

# Sustainable Life

Birmingham



£3000 awarded in 2020

Project Closed 03/07/2020

## Final Report





## Introduction

The Heart of England Community Foundation funding provided £3000 towards our Corona Virus Community Projects.

This money was due to provide supplementary funds for three of our corona virus projects:

1. FOOD - Essential food deliveries for local families in Stirchley
2. SAFETY - Masks and Mask adapters for local resident key workers and small businesses
3. WELLBEING - Plant plugs and seedlings for growing at home during lockdown to improve mental health & wellbeing.

These three projects offered FOOD, SAFETY & WELLBEING during a time of crisis in our local area which helped us create a well rounded response to the needs of our fellow residents.





## **Essential Food Deliveries**

The funding from the Heart of England Community Foundation's Coronavirus Resilience Fund allowed us to:

**Extend our delivery service from 5 local families to 8 local families.**

We were able to get essential deliveries to local families who needed a helping hand during lockdown due to a variety of reasons. These included disabilities, lack of transport, illness and shielding, coronavirus sufferers and lack of access to specialist dietary requirements (made worse by the closing down of the only nearby supermarket for the duration of the lockdown).

**Extend our delivery service from 4 weeks of deliveries to 13 weeks of deliveries.**

We were able to provide deliveries for a whole 13 weeks in total thanks to the additional funding from HOECF (plus 9 weeks) which saw our vulnerable families through the bulk of the lockdown. Our last delivery was on 22nd July 2020 as the lockdown now begins to ease. We are very pleased to have been able to support them throughout the most difficult part of lockdown.





## **Specially Tailored Service**

This project was uniquely tailored to each individual family. Coming from a family with special dietary needs ourselves and struggling with locating allergy safe and autism friendly ingredients with no local shop during a pandemic crisis - we immediately saw the need for a tailored service. The majority of the families we worked with didn't qualify for government help and many would not be able to use the food parcels services already set up due to their various dietary needs.

We made the decision to provide highly customised personalised food deliveries on a weekly basis - allowing service users to change their orders on a weekly basis. This meant buying specific food items from specific shops, dairy free, soya free, vegan, gluten free, sucralose free items and more.

One of our clients had contracted the virus and suffered neurological damage and required specially tailored food items to accommodate poor mobility, poor fine motor skills, memory issues and texture/hydration issues as a result of this illness. We sourced balanced vegan ready meals and Huel™ to ensure this client was able to access good nutrition - even if they were unable to cook on a given day.







## Feedback

Thank you for  
everything you've  
done

"Due to both my husband and myself being asked to shield during Covid-19, with my husband suffering from stage 4 cancer and having chemotherapy, me having had cancer and still vulnerable, we were extremely worried and knew we would need to isolate in the house. Our two grown-up children came to join us so we could all be together. It was far too risky for any of us to leave the house at this time as we were told being infected by the virus would very likely be fatal, especially for my husband. It was therefore of great value to us to have local friends, family and community support at this time.

The weekly shopping from Sustainable Life provided us with basic foods that supplemented our grocery costs. This meant we could eat more healthily and had a choice. It also meant some extra contact with the outside world, with a friendly chat, despite being from a distance. We felt reassured there were people in our local community that were looking out for us. This was incredibly important to our emotional well-being as well as our physical health.





I would like to add that the Government boxes that were promised us arrived only on three occasions, without notice and with no choice at all. These were not of much use to us in comparison to the service we received from Sustainable Life. This to me highlights the value of localised community-based initiatives that can provide much more relevant and appropriate support.

I've worked in community engagement for most of my working life and value greatly the impact it can have on lives. Having received the support at this time when we have needed it ourselves makes me proud of my community and extremely grateful to the staff at Sustainable Life for their care and support. As a family, we can't thank them enough."

thanks for  
everything guys xx

"Thank you so much for  
the help over the past few  
weeks, it's been so helpful

<3"



## Masks and Mask Adapters

The HOECF funding also provided safety equipment assistance during the lockdown period for a range of local residents and key workers.

