**Date: 07/12/2020**

**Duration:** 48:16

**Interviewer:** \*Project introduction\*

**Participant:** [unclear: 00:02].

**Interviewer:** That’s okay.

**Participant:** You were asking about how the group formed?

**Interviewer:** Exactly, how – what is the name of your group?

**Participant:** Urm, well initially we used the postcodes, so it was [FORMER GROUP NAME], but now urm, we’re sort of favouring the town names so it’s [GROUP NAME].

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** That’s the two towns that we cover. Urr, and basically what happened, at the start of urr, the pandemic, urm… a number of people were posting their phone numbers through people’s doors saying, “if you need any help, you need shopping or whatever, we’ll help you.” Urm… a group urr, our council that covers the various towns is called [COUNCIL NAME], urr and… [NAME OF THIRD SECTOR SUPPORT ORGANISATION], [NAME OF THIRD SECTOR SUPPORT ORGANISATION], so started to pull the whole thing together urm, making us all kind of aware that there was a helpline called [HELPLINE NAME] so, what happened at that stage was, I wasn’t actually involved at that stage, we urm, people would phone to [HELPLINE NAME] and you’d pass to a couple of coordinators and then put requests out. And then it tended to be the case that if you lived in a certain street or a certain district, you would be given that, the person who was asking for shopping or for prescriptions to get picked up, so, and then you would sort of deal with them ongoing. So, it became apparent to [LOCAL VOLUNTEER NETWORK NAME] that, when people started returning to work, all of a sudden people still needed assistance but they’ve lost the support they had. Urm so they tried, they wanted to do was to re-formulate the group. The once that had been dealing with it, urm… weren’t terribly cooperative about the whole thing. Said they didn’t want to be involved, urm, so they put out a request for people to administer a new group.

So, I had been on a number of things, I had been on a… something or another response that was predominantly in [COUNTRY NAME 1] that was an app, and you could send – [NAME OF APP] I think it’s called. Urm, I never got any requests through that. I had registered with urm… groups in [COUNTRY NAME 2] and no one was asking – I think there was so many people volunteering I wasn’t getting asked to help. Then all of a sudden, an e-mail came through to administrating this new group. So, three of us formed this new group in July.

**Interviewer:** July, okay.

**Participant:** And urr, what happens is people still phoned through the [HELPLINE NAME] helpline, [NAME OF THIRD SECTOR SUPPORT ORGANISATION] support us, we get e-mails through to our own e-mail address and then we put it on a WhatsApp request to our volunteers, and then they come forward and say, yes, they’ll pick up the prescription or they’ll… do shopping whatever it is that we’ve been asked to do. But that only started… in this… sort of new group if you like, on the second of July, it was a bit more informal before that.

**Interviewer:** Mmm-hmm, so what was the aim of the group when it started?

**Participant:** What was the aim?

**Interviewer:** The aim, yes.

**Participant:** Just to, just to help people with whatever they required while they were in lockdown. Urm, although [NAME OF THIRD SECTOR SUPPORT ORGANISATION], they had urm, they had been supporting people and helping people, you know, for a number of years. Urm… but urr, it became obviously more important during the pandemic when they’re, when there are so many requests coming in. So, there’s, in other districts there’s, there’s, there’s two other post code districts in [COUNCIL AREA NAME] have got groups as well so there’s three separate groups.

**Interviewer:** Urr, has anything changed since you started the group?

**Participant:** Urm… has anything changed did you say?

**Interviewer:** In the group, yes, since you started the group?

**Participant:** Sorry it’s a bit slow, has anything changed did you ask?

**Interviewer:** Yes, if urr, has anything changed?

**Participant:** Urm… well we’ve had… we’ve had some sort of different requests and we get some different requests to go to pick up PPE for people who who need to have it when carers come in.

