



The café continues to attract a wide range of people. Most from the local community including young families , elderly people some in work and some on benefits. The most amazing part of the café is the interaction between customers, people sitting with others who they know, people greeting people as they come in or as they are leaving and a few conversations across the room.

Our front of house staff encourage this sometimes sitting with customers and engaging in conversation if appropriate. The café is obviously contributing to the connecting fabric of the community.

Some of those who come to the café are unable to pay but are not stigmatised in any way by the method of payment others are very generous in the payment they make in this way we normally break even once we have paid expenses and additional food products that are needed to supplement the menu. We feed between 35 and 45 people most days, this includes meals for volunteers and some meals given as take outs to some people known to be in need to supplement their meals for the rest of the week

The stated purpose of the café is to stop food being wasted but using it to feed people, but it is doing far more. People who initially seemed unfriendly and grabbing of all that is available are now talkative and more at ease in the food they consume. Lonely people are finding friends to eat with regularly. Volunteers from groups find a friendly place to rest and recover. The café provides what Celtic theology calls a thin place, and conversations are often about spiritual things either in the kitchen, at the table, or as people are leaving. Christian volunteer staff or visitors are not encouraged to overtly witness, but to be themselves as Christian people in the community alongside others. This seems to be the right approach.

We have eight volunteers most of whom are from the local community. The age range is wide although we have just lost our eldest kitchenhand and cook when she retired at eighty. ( she still however delivers fruit crumbles to us most weeks.).

Food is obtained from Fare share, a charity that receives food from major supermarkets that has been overordered and distributes it to voluntary organisation for use. This includes meat, dairy products, vegetables a variety of ready meals, cakes and sundries like past and rice. We also have a donation from the local Lidl of pastries and sometimes flowers under the Neighbourly scheme. Every week we have a donation of fresh veg from a local market stall in Treorchy. From this food we create our menu with increasing popularity of our home-produced food rather than ready meals. Showing an influence on the local eating habits.

We are trying to develop links with restaurants and catering establishments to explore the possibility of them seconding a chef or two to work at the café once a week. This providing a unique training opportunity for a chef at any level, but as yet we have had no take up of this. We have trained most of our staff to level two Food Hygiene certificates , using a local grant to provide a training course which we opened up to local caterers and had uptake from two local take aways.

The café has received a great deal of support from local people and has been visited by many people to see what we are doing , including the First Minister from the Synedd.

See Video Via link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kISpq6N8sM&t=11s>

