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Your parish magazine with news and views from Bolter End, Cadmore End, Lane End, Moor End and Wheeler End

**We're together.
Even when
we're apart.**

Local D&T teachers

making PPE

Report by Katy Dunn

Bolter End couple Vicky and Graham Nicholls are Design and Technology teachers at Holmer Green and Sir William Borlase schools respectively. They've been putting their design and manufacturing skills to good use at home making Personal Protective Equipment for local hospitals, care homes and GP surgeries that have been running short.

'It's not just us,' says Vicky, 'It came out of our Design & Technology teacher Facebook Groups. We started by donating all the goggles and masks we could spare, then we started sharing designs for making the PPE. What people make depends on what equipment they can access. Some people are laser



cutting, others are 3D printing.'

The Nicholls' started making visors just before the Easter holidays by 'raiding' their departments of materials they thought might be useful. They've honed their technique as they've gone on.

'After the Easter holidays it was a bit trickier to manage production as we had to homeschool our two children on top of teaching,' says Vicky, 'But we each brought a 3D printer home from school, simplified the design and now we've a sustainable production line.' Their living room and dining room have been taken over, but their kids understand why they're doing it and that it's



important work.

At the time of writing, the couple were expecting another three 3D printers following a donation from a generous parent from Holmer Green School. Wycombe's Lib Dem candidate Toni Brodelle has been coordinating needs, donations and distribution channels.

The visor headbands are made from PLA—a renewable and biodegradable plastic which becomes soft and mouldable when heated, and rigid when it cools. The 3D printer lays down very thin layers of the PLA according to the plan that's drawn on the computer and eventually builds up to the designated thickness of the object. It takes around an hour to create each headband.

'It's been good to feel like we've been able to do something to help. It's also been lovely going to hospitals and GPs to deliver the PPE, they've been so grateful and appreciative. We're also used to being busy, so it's been a good way to take our minds off things,' says Vicky.

The Nicholls' are also hoping that their work might raise awareness of the importance of their subject; design and technology. 'We've seen during this

time how important the work of key workers such as bin men, postal workers and supermarket workers is. They're considered low-skilled jobs, but they are essential to keep this country running.

'Equally, Design and Technology is not viewed in the same way as so-called academic subjects, but we absolutely need people who can make things and fix things. We can't get away from the fact that we need people who can build your house, fix your plumbing, manufacture the cars that we drive and the clothes that we wear,' says Vicky.