**Interviewer:** PPE?

**Participant:** We got a request for an, actually it came via a doctor, urr a lady urm, was becoming urm, very stressed and concerned because her husband had been a landscape gardener and the garden was always nice and she was in a council house and the local council had stopped cutting the grass so we, kind of, tidied up her garden for her. Urm, and then recently we got a request in, urr, a man had been allocated a council house, and the council had furloughed all their painters, so we painted his house, he was actually going to turn down the council house because he wasn’t in a position to decorate it himself. So, we did it for him.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** So, the nature of the requests have changed slightly. And also, its sort of tailed off a bit because a number of folks seem to think it purely related to urr shielding or urr, urr what ever the other words they use to these kinds of things-

**Interviewer:** Self-isolation, yes.

**Participant:** Yeah, as far as we’re concerned, we’re there, if someone can’t get out because they’re having to isolate, yeah. But if its just icy weather and they feel worried about going out then we would go out on their behalf so, it’s these kinds of things have changed slightly.

**Interviewer:** Okay, what is the situation with the group at the moment?

**Participant:** So now I’ve got a dog making noise, sorry can you say that again?

**Interviewer:** What is the situation with the, with your group currently?

**Participant:** Urm… we’re, well we tend to just carry-on operating.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** Even when this pandemic is over just to available to people when they need assistance. Urm… but urm… its certainly quietly than it s been, we’re expecting it’ll pick up in the winter.

**Interviewer:** It’s quiet?

**Participant:** Yeah, we’ve a lot less requests out, it’s a lot quieter.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Urm… you mentioned that it started as informal and then it became more formal? The group, right?

**Participant:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So, when did you get involved?

**Participant:** I say, this new group was formed on the second of July.

**Interviewer:** Okay so, you weren’t in the first one?

**Participant:** Urr, I wasn’t involved in the initial group… urm… I say it works on a slightly different basis, in that they pair folk up one-to-one, whereas we just, we just keep it – you know we put out requests for a volunteer and then… it’s not, the they’re not tied to that person or anything, they just do that one off prescription pick up or shopping, and then your know, next time it might be a different volunteer who does sort of the same person. It’s just, whoever’s available can come forward and say, “yeah I’ll, I’ll do that one.”

**Interviewer:** Okay and why did you get involved?

**Participant:** Why did I get involved?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Participant:** I just, as I say, right at the very outset I put my name forward for a number of things and I just never got asked to do anything because I think there was so many people volunteering. Urm… I just wanted to help urm, knowing that some people were in a situation where they couldn’t get out, couldn’t shop. Urm… were isolating, urr, were shielding, so I just wanted to be of help to people.

**Interviewer:** What is your role in the group?

**Participant:** Urm, there’s, there’s three of us on admin, so, basically, we, we get the e-mails in and we put them out to to WhatsApp groups for a volunteer to come forward, although… you know, its from time to time, we do get involved and actually urr have undertaken assistance for people. I did most of the painting for instance, recently.

**Interviewer:** Uh-hmm. Has your role changed at all?

**Participant:** Not much, much, much the same. Just by, I kind of set up things, spreadsheets to you know, record all the volunteer’s details, the client’s details, any responses that we do. Urm, I also started a, we’ve got an old list of people, so I went through all them and contacted them all and let they know that we are still here, we are still operating, you didn’t need to be urm isolating in order to get our help, as long as you needed it we were there. Urm… and I started a befriending thing with you know, some of our volunteers phone up clients once a week, just to check how they are and makes sure everything’s okay with them. Urm… the the area we’re in is quite… it’s a mix but its more towards the affluent side, so there are a lot of people who get family support and, you know, they do hear from relatives. There wasn’t a big take up on the befriending calls side of things for instance. Urm… can’t remember what I was going to say there. Urr… urr yeah, one one of the other groups nearby in an area called [TOWN NAME 1], they had a hundred volunteers they were getting fifty requests, sixty requests a week for assistance whereas we’re sort of more, twelve to twenty on a busy week sometimes. Or only a handful, as I say it’s kind of tailed off a bit.

**Interviewer:** How many? How many do you have volunteers?

**Participant:** How many volunteers? Urm… we’ve got thirty volunteers.

**Interviewer:** Thirty.

**Participant:** But some of them are back at work a couple of days a week so can only help occasionally. We’ve got a few who volunteered and have never actually done anything. You know when you put a request out, they don’t pick it up so, active volunteers we’ve got about half a dozen who jump on every request we put out and another kind of ten who do them from time to time. Urm… but a lot of the time it’s the same people who are looking for help.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned that you collected prescriptions, what kind of things do you do?

