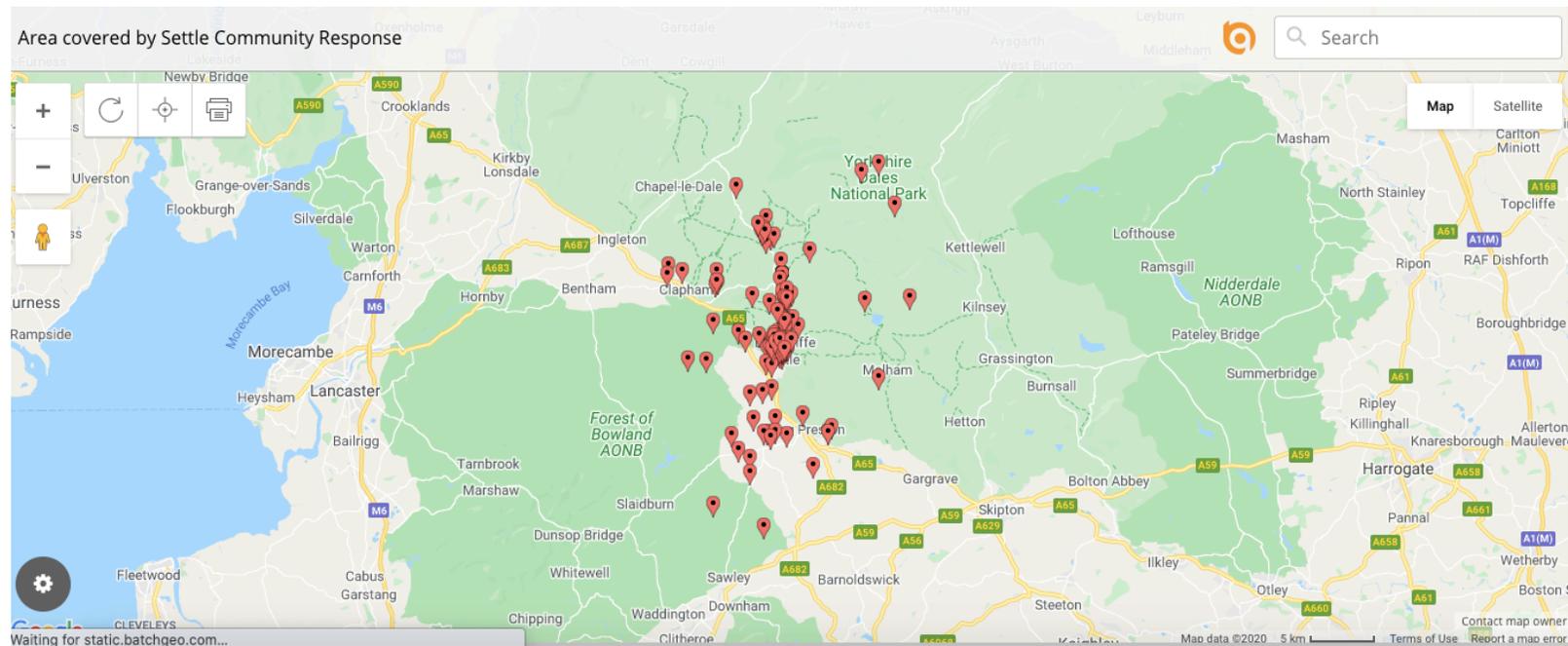
** An A4 flyer was printed immediately by Lamberts Print Ltd and paid for by Settle Town Council

Settle Victoria Hall

- Settle Victoria Hall was opened on 11 October 1853, and has been open and at the heart of Settle's social and cultural life ever since. At 165 years old, it predates the Settle-Carlisle railway by thirteen years, Wiltons' Music Hall in London by five years, and is the oldest surviving Music Hall in the world.
- Settle Victoria Hall Ltd. was set up as a charity in 1999 run by the trustees and management team. Volunteers are the heart of Victoria Hall, taking on everything, from painting and decorating, to stewarding at events, to manning the bar and box office.
- The building is owned by Craven District Council, but Victoria Hall receives no regular funding.
- Settle Victoria Hall serves Settle, the surrounding area, and farther afield, both as a community space and by bringing arts and culture to an isolated rural community. During the day, there are a range of classes and community groups, alongside auctions, bazaars, and public and private events. In the evening, this beautiful little music-hall is transformed into a venue for top-quality music, drama, comedy, spoken word, film, and festivals.
- In March 2020, Settle Victoria Hall faced closure and the loss of its main income stream for an indefinite period, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Catchment area

