**Date: 24/11/2020**

**Duration:** 44:39

**Interviewer:** **\*Project Introduction\***

Urm, okay so, first of all I would like you, I’d like to ask you some questions about the group, how the group began, urr my first question is what is the name of your group and when did the group start?

**Participant:** The group started, urm a few weeks into lockdown and the group name is [GROUP NAME]. It was previously called [PREVIOUS GROUP NAME] but we changed it urm because we needed a group after lockdown as well, looking after people and [GROUP NAME] had a sort of ring to it that it was everyone together in this and all that. So, we were called [PREVIOUS GROUP NAME] – because we’re a network of people – but then we changed it to [GROUP NAME] because we’re all in it together.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how did, how did it start? How was the process?

**Participant:** So, we - someone else started the group, urm who was called [GROUP ORIGINATOR NAME], she started it and she was [OCCUPATION 1]. Urm, but then as we started applying for more, urr she contacted me and said would I mind helping with the marketing side of stuff. Urm then as we started applying for more and more funding, she had to withdraw her involvement from the group due to her having involvement with the council, because it was a conflict of interest. Which was absolutely fine. She still works very closes with the group, kept – you know, just not with it. Then, urm, we were working with a friend of mine called [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] who I know from previous, from previous businesses as well, and obviously this was a community group so a little bit different. Urm, but he came in and started to help with the running of the group as well. So now it’s me and him that run it, urm with support from the council. But we’ve sort of adapted it a bit more since the start but its always sort of kept its true purpose of helping people where they need. Urm, but yeah started by one person and then it grew I think we’ve got now a team of seventy volunteers on board.

**Interviewer:** Okay, just – the internet is not very stable. Okay, so you say you change a little bit the goal of the project of the the group, can you explain me a little bit more about that? What was the aim of the group when it started? Sorry.

**Participant:** So initially it was really getting food out to people, food parcels urm and getting people supplies. Now urm especially later on during the lockdown it sort of changed into more of a community type project. So, we opened up a book swap, we also started doing sort of activities every week – a coffee morning. So it became a bit more of a community, rather than a support group in the end, but it still had that heart so, you know, food and supplies to people still, but we’re doing it less so because people didn’t need it as much. So, it adapted to sort of how the lockdown was going and even after lockdown we’ve sort of continued going, adapting the group to what it needs to be to carry on going.

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

**Participant:** …Urm so, at the moment we’re responding to the odd request. So, we might get someone phone up and say they need a prescription they might say they need last minute milk or something like that, little things. So we still just today we needed prescriptions picked up, so its little things like that that we do, but other than that we meet probably one a month, we have catch up over the phone and all that sort of stuff. And just how we can still help in the community. But at the moment with how everything is at the moment, it’s not really needed because people are still at work and stuff. Urm, but we’re still keeping the structure because people who do need it at the moment.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and have you had any previous experience of organising groups like this?

**Participant:** Urm, so I was involved in, actually with [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] who I run the group with, [RADIO STATION NAME], so we ran a radio station. Urm I was going to be brought onto the board of directors of that, that had to come to an end. Urm and in terms of other stuff, I’ve been involved in a lot of community projects, urm from a young age and [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] has a well. So you know it’s something that I’ve always enjoyed doing, I’ve always enjoyed volunteering, urm, and I’ve been with [CHARITY NAME 1] for a while, urr started there probably seven years ago, still do the odd thing to them with them this day. It’s a bit, it’s more difficult because I’ve got work and all that. Because where I am now and that’s where we’re based out of, so [GROUP NAME] came urm under the [CHARITY NAME 1] \*audio cuts out 05:29\* their offices and start supplying stock is here and stuff.

**Interviewer:** Sorry I lost you, the internet, do you mind if we try Zoom? I’m so sorry about this but its not working very well, so I will just stop recording and send you a link for Zoom here, and thank you.