**Participant:** Sorry my sound won’t go any louder, I didn’t hear you there, sorry?

**Interviewer:** Urr what kind of things do you do in the group? You already mentioned some.

**Participant:** Yeah, well as I say we do shopping –

**Interviewer:** Shopping.

**Participant:** -collecting prescriptions, we pick up the PPE. We did do, we’ve done a couple of gardens because the council currently aren’t doing that, and we did painting. It’s just… whatever people ask for that we feel we’re able to do. I mean I know, I know the other group have done things like repair doors and urm… you know, we’ve done simple things like pop in a change someone’s lightbulb and things like that, because they can’t do it. Just anything we get asked to do really but, urm… predominantly shopping and prescriptions. I mean, most of the pharmacies will actually deliver and of course so do the supermarkets, but a lot of the older people don’t know how to access these things. You know they don’t have internet or they didn’t seem to have the ability to actually do these things, or those. Some some of the ones we were helping before I think the pharmacies, the chemists have sort of contacted them and said, “we’ll deliver for you.” Because some of them aren’t asking us anymore.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how often do people in the group urm, the do these things, how often?

**Participant:** Often? How often? Sorry?

**Interviewer:** They do these things, how often they do these things, for example shopping, collecting prescriptions, gardening, is every week, or every day?

**Participant:** Urm, we’re available from… urr nine a.m. to five p.m., Monday to Friday. Urm, Saturday has just reverted back to that expecting us to get a bit busier. For about a month they made their cut off one-thirty because they weren’t really getting any requests in after that. Urm, and it’s funny because it used to be that at the start of the week, we’d get a lot of shopping requests, people wanting their shopping for the week, or at the end of the week, you know wanting their shopping for the weekend. But the last few weeks it’s been sort of Wednesday/Thursday’s been like the busiest day. So, its unpredictable, you just can’t tell.

**Interviewer:** Okay, urm… what resources do you have?

**Participant:** What resources do we have?

**Interviewer:** Um-hmm. Yes.

**Participant:** None really. We use our own laptops and phones, urm… its, one of the other groups is even setting up their own phone line, urm… but we don’t we just… and… [\*interference\* 14:12] group, urm we’re offering expenses for people if they wanted to claim. But no one – no one ever claims expenses its all, its all voluntary, they feel, you know, that they’re volunteering their time and their fuel and everything else and therefore they don’t, they don’t want to claim it. So, we do have a… some funding we received from the [NAME OF THIRD SECTOR SUPPORT ORGANISATION], we’ve just received that. Urm, and we’ve advertised and some local publication’s just to let people know we’re here for them. Urm... we’ve got, we’ve got a Facebook page, urm… and urr… we’re also, you know we try to get the word out on other community’s pages just to let people know that if they need us, we’re there.

**Interviewer:** Okay, urm, are there any particular skills that people in the group have?

**Participant:** Any skills?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** We’ve got an ex- an ex-policeman, who, if required, urr… is willing to help if there’s any sort of domestic situations we come across, if you know what I mean, if someone… if someone approached us and they were a battered wife or whatever. Urm, we haven’t really come across an awful lot, we have, we have [NAME OF THIRD SECTOR SUPPORT ORGANISATION] group have managed to give us support for a couple of people from social services. Urm when we’ve realised that people are, are not coping, urm, and it’s not just shopping and prescriptions they need, you know, there’s, there’s a greater need for them, so we do have that kind of back up if we come across anything then urm we contact [NAME OF THIRD SECTOR SUPPORT ORGANISATION] urr, you know, put the people in touch with social services to do whatever’s required for them.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how did you get people, the volunteers involved?

**Participant:** Sorry, I didn’t hear that one again, sorry.

**Interviewer:** Sorry, how did you get people involved?

**Participant:** Urm… basically, urm… we on our Facebook group-

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** -and also urm, we delivered 10,000 leaflets which urr, one - we’re sort of saying about the sort of support we’re providing but two, if you wanted to volunteer giving number for that as well. So, we picked up some volunteers from that. We’ve picked up some volunteers through the Face, the Facebook group. Urm… the… I was telling you that I volunteered for a number of groups, those people are still getting requests in and they’re passing them on to [NAME OF THIRD SECTOR SUPPORT ORGANISATION] who pass them on to us, so the clients on various sources. And word of mouth as well.

