

PRESS RELEASE July 2020

Over the last few months, Wells Coronavirus Network have been doing everything they can to relieve local people from the stress and practical difficulties caused by the lockdown emergency. A single contact phone number, more than 350 volunteers undertaking shopping, delivering prescriptions, a friendly phone call service, and direct referral of the more complex cases to the appropriate support agencies.

This work continues, but they are turning their attention to the Wells economy. While visitors have started slowly to return to Wells, the impact of the long lockdown on local businesses, small and large, and on jobs is starting to show itself. As seeing the approaching end of the government's furlough scheme, the majority of Wells-based people and their employers are facing a nervous time.

WCN Business Services is a programme with three strands, designed by Christopher Bond, a Wells resident with decades of experience in the City and the business world.

The first one to launch is the WCN Sympathetic Ear service.

As Christopher says, "We are fortunate in Wells to have many recently retired, successful business people living among us. Their experience and practical wisdom can be exactly what a business owner facing an uncertain future needs. Just having a confidential sounding board, someone to share your worries and your ideas with, can help you to see things more clearly and give you the confidence to go forward."

Several Wells residents, from a range of business backgrounds are already signing up as "Ears", giving their time and their attention entirely free of charge in support of the Wells economy.

The WCN Local Professionals service is enlisting a range of local specialist consultants and firms in fields such as business start-ups, business planning, legal, finance, accountancy, technology, digital strategy, and marketing, each of whom will agree to offer, free of charge, some of their time and expertise to business leaders and those considering a start-up. Naturally, there will be a limit on the number of hours they can give but it is expected to be enough to be of considerable value.

Finally, WCN is setting up a Business Support Information website, listing a vast range of the most useful government and advisory services for business and their contact details in one place.

"The Wells economy's survival is everyone's concern," says Christopher Bond. "The community came together when lockdown arrived; now Wells needs to get behind its businesses."