



Welcome to this winter edition of our Marsh Farm Futures newsletter. What a year this has been, the pandemic continues but I hope you are all well and coping. This will be a very different Christmas for us all but I hope that you and your family and friends will be able to enjoy the festive season safely.

We are sorry that we have not been able to run our normal Christmas projects such as Winter Wonderland, Futures Fun Factory Christmas party, Marsh Farm Fireworks and the Pensioners Christmas meal. Marsh Farm Fundraising group with support from Marsh Farm Futures are working towards delivering the Christmas meals to our pensioners instead.

During these past months our priority has been the health and wellbeing of our residents, our workforce, and the partners we work with. We are therefore delighted to announce that Marsh Farm Futures has successfully secured an almost £50,000 share of National Lottery funding to help the community recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. We will be using this money for our Better Futures Programme which is running a number of projects to support our community and residents during these challenging times. It includes a befriending service three days a week to those who may need support or who are isolated and want to have a chat and delivery of care and food packages to people and families in need. We will be starting other initiatives in the near future including an employability programme, zoom story time for under 5s and one to one zoom chats with support and advice. Read more about the programme in this newsletter.

In a separate project, we are delighted to have had Santa himself deliver more than 3,000 Christmas gifts to children in the schools across our community. A very big thank you to everyone who worked so hard to put this together.

Along with the care and food parcels that we are delivering, Luton Foodbank are still providing their service from Futures House on a Monday between 11am – 1pm and Joseph's Basket are at the doors of Futures House on a Friday from 10am giving out food parcels.

Some of our staff are working in the building to deliver our community projects but the majority are still working remotely. However, we are available during our usual office hours of Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm on 01582 512 555.

It just remains to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and hopefully Covid-19 free New Year. Please look after each other and we will come through this stronger than ever.

Mohammed Rafi
Chief Executive



SANTA'S COMING TO TOWN!



More than 3000+ children from primary and infant schools across Marsh Farm, Sundon Park, Icknield, Limbury and Bramingham have received a Christmas present delivered by Santa himself. Santa appeared on his sleigh loaded with presents at the schools on the 17th and 18th of December. Please see the photos below. For the full story visit

<https://marshfarmfutures.co.uk/community-business/community-event/santas-coming-to-town/>



FUNDING SECURE FOR 'BETTER FUTURES' PROGRAMME IN MARSH FARM



Selina, Yasmin and Cathy putting together school lunches

Marsh Farm Futures has successfully secured a share of £9.5million of National Lottery funding to help recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The £49,010 grant has been awarded through the Covid-19 Community-Led Organisations Recovery Scheme (CCLORS). The scheme is led by independent trust Power to Change in partnership with Locality, The Ubele Initiative and Social Investment Business, and was part of The National Lottery Community Fund's Coronavirus Community Support Fund, that launched in May this year.

The money has helped Marsh Farms Futures realise the Better Futures Programme. The project will encompass food and care packages, a befriending service and Employability programme.

Marsh Farm Futures are match funding the budget amount towards food and care packages to ensure they reach as many people as possible. The Better Futures Programme, officially launched on 11th November, was already in place to offer free packed lunches during the October half term to children who receive free meals, with over 179 packed lunches handed out.



Dave Crean pictured with Cathy McShane accepting the cheque

Dave Crean, a Trustee and director for Marsh Farm Futures spoke about what this grant means to him and the community: "Firstly, I'd like to say well done to the team for securing this funding, this is truly wonderful for our community and I am delighted. Sincere and huge thanks to the team that has delivered the CCLORS funding programme, which has given us this money to fully support and address the needs of residents through our project which includes befriending services, activities for children, employability support and food and care parcels. All these are especially important during this pandemic which has caused harsh times for everybody in different ways.

"This is what we are here for and why MFF was set up, to support the needs of the diverse community in Marsh Farm and surrounding areas - uplifting, encouraging and motivating people however and whenever we can."

Project lead, Youth and Communities Manager, Cathy McShane, said:

"Our packed lunches programme was very well received, and we've had great feedback from parents and children. We are now in the second phase of the project, making up and delivering food and care packages to people and families in need in the community and have delivered packages to 16 families so far and from the number of enquiries we have received recently, this number will increase over the Christmas and New Year period.

"We are determined to reach out to and support as many people as we can. I encourage anyone in the Marsh Farm or surrounding areas to call us, we are here to help and support you in any way we can. Call 01582 512 555 or check our website and social media pages for more information."

For the full story visit:

<https://marshfarmfutures.co.uk/community/lutons-marsh-farm-futures-secures-funding-to-support-community-during-covid-19/>

An update on the various things we are doing as part of the Better Futures Programme.

Zoom Meetings

Marsh Farm Futures are in the process of setting up a new Zoom meeting for local residents to join where they can chat about any concerns they may have or get signposted to relevant organisations.

The first zoom meetings with the Art group started in September 2020 on a Wednesday morning where they were able to see and catch up with each other over Zoom and share news.



The group were missing their art classes, so Cathy McShane, Marsh Farm Youth and Community Manager set a challenge and sent them photos of different parts of Luton to paint in their own style. The paintings are amazing and they are working towards depicting different seasons in Luton to use for a 2021 calendar to raise funds for a chosen charity. ***Here are a selection of paintings by the class.***



Quiz Night

The Quiz Night held every Wednesday evening now has 28 -30 people, with participants' friends and families joining in from as far out as Cornwall. Cathy McShane said: "It gives them all an opportunity to see family and friends who they've not been able to see for months. It's a very jovial and fun evening that we all look forward to." If you would like to join in call Cathy on 01582 512555.

