

Bedfordshire Heartlands Rural Food Access

Project progress and final report of working with the community groups

1. Potton Travellers Site

Intervention: Cooking workshops

Implemented: July 2005

Identification

The community was initially identified through the food access event held for community development workers (CDWs) during March 2005. This initial contact led to further discussion with the Health Visitors working with the families to and a community food event to raise awareness of the project was arranged.

Engagement

The community food event was held during July 2005. A traditional gypsy fare of a pot roast with beef and vegetables was cooked on the day, and the children helped to make strawberry smoothies for pudding. The children were very interested and got involved throughout the day, helping to publicise the event, shell peas and make the strawberry smoothies. The event generated an interest in healthy eating and cooking and the community were keen to get involved in the project.

Research

The community research was carried out through informal discussions between the Health Visitors and residents and with food diaries, in the form of picture scrapbooks, given to the children to record all food and drinks consumed over a seven day period. Unfortunately, only three scrapbooks were returned, although the informal discussions captured a general picture of the communities eating habits. Overall, the research showed that eating habits among the families in this community were similar. A typical breakfast for the adults would be coffee and cigarettes, whereas the children reported mainly eating breakfast cereals or toast, although biscuits with tea were also reported. Both the adults and children consumed 2-3 high fat or sugary snacks throughout the day, although a main meal consisting of meat, potatoes and a portion of vegetables was eaten by most families. The community consumed very little fruit and vegetables, favouring a sugary snack and a fizzy drink. In addition the cuts of meat selected for the sandwiches and the main meal tended to be fatty cuts or a large proportion of the main meal was fried. A number of the families observed often didn't have a working cooker and relied on the microwave or a deep fat fryer.

Intervention - Selection

The pot roast event held during July generated an interest in healthy eating and cooking among the community. A series of cooking sessions to promote healthy eating and learn new cooking skills was selected at the event as the food access initiative.

Planning

The planning of this initiative developed through a series of meetings with CDWs.

Implementation/Operation

A series of cook and eat sessions were run with the children on the site for the duration of the school holidays. These sessions were a great success and the children reported eating more vegetables and trying a greater variety of food. It was hoped that the sessions would encourage the parents to attend further cooking workshops, although the community didn't express an interest, however it was thought that the lack of a suitable venue to hold the cooking workshops contributed to this. Therefore the cook and eat sessions were followed up with a Christmas lunch when the children were presented with a picture card recipe book of the food prepared during the cooking sessions and a Christmas bag containing cooking equipment. It is hoped that the items will encourage the families to experiment with cooking and, with the Health Visitors continuing to encourage the parents to eat healthily, will hopefully improve the cooking practices within the community. The pot roast event held at the site attracted 10 adults and 8 children, and 2 volunteers were recruited to help with the subsequent cook and eat sessions with the children. Five cooking sessions were run at the site in total, with an average of 8 children attending each session. The sessions also attracted a couple of the young mums on the site as well, with 2 mums attending 2 of the sessions.

Sustainability

Two of the CDWs that were initially involved in the project are keen to continue cooking sessions, at least during the school holidays. The toolkit presented to the children at Christmas will contribute to the sustainability of the initiative.

2. Manor Farm – Mums and Tots Group

Intervention: Allotment growing scheme, cooking workshops

Implemented: July 2005

Identification & Engagement

Manor Farm was identified through the food access event held for community development workers (CDWs) during March 2005. The individual groups identified by the Manor Farm CDWs were the Mother and Toddler Drop-in held at Manor Farm three times a week, the Special Needs Group held once a week on Tuesday and the Tempsford Youth Project held Thursday once a week.

Research

Manor Farm CDWs knew the food access issues for this group and had a good idea of what would work at their centre.

Intervention – Selection

The initiatives were shaped from the CDWs knowledge.

Planning/Implementation/Operation

The mother and toddler drop-in at Manor Farm is regularly attended by 25 mums and up to 50 children each week. Over the last year they have taken part in seed planting, food diaries and healthy eating discussions. They have also been involved in cook and eat sessions when the Centre has had delicious smells wafting through the corridors ranging from Pumpkin and French Onion Soup (made from onions grown on the new Manor Farm Allotment) to Fruit

Salad, Cakes and Pancakes. Taste and eat sessions for mums and children to try different and sometimes exotic fruit and vegetables have also been successful. A recipe book is currently being compiled and it is hoped the families will be actively involved in planting and maintaining our allotment over the coming months

Manor Farm has also created a five plot allotment, and has planted fruit trees, onions, lettuce, cabbage, and leeks in two plots and covered the remaining three during the last year. Planning for spring planting is underway and a volunteer to oversee the planting and the general maintenance of the plots has been recruited. It is hoped that the allotment will encourage all users of Manor Farm to participate, both young and old, and with the local Upper School expressing an interest, will eventually become a community project. It is also hoped that any produce will be sold at a minimum cost.

