



WELLBEING



THOUGHTS ON KINDNESS

By William Armstrong

"Kindness, it has been said, is the highest form of wisdom.

Responding to the needs of others, especially in difficult times,
is what matters.

Martin Luther King spoke about the Good Samaritan. He said that the first question which the priest and Levite asked was, "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" The Good Samaritan reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?"

Kindness is what matters, and kindness is always personal and particular. It is not about empty gestures - thank you for waiting when you had no choice; enjoy the rest of your day when you have no idea what sort of day it has been so far; thank you for that incredibly good question, and then providing an incredibly unhelpful answer!

Kindness is recognising and responding to a need. In a crisis, like the one we are currently living through, kindness is more important than anything. And it can take many forms. Words are not always necessary. A kindly smile can convey so much and mean so much.

Getting the shopping or fetching a prescription can be a life line. Keeping a safe social distance from someone by moving out of the way instead of waiting for them to move. Checking on an elderly or vulnerable neighbour. Making a phone call. Keeping in touch. Simply being there. The poet William Wordsworth, the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of whose birth is commemorated this year, wrote of *"that best portion of a good man's days, the little nameless unremembered acts of kindness and of love."*

Except that they are remembered, because they matter. Kindness matters.

Keep healthy, stay safe, be positive and keep being kind - and be thankful for the kindness of others.

It is kindness that will sustain and see us through this crisis.
Nothing is more important."

William Armstrong

Patron of Norfolk and Waveney Mind