**Interviewer:** And how do you coordinate and organise?

**Participant:** How do we coordinate all the-?

**Interviewer:** All the help for example.

**Participant:** Well so basically, see I started spreadsheets which are now shared on google drive, so whoever is on on a particular day, they urr, they’ll note any responses that we make. And you know basically we’ll put out a request for help. And then someone comes back so we’ve got a note of who, who we’re helping and who, who did the response for them. Urm… I thought of something, oh urr, we offer transport, there hasn’t been a big take up on that and obviously we have to do that within government guidelines and have appropriate PPE and everything available so again we’ve got funding for that to supply PPE for everyone who’s going to go transport. But so, so far, we’ve only sort of done that once, but the offer is there if, for doctors’ appointments and hospital appoints and they can’t get there.

**Interviewer:** PPE-

**Participant:** As it happens, they built a new hospital in [CITY NAME 1] but its, its on the opposite side of the [RIVER NAME], we’re in the north of [CITY NAME 1] and it’s on the south side. And there’s no direct bus route there, you have to go sort of into town or into near, sort of the river [RIVER NAME] and then get another bus through, so its not the easiest place to get to so that’s just another thing we’ve got on offer if people want to take it up.

**Interviewer:** Okay, urm… you mentioned PPA, PPA is the-

**Participant:** PPE – personal protection equipment.

**Interviewer:** Oh, okay., okay.

**Participant:** Sorry, yeah, we sometimes pick that up for people, when carers go into houses, obviously they’re all like kitted out, but they also like… urr the person that they’re helping to have urm, sort of masks and sort of things on as well. So, that that is available, but we have to go pick it up for the people because obviously if someone’s wheelchair bound, they can’t get out themselves and its urm, its available in another town a few miles away, so we go and pick that up for people. But yeah, we also, we recently got funding and if anyone’s doing transport then we would provide the necessary personal protective equipment for them, and if need be the passenger as well.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how do you know, how do you get people that need help? People in -

**Participant:** How do we get people…?

**Interviewer:** In need. How do you access them?

**Participant:** How do people seeking help?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Participant:** Urm… well, as I say, we’ve done a bit of advertising, urm, with local, local magazines etc and papers. Urm, we’ve delivered leaflets, but a lot of us have local organisation for referrals. We get through come sometimes from urr… urr… I think it’s called [LOCAL ORGANISATION NAME], sometimes the doctors we've managed aware urm, of our services. Urm… who else, oh, what do you call them? Urr… can’t remember – where you go, if you need help and you go an enquire about anything, what do they call those people? We get some from them anyway, I can’t think what they’re called.

**Interviewer:** Huh, I don’t know.

**Participant:** You obviously don’t know what I’m talking about either.

**Interviewer:** No

**Participant:** There is an organisation where you can go and you can ask for, you know banking or anything – I can’t remember what its –

**Interviewer:** Is it a national organisation?

**Participant:** Its what sorry?

**Interviewer:** It’s a national organisation?

**Participant:** Yeah, I can’t think what it’s called?

**Interviewer:** [COUNTRY NAME 2], something like that… no?

**Participant:** No, but you know places like that that seem to urr, be aware and urm, and pass on details to us.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** But we really do, we don’t think urr, our names’ out there enough, it’s getting it out there that’s the issue. As I say and… basically going onto community websites and sort of saying, “if you know anyone who needs help, here’s the numbers, if you want to volunteer, here’s the numbers.” Because again, the elderly, we don’t expect many of them to have the internet. We’re hoping their relatives will sort of pass it on to them.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** We’d one, we had one the other week that I actually went to, urm… a granddaughter of a man, she’s down in [CITY NAME 2], and he’s phoned to say that he had collapsed, he didn’t know if he’d passed out or if he’d just fallen over, but urm she called an ambulance for him, they didn’t know how long it would be. Urm, she thought maybe his blood sugars were low, so I went up and took urm… urr a [unclear 22:21] and chocolate to him and just stayed with him until the paramedics arrived. Just things like that, just anything we can do to help.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Urm… is the group part of a national network?

