



Celebrate Camberley - Saturday 24th July 2021

Meet our Camberley Heroes...

All Heroes were nominated by a member of the public to be treated to a VIP experience on the event day. Have a read of how our Heroes have made an impact on others and the community, especially during the pandemic...

Ajay Gurung

Ajay has worked in the Armed Forces since 2004. He is a loyal, courageous, and helpful person. He has always given his best to do any jobs. Ajay is a very sensible person who is always focused on helping others and always there for when people are in need. I can see his determination for help has been fabulous. He has served in many places and gained enough training to make him capable. He has deployed to countries like Afghanistan and Kenya helping out. He has worked along the covid period to help out in his work place. Ajay has always looked after family well and is a lovely father. His kind heart to help others whenever in need is the most crucial part. I would like to nominate Ajay for being the best and he deserves it.

Alistair Pinkerton

Alistair played a crucial part in Surrey Heath Prepared, part of the steering group, and helping look after his local residents with food, essentials and prescription deliveries.

Aline Poulter

Aline was recently made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2020. Mrs Poulter, who has worked for the Council for 14 years, received the honour for services to vulnerable and older people. The award recognises Mrs Poulter's passionate commitment to reducing social isolation, both through going 'above and beyond' in her role at SHBC, and many hours of voluntary work carried out at evenings and weekends. Aline has also overseen a Community Services team who've worked solidly through the pandemic, delivering hundreds of Meals at Home to vulnerable residents on a daily basis, providing crucial welfare checks on those isolated from family and friends, and helping people get to GP appointments and other vital trips in Covid-secure Community Transport buses.

Colin and Alison Morey

Alison and Colin have been key to the covid response to the local community. Alison is a Manager for VSNS and has supported the work of Surrey Heath Prepared. Colin has volunteered with Surrey Heath prepared and since coordinated for VSNS the volunteers supporting the work at Lakeside Vaccination Hub.

Annie McDowall

Throughout the pandemic Annie has helped patients with their eye care. Annie is our receptionist at Leightons Opticians Camberley. She is the person who you call and talk to when you are worried about your eyes, the person who reassures you "it's ok" when you are worried about your appointment - whether you are worried about your eyes, or worried about being out, or the friendly hello when someone close to you has died. She is also the person that looks after the Optometrists who are all masked up and dressed in full PPE - making sure you get a drink or facilities break.

Amy Smith

Amazing Mum and Step Mum, who works tirelessly to give all 3 kids the love and life they need. She has given up work to be able to devote herself to the children, and on top of all this she has project managed a significant home renovation to give the kids the physical environment as well as the emotional environment they cherish. She occasionally washes the dishes too!

Barni Cardici , Jemma Thatcher , Janice Hills and Louise Gomez Baker

All of them are key workers. All of them support the community and do lots of volunteering. For me personally, they all have made significant changes in my life to brighter and happier without expecting anything! They all are extreme strangers and showed lots of care and kindness, which they did not have to, but they did. They are really inspiring women and I take them as my real life heroes! I would be delighted if you could give them a VIP treatment as they very well deserve and hard working women!!

Belinda Waugh

Belinda works in a local care home in Camberley as domestic staff. Unfortunately her home got covid and she went into work every day sometimes working 10 days without a day off. She even gave up annual leave due to the lack of staff as they were of sick with the virus. With watching a lot of residents dying around her and most of the staff contracting covid, she has remained positive and supportive and put the residents first. Amazingly she didn't contract covid herself!

Ben Leyton - Heatherside Happy Beat

Ben really brought the Heatherside Community together during lockdown - originally doing a daily walk as the Heatherside Happy Bear which morphed into the Heatherside Characters, with the help of a few friends. He helped establish a community spirit on Heatherside organising Easter events and Christmas letters from Santa via the Wheatsheaf postal box. This has continued since the end of lockdown and it would be a small pay back for what he has done for the community to be a VIP.

Charles Barbor

A Rotarian, President last year, Charles is tirelessly helping others. He is a befriending organiser for Age Concern Surrey Heath and is a totally a Community lead individual. He gives up lots of his own time to support charity and help out at The Rainbow Café. Charles cannot do enough for people and always puts others first.

Chris Jackman

Chris is the Station Support Officer for the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He is also Chairman of the Sandhurst Station Nursery. Chris has such a varied job including housing, welfare, community activities and he acts as the main point of contact for all military families who live here. Chris works tirelessly and always with a smile on his face. He keeps everyone up to date and is often found replying to messages or sending out information late into the night. Because he manages the housing at RMAS, he also deals with quite a lot of negativity but he is unflappable and continues to smile. He deserves some recognition for his hard work and support for so many people.