- Settle Community Response has supported people living across an area of over 300 square miles.
- This is a predominantly rural area, with hills, and narrow roads. Time to drive, for example, from Settle to Selside (the northernmost point) is around an hour.
- The largest supermarket, with car parking, is Boots in Settle. There are also two smaller Co-op outlets, a range of independent shops and a weekly market on a Tuesday. The nearest of the 'big 5' supermarkets is in Skipton.
- The GP surgery provides dispensing services to patients living more than 1 mile away. Those living in Settle are served by Boots pharmacy in the market square.



Description of the Settle Community Response Service

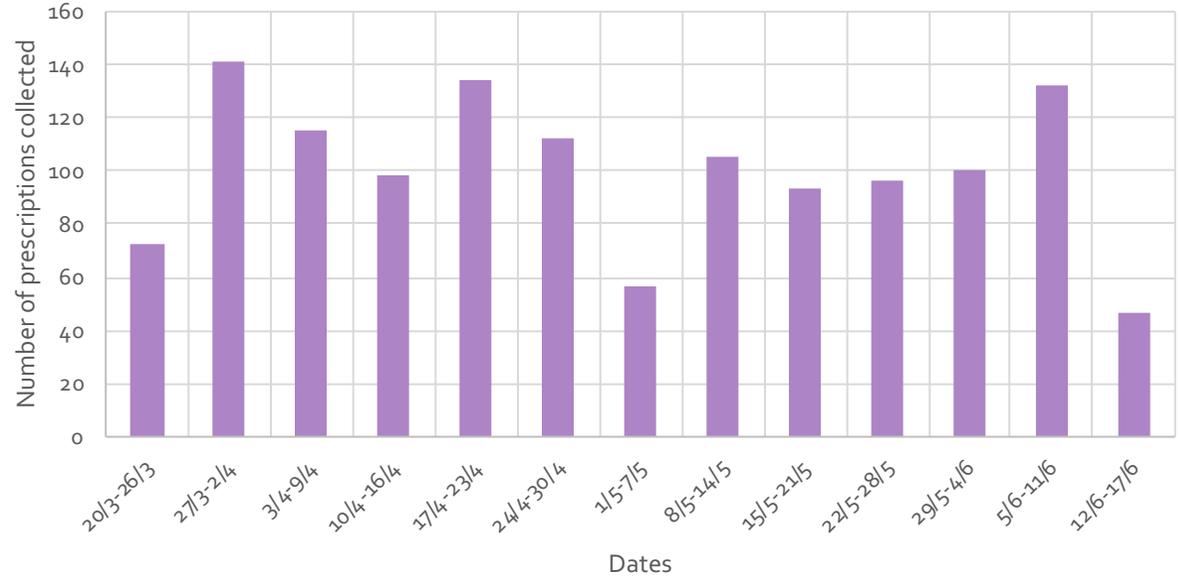
- The initial premise was to provide whatever support was needed for socially isolating or shielded people (and households) for the duration of the lockdown period. This could include anything that volunteers could readily provide.
- However, a small number of key services quickly emerged.
 - Collection and delivery of prescription medication
 - Collection and delivery of shopping
 - Provision of information, both local and national, through as many accessible channels as possible (social media, email newsletters, word of mouth, via telephone enquiry line). Online and offline communications were shared with vets (to reach more remote farms, who were right in the middle of the critical lambing period), church groups and other partners.
- The philosophy was to mobilize fast, assemble working groups who devised their own operational plans, respond to problems and refine. An efficient office was quickly established to support, monitor and respond.
- Settle Community Response acted as a hub for the wider area, linking with a number of village support groups (Langcliffe, Hellifield, Malham) to cascade information and food donations.

