

# LEVENS HULME

If you are living alone, in need of advice or support, self-isolating or struggling to make ends meet, Manchester Community Response Team have a helpline open Monday- Saturday 8.30am -5.30pm: **0800 234 6123**

## big street changes

The Beelines project is kicking off in July with 27 trial 'filters' - barriers preventing cars from going down some streets. It has £2.5m from a mayoral fund to improve the streets for cyclists and pedestrians.



The wider plan also includes new pedestrian crossings, secure bike parking, and 'school streets', which will mean restrictions on traffic around drop off and pick up times. Organisers are hoping the new system will be in place by July 2021. The proposals are on their website, [levenshulmebeenetwork.commonplace.is](http://levenshulmebeenetwork.commonplace.is) - select 'active neighbourhood vision map' from the drop down menu.

Beelines says the work is the product of more than 4,000 online comments, postal surveys to 9,000 households and 40 events, pop-ups, meetings and workshops.

The plans have attracted enthusiastic comments on the 'vision map' page, as well as concerns that some areas have been overlooked, and fears the barriers will contribute to worse congestion on main roads.

*let us know what you make of the plans and how they'll affect your area*



## Welcome

to Levenshulme News. At the time of writing, we're two months into lockdown. In Gtr Manchester about



1,800 people have died. We've mixed local news with more personal reflections on how the pandemic is affecting individuals.

Levenshulme News is a free, independent local news source, online and in print. We are now collating our newsletters online and encourage contributions, so have a look at our site and get in touch:

[www.levenshulmenews.weebly.com](http://www.levenshulmenews.weebly.com)  
[levenshulmenews@gmail.com](mailto:levenshulmenews@gmail.com)

## tackle uk racism - khan

Levenshulme's Labour MP Afzal Khan says the government should take "tangible action" to weed out institutional racism in the police and criminal justice system following the killing of George Floyd in the US.

In a statement Mr Khan, who is shadow deputy leader of the commons, says racism is not an "American problem", and is "no less lethal or corrosive here." He also said he, "stands with all those protestors... who are fighting for a better world".

Full statement on Twitter [@afzal4gorton](https://twitter.com/afzal4gorton).

## across the digital divide

The team behind Levy Corona Helpers - a street level network of volunteers - is looking at how it can help people with no internet access get online.

They're planning a survey of those who need help and hope to pass on donated devices.

Co-founder Carey Bamber said: "If you want to report your bin not being emptied, for example, there is no way you can currently do that in Manchester without going online. We know there are a lot of people with no IT equipment, no wifi and no experience of using online things like shopping.

"Working with Inspire and Levenshulme Good Neighbours, we want to do a survey of what the needs might be, and then maybe look at how we can identify surplus tech that is sitting in people's homes that could be repurposed. We'd be interested to hear what people think about this."

You can contact Levy Corona Helpers at [levycoronahelpers@gmail.com](mailto:levycoronahelpers@gmail.com).

*Read more about Levy Corona Helpers' story on page 2*

## market demands council help

Levenshulme Market has called for a cut in the fees charged by the council to help it, and other markets in the city, recover from coronavirus. An open letter, with the street food specialist GRUB, argues that markets need more support for them to thrive and deliver wider economic and social benefits post-covid. It says market operators pay the council an administrative fee of £55, which can cover one or a block of events, plus £4.50 for each stall per day.

"This is a significant cost to market operators who on the most part already work on small margins (especially for those operators who already pay business rates for the property where the market takes place)," states the letter.

"In return for their fees the market operator does not receive anything apart from the permission to operate and the profits from Manchester Markets (£160,000 in 2018) are paid to the council so it is to all intents and purposes a market tax."

In response Cllr Luthfur Rahman, member for skills, culture and leisure, said: "The pandemic has created challenges that as a local authority we've never had to deal with before... We will speak with traders and try to navigate a way through the post-lockdown landscape."

Levy Market says staff wages and pitch fees are its biggest costs. It covers these overheads by charging traders, for example a single stall is £37.





Two new seven-a-side astroturf pitches are on the cards for the Rushford Park sports ground.

Manchester Youth Academy, the charity which runs the site, is preparing plans which should go to the council in the coming weeks.

Trustee Abdul Qayum said the investment, funded from various grant sources, was part of a wider strategy.

"We're at the early stages in terms of what we want to deliver. Our long term goal is to make sure it's always there for the community, and at a low price. We want it to be affordable for people - kids, their parents, and adult groups."

Rushford Park, off Slade Lane, already has two five-a-side astro pitches, a full size grass pitch and a function room. The facilities are all available for hire and MYA also works with youth groups and schools. The pitches are still owned by the council but run by MYA on a peppercorn rent.

Check out their new website at [mcr youth.org.uk](http://mcr youth.org.uk).