**Participant:** Is what we do part of a national network?

**Interviewer:** You are?

**Participant:** No.

**Interviewer:** No?

**Participant:** No this is just really very, very local, its just [NAME OF THIRD SECTOR SUPPORT ORGANISATION] have set it up in and our group is in [TOWN NAME 2], urm another group is in [TOWN NAME 1] and [TOWN NAME 3] and they’ve just started another one in a town called [TOWN NAME 4]. Urm… and it’s just some, something that they have done for this - they’re a voluntary organisation before, so they were a kind of helping people more on the social services side of things. But obviously when this all took off, they started to try and support people who were out there helping. So, we’ve got them to sort of fall back on if we need anything. And you asked me earlier, sorry about resources, urm… we do have urm… protocols for everything we do which we give to the the volunteers. Just a short thing, you know, some instructions for them, how to go about it, urm if they’re picking up prescriptions. Sounds easy enough, pick up a prescription, take it to the person, but its amazing some of them say, “oh, leave it in the porch,” you can’t leave a prescription in the porch, you have to make sure, you ring the doorbell and they come out and get it. Urm… so there are protocols for the various things just to keep everyone safe and keep it all correct and how it should be done. It’s the same with the tran –[\*interference\* 24:13]-

**Interviewer:** I lost you! Okay, protocol, okay.

**Participant:** Did you understand protocol or?

**Interviewer:** No, you said protocol but then I lost you, you were saying that you have, because you have protocol for collecting prescriptions?

**Participant:** Yeah, basically instructions for people on how they should carry out their various duties.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Urr and what is the relationship like with the local authorities? With the local council?

**Participant:** Urr, urr, with the local council?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Participant:** Urr… urm... let’s just say I’m a wee bit disappointed with the local council. Especially because they’re not involved in anyway, but secondly in our particular district, [COUNCIL AREA NAME], they, they furloughed all their, a lot of the gardeners and painters, because, because they said that they can’t have them working along side each other. But… the post office got around that, but one – two workers work together, one drives the post office van, and the other person drives a car it’s on the same expenses and then they just work out of the can while distancing from each other. The council have just withdrawn all their services, they seem to be using this whole furlough scheme as a money saving scheme so, as far as I’m concerned, they’re pretty useless. They they’ve actually created tasks, like as I say, that gentleman wasn’t going to take on his house because he couldn’t paint it. He was just going to stay wherever he was renting elsewhere which wasn’t a suitable location, urr… but as I said, we got approached by [LOCAL ORGANISATION NAME], asking if we would, if we could do anything, so we decided we would do the painting, but it was meant to be the council who was doing that.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and with other official institutions? Do you have any relationships? You mentioned the groups, local groups urm…

**Participant:** [NAME OF THIRD SECTOR SUPPORT ORGANISATION], yeah.

**Interviewer:** And charities for example, NHS organisations?

**Participant:** No, no, nothing else, it’s just this voluntary group that urr… that we can turn to if we need any support of help and they sort of urm [\*unclear, bird sounds\* 26:41] if urm… and they’re there if we need them. So, they were the ones who sort of pulled the whole thing together and got myself and two others involved as administrators and urr… they pass us urr… the referrals and they pass us any new volunteers that come forward. So urm… they’re a great support to us, as I say that’s the only thing we’ve got.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and has your group tried to get official recognition?

**Participant:** Sorry, my birds are being noisy, say that again?

**Interviewer:** If you group has official recognition, as a company or a charity?

**Participant:** At the moment we’ve decided not to go down the charity route. We’re just a voluntary organisation. We do have urr… constitution and we’ve opened a bank account. At the moment the volunteers have been shopping and then when they deliver the messages, they get handed cash by the person they’ve done the shopping for. However, we have put a card into a local ASDA store urr with money on it so that now they can go and pick up the card from the customer services, use that to pay for the shopping and then effectively give a bill to the client who can either pay by urr bank transfer, and if they don’t have the facility to that, then a cheque. But then the other thing we have to watch is, if they’re paying by cheque, the volunteer still probably has to wait and get handed that cheque, because if they’re not able to get out, then they can’t get to a post box to post it to us. So, it was a good idea in principle, so the volunteers weren’t paying, but it does have its issues in getting paid.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and you talk a little bit about your motivations to get involved, had you had any previous experience of organising groups like this.