Prescriptions

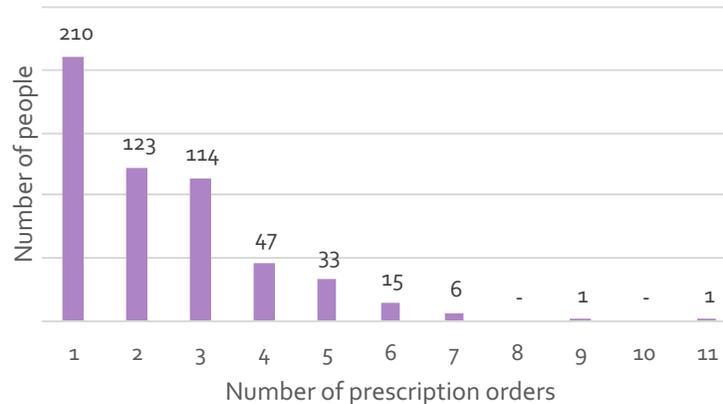
- The most in demand service offered by Settle Community Response
- Medicines were collected from either the GP surgery or Boots pharmacy and delivered to the home of the client
- The client supplied name, address, postcode and was required to confirm that the prescription or medicines were ready for collection.
- Prescription orders were taken each day and the batch passed to the pharmacy. A collection was then made of the previous day's order and delivered to clients during the afternoon.
- Separate visits were made to the GP surgery to collect medicines for patients living more than 1 mile away, eligible for the surgery's rural dispensary service.
- Discrepancies were common and would be followed up the next day, keeping the client informed. On some occasions, emergency prescriptions for residents of Settle needed to be collected from the surgery, for transfer to the pharmacy.
- Differing systems and cultures at the commercial pharmacy and the NHS surgery initially caused a 'clunky' system. The service needed to be adapted and refined, with respectful discussion between all concerned, to quickly achieve a successful working process.

- 1303 separate prescription deliveries were made on 79 different days between 20th March and 16th June 2020
- There were up to 42 prescription deliveries per day, with the average daily number being 16.5.
- There were between 47 and 141 prescription deliveries per week, with the average daily number being 100.2
- A total of 550 people used the prescriptions service, on average each using it 2.3 times

Number of prescriptions collected per week



Number of uses per person



Shopping

Booths – the largest supermarket in Settle, with car parking

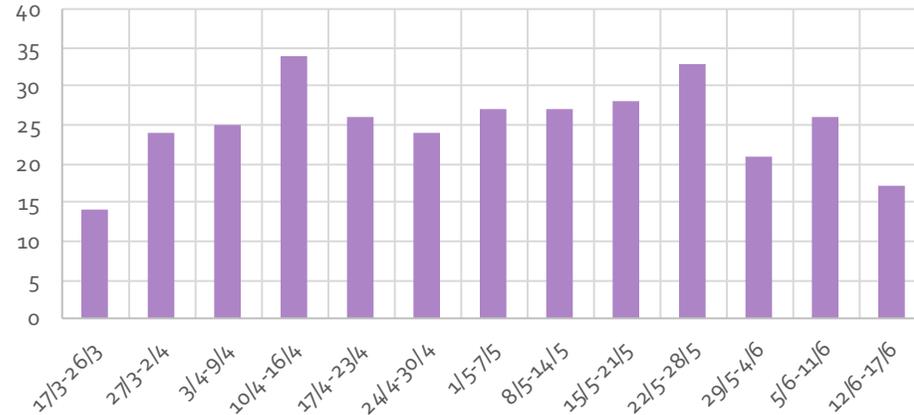
Wholesome Bee – a health food and holistic remedies shop, particularly important to those with specific dietary needs

- The second most popular service was shopping.
- At start of the lockdown, it was very difficult to get online deliveries and vulnerable people needed a fast solution.
- Initially this was for emergency purchases from Booths supermarket, just to enable people to get by. After the first week or two, many local shops began to provide a direct delivery service and Settle Community Response was able to pass on details of the service, with contact phone numbers. An updated list was shared each week and enquiries answered. Many people were able to use local independent businesses for most of their shopping needs, as a result.
- Within a couple of weeks, a more streamlined shopping service was established in which clients could phone through a detailed order. A sub-group of 'shopper volunteers' was formed who went to Booths each day. If possible, Booths would take payment by phone directly from the client at the checkout.
- There was a separate service with Wholesome Bee, in which clients would call the shop directly and pay in advance. The shopper volunteers also collected this shopping and delivered it to clients.
- A small charge of £2.50 was made for shopping deliveries.