Befriending Service update

The Befriending service is still available for anyone feeling lonely or isolated. We have a number of people benefitting from this service so please don't hesitate to call us on 01582 586 133. Please note that the befriending service is not an advisory or counselling service, we are here to have a chat and let you know that you are not alone.



CORONAVIRUS TESTING

Essential workers, anyone with symptoms of coronavirus or anyone who lives with someone showing symptoms can get tested.

Remember:

Wash Hands – Keep washing your hands regularly

Cover Face – Wear a face covering in enclosed spaces

Make space – At least 2 metres apart

Coronavirus rapid testing now available in Luton.

https://m.luton.gov.uk/Page/Show/Health_and_social_care/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus-testing.aspx-#rap

Making MFF Digital

How would you like Marsh Farm Futures to communicate with you? What information would you like to receive from us?



Let us know at info@marshfarmfutures.co.uk putting MFF digital in the subject field.



BETTER FUTURES PROGRAMME

Marsh Farm Futures has successfully bid for and received funding from the The National Lottery Community Fund to support members of the community during these unprecedented times. We are delivering this support through different projects.

FOOD AND CARE PACKAGES



**If you or your family need support with food and you are:
Unemployed or on a low income or
In receipt of benefits
We can help you.**

You will need proof of ID and address, proof of benefit and a full or mini bank statement. Call Cathy or Selina on 01582 586 133 or email cathy@marshfarmfutures.co.uk or sokoli@marshfarmfutures.co.uk

BEFRIENDING SERVICE **01582 586 133**

We are at the end of the phone if you are feeling lonely, isolated or in need of a chat. We can signpost you to relevant organisations if necessary. We will also have a weekly zoom meeting where you can speak to and see other people and have a general chat. We can offer one – one chats if preferred.

Please note that we are not an advisory or counselling service

EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME

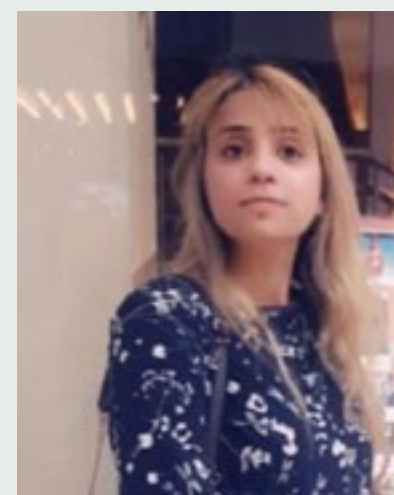


For people who have either lost their jobs or are struggling into employment this workshop will equip you with all the tools to help get you back into work. Please look out for this project which we hope to launch from January 2021.

Funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, distributed by Power to Change, has helped us to bring these projects to the community. Thanks to National Lottery players for making this possible.



Community Focus Interview



Moona Ali Shah lives in Marsh Farm and works in the local Nisa. She talks to us about how the pandemic has affected her and her family.

Moona, you're a familiar face to a lot of people in the area, how long have you worked in Marsh Farm?

I've been working for 8 years in Nisa Local, Marsh Farm Shopping Centre.

How would you describe yourself in three words?

Hard-working, compassionate and caring

How would you describe Marsh Farm in three words?

Compact, untidy and lively!

How have things changed in your local area as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic?

Even though Marsh Farm is generally a friendly area where people all seem to know each other, it has definitely become more disorganised and untidy as more people are at home.

How has the pandemic affected you personally?

Not having a social life anymore and a lack of physical interaction with friends and family has been quite difficult as well as the children being stuck indoors.

Have you adopted any new healthy habits as a result of the lockdown?

No, especially as the gyms are all closed.

As a parent, how have your children coped with social distancing particularly with friends and family.

My children have not been able to see friends outside school or family members and it's been hard for them to understand why they can't.

Christmas holidays are coming up soon, do you celebrate it and if so how?

I'm so happy that there will be a relaxation in the rules about meeting family so we will just spend time together.

Continued on next page

Any positive message to people who have found this such a difficult year?

Keep calm and collected, learn to live as a community and care for the elderly.

Do you have any suggestions on what Marsh Farm Futures can do or introduce to help you and other people in the community during this time and moving forward?

Yes, give children more activities and bring back computer classes for parents, they were very useful for a lot of people.

What would you like to see improved in the area?

Open council offices locally for reporting problems in the area and also put more funding into community policing.



OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE

Futures House is a modern architectural building with natural light and a stunning atrium area. We offer quality office space to rent with sizes from 10sq m up to 300 sq. m on either short term 12-month licenses or long-term leases, at very competitive prices.



Tenants can enjoy allocated parking bays as well as free visitors parking. There is an onsite café and seating area for visitors as well as a tenants' lounge and kitchen area. We also have conference and meeting spaces which tenants can hire for their meetings and events.

To find out more about available office space
Email: facilities@marshfarmfutures.co.uk or call 01582
512 555.

Photographs of members of the local community, including the Mayor of Luton, Cllr Maria Lovell, Police Officers, Mr and Mrs Patel from the NISA Supermarket and members of the MFF team and Directors helping to put the school gift parcels together.





Season Greetings
from all of us at
Marsh Farm Futures

**HALLS AND ROOMS AVAILABLE
TO HIRE AT FUTURES HOUSE FOR
CONFERENCES, MEETINGS,
WEDDINGS AND SOCIAL EVENTS.**

Please note that availability is dependent
on COVID 19 guidelines.

Call 01582 512 555 for more
information or check our website.



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www.marshfarmfutures.co.uk