So, you were explaining that you had some previous experience, but I lost part of it so if you can repeat, so-

**Participant:** Yeah, I’ll start again on that one. So, I’d previous experience urm with a group that actually [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] was also lead on, urm, and it was called [RADIO STATION NAME] which ais a community radio station, so community events and that sort of stuff. Previous to that and still now, the past six or seven years I’ve been involved with a group called [CHARITY NAME 1], urm which is where the [GROUP NAME] offices are now based. Urm, so we’ve got a really good relationship with them, and we’ve grown, we’ve grown alongside them which is really good. So, I’ve been involved in them for quite a while now and they do a lot of community projects, we do a lot of like events, stuff like that, and engage with a lot of young people. So really good to get back involved with them see if we can help people together. You know link up.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and in this mutual aid group, when did you get involved?

**Participant:** So I got involved probably about a week and a half, two weeks into the conception of the group, and the group was set up pretty much as lockdown, I’d say the same week that lockdown happened, so, I was there from the start really. Urm and then the other people that come in now to help like [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] and everyone else, come in sort of afterwards but we had – the whole point of the group was not just to have us running it, it was linking to the people helping us run it. Because, you know, working with tother people in that space who know a lot more about this is key. Urm… and sorry, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And why did you get involved?

**Participant:** Urm… well… because I run my own business and nothing, like… all my work got cancelled I had nothing on and the thought of being sat around in the house doing nothing really didn’t appeal to me. Urm, I always like to be out and about I don’t really like to be sat in the house doing nothing. Urm… and this was a great way to do it whilst also helping people. So… and you know, the fact that the community aspect of it as well, I’ve lived in [TOWN NAME 1] for…ooh… fifteen years of my life. Urm. I’ve only recently moved out of [TOWN NAME 1], urm so you know, I absolutely love the area and stuff and its great and I know a lot of people here. So, to get involved in that as well and just to help people in the local community is great. And meet new people as well, I love meeting new people and it’s a great way to do it whilst still in lockdown has to happen.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and so what is your role in the group?

**Participant:** So… we don’t really have like official titles but its me and [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] who both lead it, urm and every decision that we sort of make in the group has to have like unanimous decision between me and him. We are looking to create more of a structure urm but will also be sort of me and [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] at the top of the urm of the structure and then everyone else under. Urm… in terms of you know, management titles and stuff we all get stuck in still, me and [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] will still go out and do deliveries and stuff so you know there’s no real sort of titles but me and [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] run the group together and always ask each other before doing anything massive in the group.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And how does the activity that you do in the group relate to the other things you do in your life? How do you fit everything?

**Participant:** So… it really just urm we both have the phone, so… when someone rings it will go to both of our phones and one of us will answer it. Whoever then answers it will usually then log it and just quickly put a note in the WhatsApp group for someone to deal with it. So, it doesn’t really take much of my time. If I’m doing shopping for someone it will usually have to wait until later on in the day or, you know, maybe I’ll get someone else to do it or maybe later on the next day. Urm… that’s a bit more logistical. But in terms of interfering with what my life and my current work, doesn’t -because the demand went down and everyone got back to work and the demand was high when everyone wasn’t at work, so it was a lot easier to manage your time. But there wasn’t really any point when it was difficult to manage in terms of time.

**Interviewer:** It wasn’t?

**Participant:** So, it’s always been quite easy – no it’s always been quite easy to fit in and urr you know, and have time to do it.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and can you explain a little bit more what geographical area has the group covered?

**Participant:** So, we covered the whole of the postcode [POSTCODE]. Urm which is [VILLAGE NAME 1], [TOWN NAME 1], and also parts further on the coast. So, I mean our area was basically anywhere form the town to a house in the middle of nowhere. With it being [COUNTY NAME], it is quite spaced out. Urm… and we even were going up to, we’re going miles up the road to drop something off at a zoo as well every week. So, the area we covered was very very variant, but to have the local knowledge of the people in the group helped as well. Urm because they knew where everything was or we knew where everything was so, you know, the – any challenge that was sort of there was overcome quite easy. But the yeah, its, it is quite a large area to cover, the whole [POSTCODE] postcode.

**Interviewer:** And how many people are in the group?

**Participant:** So, on the sort of board of people who lead it it’s me and [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1], urm below that we have sort of like a team that came in and did a lot of like the packing for the food parcels, a lot of the other organisation as well, so on there we had about five people. And then below that we have urm about, urm its forty-to-seventy people in the group, it’s forty-to-seventy.

