

Hello and welcome to the March newsletter.

This month's newsletter is coming to you from behind isolation lines in a secret location, somewhere in Tinkers Bridge, it has been sanitised, so don't worry!

Jokes aside, we are certainly going through strange and unusual times, battling an unseen enemy. The government is now asking for more of us to self isolate, closing schools to the majority and cancelling events. The impact of COVID-19/ Coronavirus is affecting us all, in one way or another but mostly the elderly and vulnerable, who will feel increased loneliness and isolation. A lot of people will be feeling the stress and strain, worrying about jobs and families, we can only hope for better times in the near future.

As a caring community, we ask you to reach out to your neighbour, if you are able to, maybe pop a note through their door with your number on and an offer of assistance. A quick chat or offer of help can really improve mental wellbeing and make your neighbour feel noticed and not so alone. Ensure you keep yourself safe and practice good hygiene, by washing your hands or using hand sanitiser if you're out and about. Change your clothes when you return home and again sanitise those hands!

Remember, stockpiling is greedy and unfair on those who are vulnerable, elderly or cannot afford to bulk buy as their budget is tight enough. The supermarkets and shops are doing their utmost to get stock on the shelves and ensure there is enough for everybody. The lovely people in our little shop are doing what they can and aren't to blame for the empty shelves. They are doing a great job under a lot of stress. Everyone is feeling the strain of these unrepresented times and we must pull together, not fight each other for toilet roll. We are all human, let's treat each other as such. Let's support one another and be kind. Thank you.

Please note the Community Fridge on Netherfield can no longer open, but they are doing some food parcels. Contact Councillor Maggie Ferguson on Facebook if you know of a need.

Scammers

Please be aware that there are many scams coming through trying to get at your personal details - and your bank account details. The NHS and the World Health Organisation (WHO) will never send you emails asking for this information or offering so-called cures. There are plenty of really bad people out there sending this kind of scam to you. DO NOT ever give your details online or in response to emails. Delete them. Do not open attachments. Look at the NHS and WHO websites for real advice. They both have COVID 19 pages full of advice based on what the science knows so far. Stay safe during these difficult times.

Support Group

Milton Keynes Coronavirus Support Group can be found on Facebook. They are coordinating efforts across many parts of the city and are looking for help and for those that need help.

Go to- <https://www.facebook.com/Milton-Keynes-Coronavirus-Community-Support-102707221365468>

Special Appeal Fund

Milton Keynes Council and MK Community Foundation are launching a special appeal fund, MK Emergency Response Appeal to which people can donate to support MK charities and community groups who support vulnerable people through this outbreak. MKC is providing £50,000 to kick start the appeal, with MK Community Foundation adding another £50,000, bringing the initial total to £100,000. The appeal aims to reach £400,000 by the end of July. All the money donated will be distributed to groups in Milton Keynes who play a vital part in supporting vulnerable people such as Age UK and The Food Bank.

To donate, visit; www.mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk/mk-emergency-appeal

GOVERNMENT HOTLINES:

- ☑ **Business support & ventilators:**
0300 456 3565
- ☑ **HMRC:**
0800 015 9559
- ☑ **Universal Credit:**
0800 328 5644
- ☑ **School closures:**
0800 046 8687
- ☑ **NHS:**
Only call 111 if you cannot
get help online at 111.nhs.uk

VISIT [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk) FOR MORE

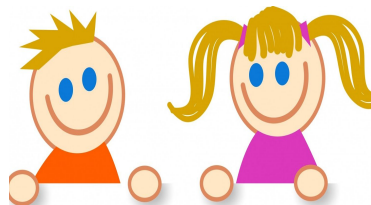
Easter Egg Hunt for children

We are happy to tell you the **Easter Egg Hunt is not cancelled!** The children need something to look forward to in these strange times. It will be at **Colne park and fields on Wednesday 8th April at 2pm.** Social distancing measures will be in place. We may have to stagger entrance into the hunt, depending on numbers attending. **Please do not attend if you are in any of the vulnerable groups or have elderly relatives at home.** Hygiene measures will be in place. In the little playpark will be the under 4's chick hunt, they will need to find 5 little chicks to win an Easter egg prize and goodie bag. Over 4's will have the whole field area to look for 6 numbered plastic eggs from 1 to 6 to win an Easter egg. Once the children have found the correct number of chicks or correctly numbered plastic eggs, come over to the judges who will check and give out the prize. This is a free event and therefore it is one prize per child. This event is funded by John Orr's Councillor Fund and the T.B.R.A, we are very grateful, thank you. If anything changes, and we are forced to cancel, details will be on Tinkers Bridge OFFICIAL GROUP.



