**Wem Store Cupboard proposal for Establishment of a Wem Community Meals Project**

**Background**

During the Covid 19 lockdown period representatives from Wem Store Cupboard received several calls from professionals including social workers and health workers requesting support for their clients who were housebound or were not able to cook food in their own homes for various reasons. To help these residents the Store Cupboard was able to offer free delivered hot meals to those deemed as vulnerable. Over 50 meals were delivered during the lockdown period free of charge.

From the crisis it has emerged that there is a need for the continuation of a subsidised meal delivery service for the most vulnerable residents in the town especially over the winter period and should a second wave of the virus result in a further period of lockdown. At the same time this has identified an opportunity to provide limited support for local businesses who have suffered financially during the lockdown.

**Proposal Overview**

To develop a community delivery project for Wem town residents that would:-

* Provide initially a twice weekly delivered hot meal to vulnerable residents.
* To provide a regular source of income to businesses in the supply of these meals.
* Manage and source volunteers to deliver the meals.

**Proposed Scheme**

**Meal Provision**

Businesses who agree to be part of the pilot scheme would be asked to;

* Supply a hot main course and a hot pudding (plus vegetarian option) for one person twice a week - possibly Wednesday and Friday on either a weekly rota system or fortnightly depending on the number of businesses willing to sign up to the scheme.
* A set price will be paid monthly to the businesses from the administrating body for each meal this will be in the region of £5. (Wiltshire farm foods currently charge in the region of £4.50 for cottage pie and apple crumble).
* Businesses involved will be required to submit menu suggestions, commit for a set period and provide evidence of food hygiene certification and have a level 4 or 5 food hygiene rating score.

Due to the need to keep it easy for volunteers to collect the meals it will only be open to businesses based in Wem Town.

**Clients**

Potential clients of the service will be required to pay for each meal which will be subsidised slightly, the cost will be in the region of £5.50.

Clients will be referred for the service either via the Town Council or from other organisations working with vulnerable individuals.

The 50p excess charged on each meal will go towards the cost of DBS checks for volunteers, purchase of delivery boxes and containers.

Clients will have to order meals in advance and made aware that there will be no choice offered other than a vegetarian option. Therefore the scheme will not be able to cater for individual dietary needs.

**Volunteers**

The scheme will need volunteers to collect the meals and deliver.

For protection of the customer and volunteer, volunteers will be required to deliver in pairs and commit to deliver for the entire week (2 days) as part of a monthly rota. Working on the assumption 10 customers on a 4 week rota and making allowances for 5 week months and holiday cover a minimum of 10 volunteers would be required for the pilot.

Before starting volunteers will be required to have:-

* A DBS check
* Provided details of car insurance cover
* Attended training

**Administration**

There is a significant amount of work involved in establishing a project like this and it is important that as finances and vulnerable people are involved that the scheme is administered transparently.

However once established the scheme can run with input from the administrator of a couple of hours per week.

The administrator of the scheme will be responsible for

* Liaison with café’s over orders received and payment to businesses for meals supplied monthly.
* Taking orders for meals – customers will be required to sign up for meals at least 1 week in advance.
* Vetting and risk assessing referrals.
* Receiving payment from recipients (recipients will be required to pay in advance ideally monthly).
* Co-ordinating and communicating deliveries and meal requests on a weekly basis.
* Recruiting, training and managing delivery volunteers and DBS checks.
* Purchasing of meal containers and delivery boxes.

For any organisation willing to administer this project the following would be recommended:

* A separate bank account and accounting spreadsheet or code within existing accounts package with the ability to make BACS payments.
* Ability to process DBS identity information to speed up application.
* Ability to recruit and train volunteers and carry out risk assessments for new customers.

**Finance**

This project will only cover costs of the meal supply and delivery not the cost of administration of the scheme.

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|  | Week based on 10 customers receiving 2 meals/ week |
| Income from client | £110 |
| Payment to business | £100 |
| Weekly surplus for materials etc | £10 |

**Unfactored costs**

**Volunteer mileage** – as it is anticipated the mileage will be low this cost may not be needed, however the scheme should not be seen to put any volunteer out of pocket so finances should be allocated to enable reimbursement of mileage at an appropriate rate.

**DBS** **processing** - charges range from £32 per volunteer (Shropshire Care Partnership) to £18 Shropshire Youth Association. Volunteers will be required to work in pairs for their own safety and that of their client so at least 10 volunteers will be required to cover a month period at a cost of £180 assuming they do not hold an existing DBS form.

**Administration Costs** – these will be significant in the beginning for whichever organisation takes on this role and will reduce as it becomes established.

As a general estimate for the 3 month trial I would recommend an allocation of £500 is made to cover staffing administration costs. This is based on a payment of £9.77/ hour for 4 hours a week over 12 weeks. If the project were to become established this would reduce.

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|  | **Cost (10 customers two meals / week)** |
| Mileage | £100 |
| DBS 10 volunteers | £180 |
| Admin and Staffing 50 hours | £500 |
| Start up supplies’ containers/ delivery boxes | £220 |
| **Total** | **£1000** |

Wem Town Hall has expressed an interest in being the administrator and treasurer of this project and a grant application has been submitted to the market towns fund to cover the pilot set up costs the outcome of which is awaited.

This proposal was discussed at a Wem Store Cupboard meeting held 21.7.20 attended by representatives from Wem Town Hall, Wem Food Hub, Wem Methodist Church, Incredible Edibles and the Town Clerk all representatives present supported the project proposal subject to funding

**Recommendation**

* That the Town Council works in partnership with Wem Town Hall to help establish the 3-month pilot scheme.
* If funding cannot be identified elsewhere approval is given for the Town Council to allocate £750 towards this project vired from the underspend in the small grants budget code.