

***Report to Services & Engagement Committee: Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025***

***Report by: Miss Tracy Reece, Business Support Manager***

***Subject: Services Update***

**Pantry In the Park**

The Food Pantry continues to offer support with food and hygiene items each week. We continue to receive weekly deliveries from Fairshare of fresh fruit, vegetables and other items. The Soup and Sandwich project continues to be offered to all those who attend the pantry.

In February, 124 people attended the pantry. The most popular items at present are tins of beans, noodles, tuna, any fresh item provided by Fareshare (microwave meals, ham, cheese). There is always lots of fruit and vegetables and any leftovers will be made into soup.

All fresh fruit and vegetables are free and not included within the ten items and members of the public can take as much as they need.

Citizens Advice bureau have been visiting the first Monday of every month, to speak to people who visit the pantry, offering advice and support. This will continue during 2025.

The Town Council has signed up with the Multibank organisation to help residents in our community. Along with the Food Pantry and the Go With the Flow project, we can now provide additional support with household items, toiletries, children's toys, footwear, pet food and accessories and limited clothing.

**Groups**

The following groups and activities take place at the café/Annexe throughout the week:

- Monday - Art & Craft's 1pm to 3pm
- Tuesday - Dementia Support Group 10.15am to 12.25pm
- Tuesday - Stockton Carers Peer Support Group 1pm to 3pm
- Wednesday - Tots & Teacups 9.30 am to 11am

- Wednesday - Walking Group who use the facilities within the Café
- Wednesday - Wellbeing Group - 12.30pm to 2.30pm
- Thursday - Games group 11am to 2pm
- Friday – Age UK 1.30pm to 3pm

Diabetes UK had their first session on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February with good attendance, this will continue on the last Thursday of every month.

A new Dementia Support group commenced on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and continues to be well attended, this group will continue throughout the year.

### **Go With the Flow Project**

We continue to offer free sanitary products for those in need. There is no set day for this as members of the public can call in to the café any day.

### **Café in the Park**

Due to still being in the winter season, the Café in the Park has reduced hours, open 10am to 3pm, Monday to Friday. The food menu is also reduced to hot/cold drinks, homemade cakes, pastries and pies

The cafe will reopen for the summer season on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April, 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday, with a full menu. From June 2025 onwards the café will be open Monday to Saturday until October 2025.

Bookings are still being taken for our popular Afternoon Tea and will continue throughout the year.

We are still operating as a Community Space. The café/Community Hub is now a more welcoming space for the winter months with comfortable seating, TV, internet, craft table, magazines, puzzle books, children's play area with toys, jigsaws, games and books.

### **What's to Come!**

Below is what is planned for the coming 12 months:

- Afternoon Tea to continue

- Bingo and quiz afternoons
- Half term activities
- Easter activities
- Summer activities
- Picnic in the park

### **Volunteers**

At present we have five volunteers who assist with the Food Pantry and help in the café. This is giving the individuals chance to experience what it is like to work in a busy environment with support and guidance.