**Interviewer:** Mmm.

**Participant:** But varies on how many people actually get involved at once. Urm, we’ve never had every person in the group in a room together or anything like that. But people are on standby and people will act as soon as they get a message so. We have I think seventy volunteers in total that applied and got through, so.

**Interviewer:** Okay, urm, you mentioned shopping, can you describe a little bit more the types of activities you have been doing since the beginning, yeah?

**Participant:** Yeah, so we sort of split into three different sections for the group, so we had prescription collection and deliveries for people who couldn’t get out, that’s still going to this day. We also were doing food parcels, that’s stopped at the moment we refer all the, any food parcels that are needed again and again get referred to two other community projects in the area. Just because, we… don’t like holding all the stock of food because we don’t use a lot of it anymore. So, we’d rather farm it out to everyone else who can deal with it and who need the referrals. The third one is the shopping, so we had a food card provided by the local council. What we’d do is we’d go and - this is for people who pay for shopping - we’d go and do the shopping for people, we’d give them a receipt and the council a receipt and the council will then invoice the person who needed to get the shopping. So, we wouldn’t touch any cash or anything. But those were the sort of three aspects that we got involved in. There was the odd occasion of, “can you drop something off at the doctors? Can you do this for me, can you do that?” but it was mainly fitted into those three, prescriptions, food parcel or paid for shopping.

**Interviewer:** And food-parcel? Can you explain me that?

**Participant:** Yes, so we had a set list from the local council again on what should be involved in the food parcel. Urm… we accepted donations we also had donations from [CHARITY NAME 2], which is a charity. We also had delivered from local supermarkets, [RETAILER NAME 1] and even [RETAILER NAME 2] came and delivered stuff. And we opened up for public deliveries, urm public donations later on down the line. Urm… we also had some people who were getting government food parcels but didn’t need them, and they were then donating the government food parcels to us to make other food parcels for people. So, with those food parcels we had to have people who needed ongoing support through this. And then provided them weekly and I think we were probably only providing about twenty, twenty-five per week, it wasn’t that many, and it went down each week. And then we made the decision to urm… say to people, if you don’t need them, you know, this will stop now, but if you do, let us know and we will get you sorted with either the [CHARITY NAME 3] or the [CHARITY NAME 4], which is also in the area.

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

**Participant:** I’d say now, in the current situation its about once a week. In the urm… during the pandemic it was about three or four times a day at most. Urm… and then we had set days like every Tuesday we’d get the deliveries from [CHARITY NAME 2] and we’d sort all those out and do the food parcels on a Tuesday. And then on a Saturday we’d open the book swap and donations from the public. So, we had set days to do thigs. Urm… but… in terms of urm… sort of other people getting involved it was sort of two or three times a day depending on what requests came through.

**Interviewer:** And what kind of resources do you have?

**Participant:** So, urm surprisingly we had a lot of pasta and a lot of toilet rolls.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** So, had a lot of those in stock and still do, still getting them at the moment, we got a lot of long-life milk, didn’t hold a lot of fresh produce. Urm… [CHARITY NAME 2] gave us a lot of fresh produce that we used. Urm, and we had quite a lot of fruit and veg that came in that was out of date, anything that was out of date in terms of fruit of veg we donated to a local zoo that was struggling for supplies. So, anything that we had was used. Urm… and then, you know, we hold a lot of toiletries as well and then a lot of generic stuff like cans and tins and all that sort of stuff. Urm, a a lot of sanitary products as well. Urm, a wide range of stuff to kind of supply to anyone. And then as we needed them less, we donated them to other foodbanks and other places that would need them. So, nothing that we had went to waste, which was good, everything went to where it needed to be. Urm, I think three was probably only two products that we chucked-out and they were out of date, yeah it was back from tins that we got donated, so everything got used pretty much.