**Participant:** No, urm…. I was a [OCCUPATION 1], so I was used to dealing with people but urm… no not doing anything like this, no.

**Interviewer:** And how does it, the activities \*dog barking\* - you have a full house with animals, sorry.

**Participant:** Yeah, two cats as well, but they’re not noisy.

**Interviewer:** So, I was asking how does the activity that you do in the group relates with other parts of your life? How do you fit everything?

**Participant:** Urm… I’m quite happy to give my time to it, but my wife isn’t very happy that I’m doing this.

**Interviewer:** She’s not? Okay.

**Participant:** Urm, but we worked in such a way- there was, there was three of us and there’s six days, we did two day each, but then one of the people stepped down and then the other one’s back [WORKING]. So, she took a back seat and we got two new volunteers in, so… I was doing my two days and then kind of babysitting the other two, just keeping them right on the procedures and everything. So, it felt like I was full time for a while. Plus, sometimes were messaging, the cut off supposed to be five o’clock but sometimes we’re still messaging each other into the evening. So that get’s my wife annoyed, “you’re supposed to be finished at five o’clock.” But I’m quite happy. But it does, it does cause a bit of friction in the house sometimes.

**Interviewer:** Urm, and what do you think the other people, the active participants, why did they get involved?

**Participant:** The other people, well-

**Interviewer:** The volunteers and the two coordinators as well.

**Participant:** The initial two they had much the same as myself, they were volunteering they were approached to do the admin job. Urm, the current two that we have were already volunteers, urm… and… in actual fact we’ve got a Zoom meeting on Wednesday, the admin and the other volunteers – no one has met anyone else, because obviously we – you know you’re not going around each other’s houses and things in the current situation. However, I did take identification cards to the number of volunteers, so they’d be able to pick up the ASDA store care I described to you. So, I’ve met, I’ve met some of the volunteers and I ask them when I was handing them out if anyone would be willing to come on admin. And I was, the two in particular that I thought would be good for the role. So initially they said they would be willing to do the role and I recommended them to the other, existing admin people, so that’s how they, they became involved in the admin side of thing. But they’d already been volunteers prior to that.

**Interviewer:** Mmm, so you think they just want to help their neighbourhood?

**Participant:** Yeah, urm, I say there’s…basically… it’s the same for all our volunteers, they just want to be helping others, they know they’re there coping, urm… they’re able to get out and about so they just want to help others. Urm… some of them have been helping some of their immediate neighbour and they thought they could do a bit more, urm so that’s how the volunteering have come about. It’s just people wanting to help others.

**Interviewer:** And have people drop out of your group?

**Participant:** Have people, sorry, dropped out?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** Yeah, urr, yeah…

**Interviewer:** Why?

**Participant:** Some of them have gone back to work or felt, although hey were volunteering, they weren’t doing as much urm… as they would have liked to, so they’ve dropped out. But not many have dropped out, well… formally about three, three have dropped out along the way, however there’s others who came on board, as I said, and have never done anything. Urm… and I do ask the from time to time if anyone’s availability as changed can they let us know, but they don’t come back and say, “oh no, I can’t do it anymore,” so. Urm, because its voluntary you don’t want to push people or pressure people. It’s up to them, they’re volunteering their own time and everything, so. But as I say, we’ve got a core of urr people who who volunteer all the time.

**Interviewer:** Mmm, okay. Urr any problems that have affected the group?

**Participant:** Any problems? Urm…

**Interviewer:** Organising, communication?

**Participant:** We’ve had a couple of have actually had COVID themselves and have had to step back for a couple of weeks. Urm… we, I say we did have an issue relating to prescription, because one of out volunteers was a [OCCUPATION 2], and urm, I said, someone had requested that a prescription be left in a poach, and the [OCCUPATION 2] was kicking off, “you know you can’t do that, you have to hand it over etc.” That’s why we sort of made some more robust rules. But clearly the person… at the house, because they weren’t able to go out which was why they asked us to get the prescription, so I think it was blown all out of proportion.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** All, all, basically to resolve it was a rung the doorbell the person came and collected it. But it, you know, this [OCCUPATION 2] jumped on the fact it was left in a porch and kicked off about it, so.

