



**Community Food Project
Batheaston
Review**

June 2021 – March 2022

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1. Penny's Pantry Timeline

March/April 2020	<p>CoViD Lockdown</p> <p>Planning began to expand local food choice for vulnerable residents in Batheaston with Mercy in Action and Batheaston Parish Council.</p>
14 September 2020 – April 2021	<p>Penny's Pantry began with food contributions and admin support from Mercy in Action – to operate an affordable food pantry session from 9am -3pm every Wednesday.</p> <p>Over 80 households used the pantry during lock-down.</p> <p>Pantry guests contributed over £1000.00 to Mercy in Action during this period.</p>
May 2020	<p>Weekly collection of education materials for families' home educating during lock-down, held outside St John's Church – subsequently distributed via Pantry.</p>
December 2020 - April 2021	<p>Bric-a-brac was introduced as part of the Pantry service following a fund-raising book sale for Hope & Homes for Children in December 2020.</p> <p>Guests contributed an additional £644.00) to this charity.</p>
May – June 2021	<p>Post Lock-down</p> <p>New pantry team of volunteers. New users post-lockdown as people began to travel to see families and friends.</p> <p>Planning for Pantry began to run independently as a community resource for local Community Café on Wednesdays.</p> <p>Registered with Local Authority as a low risk food business.</p>
June 2021	<p>Community Café supported Grow Batheaston Community Day</p>
16 June 2021 – present	<p>Weekly Wednesday Community Café began</p>
July/August 2021	<p>Children's Holiday Football - Pantry supplies fresh fruit and drinks for children's holiday football free of charge (outreach).</p> <p>Kid's Weekly Football - Pantry supports with fresh fruit and drinks free of charge using surplus where possible.</p> <p>Café service provided but take up was low so discontinued.</p>
September 2021	<p>Grow Batheaston Community Day – Penny's Pantry Community Café</p>
Oct-Dec 2021	<p>Began introducing weekly sign-posting services to Pantry from Home Energy, Clean Slate, Local PCSO's (police) , Ward Councillors</p>
November 2021	<p>Batheaston Leadership Group formed to bring local facility and organisation leaders together to improve collaboration/communication, share resources, policy and planning for local development. Agreed joint newsletter, volunteer recruitment, events, campaigns, policy development in interests of most vulnerable residents and local community.</p>
January 2022-current	<p>Wednesday Café – revised hours 10-30-12.30pm (new Omicron scare)</p> <p>New team of volunteers.</p> <p>New Village Agent attending regularly from 26 January 2022</p> <p>Rural Leadership Group agreed to; Research local needs, Produce newsletter, produce annual events calendar, plan joint village jubilee celebration, research activities/services for older people and U5's, develop joint policies for future and immediate growth, establish volunteer recruitment and fundraising campaign.</p> <p>PP providing refreshments for community development meetings and events where possible.</p>
Feb 2022	<p>Handover period – pantry team, sign-posting teams & routines stabilizing</p> <p>Post CoViD (Omicron).</p>
March 2022	<p>Formalizing processes, procedures & paperwork.</p>
April 2022	<p>New Constitution Agreed – handover period and process review continuing.</p> <p>New guests coming along following new Newsletter.</p>

2. Management Structure

Penny's Pantry was set up in response to a need for wider and more affordable food choice on the door-step during lock-down. Prior to the CoViD pandemic, economic pressures were being felt nationwide. The rural nature of Batheaston village continues to pose challenges for local residents many of whom have limited access and transport links to basic services and facilities locally and across the city.

The Pantry now operates as a self-funding, voluntary not-for-profit community organisation, and is fully dependent on the goodwill of local volunteers.

Aims and Objectives

To support and enhance community health through collaborative food services and social events. Our objectives are as follows:

Objective 1 – To expand local food choice using surplus food donations whenever possible.

Objective 2 – To make affordable food accessible locally.

Objective 3 – To support and encourage the development of affordable food related events.

Objective 4 – To improve access to essential welfare services and sign-posting to relevant agencies.

Objective 5 - To foster sustainable eco-friendly practice around food consumption and waste.

Committee

The project has been developed and co-ordinated by Immi Corry in response to local need for wider, more accessible, more affordable food choice and social cohesion. Ongoing support has consistently been provided by members of St John's Church, local residents and volunteers.

The Management Committee consists of 6 members as listed below:

Chair: Immi Corry

Vice Chair: Mary Hunt

Secretary: Sarah Sheppard

Treasurer: Roxie Russell

Member: Tina Connor

Member: Carla Milsom

An additional 4 members may be co-opted onto the Committee as required.

