

Community Pantry

The Community Pantry in the Church is still being well used by people who are struggling to make ends meet. There are normally at least three visits a day to collect both essential food and non-food items. To prevent abuse, I don't put out more than one or two of each item at a time, so I normally restock at least twice a day. This isn't a problem as I live so close.

In the past year Suffolk County Council has supplied around a third of the food but none of the non-food the pantry offers. The problem with their system is that we never know when or even if we will get supplies and we must drive into Ipswich and fill our cars with what Suffolk decides we should have rather than what we need. Then we have the supplies in large quantities (that are to last for many weeks or sometimes many months) which are very heavy to transport and a real problem to store. The Council has used Vertas to order and distribute these supplies. We have continued to try and communicate with Suffolk to explain that this system is not easy to use and is, above all, very wasteful of Council taxpayers' money as the Council is paying significant sums for the ordering, storage and distribution of supplies. However, we are told that a change to providing organisations with a budget will not be considered. We have had just 4 collections of food in the past year.

The Vertas lady I spoke with last week said she had no idea if or when future collections would take place. In view of the administration changes at Suffolk County Council following the recent elections there are likely to be many changes. Communication with Suffolk is very difficult as emails do not get answered. In addition, the company, Rix from Gt Horkesley, generously supply onions which we collect once a month.

I shop at least once a week for items that are not supplied by Suffolk, such as eggs, juice, bread and cheese and everything else when the Council supplies run out. The money for this is provided by the benefice Community Pantry and Hardship Fund which relies on donations from individuals and parish councils. We are very grateful for the donations that Leavenheath Parish Council has made in the past. I give my time, petrol etc. Donations to the Pantry are always welcome, although it is more helpful to donate to the Fund.

Tuesday Get Together

Vivian Cowell, Jacqui Rose and I held a Tuesday Get Together every second and fourth Tuesday of the month between November and Easter in the Village Hall. We provided hot dogs, soup, hot drinks and cakes and half an hour of gentle Pilates as well as games of cards and Rummikub. We continued with a morning event 11.00 – 13.00. Attendance was quite good and it has been much appreciated. It is funded partly by the Community Pantry and Hardship Fund and partly from a grant from Babergh District Council. Stoke by Nayland Golf Club again kindly provided the sausages. Funding permitting we intend to restart the event in October.

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