

# Wem Eating Well- Bringing Together Food Projects in Wem



## The Project:

Wem Eating Well brings together a number of organisations in the town to support their community with food. The partnership includes, Wem Town Council, Wem Youth Club, Wem Food Hub, The Fruitful Deli, Wem Incredible Edible and Wem Good Neighbours.

## The Plan:

Before Covid the Wem Eating Well project planned to:

- Identify the levels of need locally and improve communication about what support is available locally.
- Increase the number and diversity of volunteers at Wem Food Hub and purchase a freezer.
- Plan a town wide community meal to be held over Easter.
- Co-create a forward plan to continue food poverty alleviation activities beyond the end of the project.



## The Resources:

- An established network of community projects and organisations- each with existing spaces that they run out of and a team of staff/volunteers, all keen to do more.
- Funds to hire a coordinator, purchase a freezer, provide food hygiene training for volunteers, create publicity materials and buy food supplies.



## The Outcomes:

Representatives from all the organisations involved worked together. They appointed a temporary co-ordinator to map local need and improve communications. Because they were already working as a team, they were able to quickly adapt their plan to meet the needs of the community during Covid. The project morphed to focus on crisis community support. They were able to help local schools by delivering free school meal packs for families, work with the local Co-op to develop a volunteer-led delivery service and set up Wem Store Cupboard, an emergency food parcel provision, in partnership with Wem Town Council and volunteers.



## The Key Components:

Covid-19 acted as a catalyst for all the different organisations involved to agree specific roles. They were able to start to answer the question of how to best share responsibility to achieve impact. This project demonstrates that if you can figure out how to do this as a local level partnership you can achieve much more.

## The Future:

The Wem Eating Well group has developed a better understanding of its community's needs and has worked collaboratively to secure funding to plan and deliver lots of future projects, the details of which are below.

**"Where we're at now is a starting point really. To begin with, we knew there were people in need, but not who and the extent of it; and now, we know that there will still be considerable need because of Covid".**



## Meals On Wheels:

1. Meals will be prepared by the four local cafes, each responsible for preparing meals one week a month. This meal support is expected to be useful for people that can't get out and about and people that used to use cafes to get a hot meal before Covid lockdown. People will be asked to pay £5.50 per meal, but WEW will subsidise those who cannot cover the full cost of the meal. The cafes will receive £4.50 for each meal sold and volunteers will deliver the meals.

# Emergency Food Parcels

There is no food bank in Wem. The need to gain a better understanding of local need and to signpost local people to Whitchurch Food Bank had been highlighted by the group in their discussions. WEW have started a store cupboard operation, running out of Wem Business Park, preparing and delivering emergency food parcels with two days' worth of food. The person receiving the food parcel is then referred to Whitchurch Food Bank.



## The Twelve Days of Christmas:

They expect to prepare 100 Christmas hampers with twelve luxury items, one for each of the twelve days. Boxes will be for families with children on free school meals, both junior and secondary school, and other vulnerable families and elderly people.

## Top Tips:

- 1. Agree clearly defined roles.** Understanding how different organisations will work together means that when there is a crisis you can respond quickly, and to those most in need.
- 2. Don't assume you know what all the communities needs are.** Investing time to develop a clear understanding of this will make the work you do more relevant and valuable.
- 3. Have your longer term goals in mind.** Dealing with the immediate repercussions of Covid will be a reality for the near future, but in the longer-term we will be even more in need of community led action which fulfils a variety of social needs.



## Contact:

For more information on this project and other community food projects across Shropshire, please contact [sophie@shrewsburyfoodhub.org.uk](mailto:sophie@shrewsburyfoodhub.org.uk)

