

Penkridge Parish Council Community Café - March 2024

What started out as a warm spaces scheme at the Haling Dene Centre has blossomed into a weekly community café, with 60-80 in attendance each week.

Penkridge's weekly community café demonstrates how creating opportunities for community connectiveness can have a significant impact on local population health.

The community café has been running for over a year and originally started out as a warm spaces scheme set up by the Parish Council. Each Thursday the café is open from 11-3, managed by a dedicated group of volunteers who coordinate all the necessities from refreshments and cleaning, to managing a level of social engagement.

Promotion via social media, the website and council newsletter has helped initiate the café, however it is predominantly word of mouth that has led to 60-80 people attending each week.

A small grant from South Staffordshire Council was utilised to supply refreshments and a more recent grant has supported with a much-needed dish washer to help with the growing amount of crockery used!

Feedback from those who attend and through the volunteers who regularly see attendees, is incredibly positive. The café is a fun environment to socialise and relax in and has seen a number of people who, without the provision, would not have left their homes, further reducing isolation and creating a greater sense of community connectedness.

The Haling Dene Centre in Penkridge also hosts a plethora of other activities, including a number of fitness and wellbeing groups and classes.

Outside of running the centre, the Parish Council manage four local play areas and by sourcing match funding through a Viola grant, it has enabled their renovation.

These types of initiatives really go to show the level of influence Parish Councils can have on local population health and how crucial the council's involvement, including that of the staff, councillors and volunteers, is in ensuring their success.