Sustainability

The CDWs at Manor Farm manage the project themselves and are hoping to secure further funding to enable this project to continue.

3a. Manor Farm – Tempsford youth club

Intervention: Allotment growing scheme, cooking workshops

Implemented: July 2005

Identification/Engagement/Research/ Intervention – as above

Planning/Implementation/Operation

A health barbeque was held at the youth night and proved to be a great success with 30 children attending between the ages of 9-14 years. The young people made their own burgers and vegetable kebabs as an introduction to healthy eating and to raise awareness of what goes into the food they eat. They also were involved in making fruit smoothies from fresh fruit, and barbequing bananas. The evening proved to be a great success.

The group were also involved in keeping food diaries and creative research through graffiti boards, and had a very successful scarecrow making competition to encourage participation with the allotment at the centre.

Sustainability - as above

3.b Manor farm - Special Needs Group

Intervention: Allotment growing scheme, cooking workshops

Implemented: July 2005

Identification/Engagement/Research/ Intervention – as above

Planning/Implementation/Operation

The Special Needs group is run in partnership with Health Visitors and Early Childhood Advisors on a weekly basis. This group is for parents of children with special needs, children with special needs and their siblings. The group is extremely self supporting and parents often return to the group once their child attends full time education.

The group has been involved in keeping food diaries with particular reference to changes in diet and the impact this can have on behaviour. There has also been open discussion sessions around healthy eating as well as taste and eat sessions.

As the Drop-in is funded through the Health Living Initiative the emphasis is very much on a balanced accessible diet. The group have also researched shops selling fresh fruit and vegetables within the local area.

Sustainability - as above

4. Harlington Upper School

Intervention: Uncertain

Identification

The head teacher was very interested in the project and thought it would be something the Eco Council would like to get involved with after hearing about the project during a promotional meeting setup with a local conservation group.

Engagement

Through a promotional meeting held at the school.

Research

The Eco Council sent a letter to the Canteen Managers later asking for information on the where the food in the school canteen was sourced from, however this information proved too difficult to obtain. The group would like to investigate, in the Harlington Pyramid first, where produce is purchased for use in school canteens, although it is know likely that this will continue as a school project. The initial group consisted of the head teacher and 19 school children who met twice to discuss the project. A small group of 6 children drew up the letter the school canteen.

5. SPARK youth group

Intervention: Healthy eating educational activities

Implemented: September 2005

Identification

The group were identified through the initial investigation of existing groups. They were chosen for participation in the project as they would be best placed to promote healthy eating to younger people and involve youths in the project.

Engagement

The group were engaged in the project through an initial meeting with the Youth Participation Officer at Mid Beds District Council and a follow-up session with the group detailing the project.

Research

The group were well aware of the barriers to healthy eating for younger people in their area and knew that they would like to use the project to run healthy eating educational activities for children of all ages. However, knowledge of the actual diets of youths in the area was lacking therefore food diaries were designed to record all meals eaten over a three day period, to include one weekend day. Photo food diaries were kept by the upper school age children and their parents, whereas munch charts with stickers of food were designed for the younger children. The photos food diaries that the initial group of upper school aged children and their families kept showed that this group generally had a good diet, although fatty foods, such as crisps and biscuits, and sugary foods such as sweets and fizzy drinks, and takeaway meals were consumed regularly by all of the teenagers. The majority of the teenagers in this group reported eating their main evening meal alone, or with their siblings, prior to their parents returning from work. The foods selected were ready meals or frozen products such as chicken burgers and chips, although pasta and salad was also a popular meal among this group. The teenagers reported a lack of time for both themselves and their parents as the reason for the family eating separately.

Intervention – Selection

The group decided to run healthy eating educational activities for lower and middle school aged children and design healthy eating promotional materials for older children. The results of the data collected from the photo food diaries were used to focus the initiative on actual need.

Planning

The planning of the initiative developed over a series of meetings with the group and the Youth Participation Worker. Help was given to formulate ideas and develop a workable and practical initiative.