**Interviewer:** And how about resources and people, do you think you have enough volunteers, enough resources?

**Participant:** Urm, well we do have, we do have the backup, a group in a neighbouring town, its… six or eight miles away, however, at the outset, if we had anything that we couldn’t do, basically put it, we put it onto our WhatsApp group, if we hadn’t heard back, if no one had volunteered within sort of forty-five minutes an hour, we sent out a chaser saying, “we haven’t had anyone, has anyone picked this up, is anyone available?” Urm… and if another half an hour went by, we then referred back to [NAME OF THIRD SECTOR SUPPORT ORGANISATION], and they passed it on to the other group who had a hundred volunteers, and someone would come over to our district and and do it for us. So, we do have that back up, but we haven’t had to ask… them to do anything since… I think the end of July, but that back up is still there if we need it. But urm… I don’t like – you know, you put a request out and if no one’s picked it up within forty-minutes you start to panic because you don’t, you want it to be picked up now, you don’t want to pass it on.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** Urm.

**Interviewer:** And you have many situations like that? That you don’t have answer?

**Participant:** Many situations -sorry, said it again?

**Interviewer:** That you don’t have volunteers to do the job, the tasks?

**Participant:** Well, as I say, at the end, towards the end of July we had, but since then we haven’t had to ask urr for any support. And urr, I mean, we now have, as I say, about half a dozen or more urm, volunteers who will do as much as they can, and as often as not you put a request in saying for anybody to pick up a prescription urr, in [TOWN NAME 2] for delivery to x address, and within two minutes someone’s answering, “I’ll do that one.” Or occasionally, someone will say, “I can do that this afternoon if it can wait until then?” And then you maybe, you’ll say, if no one else picks it up we’ll do that, we’ll phone up the client and we’ll say, “is it okay if it’s the afternoon?” And if they say yes, then we go with that?

**Interviewer:** Okay, now I want to ask you some things about the kind of things that maybe you have done to help the group keep going, to sustain the group. Urm, for example, what kinds of things have you done that have helped to keep the group going?

**Participant:** Urm…

**Interviewer:** Meetings?

**Participant:** Urm… just, I say, just we keep building, building up volunteers and adding clients as we do. Urr, it’s its keeping it going, plus the fact this urr, core kind of numbers of volunteers, urr, just are very keen, and they want to help, you know. So that’s kind of sustaining it. Urm, plus as I say we’re expecting it to get busier as we get into the winter weather. Because you know, the winter and the snow and the ice can be quite severe here in [COUNTRY NAME 2], so we are expecting it to pick up then.

**Interviewer:** Okay, urm, were any of this strategic or just ad-hoc?

**Participant:** Sorry, can you say that again?

**Interviewer:** If any of these things that you did were strategic, did you plan to do it or… did you have a plan in?

**Participant:** Urm, not really, it’s just a case of, let’s see what comes along.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** We said at the beginning, because the three of us were new to this, we sort of making it up as we went along, and it seems to have built up nicely and … urm… urr… we have, out outside the WhatsApp group we have a WhatsApp for our admin people and there’s a bit of banter and fun on there, chatting to each other and things, making sure that things are running smoothly. So… the admin side of thigs are good. The volunteers, I’d say, we we would like to urm, kind of interact with them a bit more, and we do have our first Zoom meeting with them on Wednesday evening, those who are interested in finding out who else is in the group and chatting amongst ourselves, sharing experiences-

**Interviewer:** But it will be the first meeting like that?

**Participant:** Sorry?

**Interviewer:** It’s the first meeting that you are doing?

**Participant:** Yeah. I mean urr urr, when we were allowed to meet, the admin, the original admin group… urr met up a couple of times to discuss things and organise a constitution and decide how we were going to do things and who was doing what. But urr, the new admin people. Urr, I’ve met them all, but they haven’t met each other, because basically you’re not allowed to. So, so it gives a chance, even the admin to see who it is you’re, you’re talking to and stuff like that.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and do you feel that you have learnt anything from coordinating the group?

**Participant:** Again, I’m sorry, can you say that again? If you move closer to the mic again.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, if you have, I want to ask, whether you have learn anything from coordinating the group.