**Interviewer:** And did you have access to funds?

**Participant:** So, we had some funding from urm a local councillor who helped us market the group a bit more and that was to engage with the correct people. We also had funding from the council, we had vouchers, it was two hundred and fifty quid on the vouchers. Urm and we haven’t even, we’ve still got a bit on one of them left still, so we didn’t go through all of that. But the money that was on those vouchers we used for the shopping. Urm… and then also the public made donations as well which is really good, and then that went back into helping people. Urm, but in terms of sort of other funding, that was really it. Urm we didn’t really want to be holding massive amounts of cash as a community organisation. Urm because we knew that sort of after the pandemic there wouldn’t be much, much of a place for that to go. But you know, we’ve used it for stuff that can help people through the way and we’ve still got a bit left that we’re looking to do something with in the future. But we haven’t had much, we haven’t applied for funding bids at all for this, everything’s been given to us we haven’t applied for anything.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Are there any particular skills that people in the group have?

**Participant:** Urm, so… everyone who… so me and myself [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] both have DBS clearance so we can go out in school and everything like that which we have been. In terms of other stuff, it was really good to work with h some people who had good management experience. Good communication skills, all that sort of stuff. Urm, and then urr myself I [OCCUPATION 2] so I managed all the social media, urm, [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] [OCCUPATION 3], he did a lot of the management in terms of structure and stuff and made sure it ran properly. And I did everything technical. And we also had [CO-ORGANISER NAME 2] who got involved as well, she was fantastic at, she was the link between the council, and she had all the contacts. So, it was just connected with the right people in the group who had the right contacts. But I think everyone in the group who got involved on on the Saturdays or Tuesdays who were doing stuff, and their own skills. Like we had people who really good at cooking, we had a school chef who got involved and started cooking stuff with rhubarb crumbles with stuff that arrived, you know, it was stuff like that that was really good. But it was just… yeah, people had different skills and we just saw them develop over time, you know, great.

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

**Participant:** Urm, so our main source came from Facebook, so we out a post out on Facebook saying, “look who’s wanting to volunteer?” and that’s pretty much where all of them came from. Urm… there wasn’t, I had a feeling that some of it would have been word of mouth, but… I have strong feeling that a lot of it came from the Facebook posts we did and sort of the marketing and social media.

**Interviewer:** And how about people with the needs, how did you, for example how did you get access to Them? How was the-?

**Participant:** So, we had referrals come in – so we became part of urr… [COUNTY NAME] County Council set up this thing called [COUNCIL INITIATIVE]. Urr, they’re idea to manage the community groups in the area wasn’t to overtake them like other areas have, it was actually to work with them. So, we were the group for [TOWN NAME 1], they had another group for [TOWN NAME 2], [TOWN NAME 3], for all the other little towns nearby. So we were the [TOWN NAME 1] one, so we got all the referrals for [TOWN NAME 1] of the [POSTCODE] area, so anything that came through for that area we’d get, we’d evaluate and then get someone to work on it. We also had a public phone, people could phone us to our number, that would go through to me and [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1], we’d deal with those. Urm, other than that we’d have the odd thing on Facebook, people getting in touch asking for help. I had one yesterday ask for a prescription collection which we’ve done. So, we’ve tried to make it as accessible as possible. We’ve had e-mail addresses, phone, social media and also people could even write in if they wanted and I think we’ve had communication through all of them, so it’s a wide range that people accepted. But the main bulk came from the council and was referred down to us from their groups.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how did you organise the volunteering work?

**Participant:** So, urm, it was all organising in terms of a, we had a WhatsApp group, urm, everyone was held in there, we’d never share any personal details in the public WhatsApp group, we’d always direct message the person with them. But we… trying to think. So, if anything arose we’d just put it in the group and say, “look, we need this done, can someone help?” Urm and yeah, they came and helped and all that sort of stuff. We prioritised getting people in the group we were DBS checked first, so we made sure we had our checks and stuff in there. But as we went further along, we made sure we did our own checks on people who didn’t had DBS. So we spoke to them on the phone we spoke to them, you know, via e-mail we always spoke to someone in person – or you know over the phone or via call before we invited them into the group, just to cover our backs. But in terms of people getting involved it was generally just a message in the group, “we’ve got something on this day, can anybody help? We’ve got this many spaces that we can do safely,” “yes, I’ll come, I’ll come, I’ll come,” and then we just meet them on the day and see them. A lot of people it was a very quick case off pull the car up, quickly put stuff in at a safe distance, and then, you know, that’s them gone. But we tried to keep people getting involved on site low so we couldn’t transmit the virus between us and stuff. So, there was like hand sanitisers and facemasks and all that sort of stuff.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Urm, is the group part of any national network?