Operation

The Pantry opened on Wednesdays from Sept 2020 with a view to re-introducing a traditional Wednesday Coffee morning which has stopped before lock-down and which had been an important social gathering point for local residents once a week since 2001. It was originally set up by Penny Mimmack, a local nurse, as a community run organisation for social health. This weekly event has since become known as Penny's Pantry and Community Café.

By setting up the Pantry during lock-down, the aim was to attempt to re-introduce this friendly tradition where all age groups could mix and provide mutual support at least once a week in an informal setting, *all year round*.

Operationally, the service relies on the recruitment of teams of volunteer:

- hosts
- bakers
- drivers (food collection and delivery to homes if urgent)
- volunteers with social media skills
- volunteers with admin skills

The Pantry currently relies on the goodwill and support of supportive organisations such as Batheaston Parish Council.

Guests (pantry users) contribute to the running of the service by making a small financial donation to help cover basic running costs of the Wednesday pantry, coffee morning/café (and additional community based/development groups and events supported by the Pantry where finance allows).

Services & Community Support

The following services are currently provided for the village via the Pantry;

- Wednesday Café - Affordable food (fresh and ambient), Coffee/tea & cake; signposting services from formal organisations as follows;
 - CleanSlate – guidance on finance, employment
 - Home Energy – grants and problem solving
 - Community Police – community matters
 - WERN – Independent Living advice and support
 - Ward Councillors – community matters/consultation
- Kids Football – Fresh fruit is provided for all children attending weekend football sessions.
- Holiday Football – Fresh fruit is provided for all children attending holiday football.
- St John's on Sundays– food surplus is offered after Sunday Services at the 11am Fairtrade Café when available.
- Community Days – the Community Café has run to support 2 Grow Batheaston Community Days.

- Community Events – Penny’s Pantry volunteers have got involved, equipment and surplus food provided to support the Art Trail (at St John’s), Xmas Fayre 2021, Refugee Fair 2022.
- Community Development Meetings – refreshments are provided at Leadership meetings relating to collaborative development.
- Parent/Carers Meet-up Group (starting end April by local parent, Roxie Russell) – Pantry to provide basic start up refreshment supplies and food as required.
- Pantry to help run monthly Thursday lunches starting with Jubilee Singalong Lunch in June.

3. Food Sources

Penny’s Pantry has been registered with BANES as a low risk food business. We manage, store and offer a wide range of longer life produce alongside some fresh baked products, fruit and vegetables. As a low risk ‘business’, we do not offer fresh meat or dairy produce.

Because supplies are donation based, food supply varies weekly. Our food donations come from a range of sources. Contributors are as follows;

Ambient Food (longer-life)

- Mercy in Action – Sept 2020 – April 2021
- Batheaston Primary School Xmas 2020
- Penmill - Christmas 2020/Easter 2021
- Community Organisations -Oasis/Foodcycle/Genesis Trust – Occasional contributions
- Co-op Larkhall – Wednesday Collection/Saturday Collection (closed Oct?)
- Co-op Bear Flat – Weekend and Wednesday Collection

Fresh food

- Mercy in Action – fresh surplus
- Grow Batheaston – fresh fruit and veg
- Bathford Allotments – from Summer 2021
- Co-op Larkhall – Saturday Collection
- Co-op Bear Flat – Wednesday & Weekend Collection

4. Pantry Users

During lock-down, over 70 households used the food pantry on a regular or ad hoc basis.

Guests can self-refer or be referred by other health professionals or community based organisations. Since lock-down eased, many householders have switched to collecting food from city based organisations. Recent promotion via newsletter and word of mouth are generating increasing participation from local agencies and local people curious to know how it works.

A wide range of people of all ages used the service during lock-down including:

- Families/individuals facing furlough or redundancy
- People with transport difficulties
- Elderly residents who 'shop small'
- Families
- People with challenging health issues/mobility problems/injuries
- People 'shopping' for family/friends/neighbours experiencing challenging times.

The pantry is now used by local residents from over 40 households. It has become an important social hub and it's link with past social tradition is being appreciated. The support organisations involved, such as Clean Slate, Home Energy, WERN, our local Police and Ward Councillors have been able to offer helpful guidance to local people as needed.

5. Costs and Contributions

The ethos of Penny's Pantry is to encourage participation in local social events to enhance community health and well-being as social isolation is an especially common feature of rural communities. Our greatest challenge is to enable residents to attend food related social events by making it as simple as possible to join in.

