

Hauxton Community Meals:

Report for Hauxton Annual Council Meeting, May 2017

Hauxton Community Meals was established in July 2016 with the intention of bringing people together to socialise and eat a home cooked meal together as a group once a month.

The group welcomes: those who live on their own and who may or may not cook for themselves; those who are elderly; people with limited social contact and who may become isolated or lonely; or anyone who simply wants to connect with others in the village in a sociable setting. All are most welcome – providing we know they're coming.

A small group of volunteers prepare, cook and serve a two course meal, tea or coffee and a small glass of wine for £3.50 in the Village Hall on the first Tuesday of every month. The lack of kitchen facilities and space in the Village Hall are a challenge so food is prepared by the volunteers in their homes. For this reason we are currently only able to provide a maximum of 24 meals a session and look forward to new facilities to enable us to provide a wider menu, easier cooking logistics and for increased capacity to enable more people to attend. The volunteer cooks have successfully undertaken and passed a Food Safety Level 2 course that was supported financially by the Parish Council. Our thanks go to the Village Hall Group for supporting the initiative too. We have prepared ten monthly meals to date with the highlight being an amazing Christmas dinner with all the trimmings! We try and cook meal requests where possible.

We have been overwhelmed by the success of the group who now look forward to catching up with new friends and re-establishing old connections. The noise level and conversation has got louder each month and the group linger longer at the tables after eating and before leaving. It is really heartening to see and hear the difference it is making to the people who attend, and for the volunteers too it is an opportunity to establish new connections and learn from the 'village elders'. The group has really helped to establish a sense of village community.

On behalf of the group I'd like to thank the volunteers for their help and enthusiasm as without them the meals could not happen:

- Wendy Bacchus
- Marlee Beasley
- Sue Cook
- Angela Gardiner
- Terri Howes
- Allison Ryder
- Jane Ward
- Ed Webb

We are always looking for additional volunteers to help us with serving, washing up, or cooking so helpers can have a month off and to help cover holidays. Do contact me if you'd like to come and see what we get up to - you just need to have a sense of fun!

Jill Down, on behalf of Hauxton Community Meals.