**Participant:** Urm, so not any national network. So, we work closely with [COUNCIL INITIATIVE], but we are our own group. And [COUNCIL INITIATIVE] is just [COUNTY], so it doesn’t go any further than that. Urm, and so in terms of working with any national groups, no it’s just local.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And, put you work, you mentioned you were in contact with other groups, locally. Urm why did you decided to to do that?

**Participant:** Urm, because everyone needed to help together in the pandemic really. You know, everyone needs to work together, so there was sort of three other groups in [TOWN NAME 1] who were doing what we were doing, and we’d rather help them urm, you know, even if we didn’t use stuff from [CHARITY NAME 2] that day we’d give them a quick call and say, “look, we’ve got this much milk, do you want to take it?” And they’d say, “yes.” So little things like that to connect in with them. Even in groups that weren’t in our town we’re connecting with, because there’s usually stuff that we, they systems we built to start with we also helped them build. So for instance our spreadsheet with all our information and all this sort of stuff that was locked and had automation and all this, we obviously wiped it first so it didn’t have any data on it but we could send that out and say, “look, this is what you can use as a base,” urm so we built infrastructure for a few other community groups as well, which is quite good. But it was just about linking up with some of them and seeing how we could them and they could help us, more than anything. Urm, sort of work together.

**Interviewer:** Mmm, can you tell me a little bit more about how was the relationship with local authority, local council, how was?

**Participant:** Urm, so the council, urr… the relationship at the start was very, very you know, it was good all the way through. I think at the start everyone was a bit confused about how it was all working and how it was meant to be structured and stuff so there was about of initial confusion, but there was never a point when there’s been any tension or anything, its always been very relaxed. Urm, so… yeah there was an initial point where they were trying to work out what was going on. Urm and workout how to manage it best, then when they set in, this is how its, what’s happening, this is how its working, this is how we’re helping you, as soon as that came out it was a weight lifted of our shoulders as well because we knew we had people up above who could help with stuff. So if we had someone who disclosed to us that they were dealing with mental health issues, we could instantly go to the council and say, “this person here, you need to contact them in terms of support.” So, the working relationship’s been really good with them from the start, despite sort of initial confusion. But that only lasted maybe a week in the grand scheme of things. Now everything is working really well. Urm, we had chats with them regularly, there’s some dropped e-mails, you know, chats on the phone. Urm and that team that’s on [COUNTY NAME] County Councils become quite good urm… sort of work colleagues with. You know, it’s become something we’ve really enjoyed so yeah, its its been a bit difficult to start with, but straight after that initial sort of… “what’s going on, how do we sort this and how do we structure this,” it became a really good working relationship in terms of passing of information, correct chance to do it and working correctly together.

**Interviewer:** And why was difficult in the beginning?

**Participant:** I think it was because it was difficult for everyone because no one really knew what was going on urm… and especially when we first said we were setting up this thing, I remember that we were sort of, especially I was sat there going, “is this going to take over from, is this going to take over from what they’re doing? Is this going to work with them?” And after a about a week of discussions with them and all this, working with them to devise a plan it just became clear that we’re going to work really well together. So, it was only about that initial week that we sort of sat down and going, “what’s going on, how does this all work together, how do we work with you? How do we do this?” But after that initial week we just clicked and cracked on with it. And we all had the same goal which was really good.

**Interviewer:** Relationships with any other organisations?

**Participant:** Yeah, so we’ve got good relationships with two community groups in the [POSTCODE] area, which is the [CHARITY NAME 3] and also [CHARITY NAME 4] which is a community group in the local area, they both provide food parcels, they both provide essentials for people. Urm… initially we worked really heavily with the [CHARITY NAME 3], then we found out that the [CHARITY NAME 4] were also asking for some donations on toiletries and stuff, we had urr a quite large stock pile so we started donating stuff to them as well. Urm, so… anything that we couldn’t use or didn’t want to use or couldn’t find a use for we were donating to those two groups. Urm and then after we stopped doing the food parcels, and referrals that we’ve had have gone to one of those two community groups that were best suited so we don’t have to deal with them and they get the referrals. Urm… because they rely heavily on the amount of referrals they get for their funding. So the more referrals we put their way that are needed, the more funding they get and they keep going, so it’s just about helping each other out and they may contact us and say, “urm… we need this, have you got any?” “yes,” we’ll provide – I think we’re dropping off some milk for them later today, stuff like that, little things like that where we can help. Urm and even now our website’s going to become a hub for those two groups in the local area. Urm so I think we’ve got, that’s happening later on next week even. So, people can see what all of us are doing together, rather than thinking we’re working against each other, we’re all working together in this area.