## Station improvements?

Long-awaited improvements to the railway station have been delayed by coronavirus. Work was due to start on the foot tunnel under the tracks in May.

The office of constituency MP Afzal Khan says Northern and Network Rail - which owns the station - have committed to the work and the budget is ringfenced for this financial year, but there is still no start date. Network Rail said: "Unfortunately, due to the current situation with COVID-19, we have been unable to complete the required tender work". That should now be done by the end of the month, enabling contractors to be hired.

The plan is to strip back cladding, restore original glazed bricks, sort out leaks, and replace the slippery floor tiles with concrete. The ceiling in the entrance hall will also be replaced, but there are still no plans to improve accessibility.

Earlier this year Mr Khan said he will continue to seek funding to make the station fully accessible. He says it's the busiest step-only station in Greater Manchester.

## empty plot #1

Ever wondered what was happening to the scrappy, unloved plot next to the railway line at the end of Park Grove?

A company called Munif Properties gained planning permission in 2018 for a three-storey block with eight flats.

But the plot went to auction last summer where it was bought for £187,500 by Noble Properties & Developers, registered to a house in Moss Side.

There's currently no sign of any work at the site and the planning consent will expire in November 2021.



## On kindness

Hannah Powell

Although things are hard at the moment there's some amazing stuff happening in Levenshulme and across Manchester.

In my job at Macc, a charity which supports Manchester's voluntary and community sector, I've been gathering these stories of kindness.

We want to highlight the positive things that are happening and how people are responding to the current situation by supporting each other.

These very short stories could be about individuals helping each other, businesses and organisations adapting and helping those who need it, or things like the rainbows in windows.

So far we've included Inspire's meal service, the Levy Corona Helpers network of support and Muslim outreach charity the Myriad Foundation feeding the homeless in Piccadilly during Ramadan.

Each one is added to the Manchester Kindness Stories page - [www.tinyurl.com/Mcrkindness](http://www.tinyurl.com/Mcrkindness) - and tweeted on Twitter at @McrCommCentral

## reflections on the Corona Helpers...

Carey Bamber

Since lockdown our co-ordinators have helped with shopping and prescriptions, referred others for food parcels, and generally been a point of contact for a street.

People have phoned isolated and shielded neighbours, helped with bins and dogs and gardens.

Back in March when it became clear something significant was about to happen, I set up a page to link people up and share information, requests for support, and offers.

I'd been talking to a friend who runs a national charity about our concerns for people who were not able to run fast enough in the race for toilet rolls, or have resources to stockpile food.

We also thought that there would be plenty of people who would want to do something - and so she set up a page that went national - coronahelpers, and I set up a local page.

I thought a few hundred local people might want to link up and organise - and in the first few weeks we were inundated with offers of help.

Having lived in Levy for 16 years, I knew that there are people with community organising skills - the people who knew how to campaign to save the baths, or the library, or had been running community groups.

We had a shared view that we didn't need to grow another voluntary organisation in Levenshulme, but that the power of neighbourliness, alongside a strong link to the great organisations that already serve our community, would be enough.

Before lockdown kicked in, we delivered leaflets to many streets, supported by Levenshulme Inspire and Lev Good Neighbours [a charity which supports older people], and about 40 people had come forward to act as street coordinators - a network of people who could be the connector for their street.

We were thwarted in further leafleting by the lockdown, or else we think far more would have been done.



## business is blooming

Garden centres were allowed to reopen in mid-May. Laura Deane caught up with Brenda Smith, the co-owner of BUD garden centre in Burnage on their second trading weekend.

BUD has adapted to coronavirus - it has a queueing system outside, a large bottle of hand sanitiser, a one-way system marked out in chalk, and a till outside to prevent bottlenecks. Before opening time there was already a queue of people snaking out of the entrance.

"When we re-opened, lots of people said it was the first shop they'd been to," says Brenda. "We got the Chancellor's grant - the council sent a letter and we had the money in about 10 days. We've actually got more money in the bank than last year! If we have a good year, we may be able to use the money to invest in something, but we don't know how it will pan out - people might lose their jobs and not have money to spend. At the moment though, we're going through a receipt roll a day on the card machine."

Whilst chatting, Brenda ran out of till roll. After a short time a customer returned with a roll he had bought especially for her, reflecting the goodwill towards the business.

BUD also had some glowing reviews on social media later in the day, but they have had some criticism online, including a comment that emails weren't answered quickly enough.

"Online comments really upset me," says Brenda. "But I have to remember it's only a couple of people out of hundreds of positive responses. BUD is just me and my husband, and a part-time employee called Anne, who is currently furloughed. To be honest, we could do with more people but you have to find somebody who is the opposite of you, and create compatibility."

"We could be bigger but we want to keep BUD small. The beauty of a small business is getting to know the customers."