- **BOOTHS**

- 326 separate shopping orders were fulfilled on 71 different days between 17th March and 16th June 2020
- There were up to 10 shopping deliveries per day, with the average daily number being 4.6.
- A total of 84 people used service, on average each using it 3.9 times

Booths shopping orders per week



- **WHOLESOME BEE**

- In addition there were 36 shopping deliveries from Wholesome Bee to clients. 20 people used the service.

Uses of Booths shopping service per person



Other services

Information

Food bank

Dog walking

Lifts to medical appointments

Miscellaneous

- Settle Community Response offered a telephone and email helpline that was staffed between 9 am and 4 pm, every weekday and some weekends and public holidays (Easter and two May holidays occurred during the period).
- Clients could call about anything and where possible they would be matched with a volunteer or one of the standard services.
- Many simply wanted reassurance and an explanation of the government rules, particularly during the first month.
- Information about local services was much used, particularly details of which shops and businesses were still open. Many local retailers rose to the occasion and modified how they worked, with different opening hours and the introduction of deliveries. Settle Community Response increased usage of local businesses significantly.
- Other requirements were many and varied. Usually the client would simply be put in touch with a volunteer from the database and they could make arrangements directly.

Other services - continued

Information

Food bank

Dog walking

Lifts to medical appointments

Miscellaneous

- An important feature was providing support at the request of relatives of vulnerable people in Settle, who themselves lived at a distance and could not travel during lockdown.
- With the disruption to normal food distribution, many retailers and restaurants found themselves with excess food from time to time. Settle Community Response distributed anything close to its sell by date to clients and the general public. Donations were welcomed, but not required.
- Food donations were used to provide 'pop-up foodbanks' in Langcliffe and Hellifield, with volunteers from these small villages collecting from Settle when alerted.
- Settle Community Response also distributed emergency food parcels when other systems broke down. This was normally through referrals from Age UK or Skipton Food Bank. A total of 23 food packages were distributed, to 13 different clients.
- Other requests included transport to medical appointments, delivering samples for medical tests to the surgery, taking parcels to the post office, making regular phone calls to keep in touch.

The focal point for local support

- During the lockdown period, Settle Community Response quickly emerged as the main point of contact for individuals, statutory and non-statutory health and social care providers, businesses and charities.
- An example is the hosting of the Team Shield project, a group who quickly came together to produce safety visors. The upstairs meeting room of Settle Victoria Hall was used for assembling 3D-printed masks from individuals and organisations all over Craven. These were collected from the Hall for delivery to care homes, ambulance stations, health centres, and other. A total of over 7000 visors were produced and distributed.
- The establishment of this focal point meant that many in the community could contribute in different ways. Supporting everyone's mental health was recognised as a critical need. Cakes, puddings, garden flowers, books, jigsaws, activity packs from Settle Stories, and drawings and letters from local children were sent out along with prescriptions and shopping deliveries, to keep people's spirits up..

Stories

Henry was one of the 'young volunteers group' who did shopping and deliveries (Oscar, Leonie, Joe, Henry and Sam). They were often the main 'face' of Settle Community Response for clients. Henry has finished school this summer and will be joining the army for a year, before going to study economics at the University of Bristol. The nicest thing for him was being part of the project, having somewhere to go and be useful each day. The clients were always incredibly grateful and often wanted to talk, asking questions and taking an interest in his plans. Often they offered a 'tip', which went into the donations pot.

Ann and Josie, the two permanent staff at Settle Victoria Hall, volunteered from the start, along with three of the trustees Jane, Jean and Laurie. They brought not only their massive enthusiasm, but also enabled seamless access to Settle Victoria Hall systems and facilities, including temporary bankrolling of Settle Community Response at the start.