Christine Stokoe

Christine is the Manageress of the Royal Voluntary Service shop in Frimley Park Hospital. She goes above and beyond the remit of her job to ensure the best possible service for the NHS staff, hospital patients and visitors. She is always cheerful and caring. She comes in on her days off when help is needed and never complains. She loves her job and always strives to improve the shop not only for the customer, but also for the RVS which is a charity.

David Murray

My Dad previously served 30 years for the Army, followed by 15 years Police service for Camberley. I am nominating him as since the covid outbreak he has put himself forward to volunteer and help where he could/can. This involved and not limited to volunteering for REACT <https://www.re-act.org.uk/> Undertaking various tasks, Hart Councils volunteer team and working for the temporary mortuary's built throughout Surrey and Berkshire hospitals to cope with the deaths. After 18 months of putting himself unselfishly on the front line (for his whole life) and during covid times he deserves a treat more than anyone I know.

Debbie Welch

Debbie would not wish to be nominated at all! However, during Surrey Heath Prepared she supported the administration and finances of the entire project, keeping us all on track. Since then she has been the voice at the end of a phone, and has fielded hundreds of calls for people still seeking help. Each has been handled with love and care.

Dr Gail Milligan - Camberley Health Centre

Gail has been involved in the establishment and running of the GP lead clinics at Lakeside from the start. She has also continued to support and care for her patients.

Fiona Fenton

First of all, Fiona always helps me, a working mum, with my 2 children even when she worked herself. She was also a single parent bringing up 3 children on her own with no help and worked 5 jobs to keep a roof over our heads. Fiona is a dinner lady at a Sandhurst school and always helps everyone that she can. During these tough times, even though she was vulnerable herself being in her 70's, she gives up lots of her spare time volunteering at the nearby Lakeside Covid clinic. She also volunteers at Sandhurst Voluntary Care providing transport for people to get to their medical appointments.

Gillian Foster

Gillian is the Pastoral Secretary at High Cross Church, since the start of the pandemic she has supported those involved in the life of the church with regular phone calls and cards. Ensuring that people felt supported and had somewhere to turn to in a time of need.

Greg Scott

Greg was a lynchpin in the work of Surrey Heath Prepared Food bank and has continued to support and build The BESOM foodbank in Camberley. He also is Vice Chair of Citizens Advice Surrey Heath.

James Robinson

James was the chair of Surrey Heath Prepared and managed to hold a unique team of people together to ensure that the community was supported in the best possible way over the last year.

Jessica Nunes

Jessica lost her dad during lockdown and has always kept a positive attitude and helped family and friends. She likes to fundraise and volunteer with charities and I have always admired this. She always listens and helps people with what they need and has worked above and beyond.

Karen Jackson

Karen works tirelessly for her charity (CSSEF) and the deaf community. Karen is instrumental in making the public aware of how we can all support the deaf community and started a campaign with Camberley town centre partners to raise awareness by supplying clear face coverings to all town centre businesses and also providing people with notepads and pens. She also managed to have time to support free school dinners, collecting and distributing meals to the community of the Old Dean. Prior to the pandemic, Karen helped facilitate British Sign Language training for town centre businesses, supporting the aim of the town being more inclusive. Karen does a lot for so many and always does it with passion!

Kris Hatton

An amazing guy from 'Complete Coaching' that helped children over the last 18 months, keeping focused and on the straight and narrow with his free online zoom and training calls.

Lauran Hampshire-Dell

Lauran has worked through the entire pandemic tutoring children from local schools, she works 6 days a week term time and through all school holidays with barely any time off and super long hours to try and help as many kids as she can. At Christmas Lauran organised a food collection for donation to a local food bank and she just generally is always looking out for her students and the community so it would be great for her to feel appreciated!

Lisa & Kel Finan-Cooke

They are some of the greatest neighbours anyone could have!! Living on the James Estate, they are at the heart of everything that goes on. Fighting for their neighbours, delivering food, offering support, and just being brilliant. They deserve so much recognition for all they have done during the last year, before that and moving into the future.

Lorraine Cooley

When I joined the District Nursing Team in 2018, Lorraine took me under her wing. She taught me everything I know about district nursing to the point where I got a promotion to Community Sister in 2020. Lorraine has been with me every step of the way and I will be forever grateful for all I have ever learned from her. Lorraine took me under her wing and treated me like a daughter. When I was diagnosed with covid she text me constantly to make sure I was okay. When I was hospitalised she came round with little treat meal packages so my husband and I were looked after. On top of all of this Lorraine works damn hard as a band 7 district Nursing sSster and her patients love her. She is by far one of the best nurses I have ever met! Words will never be able to describe how wonderful Lorraine is and just how much she does for her colleagues, friends and family. She deserves a VIP experience!

