

Appendix 4: Birkenhead Food Hub updates

The Rock Ferry Food hub a year on....

Rock Ferry food hub now has its own constant delivery building at the Beaconsfield Community House which with the support of Neo community café has set its self-up as a Charity in its own right and the community are being supported to asset transfer the building from the council, to offer full community ownership and community lead activity from the building.

The Feeding Birkenhead School provision has been running all School holidays since February of this year from Beaconsfield Community House and has now delivered a total of 1637 meals and snacks through the year of running the programme. Along with craft clubs, gardening, cookery, community clean up days, environmental days and loads of fun for children.

Rock Ferry Food hub also runs surplus food education courses and cookery clubs in Well Lane Primary school and is going to also run these projects in Mersey Park primary and Rock Ferry Primary School in September.

Rock Ferry food hub runs a weekly large social supermarket from the building using both intercepted foods and our subscription to Fare share, this is running on a Pay as you feel model which allows people to pay what they can in money, skills or time. Which allows the service to be open to everyone no matter their financial circumstance. We have received massive support from the local community and other organisations working with families and individuals in the area. The other really positive group of people the social supermarket is being able to support is the 16-24 year olds living on very low incomes in the Beacon Project many of which have left care and now living independently, the social supermarket offers a low cost option for weekly shopping for the young people with the dignity of choosing what food they want and always being welcome in the centre and also offering projects that they can engage with and volunteer through. We now have 2 young lads who help set up and stock the shelves. We are also seeing people traveling from outside the area to use the services. Along with the weekly supermarket we have free bread, fruit and vegetable available daily.

Neo community Café who run and manage Rock Ferry Food hub are also part of the National organic network of Community Café's that are part of The Real Junk Food project who collect and redistribute surplus food from national supermarket chains as well as smaller more local retailers, through this Neo has also intercepted and redistributed 1104168grams of food this quarter to 3998 people across the Birkenhead and Wallasey area, along with supporting young peoples sheltered accommodation, other community projects, school breakfast clubs and emergency provisions with as much food as our volunteers can collect and give out across the borough. Neo is very lucky that we have an amazing and dedicated team of volunteers who without couldn't deliver even a 10th of what we are able to do. Ema Wilkes (Founder and Director) is also the North West co-ordinator for the Real Junk Food Project and would welcome and support anyone else who was wanting to look at joining the network and go through the work involved. On the 13.07.2015 Neo redistributed 630 boxes of cereal across some of the most vulnerable young people and families across Birkenhead as well as supporting a total of 247 individuals through the social supermarket with 240kg of food both fresh and ambient.

To increase the amount of food that Neo can intercept and the amount of people we can support we identified the need for a large van and through community funding we raised £2500 in a matter of days through an online giving page and bucket collections along with this we have managed to raise a further £2400 through corporate funding to enable us to buy a large transit van as well as the tax and insure for 6 months.

Neo Community Café has also received recognition for our project model from Coventry City Council and the Voluntary sector and Leeds Voluntary Sector and Primary School cluster and have supported this with going to speak and share best practise on a number of events to help and support the setting up of Feeding Coventry and other initiatives in Leeds.

Rock Ferry food hub working with John Moors University is now also carrying out a Social Impact Longevity report on the impact within Communities of tackling food poverty and social isolation through food and grass route community action. We are also working with Liverpool University environmental team also to look at the impact on the environment.

Ema Wilkes with the support of Jen Doherty and the amazing Neo team were also remarkably proud to receive recognition through the Merseyside Woman of the Year Awards where she won Woman of the year for Community Impact 2016.

We are now looking forward to the 2nd year of #feeding Birkenhead summer provision where we plan to have 18 free day sessions including breakfast, lunch and snacks every day whilst also supporting a further 15 sessions in other settings to offer free food for children.

Neo and the Rock Ferry food hub have learnt so much over the last year, through supporting 5 volunteers into employment we have been left with a smaller team at times which we are growing again, although it has left a major gap in administration time and office planning time as our project co-ordinators are also cooking, cleaning and picking up food. We have also started looking at working partnerships more closely and insuring full community benefit and not allowing Neo to become over stretched with commitment.

Feeding Birkenhead up-date report: North Birkenhead Development Trust

1. School holiday activities

Food and fun activities were delivered over the following school holidays:

February – total of 39 children attended @ cost of £4.44 per child.

April – total of 64 individual children attended (111 meals provided) @ cost of 84p per child

May – total of 31 individual children attended @ cost of £2.03 per child

Food was sourced from Aldi, Tesco and Fareshare for all half terms.

Sessions delivered included free breakfast club (generally low take up), art and craft in the library, story telling picnic, rocket making, drop in playscheme and lunch, family cookery, create a town, youth club, meal share, football and the café has offered buy and adult meal kids eat free.

Activities where food has been provided have been very successful. Families have appreciated the offer of toast during the morning sessions and the opportunity for children to make their own lunch and sit to eat it as a community.

The family cooking has been an ongoing success. We run these sessions throughout the year and have welcomed 27 families since October 2015.

2. His Church

We have now ordered and received 4 beauty and household supplies from HIS Church. We have distributed these through our library coffee morning, using the St James Opp Shop, at our Community Celebrations (bingo & Queen's birthday lunch) and Community Market days.

The delivery of His Church pallets has been coordinated by George from Beechwood Development trust and Luke from Gautby Road. This co-ordination of deliveries has worked very well. Pallets have cost on average £180 each (last delivery slightly higher @ £200) and we have generated a small surplus from each one.

3. Food poverty and welfare

We continue to be a part of the Wirral Foodbank (Trussel Trust) as a distribution point on a Monday evening. We welcome the support of Involve NorthWest benefit advisors at these sessions and together we have been able to address individual and family challenges around welfare blockages and budgeting. We have supported 4 families accessing foodbank with whitegoods through the Birkenhead Relief in Sickness Grant.

We work closely with Wirral Ways to Recovery and the Secondary to provide a hot meal once a month to those in need. These include rough sleepers, sofa surfers and hostel sleepers. To date we have provided 5 hot food hubs, providing an average of 40 2 course, hot, nutritious meals per session (200 meals). The ingredients for this have been provided by Fareshare and donated by Tesco Bidston Moss with some additional purchases from Aldi.

4. Future plans

We have a bumper summer programme starting Monday 25th July. Our offer includes family experiences out of area, jolly tots (under 3s session) & reading group (new), library craft, family and junior cooking, youth trips and park play (outdoor facilitated play with light snack). Funding from the constituency will enable us to provide additional staffing resources to these activities as well as cover material and ingredients costs. We have also drawn in funding from Prince of Wales Charitable Trust, Soroptimists, Inner Wheel, the Lions club, Lifelong Learning and internal fundraising.

Our theme this year is Roald Dahl. Where possible we always try to fit in with the Summer Reading Challenge theme and what a great one it is this year! We will be making big ears, fox masks, wonderful concoctions and lots more!

Working with Lifelong Learning, from September we are hoping to utilise the teaching kitchen for adult cookery classes with an optional qualification in Food Hygiene (L2), Nutrition and Allergy Awareness (at L1). We also hope to work with Can Cook to deliver a range of Master Classes for children and young people aged 10-21 years in addition to our ongoing Family and Junior Chef School programmes.

Anna Barnish

Trust Manager

North Birkenhead Development Trust

0151 670 9974