

North Central Area Committee report for the Artane/Whitehall Electoral Area for May 2020

Following the closure of all schools, creches and educational facilities on Thursday 12th March 2020, the North Central Area Office began contingency planning to operate business in different ways. Staff at this stage were rostered on shift or staggered work patterns while others began working remotely.

From Monday 30th March after the announcement of lockdown by the Government, staff were all in a position to and began working remotely. The main administrative phone number and generic North Central Area email were diverted to staff phones and are being answered and replied to remotely.

All Housing staff began working remotely also with main housing numbers and generic emails being diverted to staff mobiles. Housing Liaison Officers also began working remotely with new protocols in place to support the tenants in our older person's complexes. Our Community staff along with continuing to link in with local groups became central to the operation of the Covid 19 Community Call helpline and the Alone nationwide helpline. These helplines continue to operate between 8am and 8pm, seven days a week. Our public domain team have been working remotely while continuing to arrange for the collection of illegal dumping and having graffiti removed among other tasks.

While carrying out their own duties, where possible, administrative staff also assist with the Liaison service. Housing, community and administrative staff are rostered on a shift to monitor the North Central generic email through which Community Call requests are filtered and to log general service requests from the CRM system to line departments. Sports officers are rostered to assist with requesting volunteers to carry out grocery shopping, collect medication, arrange transport for medical appointments for vulnerable and older persons. Staff have made good use of phones, laptops and other digital devices while questions for the April Area Committee were handled on a mobile phone. The Area Committee team have been back in the office the last week or so preparing the agenda for the May area committee meeting and dealing with Councillors questions. With reference to all staff no job has been too big or too small. To a person they have been 'apart' working in close unison.

The following are some of the tasks carried out through this period in the Artane/Whitehall electoral district:

Community Development has continued to liaise with most groups. As our main cohort of people are in the older age bracket, we believed it to be essential that we remained in close contact with those most vulnerable. As we have excellent connections with community and other statutory bodies in the area, we managed to stay atop of all queries and problems; we have not encountered a problem that we have been unable to resolve! We were very much to the fore initiating and mobilising our partnered organisations

We have coordinated:

- Delivery of all COVID community call/ Alone information
- Collection and delivery of groceries/prescriptions
- Organising, coordinating homecare packages/delivery of meals
- Arranging transport for older and vulnerable persons to GP and hospital appointments.
- Assisting with the NCA queries and reports
- Staying linked in with other departments i.e. Parks, Waste Management and Public Domain
- Continuing working on projects; i.e. Kilmore FC and Glin Boxing Club
- Keeping our press office and local media contractor completely informed with information and photos which have been uploaded to facebook, twitter and Instagram.
- Providing an open line to anyone who just needed a chat and assurance

- Sourcing and delivering medical aids to those in need
- Daily contact with local Gardai
- Co-producing and presenting of; Cocoon Tunes a new Covid specific radio show on Near FM, reaching out to all who have been cocooned over last number of weeks.

The Darndale Area Housing Office has put a significant amount of supports and resources into supporting older and vulnerable people both in our housing complexes and in the general community since the beginning of the lockdown.

- The Darndale office is supporting and assisting state agencies and voluntary groups to deliver supports to any residents or areas where required.
- We have maintained a good level of response to maintenance and estate management issues. All calls are responded to by phone, email or post. All requests for application forms and housing enquiries have been dealt with..
- House and site visits have been kept to a minimum while maintaining social distancing.
- Interviews for anti-social or estate management matters have been conducted over the phone.
- Housing welfare services have been delivered through remote access for referrals and interviews.
- Allocations have continued during the lockdown for all housing needs.
- De-tenanting of Cromcastle has continued.
- Support of the Covid 19 community call helpline.

Sheltered Housing Liaison Service

- Leaflets delivered to all our sheltered housing complex tenants with useful phone numbers and advising that our Sheltered Housing Liaison Officers will be contacting them by phone rather than calling in.
- Gave our sheltered housing tenants the mobile phone number of our Sheltered Housing Liaison Officers so they can contact them if they have any issues.
- Daily contact made with tenants to make sure they are doing ok.
- Developed a protocol for cases that our Sheltered Housing Liaison Officers cannot contact a tenant.
- Developed lists of vulnerable tenants outside of sheltered housing complexes whom we also stay in contact with via phone.
- Liaising with agencies that provide meals to older people to make sure their service is continuing and advice around COVID 19 precautions.

Tasks have also continued on other fronts where possible including the upgrade of the three cameras in Stardust park, liaison with public lighting with regard to arranging a new power supply for the Christmas trees in Whitehall and Kilmore and a presentation of two webcasted information meetings covering three proposed SHD's in the Artane/Whitehall area.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff in the North Central Area for their support to management, to the organisation, to the customer and to each other over this extraordinary period, working from early morning to late at night, weekends and carrying out tasks that may normally not be in their portfolios. Great praise is also due to all volunteers across the area from neighbours helping neighbours to meal delivery services to local GAA clubs and to all others who have made it easier for our most vulnerable to cope during their cocooning.

Derek Farrell, Area Manager, Artane/Whitehall