As lockdown kicked in, BUD started deliveries. "We were working 12-hour days - it created more office-based work," says Brenda.

So how does she feel about being open again? "I'm ecstatic!"

*BUD is open 10am-5pm Wednesday to Sunday, and on bank holidays.*

## Cibus pizza *Giorgio Fontana*

We were offline for a good six weeks, to take stock of the risks, understand the government guidance and measures - like furloughing staff, PPE, key-worker status and testing. We were then able to pivot the business, take on additional staff and launch a home delivery business, all within a week of deciding it would be viable.

We're really grateful to Lawrence and Kath Hennigan, owners of Fred's Ale House, for supporting us in our efforts to continue to serve Levenshulme. The virus has hit their pub empire hard, so it's great to see that now the new 'covid-secure' guidelines are out, pubs with good-sized outdoors spaces like theirs can take tentative steps towards opening.

With us it's always been more than just about serving lovely food; we're missing seeing people and connecting with them like you do in a restaurant setting. We're lucky to have already invested in an OK-ish website and we've been able to stay in touch with our client base on social media. The new world that we're entering is unknown, but we'll embrace it with gusto. We're Italian after all!

## hundreds get food help

Islamic charity the Myriad Foundation has been sending out 350 food parcels a week during lockdown. Myriad works from the SMMCA (South Manchester Muslim Community Association) at Quba Masjid next to the Aldi car park, where its food bank normally serves 20-30 families a week. The parcels have gone out to existing foodbank users, others in financial difficulty and people self-isolating.

Project lead Adeel Mahmood said: "Now the foodbank is shut, we have started delivering our food parcels, and currently average over 350 food parcels delivered every week! This has been during the month of Ramadan, which has just ended, where Muslims tend to spend more time in acts of worship as well as preparing for the evening Iftar meal when the fast breaks. Our work never stopped, and we were still out delivering food on the day of Eid celebrations."

The charity is run by volunteers and has no paid staff. "It really is a credit to all the hard working volunteers we have, from taking referrals from different agencies, to weekly shopping and then putting the food parcels together as well as delivering," added Adeel. The foodbank and the delivery service are available to all, irrespective of religion or belief.

## aLLfm awarded again

Manchester's ALL FM 96.9 has been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK. This follows on from being awarded 'Community Radio Station of the Year' in October 2019.

ALL FM has 115 volunteers producing and presenting a diverse range of shows, seven days a week. The station's ethos is 'by the community for the community'. Its schedule includes shows by and for carers, those with disabilities, those on the Autism Spectrum, from BAME communities, LGBT communities and six foreign language shows plus Drivetime, Breakfast and specialist music shows.

The QAVS recognises outstanding work by volunteer groups to benefit their local communities. Ed Connole, Director of ALL FM said, "Levenshulme has been home to ALLfm for most of its 20 years. Some of our finest presenters have come from and are from Levenshulme. Their energy and vision have been integral to ALLfm's success. Levenshulme and its community have had a huge significance in ALLfm receiving the QAVS. I'd also like to thank our small staff team who has helped train our volunteers and keep the station on air. It's a real team effort."

*Throughout lockdown, ALLfm has broadcast with volunteers recording shows from home. It also hosts a daily Lockdown Show aimed at supporting people and communities who are at risk.*

## empty plot #2

A developer is planning to squeeze a couple of houses onto a triangular plot behind Barlow Rd, at the junction with Broom Lane.

Two years ago an application to build garages by Macclesfield's SG Properties was refused. The land was sold by the council sometime after alley gates were fitted in 2008. A developer called Hawjeen Ibrahim picked up the land at auction earlier this year where it was being sold with a guide price of £20,000-£40,000.

One person backing on to the plot told us a number of residents were unhappy about the plans, but they declined to go on the record. A statement submitted with the plans said: "The proposed development will ensure that there is no loss of privacy to adjoining dwellings and their rear garden areas... there will be no adverse impact in terms of overlooking or overshadowing."



## business survival

Many businesses have faced upheaval through this crisis. Let us know how you've been affected, what challenges you've overcome, and if you've managed to get hold of government support. Are landlords sympathetic or hardnosed?

Stephen Jennings thought lockdown would mean the end of his fitness enterprise, Parkview Fitness, but he's managed to make it work online.

"We'd been training in Cringle Park for three years and Coronavirus hit... Within a day I went from thinking I'd lost my business to re-launching an online venture. Thankfully the majority of our group are able to train and stay virtually connected.

"I'm so grateful I can work from home, and for my clients who have stuck with me." In late May Stephen resumed one-to-one sessions in the park again.

Nicky who runs Needles and Noodles piercings from the Crimson Rose tattoo parlour has switched to an alternative career, for now: "I managed to set up a new website selling jewellery online which was quite risky but seems to be doing okay. The suggested guidelines seem to point towards July, however I will not be risking myself or clients until it feels safe to do so."

