

# The Residents of St Helen's Village and VoIPstudio

VoIPstudio powers COVID-19 helpline

## Background

People have lived in the beautiful rural village of St Helen's on the Isle of Wight since the 11th century. Home to around 1,200, the village lies about 3 miles from the nearest town of Ryde.

## Challenge

In March 2020, local volunteers set up the St Helen's Community website to provide villagers with help and support during COVID-19. The site provided lots of information about local services, shopping, takeaway and restaurant deliveries, doctor and dental services, Government support and grants.

To supplement the website, villagers also set up a telephone helpline for older and more vulnerable residents which was manned every day from 9am-5pm by volunteers. The team wanted to have one central - and local - number but with people able to pick-up inbound calls on their own phones.

Luckily for the volunteers, local resident Charles Hewitt was already a long-time customer of VoIPstudio using it for his business, Pathway Analytics, which provides data, economic modelling and procurement advice to hospitals and directors of public health.



# VOIP \ STUDIO

He says “Even while the volunteers were brainstorming what we needed, I knew that VoIP studio would be just the job. As volunteers reacting to a global pandemic, we needed a system that was quick and easy to set up, totally reliable and able to let us focus on providing emergency help and advice”.

## Solution

Traditionally, setting up a system the way the villagers wanted it would be time-consuming and would need a PBX, scheduled routing and an IT specialist.

However, with VoIPstudio, users can choose from a variety of web-based comms services starting from just £3.99 a month.

For the St Helen’s helpline all they wanted was a local number with call routing to multiple numbers on a schedule, a central voicemail that was easy to access plus the ability to record calls, if necessary.

Charles says “We configured the service including provisioning the inbound line in under 30 minutes. For my business I like using the mobile app and also having a London number. However, for our village helpline, we just needed a local number with call diverting to our mobiles”.

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*Charles Hewitt, resident of St Helen’s and MD of Pathway Analytics:*

*“The people of St Helen’s have always had a community spirit, however, COVID-19 brought us closer together. Our volunteer helpline was an essential resource for people of all ages. Using VoIPstudio meant that volunteers could share the incoming call workload - and step out when they were busy with something else.*

*As a long-term fan of VoIPstudio, I often recommend the service to others and am impressed with the evolution of its feature set and its excellent service”.*

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## Benefits

Around 24 villagers were on a rota for the help line. Calls to the central local number provided by VoIPstudio were diverted from volunteer to volunteer until someone picked up. It was also easy to add new volunteers to the list - and schedule people when they are ‘off-duty’.