\*Dog barking\*

**Participant:** There must be someone outside, I’m going to shut him in the conservatory. Sorry about that.

**Interviewer:** That’s okay.

**Participant:** He’s barking at someone else out in the conservatory.

**Interviewer:** I was just asking if you have learnt anything from coordinating the group?

**Participant:** Urm, it’s just sort of run of the mill, you know, I always urr, I always use WhatsApp, I always use spreadsheets for various things. Urm… I don’t think there’s really anything.

**Interviewer:** Anything about local government for example? Or things outside the, your context your local community?

**Participant:** Urm… no see the local government have no, no involvement with us. Local community I know urr, I know my town and my neighbouring town fairly well, lived her all my life, urm… so… nothing really. No.

**Interviewer:** Okay, about yourself? Okay. And how do you see the future of this group?

**Participant:** Urm… well its intended that it’ll carry on supporting people. But we really need to make sure we get the word out there. Urm… in order for that to carry on, because already, as I say, I had a list of names as I said to you, form the, from before we started, and I contacted them all and many of them just thought it was related to that initial first lockdown and basically, we weren’t there anymore. So, we’d really like let people know that we are there for them. Sorry this dog is going nuts let me see what he’s barking out. Sorry about that, I think he’s just going to keep barking now.

**Interviewer:** It’s okay. So, did you want to continue the group beyond COVID?

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** That’s the intention. As I say, there’s a number of people who… as I say, when it all, when the first lockdown finished there’s been a number of people who’ve just arrived on getting shopping every week, getting their prescriptions as required, so… just no reason to change that. Urr just carry on supporting these people who don’t otherwise get out. Urm… and as I say there’s someone who, the other people, the people who don’t have family or relatives or anything, the only people they ever saw urr would be their neighbours, and in the current situation, they’re not even seeing them. Which is why we starting the befriending calls for those who don’t have anyone. Urm, and that seems to go well, they all [\*interference\* 43:43]. And, as I say when I phone, when I phone people up to say that we’re there, they’re all very grateful for what we’ve done for them before, and good to know we’re there if we’re needed again, because some of them have become a bit more independent and they’re getting out and getting they’re on shopping and things like that. Just making them aware that if circumstances change, if they’re unwell, if the weathers bad and they don’t feel safe going out, then we’ll go out for them.

**Interviewer:** So, you mentioned that you had a constitution, right?

**Participant:** A constitution, yeah.

**Interviewer:** So, what kind of things do you have there that, is it your plan for the project, for the group? Or urm…

**Participant:** Yeah just, urm… I wish I had it in front of me, it was me who wrote it as well and everyone agreed it. No, it’s just sort of the guidelines for how we operate. Urm… urr… and the various, various roles. So, because I was in the bank and the treasure urm… one of the, one of the former administrators have still got a role within the group as a chairperson when we’ve had meetings. And urm… we’ve got a secretary takes care of anything that needs to be done. So, urr just kind of set setting that out, and all agreeing how we would operate. So, it’s really just formalising, we just, we felt we were opening up a bank account we would probably need a constitutional, as it turns out we didn’t need to have one but because we had one the bank wanted to see it. We’re just agreeing that the bank account would need two signatories and things like that. Urm, so all these kinds of things are on it.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how do you see your role in the group in the future?

**Participant:** My role?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Participant:** Urm… well as I saw, because the other two are new… I’m the kind of Daddy of the group if you like. Keep them all right. But then, urm… its funny with the previous, the previous, one of the previous admin people, whenever I offered help, she’d get like quite stroppy about it, if I said, “of do you need help with this?”, “I know what I’m doing!” kind of thing so I can’t, I can’t be too helpful kind of thing, because sometimes I can be overly helpful. I’m only trying to help but some folks don’t necessarily see it that way, so.

**Interviewer:** Okay, but you want to keep urm… active in the group?

**Participant:** I just, I just always want everything to be correct, done properly and the record keeping kept straight and everything else. I think that’s just kind of my banking background.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** Everything’s got to balance.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so thank you I do not have any more questions, is there anything you want to add urm, I think I ask everything?

**Participant:** No that’s, that’s fine, I mean if you think of any other questions then just e-mail me, you can add to what you’ve got.

**[Debriefing]**

**[End of Interview]**