Karen is the lynchpin of the prescriptions delivery operation – or the 'chief drug runner'. Normally she runs a taxi service, which could not trade during lockdown. This meant she had a vehicle for commercial use, knew all the local routes and has all the necessary DBS clearance. Her job at Settle Community Response involved picking up the prescriptions from either the GP surgery or the pharmacist, planning a detailed route and then going out with a helper to deliver each one. She normally started at 11.00 and deliveries finished by 5.30–6 pm. They would also ask if anything else was needed, or would take free goodies that had been donated (cakes, chocolate). Her main helper, Paul, often went back later with a takeaway dinner. For her, taking part meant she could do something useful for the community while her business was on hold.

Karen and Paul spent a lot of time driving around with the medicines delivery, going out as far as Selside, Malham, Airton, Eldroth, Kettlesbeck, Bolton-by-Bowland, Tosside. During lambing, right at the start of the lockdown period, the farming community were particularly keen to avoid any risks and were grateful for the service. On many occasions they provided other support when there were very few people out and about – putting lambs back into fields, reporting a run over dog, even putting out a fire in a rubbish bin on Kirkgate.

Kerry is the office and data aficionado. An experienced product manager, with skills in IT, requirements gathering, systems thinking and 'customer first' operations, she was made redundant in March. She turned up to help at Victoria Hall and was given the task of project manager - devising all the processes and systems, setting up forms and spreadsheets to monitor services, supporting and liaising with the volunteers. For her, this 'baptism by fire' has led to an interest in social enterprise work. For everyone else, Kerry is the first port of call when they have questions or problems to solve.

And more stories

Leonie is the youngest volunteer. She had her 18th birthday during the lockdown and celebrated with cake at Victoria Hall. She has a place to study chemistry at the University of Liverpool, but has decided to defer and take a year off. She has enjoyed being part of the group, although finding things in Booths was a steep learning curve. They would message each other with questions like “what is chicory?”. It has been a pleasure for her to meet and spend time talking to the older people of Settle.

Oscar finished his Engineering degree a year ago and was due to start a new graduate job in September, but now it has been postponed to next April. He was involved in the shopping team from the start and has helped to modify and develop it. At first they would just do bits, but then developed a process with Booths. The staff at Booths have been extremely helpful and supportive. He has learned how to solve organizational problems and also is better at dealing with people on the phone. Sometimes at the start, people were suspicious of them when they turned up and he would have to calm them down. They now have official badges.

Lynn works part time as an architect and got involved right from the start. Her first job was to deliver leaflets and after that she worked on the phone line. Some of the clients had not been out for weeks and she would speak to them regularly. When they gave her their shopping list, she sometimes would make suggestions - “you had this last week, do you need it again?”. Everyone was very grateful – it was the personal contact as much as the physical service that they appreciated.

Joe is another of the young volunteers. When his college closed and he was furloughed from Settle Pool, where he works as a part-time lifeguard, he volunteered with Settle Community Response. He wanted to do something useful and rewarding with his huge amount of spare time. His first job was to help with delivery of prescriptions and do shopping for people who were shielding. It gave him a great sense of satisfaction, especially when supporting people who lived on their own and might not see anyone else.

Many of the clients gave pleasure to the volunteers in different ways. Frank would sing down the phone, Christine used to bake cakes for the volunteers to share. Trevor always spent time having a chat and asking about their lives, not just his own issues.

Dr Zulu Charles Okoligwe is a trainee GP at Settle Surgery and visited the team during May. He had been working with ‘shielding’ patients and reported the beneficial effects that Settle Community Response has had on their health. It was important that the complex issues associated with data privacy and safeguarding were so successfully addressed, through efficient systems.