Kids At Home

We were sent home from school
We thought it was so cool
But the adults were stressed
And we have to get dressed
For mum is going to teach us
We laugh, giggle and make a fuss
We can't go out to play
On this pretend school day
We want to eat everything
And dance, and play, and sing!
Dad says he'll have a try
And tries to teach us Pi
We tell him "Dad, we're five and ten!"
And ask for a bag of crisps, again.



Cookery Corner

This month we have a fabulous immune boosting soup, which is easy to make and very tasty.

Healthy Chicken Soup

3 tbsp oil
1 onion, diced
2 carrots, peeled and chopped
Handful of peas
2 celery sticks, sliced
½ tsp of ginger
2 garlic cloves, mashed
1 1/2 tsp curry powder
1 litre chicken stock
300ml water
500g shredded chicken



Heat the oil in a large pot, add the onions, carrots, celery and ginger and cook for 6-7 minutes until the onion is soft. Toss in the garlic and cook for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the curry powder, chicken stock and chicken and stir. Continue to cook until the soup reaches a simmer. Then reduce the heat to medium-low, cover with a lid and let simmer for 20 minutes. Serve with bread or salad. Enjoy. You can also freeze it, allow it to cool, then pour into a suitable container and freeze.

School Tray Cake

300g butter
300g sugar
300g self raising flour
5 large eggs
95ml milk
1 tsp vanilla essence

Cream the butter and the sugar, add the eggs with a tablespoon of the flour. Add the vanilla essence and milk and mix. Next add the flour and mix well. Grease and line a large flat cake tin or share between two round tins.



Put into a preheated oven to 180 for about 15/20 mins. Slide a knife into the middle to check it is cooked and allow to cool. In a bowl mix together 400g icing sugar and 5 tbsp milk, add colouring, if you wish. Pour onto cooled cake and decorate with sprinkles or smarties or whatever you have. It can be stored in an airtight container for a few days and rationed to your children :)

We are on Facebook

Tinkers Bridge OFFICIAL GROUP for local news, lost and found, and anything else of interest. This page is also being used in the current climate for offers of spare toilet rolls and help. Check it out for any local updates. If you need assistance or help it can be a good place to ask. We have lots of lovely, caring people here, so please ask! It can be used to help combat loneliness, if you just want a friendly chat or to make new friends!

Tinkers Bridge - Free To A Good Home is for all giveaways, freebies and unwanted items and in date food.

Tinkers Bridge For Sale is for items you are wanting to sell locally to friends and neighbours.

You can also access our Facebook page by using this link~ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TBRA.MK>

If you wish to submit an article of any description, subject to editing, please contact the editor at

editorthethebridge@yahoo.com. Thank you.

It's official, the new pair that arrived on the canal have decided to stay and make a home with us, and hopefully a nest too! As they've decided to stay, they needed names and I've chosen Apollo and Diana for them. It has been an eventful few weeks for this pair as they settle into their new home. First Diana unfortunately got a discarded fishing hook caught in her bill, with the line also attached! Thankfully she was spotted by several caring people who raised the alarm and got help for her. I was at work so couldn't go, but Bryan from Ark Rescue found her the next morning and she was no longer hooked. We don't know if she managed to free herself or if one of the other organisations was able to help her, but either way, good news for Diana. Next was Apollo being injured, thankfully he was fine and didn't need any help, but it was worrying to see his berry (the black part over the bill) bleeding and blood on his chest feathers. I suspect it was either a territory battle or maybe he caught it on some brambles while he was foraging for food, but it healed on its own and when I saw him the next day there was no sign of any injuries.

Fred and Wilma are doing well, I was with them yesterday. Fred is really mellow with me now, no sign of his former grumpiness but no doubt that will return at some point. No sign of nesting yet but they're a new pair and I suspect this year will be their first attempt which doesn't always go well with swans, but they will get better as they get more experience.

Last week I had a report of a lone swan at Woughton that there were concerns about so I went to check in case it needed help, but it's fine.

It's a young bird, you can tell by how small the berry is, so likely travelling around trying to find a flock to join until it's mature enough to select a mate.

Yesterday the geese were all very pleased to see me and flew from all sides to greet me which was fantastic. I would have liked to have caught it on video but could only stand and watch the incoming birds in amazement. I've been feeding them for so long now, multiple generations have known me since they were fluffies and each generation is more trusting than the last. No new fluffies yet but they're due any day.

By Allie.



Help A Neighbour

Around the country, some people are helping their neighbours by first introducing themselves using these postcards. We have enclosed one here, if you would like to cut it out and help a neighbour. If you receive a card through your door, do not feel obliged to accept help and please use your own judgement.

Stay safe and stay well. Thank you.

HELLO! If you are self-isolating, I can help.

My name is

.....

I live locally at

.....

My phone number is

.....

If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 I can help with:

☐ Picking up shopping

☐ Posting mail

☐ A friendly phone call

☐ Urgent supplies

Just call or text me and I'll do my best to help you (for free!)

Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on your doorstep.

#ViralKindness