

GOOD FOOD STORY

Name: Karen Wylie

Project: Grub Club

Location: Lochside Community Centre, Dumfries

Describe your project

We run the Grub Club to feed children and families during term time and school holidays. The project consist of meals that can be eaten in or taken away and a food share trolley for anyone to come and help themselves. There is also a referral process for emergency food parcels.

Grub Clubs generally runs Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday for people to come from 11am until the food has gone or by 1pm which ever comes first. The days and times vary between term time and holidays but we give details on our Facebook page. We also run lots of activities for children and families throughout the year.

Meals consist of two courses and a drink for free and if you would like to take a meal home then we ask for a £1 donation per course to cover our packaging costs. Food comes from Fair Share and donations from local businesses such as Greggs. We aim to offer a selection of warm nutritious options. When a food parcel goes out we try to ensure that all the items to make up meals are included.

How did you get started?

We started as a committee in 2017 and ran entirely as volunteers until we got funding in 2018 as part of the Combatting Holiday Hunger campaign. The centre didn't have a kitchen so the council donated us a second hand one which we fitted ourselves with the help of local businesses, but in the meantime we served toasties. We also had breakfast clubs and then went on to feeding families attending activities by 2019.

During Covid we had funding to provide school meals to families at home and this grew into a delivery service and also an outside collection service with a complex system to keep everyone safe. Over the years we have provided between 70 and 200 meals during crisis times, a Warm Space and place for people to socialise over a meal or whilst collecting food. Social isolation is very hard for people and so what we do is far more than providing food to our community!



What are the challenges?

One of the challenges is reaching the people most in need in the community. While we are grateful for being part of the scheme, sometimes the choice of food that comes from Fair Share is limited which can make it hard to produce a meal.

Getting people to make healthy food choices can be a challenge and in the end we have to prioritise getting food into bellies. We pack veg into soup and other meals helping people to eat more healthily. There have been some cooking classes to improve this and we have also gone into the schools to help with education and provide 'flat pack' meals with a recipe cards



What does sustainability mean to you?

We aim for zero waste, left over food gets turned into meals that can be frozen or used during the week at Grub Club. If there is any fresh fruit or veg left over it goes to local charities such as Mossburn to feed their animals or to a local chicken farm.

Sustainability to us is also about resilient communities and reducing some of the financial pressure on families by providing food.

What are your plans for the future?

Success for us would be that people don't need to come in any more so that would be the ultimate goal. However, while we are still needed we just have to keep bringing in the money to carry on doing what we do.



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

There are many communities that are living with massive challenges and healthy food is not always a priority due to money and other difficulties. It is a big picture and there needs to be change in many areas of life for some communities to start being able to focus on food change.

Karen has been awarded a BEM for going over and above for her community and the project has also been nominated for DG Life Awards!

You can contact Lochside Community Association and Grub Club via:
Email - karen.wylie@lochsideca.org
FB - [Lochside Community Centre](https://www.facebook.com/LochsideCommunityCentre)