Clients

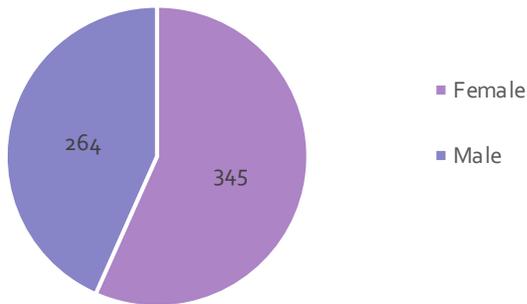
Who they were and how they benefited

- A total of 609 individuals benefited from Settle Community Response Service
- This is out of a total population for Settle and Ribblebanks Ward of 3581 (Office of National Statistics (ONS), 2011 Census). Hence the Settle Community Response project served 15-20% of the population.
- The 2011 Census reports that 1303 people were over 65 (ONS), or 37% of the population. Although accurate figures are not available, the majority of Settle Community Response clients were in this age group.
- Most clients were self-isolating or shielding. A small number were key workers who were too busy to get to shops or pharmacy.

- Of the 609 clients, 345 were female (57%) and 264 were male (43%).
- A survey was conducted, to which a total of 34 responses were received. Of these respondents, 29 were over 70 years old.

- Many clients used more than one service, as shown in the diagram below.

Gender split of clients



Survey comments

Clients were asked to complete paper forms and return them to volunteers who delivered shopping or prescriptions to them. In total, 34 people responded

What were the main benefits of the service to you?

Having someone who would help with anything - even though I live 5 miles out of town

We have been able to shield properly

Both frontline emergency services workers, so worked long days and found it hard to collect prescriptions

Avoiding risk of contact

Feeling of being safe at home

It was a godsend

This crisis has shown us that some people can be very selfish, but your group show the best that we can offer each other

Kept me fed and watered!

Service well run and making contact has been easy

Cannot stand easily for long, so avoiding queuing helped greatly

Peace of mind - not having to go in queues

Team always cheerful and ready for a chat (at a distance!) when they visited

The care and kindness meant a great deal

Volunteers

Mobilising from a strong base

A diverse group

Taking part

- At the start of the project, Settle Victoria Hall already had a strong base of over 100 volunteers, as well as excellent links within the community. Therefore recruitment of a volunteer team was relatively straightforward.
- People were invited to 'sign up' as volunteers through communications on Facebook, through word of mouth and the leaflet delivered to all homes in Settle.
- Within a few days, a large volunteer group of nearly 200 people had been assembled. Details were taken of their availability and preferred types of work. Not all volunteers were able to take part, but many also provided informal support to neighbours, outside of Settle Community Response.
- Tasks undertaken by volunteers included:
 - Answering calls from clients, completing paperwork and passing requests for shopping and prescription deliveries
 - A dedicated shopping group of 5 Volunteers did the shopping. One volunteer undertook prescription deliveries, with support from 2-3 others.
 - Miscellaneous tasks assigned to individuals included things like taking clients to medical appointments, making regular contact calls and dog walking.
- In June, an online survey was carried out to ask volunteers to comment on their own experience. 47 responded. Many reported on the benefits to themselves.

- 199 volunteers were recruited to Settle Community Response. These included 7 regular Victoria Hall volunteers, 3 staff and 4 trustees.
- 37 active volunteers undertook work for the project.
- The majority in each category were female. Ages ranged from 17 to over 70.
- The lockdown meant that the volunteer group was younger and more diverse than the core group of Settle Victoria Hall volunteers.

| | Male | Female | Total |
|-----------------------|------|--------|-------|
| Active volunteer team | 12 | 25 | 37 |
| Total volunteer team | 58 | 140 | 199 |

- Volunteers were in many different personal situations:
 - Retired
 - In paid work full or part time
 - Self-employed
 - Furloughed
 - Students
 - Running a business that could not trade during lockdown
 - Temporarily between jobs due to lockdown
- Many also volunteered outside of Settle Community Response (not included in the data collected)
 - Regular checks and support to neighbours
 - Police volunteer
 - Samaritans volunteer
 - Assisting a team who made face shields and PPE
 - Walking dogs, collecting shopping, posting letters for shielding or self-isolating neighbours

What were the main benefits of the service to clients – and to you?

An excellent sense of community. We are fortunate to live in such a kind and willing place.

Looked after elder key neighbours who otherwise had no one else.

You can tell how grateful people who call are for the help and the friendly voice to chat to briefly during isolation. Us "being there" from so early on while everyone else was trying to sort themselves out was really appreciated.

