Community Lunches

July 2023 - Issue #2

The Community Lunches started in January 2021 as the UK entered its third lockdown due to COVID. With the second lockdown having ended only a month prior, many people classed as vulnerable continued to self-isolate and had now gone months seeing very few people. The Community Cupboard had been distributing small bags of food to older people we knew of, giving us a chance to check in on them and let them see a friendly face. However, with the nation's situation worsening again and moral dropping, we were worried that many of them would lose the motivation to cook themselves hot meals. And so the idea for Community Lunches was born.

With Devils Bridge Snacks closed, Mel and Kerry offered their time to cook hot meals twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays. Our first day saw 35 meals being delivered, and two months later we had 65 names on our register. The meals provided were hot, nutritious and classic comfort food, they were gratefully received with the chance of a quick (socially distanced) chat with our amazing volunteer deliverers. Although, the lockdown ended in March 21, many still felt uncertain about returning to normal. We continued with our deliveries but saw how the isolation was affecting everyone.

Then Eden Project Communities approached us to hold a Big Lunch event. We jumped at the idea. If you were involved with us at the time, you know we went all out. Mel and Kerry put on a three meal course, invitations were sent out, tables were laid with care, bunting was put up and our volunteers had their face masks on. We hired a minibus to ensure that we could bring everyone to the Rugby Club (huge shout out to Bibby's of Ingleton who sent out replacement transport after a shredded tyre scuppered the council one!). We still delivered 18 meals out to those unable to attend and served 43 guests who sat down together for a sumptuous feast . That first Big Lunch was really special. It was the first time in two years many of us had seen each other and the hall was filled with excited chatter.

Since then, we have continued providing hot, nutritious meals, moving to a Monday only as work resumed for our chefs. We've hung up the bunting for 2 more Big Lunches, one of them honouring the Queen's Jubilee, and celebrated 2 Christmases with crackers and party hats! We run every Monday - including holidays and bank holidays, regularly providing around 20 meals to be delivered and serving 35 to 40 meals at the Lunesdale Hall weekly.

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Volunteer Get Together!

We are having a get together for all our volunteers! As a huge thank you for everything our volunteers do, we will be offering wine and cheese (as well as alternatives) at Mansergh Community Hall from 7 pm on 3rd August. We will be talking about all the different ventures that the Cupboard does and you can chat to other volunteers and our Committee members to find out their roles. During the evening, we will also be running a short safeguarding session with Community Cupboard specific examples of potential scenarios. This is mandatory for all our volunteers. If you can't make this session though – no worries! We will be holding another volunteer get together later in the year as well that we hope you will join us for.

Summer with the Cupboard

With the Summer holidays now upon us, the Cupboard recognises that they can be a long period of time without support for families. In order to support our residents, the Cupboard is offering summer bags every week for families. The bags include food that can make up 2 family meals, breakfast, 2 household items and some extra goodies. These items can be chosen from our website, so the bag is personalised for the family.
Alongside this, we are running the Kids Cinema again this summer, with the addition of lunch, including fresh fruit. As with our other cinemas, it is a pay-as-you-can event. Lunch will be served from 12 noon, with the film starting at 12.30 pm. We advise parents to sign up if they want to guarantee enough food! Sign-up can be done on the website or through the hub. After an incredibly successful first screening, seeing 91 attendees from over 30 families, we look forward to seeing the community coming together through the next ones.

- 26/07 Sonic the Hedgehog 2 (PG, 2022)
- 02/08 Finding Dory (U, 2016)
- 09/08 The Super Mario Bros (PG, 2023)
- 16/08 Ponyo (U, 2008)
- 23/08 Pinocchio (PG, 2022)
- 30/08 Monsters Inc (U, 2012)

Our Dementia Friendly Cafe

Going into our second year of lunches, we've seen many changes in the people we serve food to. Whilst ageing has always been natural, we had concerns about the increasing confusion that went alongside it. Kirkby Lonsdale has an older population, and with that comes those experiencing dementia and those helping care for them. Starting from 29th September, every last Friday morning of the month, from 10 am to 12 noon, we will be running a dementia-friendly café. A safe space in which people with dementia and their carers can come together to chat without judgement. We will also ask those who attend what activities they may want to see during subsequent cafes. I am keen to bring in some therapy pets, as well as utilise the joy of music through the playlist for life. If this sounds like something for you – either as an attendee of the café or as a volunteer, please get in touch if you have any more questions about or suggestions for the café. (Held at Lunesdale Hall, Bective Room)