

Update on Community Fridge – May 2021

The fridge has continued to open 3 sessions a week and the Friday session has now moved to opening in the afternoon. This has enabled some customers to visit who haven't been able to access the morning sessions and coincides with parents collecting their children from Hale school. We've been able to put bread and cakes on a table outside for parents to pick-up whilst collecting their children and make them aware of the community fridge. Numbers of visitors to the fridge sessions have been very variable, with up to 30 visitors a week to the fridge. However the outside cupboard is very popular and we suspect we have a lot more visitors to the cupboard as it is accessible at any time. The stock in the cupboard has a quick turnover and the cupboard has proved invaluable at preventing fruit, veg and bread from going to waste.

We have continued to receive donations from Waitrose, Lidl, Tesco and Asda. Other routes for collecting surplus food have been explored but without success so far. However we are now receiving frozen food from Waitrose and have recently received very large donations from Waitrose. Our ambient stock has been growing and we have now made the decision to reduce the amount we collect from Lidl as we have consistently had a large stock of ambient food for a while now.

Between January and March we offered takeaway meals to those locally who would benefit from them, providing approx 325 meals in total to approx 32 families. We used a booking system called Eventbrite which was a really useful tool in gathering data and contact details, and something we've now been able to use for the café as well. We also sent out a quick online survey to gather feedback about the meals once the schools were returning. We had some really positive feedback from this, with families valuing the ease of collecting a freshly cooked meal to feed their family during a very pressured time. During the Easter holidays our volunteer chef, Tim, cooked lots of meals so that we could offer these as frozen meals for families to heat when needed. We hope to be able to link with the pop-up cafe and begin offering some hot lunches at the cafe soon using food from the fridge.

As lockdown restrictions ease and due to changes in individual's circumstances our number of volunteers have reduced – we currently have 5 regular volunteers covering the 3 open fridge sessions but hope to recruit more volunteers to be available for cover if needed.

We are still awaiting the environmental health inspection and continue to review and strengthen the procedures we have in place to ensure we are operating in a safe way.

Katie Burnhams Community Fridge & Cupboard

The Community Fridge & Cupboard moved to the Training Room to allow for adequate social distancing but with increased opening up as we follow the governments roadmap we may have to consider moving it back to the reception area.