

## **Dordon Community Café**

### **Chairman's Annual Report for 2023**

**(to be presented at the AGM to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2024)**

The year 2023 was a year of stability. The café meals were produced regularly on the second Friday of each month throughout the year. Overall the delivery of the meals is working very smoothly from initial preparation to final clearing up.

The same committee members were re-elected for 2023. Debit cards for use on the Café bank account were provided for Carol Allen and Jean Knight, in addition to those held by Andrew Chittenden and Stella Doggett.

The cooking team has been unchanged over the year with Deborah Chittenden, Carol Allen and Jean Knight doing the majority of the cooking. We were also pleased to welcome Vincent Russell who assists Andrew Chittenden in the kitchen with preparation and washing up. It is also gratifying to see the built-in resilience of this team, because on several occasions there have been unavoidable absences but the remaining members have coped well.

The serving team has also been strengthened with husband and wife, Priscilla and Tom Wolodko. The serving team, led by Mark and Stella Doggett, play an essential part in providing a welcoming environment and contributing to a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. It is evident that friendships are being formed and strengthened in the community.

A year ago the attendance was typically 25-30 in the winter; it is now 40-50. In December we reached our capacity of 60. There seems to be a couple of reasons for this increase; primarily we suspect that the new policy in 2023 of providing a roast dinner every month is popular, plus word-of-mouth endorsements have likely played a part.

Initially when the café started in December 2019 there were no charges for meals, we only received donations. At some point it was suggested that people might be put off coming because they would be the recipients of charity. Therefore in the spring of 2022 we introduced a charge £2 per adult, but this was discontinued after reappraisal in a committee meeting in January 2023. The committee is happy to leave the option of a donation entirely to the discretion of the diners.

In January 2023 Tom Wolodko introduced us to his manager at Greencore Food to Go Ltd. The result is that every month Greencore kindly donate a variety of prepacked sandwiches and hot eat products, about 60 in all. These are placed in a chilled display cabinet and our diners are very happy to take them home (free of charge) after the meal.

Since 2020 the Café had been receiving food deliveries from FareShare (Midlands); these were a great help in keeping costs down and providing a wide variety of meals. In July 2023 we suspended the delivery of these meals because the fresh/frozen meat had dwindled to almost nothing. In December 2023 the committee members decided to cancel FareShare deliveries altogether and request a refund for the outstanding deliveries. The café is now a member of Booker Wholesale UK and we now purchase meat and other items from their Tamworth store.

In October 2023 we welcomed Andi Markham back to do another puppet show at the end of the meal. As previously, this was greatly enjoyed and appreciated. To advertise this event we delivered leaflets to the Dordon households. Apart from this, the café advertising is managed by Donna Watts on the Facebook page she set up.

### **Acknowledgements**

The café committee wishes to express its thanks to everyone, including non-members, for their active support over the year. In particular we are grateful to Dordon Parish Council for their continued support and to Byron Melia (Chair of Dordon Parish Council) for his personal support at the meal events. We also wish to express our thanks to Debbie Sullivan (Hall Caretaker) who goes above and beyond her duties in supporting and facilitating all that the café is involved with. Finally, our thanks to Donna Watts and Beverley Garratt for advertising the menus.

Report dated 19/01/2024. Edited on 23/1/24