

Feedback from Users of HCC through this year

1. I have been coming here for several years and think it is of great benefit to me. Seniors Coffee morning, Opportunities craft, gardening and recently helping with the Community Cupboard and fridge. I enjoy being able to help others and it gives me a sense of purpose and has increased my confidence.
2. I feel that this year the community centre has become something I really feel a part of, rather than just visiting occasionally. The share store/swap shop has been invaluable for me and my little boy, particularly during this pandemic. It gave us somewhere to go and a great supply of new things for us to enjoy each week - toys, games and books.

The community fridge and cupboard has been an amazing new initiative. I'm always keen to reduce waste and it's been a great way to try new food I might not usually buy. It's also got me back into the habit of eating fresh veg and more fruit! We loved coming to the soup share - great way to sneak some veg into my little boy, try new soups but also to spend time with others in a very easy way - great atmosphere and great food!

The staff and volunteers at the centre are great, so friendly and easy to chat with. In a time when everyone seems to have become a bit isolated into their families it's lovely to have a place to see familiar faces, get to know others in the community and feel a part of something.

Thank you to all those who are a part of making Hale community centre what it is!

3. Prior to becoming a volunteer at the Hale Community Centre I was totally unaware of what happened in the building, in fact I wasn't really aware of the building. I had recently retired and just wanted to do a few hours here and there to keep myself in touch with the outside world and detached from my working environment. I have an interest in gardening so to volunteer to join the gardening club seemed the ideal way to spend some spare time.
4. I have to admit now that I'm not quite sure how it happened, Cathy's skill at recruiting no doubt, but in a very short time I became involved with the project Farnham Area Timebank. This was a whole new interest for me. It has allowed me to meet so many new people and satisfied a need in me to help others in some small way. During this time I assisted with the cookery classes which quite clearly was enjoyed by many local residents and children.

As a result I have an additional circle of friends both within the Centre and others that have or are involved with the Centre. Since March I have also had the privilege to be involved with the Hale Community Cupboard and Fridge project, which has kept me busy in an organisational role as well as meeting even more interesting people from different walks of life. This aspect has been most satisfying in these troubled times and I really feel I am making a difference at the moment.

Prior to Covid 19 I also attended a Slimming world Club, which I desperately need to start up again, and have enjoyed the interaction with the Seniors Club members and the Arts and Craft members. I will no doubt join them one day.....but not just yet.

I really enjoy my time spent with helping out at the Centre and love the ability to helping out in a very flexible manner, the staff are amazing and I really don't mind making them tea/ coffee. I thank them for the opportunity to just be there.

5. The community centre has literally been a life line to us this year. We attended swap shop a couple of times/week during lockdown 1 and weekly in lockdown 2. Not simply to get something but to have a little essential adult contact. The ability to donate and take for free has been a wonderful learning experience for my children.

The community fridge and cupboard we visit a couple of times a week to see what is on offer. This experience isn't necessarily simply about the food but it is also about the friendly face, the opportunity to have a few minutes to chat. I can't tell you the amount of times a ready prepared meal has meant I had a meal. Not because I didn't have food in, but because I was completely and emotionally worn out by the time the children were in bed. For the same reason in half term the meals were really appreciated, often leading me to tears as it meant I didn't have to summon the energy to cook, but it did mean that we had had fresh air by walking to the centre and had an easy meal to reheat.

My 4yr old and I volunteer once a week at the cupboard, I have taken my other children in in the holidays to help. The Community Centre is somewhere they feel safe and they are comfortable, especially my eldest who is autistic. They have learnt about preventing food going to landfill, helping others, putting our free time to use.

I cannot explain how much the community centre and staff mean to me and have provided a regular cuppa and a socially distanced shoulder to cry on.

6. Volunteering gives me a sense of identity something that has been missing in the last year. It's a confidence booster to be given the opportunity to open up the centre and the cupboard and it's nice to be able to pass on the knowledge about what is available, ie. food/swap shop etc to other people.

Thank you all.

November 2020