It kept me busy, gave me company and a sense of achievement

Met lots of new peoples, had a laff, and am enjoying the role... 😊

Great to be a member of an upbeat, can do group of people!

I now know where everything is in Booths!

Giving to others is therapy for ourselves.

Kept her shielded

Hopefully whilst answering the phone lines I helped to solve people's immediate problems when allocating further action. Also gave them someone to chat to, reassure them they are not alone and maybe brighten their day and lessen their fears.

Great to be part of this team. As a relative new comer it has helped me personally to get to know people within the community, and to understand the area a little better - but also, and this probably sounds a bit self serving, it has given me the chance to be (a little bit!) the kind of person I would like to be; a bit useful and a bit kinder.

Survey comments

Volunteers were asked to reflect on the effects of their participation

Final thoughts

A subjective view

- This review has not been a rigorous study and so it must be noted that comments below are not formally evidenced – they are the views and opinions of the reviewer!
- Settle Community Response was welcomed because it mobilised so quickly and efficiently.
- It built on an existing affection for Victoria Hall and trust in the management, as well as the strong community feeling that exists already in Settle.
- The involvement of a group of younger people, who would normally be working or studying full time, changed the 'flavour' of the service in a very positive way.
- Settle has a greater than average proportion of elderly and vulnerable people, many of whom found their normal family support unable to visit.
- However, relatively few of this group live in poverty or faced serious hardship. There is strong support for continuation of such a service, particularly the medicines delivery, which was hailed as a beacon of efficiency compared to commercial alternatives.
- Many clients would be willing and able to pay (and many gave donations).

The future

- Since the end of the lockdown period, Settle Victoria Hall has already reinvented itself with the launch of two new pop-up ventures: Miss Victoria's Emporium and Refreshment Gardens.
- Settle Community Response continues at a lower level activity and will be sustained. The links established with statutory and non-statutory services will enable local provision to adapt as circumstances change.

Contributions

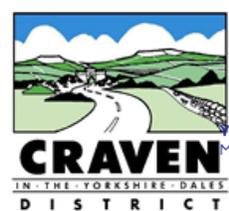
Settle Victoria Hall gratefully acknowledges support from many organisations for the Settle community Response project.

- Funding was received from
 - North Yorkshire County Council Covid-19 Support Grant Scheme,
 - Two Ridings Coronavirus Community Fund,
 - TRAMPS Ribblesdale
 - Craven District Council Coronavirus Grant Scheme
 - Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust Coronavirus Community Fund
 - Settle Rotary Club
 - Businesses provided food and other supplies:
 - Booths at Settle
 - Co-op at Settle,
 - Co-op at Ingleton
 - Arla Foods
 - Yorkshire Dales National Park,
 - The Settle Carlisle Railway Development Company
 - Settle Swimming Pool, The Fisherman,
 - The Frying Yorkshireman, Boxer and Hound
 - Forage and Feast, Settle Stories
 - Lay of The Land
 - Drake and Macefield
 - Ye Olde Naked Man Cafe
 - Limestone Books
 - The Compass Group
 - The Barber on The Yard
 - Settle DIY at Ashfield
 - Settle Italian Restaurant
 - The Golden Lion
 - WTG Ltd
 - Settle Coal Company Ltd
 - Settle Methodist Church
 - Morrison's at Skipton
 - Studfold Farm Tearooms
 - The Courtyard Restaurant
 - Quaker Meeting Rooms
 - Anley Hall
 - Neil Wrights Estate Agent
 - Age UK
 - Robert Staveley man and van
 - John Roberts Holdings (Paper mill)
 - Morrisons Inline Health and Beauty
- A large number of private individuals donated money, food and other essentials.



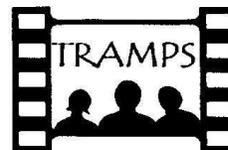
This report was independently compiled for Settle Victoria Hall by Alison Marshall, with assistance from Kerry Magson

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North
Yorkshire County Council

SETTLE
VICTORIA
HALL



The Ribblesdale Area
Moving Picture Show