**Interviewer:** And has your group tried to get any official recognition?

**Participant:** Urm, so we’re officially recognised by [COUNCIL INITIATIVE], as a group. Urm… but, other than that, urm, if we need any funding or anything, you know, we are operating under [CHARITY NAME 1] as a charity at the moment. We made the decision to work under there as an independent body still, but under them in the terms of getting funding. But there’s been no funding needs, so to get officially recognised as a group hadn’t really been needed. Urm… we are recognised but the council as the official group for [TOWN NAME 1], we’re recognised by the local residents as that, so there’s no need to go further and get that at the moment. You know, if there is, we’ll go and do it, but at the moment there’s just not that need.

**Interviewer:** Okay, you talk a bit about your motivations for getting involved. What are the motivations of other active participants in your opinion? Why did they get involved?

**Participant:** I think it was for mainly the same reasons I mean… people were sat at home doing nothing, wanting to get out of the house. A lot of people, we were speaking to are the people who are usually active and want to get out and love – we have one called [CO-ORGANISER NAME 3] who travels the world, like, she couldn’t do that, so helping the community – she travels the world volunteering, like she builds houses for people and stuff abroad. It’s amazing stuff. So she, she got involved and I think for her and a lot of other people it was – we’re a community group, you know, most of the people in this group actually knew each other from distant points and sort of past, so most people knew each other really well. You know, we’re all getting involved, it was something to do but it was also helping the community who needed it. And even people who are in the group some of them had had to isolate recently for different reasons because they’ve been out at work or somewhere, and we’ve said, “look if you need support for anything, we’ll be there.” So, I think it’s just sort of helping people as well, people really enjoy helping people. But it’s something I get a lot of enjoyment out of, so, I think it’s just a mixture between helping people and wanting to get out of the house. And the two mix and work really well together.

**Interviewer:** I see, and have people drop out of the group?

**Participant:** Urm… no one’s said – well, we’ve had one person drop out and say - sorry, we’ve had two people drop out and say, they can’t be involved in the group anymore. One was [GROUP ORIGINATOR NAME] who left because of conflict of interest reasons. Urm… she still engages with the group and will still, will pass information onto us that we need and stuff like that. Urm, but that was just purely because she [OCCUPATION 1] and if we’re getting council funding and applying for stuff, she can’t be part of the group for reasons. Urm, the other one was someone called [CO-ORGANISER NAME 4] who runs her own business, and as sort of demand picked up with her business again, she had to, I mean she runs three businesses, she had to make the decision to step back and say, “I can’t be part of this group anymore,” because she was on the management team as well. So, she had to go. Urm, but she she left probably towards coming to the end of the pandemic when gyms started to reopen. Urm but in terms of that, its’ only two people who’ve left the group fully. There’s, in the volunteer group there’s the odd person who says, “I can’t do today, I can’t do this,” but no one has ever said, “I can’t do it altogether.” Urm, everyone else on the group it’s just as and when you’re free, which is why we have so many volunteers because not everyone’s free at the same time and we have to understand that. But yeah, I don’t think anyone’s left the group other than those two.

**Interviewer:** Okay, any problems that have affected the group?

**Participant:** Urm… I think I’m… there hasn’t really been anything that’s affected it massively, urm, there’s been the odd change here and there, Urm…but in terms of sort of affecting the group or everyone in the group or everyone in the community, no there’s not much change really. Everyone’s pretty much been – there’s been stuff we’ve had to adapt to for sure. Urm... like when the shopping vouchers started it was only me and [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] who could use them because you know, with the council money and all that sort of stuff. But in terms of big changes to the group or community – there hasn’t really been anything that’s affected anything in terms of running it.