The Food Pantry and Café operate on a donation basis. As is standard with Food Pantries, we recommend the following contributions from guests:

10 (ambient) food items per household – £3.00

Café tea/coffee/cake - £1.00 per item

For the purpose of this review, costs and contributions relating to the weekly Wednesday Pantry and Café have been outlined to help with effective planning and future development.

To date, costs have been kept to a minimum to help the project develop a stable footing. The Committee will be reviewing outgoings to help introduce more efficient and cost saving measures e.g. payment card machine (to encourage more financial contributions) buying, freezing cakes to minimize shopping trips, securing sponsorship, grants, public appeals etc.

Pantry Donations and Expenditure

Period mid-June 2021 to end of March 2022 (42 weeks)

Donations **£1930.34**

Costs **£1608.04**

Operational costs **£730.80** (refreshments, coffee, milk, cake, food/fruit for events/meetings)

Baking (volunteers)	£285.00
Travel/mileage	£472.50
Equipment	£119.74

Average Weekly Costs **£38.29**

Average Weekly Donations **£45.96**

Average Weekly Expenditure - June 2021 – March 2022 (42 week period)

Weekly Operational costs	17.40
Weekly Baking Costs (volunteers)	6.79
Equipment costs	2.85
Travel expenses	11.25
Insurance	tbc

- Please note that some costs are likely to increase in future such as volunteer expenses and insurance costs which have been kept to a bare minimum to date e.g. travel expenses.
- Additional donations have been made through community days and café sessions run previously to support children’s football which have helped to contributed to a positive bank balance. *Café usage has been erratic at the children’s football events and is currently on hold whilst training and resourcing issues are being reviewed.*
- *The Committee is currently reviewing expenditure and has ring-fenced the outstanding balance to help ensure that all essential costs are covered including the Jubilee celebrations.*

6. Future Development

The Pantry is currently fulfilling basic needs within the Batheaston community and has strong potential to contribute to positive social and physical well-being of local residents in the future.

Members feel that the Pantry and Café are becoming established as a reliable, helpful and friendly meeting point in the village and that demand is likely to grow in future.

Committee members agree that the Service should continue to develop in its current form and should support the establishment of new regular community gatherings wherever possible, through café style ‘clubs’ for specific residents e.g. Thursday lunch club (starting with Jubilee lunch in collaboration with WERN – West of England Rural Network), bingo club, games afternoons etc.

The Committee wishes to focus on refining existing processes and team building as new volunteers take on new roles as the current Project Manager steps back from day-to-day operation.

Ten additional Volunteers are undertaking free Food Safety Training during May which is being paid for by WERN (West of England Rural Network) to help expand our local skill-set and to enable local

people to host future events with confidence. Volunteers will be given the opportunity to sign up to the Penny's Pantry rotas and to become more involved in local community events.

Committee members wish to 'ring-fence' the existing balance to help cover additional insurance costs, event costs and to maintain a minimum reserve balance.

The Committee asks that no additional costs are introduced whilst it:

- establishes sustainable processes with teams of newly recruited or newly trained volunteers.
- ensures that essential costs are covered e.g. additional insurance as project expands.
- considers cost-saving options e.g. bulk buying; sponsorship.
- develops ways to encourage use and financial donations from local residents e.g. editorial, appeals, notices.
- makes plans for future events e.g. Jubilee weekend, Parent/carer support.
- Identifies grant aid to support the establishment of this service and associated outreach work across the community.

In the short term, it is felt that the creation of a part time co-ordinator's post would give the project stability during this immediate handover period.

In the longer term, a Community Development Management role would assist in fast tracking the establishment of relevant and essential services across the village.

In terms of immediate need, the Committee asks that Batheaston Parish Council invests in making the Rhymes Pavilion as safe and user friendly as possible by addressing requests made in document submitted to BPC in April 2021. Immediate priorities being eg. the introduction of handrails for people with mobility issues, creating storage space, PAT testing equipment, removing chairs (to create more space), adding picnic tables outdoors (2 were approved previously) to encourage outdoor activities and dining: lastly to give permission for the Rhymes to be painted – a mural/bunting to reflect the rural character of the village, perhaps in line with the Batheaston Art Trail in October 2022.

An additional 'Wish-list' has been drafted for essential items to help facilitate the safe and effective running of the project going forwards. Further details can be presented along with an additional financial break-down of costs and contributions as required.