GOOD FOOD STORY



Name: Allison Menzies
Project: Ecclefechan Day Centre
Location: Ecclefechan

Describe your project

Ecclefechan Day Centre delivers food services and activities that are essential to the rural community of as they improve social isolation, mental health and physical wellbeing, address food poverty and resilience for the individuals who live in Ecclefechan and surrounding area.

The centre provides a two course meal every day, Monday to Friday, which could be a main and a pudding or a soup and a main. Alex the chef uses quality fresh ingredients that are sourced as locally as possible. The community often drop off surplus veggies and fruit in season which is also used in the meals provided in the centre.

Folk who come have a comfy space to share a nutritious meal and socialise, there are also activities such as tea dances, Tai Chi and quizzes along with day trips out. The Day Centre provides 23 meals on wheels each day to the local area so that people who can't get in also have the chance of a nutritious freshly cooked meal delivered to their home. The centre is very multigenerational and local children come in for singing and sharing stories and skills between generations.

Alongside all that, the centre is involved in discharge planning from hospital, picking up prescriptions and linking in to wrap around service such as foot care drop in's. With the help of staff and volunteers we offer care in the community and a sense of belonging!



How did you get started?

Ecclefechan Day Centre started as a Soup Kitchen in 1979! Through the years it has expanded, firstly to 2 or 3 days a week to now every week day catering for up to 35 people a day in the centre and the extra people who have meals on wheels.

We are supported by Health and Social Care partners and have a management committee who help to keep us running. Finically we are kept afloat by donations for meals which includes the 2 course lunch, teas/coffees and a try bake in the afternoon. We also rely on grant funding.

What are your plans for the future?

Our big new project is the planning of a new community garden that will provide food for the meals produced at the centre and to be shared with the wider community. We hope to get everyone involved in this exciting venture from the local schools to people who visit and anyone who would like to get involved.

Alex, our chef, is so passionate about local, quality and nature grown food that he will be taking the lead on this project to get it rolling and it is also great to have the help of partners such as DG Community Food Network and NHS Health Improvement Team!



What are the challenges?

The people that come to the centre have a wide range of abilities and so pitching activities can be a challenge. We also have to get around some stigma about the age of people who come to us, we actually have lots of different ages of people and have to work hard to get the message across.

Getting our new garden up and running will help with more multi generational activities.

Funding is always a challenge the same as for lots of projects.





What does sustainability mean to you?

Alex is a good economic chef using up all ingredients to keep cost and waste to an absolute minimum. We compost anything we can and what waste can be used goes to a local livestock farmer.

Most of our food is sourced locally and a lot of this is donations from individuals and businesses. We put out on Facebook when we need something and people always rally to get it to us, we are a very resilient community!

Our new veg and fruit garden will add lots in terms of sustainability.

What good food changes need to happen in D&G?

More money needs to go into teaching people where their food comes from, how to grow it and how to cook it! Often people applying for funds for these project don't have the skills for the applications so it is not a level playing field.

Community food share dramatically reduces food waste and this gets overlooked.

You can find contact Ecclefechan Day Centre on – 01576 300227

And find them on Facebook:
FB – Ecclefechan Day Centre