Mark Proctor

Mark has made a huge contribution to not only the local community but globally, he was the head of supply chain in his role Global Supply Strategy Director for AstraZeneca. He has already been acknowledged in the last Queens birthday Honours list and awarded a CBE for his services to the pandemic. I personally see him as my hero during this time, he worked around the clock with the vaccine task force. He was fully committed during this time and compromised on a lot of family time to ensure they could reach the end goal to help those vulnerable and shielding, including our close family members which was what kept him motivated. It is great that life sciences and engineering are being recognised as crucial to the covid response. I may be biased as his wife, but he is a hero in my eyes and he is definitely my children's hero! I want him to know his hard work meant something to people hence why I am nominating him for the Camberley Hero award!

Mick Bacon

Another unassuming individual - without Mick, Surrey Heath Prepared would not have been what it was. He was the steady hand, the fixer, and more importantly provided a great balance to the team's enthusiasm. He still provides that support to High Cross and has been a blessing to the community.

Neil Braybrooke-Tidy

Neil is always a smiling face in the community and is involved with so much! Neil helped support the Surrey Heath Prepared team with vital work during the pandemic. Neil started a live podcast with Rev. Mike during lockdown which kept people entertained. They now continue this effort each week, keeping people up to date with what's happening in the area.

Nicky Lynch

A fantastic lady who helped support and run 'Frimley Community Matters' throughout the very first lockdown and beyond. Nicky was part of Surrey Heath Prepared, with the 200 other volunteers who were shopping and collecting prescriptions and delivering food parcels for Frimley residents.

Rev. Mike Thomason

Mike did a great job last year as a key volunteer for the Surrey Heath Prepared response to the Covid-19 pandemic, with High Cross Church being a focal point for the efforts. None of this would have been possible without Mike's leadership.

He gave everything to support the community throughout Covid.

During lockdown he helped organise help for those in need. He really cares about the town of Camberley and the community.

Mike works so hard - to make High Cross Church - a church at the heart of community. He demonstrated this, by last March at the start of the first lockdown, helping set up 'Surrey Heath Prepared'. Mike worked tirelessly co-ordinating and help with all agencies and volunteers from the community. Doing all this, while keeping the High Cross church family, connected & supported. He has adapted how the church operates remotely, learnt new IT skills himself & continues to encourage everyone, throughout this difficult past year. He has such a heart for helping the local Surrey Heath community. He truly deserves recognition.

For super support to local community during the COVID lockdown.

Mike has gone well above and beyond during the pandemic. He has helped so many people that were in desperate need while still be an amazing Minister. Rev Mike was and still is there at the drop of a hat for anyone in our community that needs help. Rev Mike hasn't stopped since last March and really deserves to be recognised as the hero that he is.

Helping set up and run Surrey Heath Prepared, helping organise and distribute food parcels, giving support to local shops, charities, councillors, people through-out 2020-21. Keeping services running throughout. Opening the High cross Church to the community as a support hub. Liaising with local and national politicians to get things done during the pandemic. Offering support to local businesses as they re-open.

He has worked tirelessly for the community of Camberley, first at the Surrey Heath hub at High Cross church and then with the church community and the outreach work in the town centre, making sure that as things reopen, ALL are welcome at High Cross church and cafe.

For galvanizing everyone into action to form Surrey Heath Prepared to serve the community at its time of greatest need in recent history. As a relative newcomer to the area he has worked hard to become an integral part, and always in the service of others. He's a very important Pastor!

Paula Zymela - Camberley WI

Paula is the President of the WI I belong to (Camberley WI) all through the pandemic she has arranged Zoom meetings and tried to keep up our spirits with regular emails and contact. (Paula has accepted her award on behalf of the whole WI.)

Polly King

Polly has worked tirelessly over the lockdown for children and adults in and around Camberley. She has shown time and again how she is interested in each and every person that she meets and has invested her time and energy into helping improve their mental health and wellbeing. Over the pandemic she's taken the opportunity to learn more so she can help more. She's never too tired to help. And all this with children to home-school as well! On a personal level she has helped my daughter, who has anxiety and other mental health issues in a way that no one else has been able to. More widely she has organised events such as the 24 hour musical, in a covid safe environment, which was like a breath of fresh air in the middle of the pandemic, plus on-line wellbeing sessions, done storytelling on Facebook for younger children and many other activities that have raised the spirits of many over this difficult time. Polly is truly interested in each and every person as an individual, whatever their circumstance. She is an inspiration to Camberley! Ps. If she wins a VIP experience she'll tell you that she doesn't deserve it, but she does...

