

Dear Volunteers and friends of Norwich Open Christmas,

We hope that you, your family and friends are continuing to cope during the pandemic and are keeping safe and well. Right now, we still can't say what sort of Norwich Open Christmas(NOC) we will be able to provide this year but we wanted to let you know, to the extent that we can, what is currently happening and what we may be doing to stage NOC 2020, within the limitations in place at the time.

You may recall that Mark and Kerrie Fox- two very experienced NOC volunteers- agreed to act as overall co-ordinators for NOC 2019. Despite unforeseeable personal challenges, Mark and Kerrie, ably supported by our volunteers, organised a very successful Christmas Day 2019. However, they do not feel able to continue in the co-ordinators' role this year. I'm sure you will join with us in thanking them for their efforts to deliver NOC 2019 and to keep NOC 2020 on track in these uncertain times. For now, the charity's trustees will oversee plans for NOC 2020, working with volunteers to ensure that NOC 2020 will take place, albeit in a modified form if lockdown rules allow.

We are working on the assumption that NOC 2020 will take place unless the area is in total lockdown. That is unlikely but cannot be ruled out. It is more likely that we will need to modify our operation to minimise the risk of Covid to our guests and to our volunteers. We are considering the options available to NOC, with the aim to be as flexible as possible so that we can react at short notice to any changes there may be to lockdown rules.

Thus far we have secured the hire of St Andrew's Hall and the use of Norwich City College Catering School again this year. If the event can be held at the usual venue, we will work with Norwich City Council to ensure that we can host the event within social distancing and hygiene requirements. For those of you who have experience of NOC on Christmas Day you will realise that it is not without its challenges. We may have to change our offer, limiting the number of guests we serve and the services we provide to them. We are also looking into the feasibility of delivering meals and gift bags to some guests in their homes, possibly working with the Foodbank and other local charities to see how we might do that.

I'm sure that you will appreciate that the situation is still very fluid. Whatever form NOC 2020 takes one thing is clear; we will need your help to make it happen. We hope to issue volunteer application forms soon. Watch this space. Please don't hold off from registering as a volunteer for this year's event if you are able to help.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we must inform you that Sharon Bedford, a volunteer senior nurse for NOC died recently. She was known and loved by guests and volunteers alike. Representatives from NOC attended her funeral.

Best wishes

The Trustees

Norwich Open Christmas