

May 2023 Report from the Cost of Living Working Group

The Food for Thought Purbeck / Fareshare larder operating at St Marks School, Swanage every Monday is now fully subscribed and is operating well. We have received some heart-warming testimonials from those using the larder, see below. Corfe Castle School are providing seven local families with food from the larder.

However, there have been some issues recently with Fareshare not having enough food available to be able to supply the requisite number of items for each type of member (£2.50 members should receive at least 8 items, £3.50 members at least 12 and £5 members at least 20 items), leading to us having to downgrade all the food bags to a standard lower price (either £3.50 each, or on a couple of weeks the amount of food was really short, to £2 each). Fareshare have since advised that they are having problems with the donations being received; we believe this is because the amount of public donations are reducing, rather than the supermarket or business donations.

In addition to the Dorset Council funding of £14,000, donations and fundraising have supplemented this to a total of £1,070. The costs are currently less than budgeted for, although invoices are still awaited for some of the costs.

It has now been agreed that the Children's Centre on High Street can be used as a venue for the second larder, and Fareshare have vetted this site and found it satisfactory. Help and Kindness have agreed to fund this second larder, which will be operated on mainly as a first come first served, open access larder (the same model as all the other Dorset larder they are funding), although we have negotiated that we can target 10 food bags each week to those in need who are unable to access the larder in person, for whatever reason.

The second larder will operate from 9.30-10.30 on Wednesdays, opening on 7th June. Leaflets have been designed and printed ready for circulating to public areas and organisations with links to those who may benefit from this service.

The next meeting of the Food for Thought Purbeck Steering Group is on Friday 26th May, and a copy of the notes of the meeting on 19th April is attached.

The Soup and Pud lunches are held on the first Saturday of the month, and are proving to be popular, being run by Corfe Community Kitchen (Gill, Chris and Sue, and a number of regular and ad hoc volunteers). The May event was a suitably themed Coronation lunch, which was well attended and everyone enjoyed. It is anticipated the lunches will continue for the time being, having received £1,000 funding from Dorset Council, as well as donations from attendees at the lunches for their meal.

Report by Cllr Helen Sumbler, 8/5/23.

Food for Thought Purbeck Testimonials

From one of the families receiving food from the larder

I am writing to say what a help the food share has been for me and my twin boys.

I am a single working mum and have been struggling with fuel poverty and the cost of living, this scheme has helped so much and eased my worries and provide a variety of food for our family.

I really appreciate being able to pick up my food from school as I work and this gives me more flexibility to pick or get friends to help if needed.

Thanks you so much.

From the Headteacher of one of the schools

The FareShare scheme that we were invited to join in January of this year has been invaluable to a number of our families going through a range of difficulties at this time. They are all incredibly appreciate of the support they receive and comment positively each week on the wide and varied array of food they have been supported with.

The volunteers of the scheme, who set this up and lead this, in Swanage, are wonderful people. Without their invaluable support and the delivery of the food to our school, most of the families who are members of FareShare would simply not be able to access the provision for a range of reasons including: some working at the time of the larder, some not having transport to get to/from the larder (as it's well outside of our school's catchment area) and others with significant physical and mental health difficulties.

Thank you to you all for your support'.

From a member of Food for Thought Purbeck Steering Group who is now receiving food from the larder, due to medical issues

I just wanted to take a moment to express how invaluable it has been for me to have the Fareshare shopping bags delivered to my home for the last three months.

To say it has been a lifesaving resource would be an understatement! As you know, it has been a very challenging time due to my recent illness and spinal injury...and I have basically been bed bound/housebound since January. Those weekly deliveries have really kept me afloat whilst I have been struggling to get back on my feet again (quite literally!).

There are many in our community that would benefit from having access to these essential food supplies, so a second larder would be amazing. The fact that you have managed to set up a system where those who cannot get out and about on their own...can actually have a delivery direct to their door is incredibly helpful.

There are so many who cannot just go out when they need to...for all sorts of reasons. It's not just illness and injury...its also mental health issues that come into play. Even I am now struggling again with agoraphobia after being housebound for three months...the idea of going into a busy place can be quite terrifying when you are dealing with conditions like that. Sadly, trauma can take a long time to heal from and doing basic daily tasks can often feel impossible.

So I wanted to wish you all the very best with the next stage of this much needed project. I do hope the delivery option is available for all those that need it, as it really will make all the difference for those

who are struggling the most. It truly is a wonderful thing when a community comes together like this and makes sure everyone at least has the basics.

Thanks for everything you and all the team are doing, I'm sure all on the receiving end appreciate it as much as I do. All the very best to you and the crew!