**Interviewer:** Any communication problems, differences?

**Participant:** Urm you’ve got the odd one form the council sometimes sent out urm information to – they’d say someone needs to, so they’d give us, someone needs a prescription, give *me* a call on, and you’d have to ring the council on that number and stuff. They’d send that out to maybe two community groups instead of just you, urm and then by the time you’d phone the community group who’d got it two minutes before might have responded to it already. But that as really it. We didn’t have any sort of massive – we didn’t really have any - no one messaged us back and said, “oh the postcode’s wrong, this is wrong,” you know everything that we did was pretty spot on the the data because we were really careful with it. Urm, so there wasn’t any communication issues on our end really, we didn’t experience any really. Urm, you know, other than sort of, people might have got there before us and stuff. A few of the people on the group are NHS responders, I know they’ve had a different experience with that app, but nothing that we’ve done, no.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and in terms of lack of resources or facilities, for example storage space, transport, how did you get that?

**Participant:** So, in terms of storage pace we’ve had the – [CHARITY NAME 1] own a building called [BUILDING NAME], so a community building, so we’ve had that and we’ve now got an office in here which - you kind of just get it [? to store more stuff 34:11]. Urm and then in terms of transport, a lot of the volunteers have their own vehicles, urr me and [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] have our own vehicles we have access to a mini-bus as well through [CHARITY NAME 1], so our transport issues have mainly been quite easy. But the way we’ve split deliveries up, we never needed anything bigger than a car. We even had people arriving in little Smart Cars and stuff to do stuff. Urm, so the way we split anything up and the way we managed everything meant that we didn’t need to have any big lorries or vans, we could just deal with people having their own cars, who were more than happy to do that. But the transport’s peoples own vehicles and storage is [BUILDING NAME] in [TOWN NAME 1] as a sort of central hub.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Okay so, I want to ask about urm… we talk about problems now the things that might have helped the group keep going. Urr for example, have you done anything that helped the group keep going?

**Participant:** Urm… I think on the marketing side and stuff has been quite successful, keeping everything going on there. Urm, because we need to keep – to keep the group going we need a constant flood of people in so to keep everyone engaged and knowing that. Urm, we also started doing, towards the end we got involved in something called community pop-ups that was done up here. So what we’d do is we’d arrive urm, we’d partnered with a local audio company, they’d arrive in their van, we’d open the side doors, put some speakers out and play some music and we had a local NHS sports team came along and they’d do some dances with the kids and stuff to keep them engaged. So, we, so we did these, and everything was socially distance and we had limited staff involved and all this. And we’d go around and, not only [TOWN NAME 1], but we did [VILLAGE NAME 2] Common, and we did loads of others in the local area. And that’s something that [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] and [CO-ORGANISER NAME 2], I think, are still doing at the moment. Urm, I’m not so much involved in it because I’ve got my own business on the side, urm, but that is still going at the moment which is really successful. But in terms of sort of what we’d done for the group, really sort of keeping it going and keeping people engaged its worked really well.

**Interviewer:** How?

**Participant:** Urr, well just keeping them in the knowledge of what’s going on in the group, we’re doing stuff on Saturday, we post it on Facebook we let a few people know in the community. Urm… we put newsletters out with the local councils and stuff. Just keeping people involved and knowing what’s going on in the local area was key through the whole thing, and just keeping them up to date with we’re here, we’re here to help if you need us just let us know, and not being pushing about it as well.

**Interviewer:** Was that strategic or just ad-hoc?

**Participant:** Urm… some of it was and some of it wasn’t. Urr, so a lot of it, like, if we’d had a meeting the week before if if if, we’d knew where we were going to go that week and what we were going to do. Urm, but I mean as with any sort of aid group and this sort of thig, it was very sort of - some things were last minutes. Urm like “as I quickly need this can you do this?” “yeah, okay we can do that,” so a lot of the content on social media as well came from very last-minute things. Urr but it kept people engaged throughout and it did really well.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how about urm learnings, did you feel that you have learnt anything from coordinating the group?

