

'For the Love of Scrubs' gets Royal support

Her Royal Highness the Countess of Wessex visited Frensham Heights School, near Farnham on Wednesday 3rd of June to volunteer at the 'For the Love of Scrubs' Farnham, Aldershot and Guildford hub run out of the school.

Her Royal Highness cut out some scrub trousers from material provided by the larger hub in Ascot – Scrubs Glorious Scrubs, purchased with money raised by Noah Evans (son of Chris Evans) and also helped to make face coverings that the group is making and distributing to volunteer organisations and elderly and vulnerable groups.

Her Royal Highness met the team from Frensham Heights School, led by Lynn Goodburne, who have worked tirelessly throughout this period making scrubs, scrub hats, scrub wash bags and headbands for the NHS, care homes and other frontline workers. She also met with members of some of the sub hubs from Rowledge, Churt and Upper Hale, each of which have over 30 members. She did a wonderful job helping the volunteers and thanked those present for their efforts so far and wished them well going forwards.

'For the Love of Scrubs' is a national voluntary organisations started by Ashleigh Linsdell, an A&E nurse at Pilgrim Hospital in Boston, Lincolnshire. It was initiated at the end of March this year and now has over 50,000 members across the UK.

The Farnham, Aldershot and Guildford group at Frensham Heights School started with the simple act of Nick, the Head of Science, donating the schools goggles and gloves to Frimley Park Hospital. Then Giles, the Head of DT, designed efficient non-surgical facial shields to be printed on the school's 3D printers. Giles then remotely taught a team of residential staff to run the printers. Following on from this, the small team of staff – Lynn Goodburne, Stefi, Katherine, Laura, Linn, Sian and Louise - became aware that NHS staff were in need of wash bags for their scrubs to avoid spreading the virus at home. A call was put out for fabric donations and volunteers to sew and cut fabric. With the discovery of some expert sewers in the School community, the feasibility of making scrubs became real. This was when the team of staff at Frensham made contact with 'For The Love of Scrubs' and the initiative at Frensham really became a community affair, with more than 400 members, including sub hubs and individuals. This group have sent finished items to local hospitals, GP Surgeries, hospices and care homes in Farnham, Frimley, Basingstoke, Alton, Guildford, Southampton and surrounding areas and more recently organised a delivery to a hospital in Wales who were desperate for scrubs.

The Upper Hale, Seale & Sands and Aldershot and Farnham Hockey Club Hub started on the 10th of April, with a plea from a hockey friend of Catherine Powell's who is a paramedic based out of Tongham for Scrubs Bags, followed by a discussion with another hockey friend who is a nurse at the Royal Surrey they needed more scrubs, someone out of Frensham Heights School is co-ordinating something please help if you can. The group started in The Glen and on Nutshell Lane in Upper Hale, and rapidly grew with the help of a neighbour Jocelyn Close. Reaching out via the Aldershot and Farnham Hockey Club Facebook page to that community saw the group grow again.

The team is now a mixed group of volunteers, some are neighbours in Upper Hale, some are members of Aldershot and Farnham Hockey Club and some folks from Seale and Sands, plus a few on the route between Upper Hale and Frensham Heights School. They now have over 30 generous and passionate volunteers from all walks of life, from 16 to over 70, most of whom have never met, some of whom had lived within a few houses of each other for years. We have some folks in the shielding category, whom we organise careful deliveries and collection from. The over-riding feedback from the group is that their involvement has been a truly positive experience using skills some had not used in years to help the NHS, front line workers, other volunteers and the vulnerable and elderly.

This group started making scrub bags, hats and head bands, then moved on making scrubs as the sewing competency of our group increased and they are now making scrubs, face coverings and face covering bags. The group has supplied some of those in need directly, including a Doctor at Frimley Park who was struggling to find small scrubs and another Doctor at the Royal Surrey that just couldn't seem to get scrubs as by the time she got into work each day they were gone. They have also donated wash bags and head bands to the Paramedics at Tongham from where they have distributed to a wider group of paramedics and washbags directly to folks in Radiology at the Royal Surrey. This group is now co-ordinating some of the distribution of face coverings from the large group to the Farnham Foodbank and Share Farnham.

The second biggest hub is in Churt with two groups having been formed. The Churt WI got involved on Sunday 19 April 2020 when Lucy Petrie, a parent of a Frensham Heights School and volunteer from the original group called Marion Mitchell, President of Churt WI and the Churt WI for Scrubs was born, to date there are 15 ladies who have volunteered their services. There was still a need for more volunteers so Marion liaised with the Churt Parish Council Clerk, Dawn Barrow, to see if she would send out a request to Churt residents asking for volunteers. The rest is history and by the end of the day, 20 April 2020, two groups of volunteers from Churt were organised.

The teams were named: 'Churt WI for SCRUBS' and 'Churt Scrubbers'. There has been a recent demand from Frimley Hospital for scrubs made from children's duvet covers as the material is softer and nicer to wear at night which the Churt groups have lead the way on. Brijitte Dreyfus from Churt introduced the idea of children writing letters to the elderly in the community and with the backing of the team at Frensham Heights School, the school children have been writing beautiful letters including drawing pictures of their pets which are being delivered with the meals to the elderly and vulnerable through community services such as The Gostrey Center, which has also received face coverings and wash bags made by the group as have Farnham Assist.

3rd June 2020