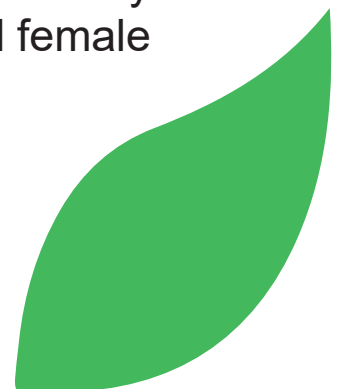
The funding provided 80 washable (and therefore eco-friendly and money saving) masks created by A is for Alice Costumes - a local home business in Stirchley. Our volunteers also sat down and made 80 cotton washable mask adapters to go with the masks for comfort.



The masks were made by A is for Alice Costumes, a local small business.

The mask adapters were made by Sustainable Life volunteers.

We are very proud to have not only provided high quality, eco-friendly, reusable masks to those that need them most during the lockdown period, but that we were also able to use this opportunity to support a local business. This put the money back into Stirchley's local economy and supported a dedicated and hard working local female entrepreneur.







## **Distribution of Masks and Adapters**

**12 Masks and adapters provided to the Clean Kilo Bournville**

**4 Masks and adapters provided to local key workers**

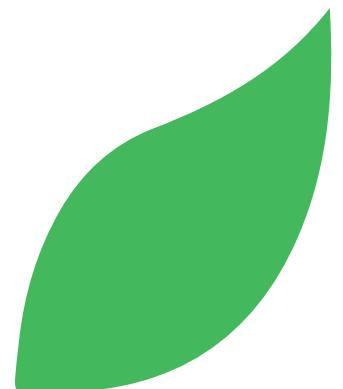
**27 Masks and adapters provided to local residents via our doorstep 'porch shop'**

**10 Masks and adapters given out for the Creative Coffee Hubs weekly NHS keyworker prizes.**

**10 Masks and adapters given out to refugee new mothers living in Stirchley.**

**5 Masks and adapters used for Sustainable Life Volunteers**

**12 Masks and adapters given to the Fruit and Nut Village Stirchley/Mother Gardens/Spring to Life team for their own volunteers and community work.**







## Plants and Seedlings

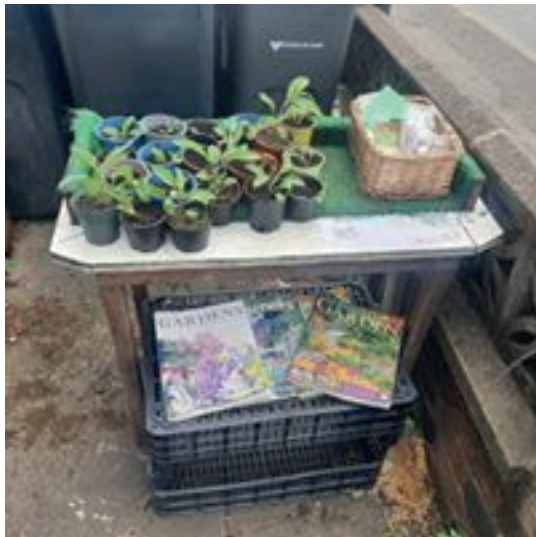
The HOECF funding also provided plants for families to grow at home during lockdown assisting with home learning experiences, promoting self sufficiency skills, healthy eating, and wellbeing from the safety of your own garden.

We managed to give out a whopping **195 plants** using the HOECF funding and in addition to this the table shop in the front encouraged other local residents with spare plants to come contribute too. Local residents donated a handful of thier own plants for the table or conducted plant swaps to spread the love of gardening and growing your own food. The table was self sufficient for several weeks with demand extremely high and items being whisked away almost as soon as they got put out!

Residents also donated money towards more plants and we managed to buy a second wave of plants (worth £100) from a local supplier providing an additional **50 plants** for residents.

Other items were also donated, including books, magazines and seeds which were placed on the table. The table is still outside now with seeds, succulents, sage and sanitiser available on it.











## Growing Feedback



the best thing is my garden is getting more food-y and [X] has more free time to go out now so all good. I'm so grateful for it all





We had some wildflower seeds from you at the very start of lockdown and planted them in a random patch at the end of our path. Didn't hold much hope for them as a few other packets we tried didn't work. But look!!!  
Linseed, sunflowers and more have shot up!  
Thank you, I have seen bees, hoverflies and a butterfly on there this morning alone



My first lockdown produce, never grown courgettes.