**Participant:** Urm, yeah so, I mean, a lot of stuff like how to deal urm… knowing there’s a lot of people out there who do need the actual support is one thing. Urm… I don’t think any of us were quite aware of how many people needed this support and sort of. I don’t think anyone really knew what level of support was out there. I mean even where you’d phone up the council and sain, “I’ve got this person who needed this level of support, urr what what can we do?” and the council would say, “oh there’s this programme here,” and you’d say, “is there? I’ve never heard of that before.” So, there’s new programmes that we’d heard about, help schemes we’d heard about. Urm… and even new departments that we’d heard about in the council that we didn’t know existed. Urm, so it was little things like that where we learnt new, urm new paths for people to get help. That are still, are still used daily today because someone might mention something and I’d say, “I know exactly who’ll do that for you.” Urm… so… really it was just sort of having worked with in the community for a while, I knew a lot about the area, but it was just a little more about support programmes in the area as well that I didn’t know about. And I met a lot of new people as well and learnt a lot about them and how they cope with stuff so it was interesting that people coped with new challenges and sort of how they got by and also how they live a bit more as well. With the different areas you can go from the [TOWN NAME 1] you can go from people who have a - you know, urm, probably I would say middle class to quite council properties and stuff. Urm so it was interesting to see, it was good to learn how they are supported, and you know, what level of support they usually get from the council.

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

**Participant:** So, we’ve had a lot of chat about this and and the the way the group’s going to go forward now is we are going to keep going. We’ll keep on doing prescription runs or food runs for people who need them. Urr but we’ll also, the ideas to carry on doing community projects. So, if something like, I don’t know, we’ve got a bandstand down at the park, urm, to give an example, we need to repaint the side of it. Great we’ll put it out in the volunteer group, and we’ll say, “right we need some people to come down and paint this,” and well go and help with the local community. We’ll get involved with a lot of events and stuff.

Urm, so… the next part the next sort of step in the group is more like engagement. Helping people urr engage a bit more and get back out. I think we’re going to start a scheme, we’re due to start it before this last lockdown but then we couldn’t start it because the lockdown. Urm, where it was… getting people who are still isolating, who still don’t want to go back outside – back outside. So it’s going out for walks with them, socially distant and sort of showing them the new, because a lot of older people get confused at new rules, even my Grandad was, you know, “one way system in a shop, I’ve never heard of this before,” urm, so getting them back out into, even just the normal world and showing them the what to do things – “make sure you get your mask on in this building, they’ve got a one way system in this building, you can’t do this, you can’t do that, but this is the sort of safe way to do thigs.” So, it’s just getting people back engaged in normal, in sort of the normal world now – or sort of the new normal. Urm, so its more about engagement with people now and getting them back into wherever they were before.

**Interviewer:** And how do you see your role in the group in the future?

**Participant:** Urm, so… I don’t really know being honest. I don’t really know. I think it will be me and [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] running it but in terms of what we do… I don’t know. Urr it could just be that we meet every month and have meetings still. It could be that I’m more on the ground doing stuff with people on Saturday obviously, you know, I don’t really know where that’ll be. Urm, but I don’t plan to walk out and not be involved, I still plan to be involved heavily in it through the development of the group and see it through. Me and [CO-ORGANISER NAME 1] have always said that urm, you know, we started it, we’ll make sure we get to where we’re supposed to be with it and we make sure we’ll see it through. We’re not someone who’ll just walk out, “right that’s the pandemic done, see you later, bye!” We start It something we need to sort of see it through to where its going to end now. Urm and hopefully we’ll see it through, we’ll have a few more years in it doing good positive stuff and not have to deal with pandemic again hopefully. Urm but we’ve always, even in this one we said from the start, we got a call from the council and they said, “are you still going, will you still help?” and the answers “yes, we’re still here, just let us know if you need us.” We’ve had the odd referral through from the council this time, but it’s been a lot less in terms of demand and work. Because people have still got money coming in because people still have living and stuff. So, yeah, I’ll still be in the group, I’m sure, I’ll still be hopefully helping people at the top and all this sort of stuff so yeah, we’ll see what happens.

**Interviewer:** Okay, well I don’t think I have more questions actually. So, urm… I don’t know if you have anything that you like to add about the group, about your experience?

**Participant:** Urm... not that I think off the top of my head, no.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**[Debriefing]**

**[End of Interview]**