## Something's cooking

Two local chefs have been sharing their skills on social media during the lockdown. Mike Hooper is out of work and his partner, Mala Tillekerayne, has been furloughed, so they set up a cookery page on Instagram and Facebook - both can be found at @cookwithmikeandmala.

"We share photos and recipes as well as get people to share what they have cooked and their recipes," said Mike.

"There's also advice on how to use up ingredients and we're planning to do some live videos soon. We've been trying to get the people of Levy involved as we want to help them get through this lockdown. We thought it would be a good way to use our skills to help people, which is very important to us."

Another couple, Alice and David Deanie, have started a business selling *The Box* - a box of games, puzzles and challenges. Alice said: "We launched a company during lockdown because families need to connect and have fun together - now more than ever." Alice, a former nurse, said for every Box sold they will send one to a hospital for use by patients and their families. You can find out more at [aroundthebox.co.uk](http://aroundthebox.co.uk)

## eid under lockdown

The Islamic festival Eid al-fitr is usually a celebratory affair, incorporating visits with family and friends, and prayers in local mosques. But with all places of worship closed and lockdown restrictions still in place, this year it was very different.

Local MP Afzal Khan urged people to follow the guidance even if it meant being unable to visit friends or relatives.

Rusholme councillor Rabnawaz Akbar, who also covers West Point, had the same message. In a Twitter video he added: "We do not want to lose all the gains that we made through our sacrifices in the last few weeks."

Levenshulme resident Katrina Maan, told us about her experience of Eid under lockdown: "It was very low key - it wasn't traditional. We wore normal clothes, didn't get dressed up like we usually would. We start Eid with Nefl - a sweet dish, such as halva, in the morning to start the day. We still did that.

"It was just our immediate family; no aunties, uncles. There was no Eid prayer in the mosque, we just did it at home. A lot of people have lost loved ones, so the graveyards were busy - lots of people visiting graves. It was happy and sad as well. There were lots of notices online from the mosques - especially from Islamic Help, to say that if you were on your own during Eid, to give them a call."

## lockdown on film

Filmmaker James Mulholland has scored a hit with a short about Levenshulme traders during lockdown.

The video captures empty streets, socially-distanced supermarket queues and businesses adjusting to temporary closure or new takeaway services. It has been viewed more than 15,000 times on social media.

It features the likes of Village Stores, The Meating Room, The Klondyke, Isca and Station Hop, as well as That Bread and Butter Thing working from Inspire.

James said: "I made the film, and the song, to help support the local businesses and volunteer groups of Levenshulme through the difficult time we're having... Your favourite shops have not forgotten you, so please don't forget about them."

James was helped by Luke Shepherd and Adam Lyon who he works with under the name *Lemontape*. To see the video search for *Lemontape* on Facebook

## student view

*Marieke van Elk, final year sixth form student at Loreto College in Hulme*

"I had a plan set in my mind about how my college time would end and it's all changed so I've had to rewire my brain. I have an inkling I might get a higher grade than if I'd actually done the exams though. I'm not really stressing about it because I can't control it. I'm sure I'll get the grades I deserve or have worked for.

I was trying to get a job at first, but then I realised this might not be good timing, and I'm probably not going to be able to get a job after this either. So I've been trying to figure it out because I'm not going to uni next year. I wanted to go travelling, but that's not going to happen either. I've been looking at jobs abroad, but for next year, so I can make plans. It's strange.

It's me and my Mum at home. I have siblings but they don't live with me. My Mum works for the NHS so I've been quarantining alone. She's usually a physio, but she's taking all sorts at the moment and doing lots of nursing. I live next to the cycle path so I've been walking on Highfield every day with the dog. I've been redecorating my room - I've been trying to figure out things to do.

I started an online history of photography course with the Museum of Modern Art in New York. There's so much reading! There's a Zoom conference every Wednesday, where they interview photographers.

I quite like being on my own, so I've been ok. I feel like I've forgotten how to have conversations with people though, each one is about coronavirus."

## fallowfield loop

Membership of the Friends of Fallowfield Loop has jumped by about 30% during lockdown. They've picked up an extra 24 subscriptions, taking the total to just over 100.

The group promotes the Loop, lobbies on its behalf, cleans it up and plants flowers and shrubs.

Membership secretary Ray Dumpleton said: "Seeing the greatly increased use of the Loop during lockdown it seemed to me an ideal opportunity to invite people to join. Until this, our membership had remained steady over the past few years at around 80. This is great news for the group and for the Loop as it brings us a pulse of fresh blood."

It costs £5 a year to join the Friends. Family membership is £8. For more info go to [fallowfieldloop.org](http://fallowfieldloop.org)