Polly is principal of Creative Minds Academy at Camberley Theatre. During the pandemic she has constantly been checking on her students and their families, taking mindfulness courses and offering supports sessions to those who need it. But even before the pandemic Polly has done so much for so many people, from being head chaperone (a very full in and demanding role) at all the Camberley Theatre Pantomimes to co-creating 'The 24 Hour Musical' (last year the '24 Hour Challenge') - a fantastic event that involves all ages of the community (well those brave enough to forgo sleep for 24 hours!) to raise money for local charities. Polly never stops, but is always there for anyone, from her students to their parents and everyone in between. You know if you need someone, Polly will be there with a smile on her face. Her life is very busy, but she has time for everyone (I don't know how she does it) and she most certainly deserves a little treat to say thank you. Without her Camberley (especially the theatre) would be a much duller place.

Polly works so hard providing performing arts experiences for the young people of Camberley. She is the owner of Creative Minds Academy which operates from Camberley Theatre. Throughout the pandemic she has continued to operate CMA via zoom and expanded the classes available to include mental wellbeing provision. My children have been Polly's students for many years. They both have issues, the eldest is autistic (late diagnosis) with mental health challenges, the youngest is dyslexic, dyspraxic, autistic, adhd and anxiety. Polly has always been so supportive and nurturing of both of them, helping me get the youngest one some of her diagnosis and therefore the support that she needs. I know that there are a number of CMA pupils with special needs, Polly ensures that the classes are fully inclusive and supportive for all.

Polly runs the Creative minds Academy, during lockdown she has worked so hard to ensure her students not only continue to be able to interact, but has offered sessions to give them someone to talk to, or zooms rooms they can hang out in, just so they don't feel as isolated and alone during these strange times. She always puts everyone else before herself and works tirelessly to ensure her students are always looked after. She is a true inspiration

Rob Millar

Rob is a wonderful character, and loved by all his neighbours on Portesbury Road. He can never do enough for them - shopping, moving furniture, DIY. He is the go-to person when they have problems, and he will always respond with a smile. He was discovered over winter as the mystery snow shoveler (he got caught), and during the summer will think nothing of litter picking the area. A true community hero and a great neighbour.

Sabita Thapa Gurung

My Camberley Hero is my Mum. Since the beginning of the pandemic, my Mum has been working as a key worker in the community. Her long 12 hour shifts as a healthcare assistant in a care home are tiring and hard work but nonetheless (as she describes) rewarding. Her love for her residents is beyond belief and she often comes home with stories about her day. On top of this, as my father works overseas and covid travel restrictions are ongoing, I haven't been able to see him in almost 2 years. My Mum has been a superstar operating as a single parent working, whilst raising 2 children on her own. Even though I've left the nest and spend the majority of my time at university now, my Mum has to continue to care for my little brother and help him as a tutor, especially when learning was online, despite her broken English. My Mum's parents, who are clinically vulnerable to covid, also live with us. Essentially, my Mum is caring for 4 people, plus herself. Also, because of my Grandparents compromised health, my Mum rarely gets to spend time with friends. When she's not at work caring for her residents, she's caring for us at home. Writing this has made me realise I don't give my Mum enough credit for the effort she puts in every single day and that I should tell her I love her more often. She is my Camberley Hero, regardless of the results.

Sam Salt

Sam, is a key individual in providing support to many family across Camberley. She not only runs the successful High Cross toddler Group but provides regular pastoral support to those who attend. Her dedication and support are superb, and should be recognised.

Sarah Croke

Works tirelessly to support the local community! Enough said!

Sheetal Kapoor

Sheetal is an amazing airline crew member and during the start and height of the pandemic volunteered her spare time to work at Frimley Park hospital on the Project Wingman initiative. This programme was set up utilising the soft skills and customer service of airline staff to offer a hospitable and comfortable retreat experience to the frontline NHS workers during their break times in a first class environment. During this pandemic and whilst on furlough, Sheetal utilised her time and energy well. Being aware that the population's mental health was reaching an all time high, along with working on the project wingman she also offered her time to the mental health unit. Sheetal is a

kind hearted and thoughtful person who puts others at the forefront each and every time. This woman is a remarkable asset to society and despite knowing many people worthy of this award, I simply can't think of a better and more deserving person to receive this. She really is a true representation of a shining star.

Terry Emmet

Terry is a well-known member of our community, providing and selling fresh fruit and vegetables, whilst also adding a lot of personality to the town. Everyone knows Terry! Throughout lockdown, Terry supplied essential food for the community and even supported the Surrey Heath Prepared and school dinner's initiatives. Terry works extremely hard and can be seen smiling on his stall come rain or shine!

Tracy Cowlard

She is a lovely person and she's been through so much herself, but she's still going and does loads for others... now it's her turn

Congratulations and thank you again to all of our Camberley Heroes and everyone else who has made an impact to our community during these difficult times and beyond!