Implementation/Operation

The photo food diaries produced during the research phase of the project were displayed around the local upper school to raise awareness of the project, and healthy eating games aimed at lower and middle school aged children were designed produced and trailed. The group have planned to run healthy eating sessions at schools in the area where they will play the games they have designed with the children, offer fruit tasting and advise on healthy eating. The food diaries will continue to be used during these sessions to enable informed advice on healthy eating to be given. The group have sent out letters to schools in their area asking for assembly time to hold the sessions, although at present, these haven't been started. A website to show the work the group have done and to offer healthy eating advice has been designed and will be up and running by the end of March 2005. Other ideas include putting together a healthy eating information pack for teenagers and running fruit taster sessions during the school holidays. The SPARK youth group, that consists of 6 teenagers, met every

two weeks at MBDC offices in Amptill since July 2005 to discuss the project and design the materials. The group has had the support of the MBDC Youth Participation Worker and the facilities at the council offices. The group will continue to meet at MBDC to take the project forward. The SPARK group themselves are currently the 6 community participants as they haven't reached the stage of taking the project out into the community yet.

Sustainability

The group have the continued support of MBDC and the Youth Participation Worker, although all of the materials will need to come out of the food access budget. It is hoped that these materials can be produced to last and will be available on the website for other groups to use.

6. Ellenshaw Community Cafe

Intervention: Community Cafe

Implemented: October 2005

Identification

The group were identified through the initial investigation of existing groups. Aragon Housing Association was chosen for their contact with a wide range of community groups.

Engagement

A series of promotional meetings and discussions were held with Aragon Housing Association employees and residents.

Research

The Scheme manager knew that there was a demand for a community café in Flitwick to provide healthy meals and as a place where people could socialise. The initial research included informal discussions on the use of the café and a questionnaire to establish community support was sent to local residents.

Intervention – Selection

The Scheme Manager had wanted to setup a community café for a long time and just needed the support and funding to make it possible. The feedback from the questionnaire was positive and the results were used to determine opening times and selection of meals on sale.

Planning

Planning consisted of a number of meetings to discuss exactly what would be required to setup the café. This included the planning of the menu, prices, potential retail outlets, equipment requirements, kitchen improvements, advertising and volunteer training. The kitchen was also inspected to check that health and safety standards were being met.

Implementation/Operation

The café is run from the Aragon Housing Association Retirement complex in Flitwick. An opening event to promote the café was well attended, and the café has been very successful. The scheme manager, one kitchen assistant and four volunteers run the café, although further volunteers are needed. The café is open to the public twice a week from 10am to 4pm and attracts both the local residents and other members of the community. The café has become a place that not only provides a hot, healthy meal, but a place for socialising with friends and other members of the community. The specials, which consist of a seasonal 2 course meal, have been the most popular option, although many people pop in for a chat and a sandwich. Healthy promotions such as 1/2 price offers on healthy options, or buy one meal get one free have also been successful. Healthy cooking practices are used and promoted, and specials contain at least one portion of fruit & one portion of vegetables. Local producers are used to supply the food sold in the café where possible. The group that have setup this project consists of the retirement scheme manager, one kitchen assistant and 3 volunteers. An additional 9 volunteers help with the day to day running of the café. Initially the 2 main volunteers received 4 hours of informal training which included details of catering regulations and procedures, and budget management, and all fourteen of the volunteers working on this project received a ½ day food hygiene training session prior to working in the kitchen. The café has proved very popular and has therefore a large number of community participants, with at least 30 people visiting the café twice a week since it opened in October 2005.

Sustainability

The café has proved very successful with elderly residents and outside customers visiting the café regularly. The café now makes enough money to be self-sustaining, often taking £100 over a lunch time.

7. Southfields YAHICS (Young at Heart Internet Café Shefford)

Intervention: Community shop

Implemented: September 2005

Identification

The group were identified through the initial investigation of existing groups. Aragon Housing Association was chosen for their contact with a wide range of community groups.

Engagement

As above – through Aragon Housing Association.

Research

The Scheme Manager knew that a community shop in the area would be beneficial as the need for a local shop had been highlighted at a number of residents meetings. Results from a questionnaire distributed to establish the degree of usage from the community were collated prior to planning the initiative. The results of the questionnaire showed that a shop would be well supported within this community. A number of the respondents relied on their families to either take them shopping or to do the shopping for them as they were unable to carry the shopping home. The products required by the community were wide ranging, although the

need for the shop to stock bulky and heavy items such as toilet rolls, cleaning items, jam and sugar was highlighted to enable the community shop for other goods when they were out.

Intervention - Selection

The initiative was selected as the need for a local shop had been previously highlighted. In addition, geographically the retirement housing complex in Shefford is quite a distance from the shops making shopping for bulky or heavy items very difficult for the elderly population.

Planning

Planning consisted of a number of meetings with the scheme manager to discuss exactly what would be required to setup the shop. This included the planning of the products on sale, the pricing structure, potential retail outlets, equipment requirements, advertising and volunteer training. The results of the questionnaire were used to determine opening times and the products that would be on sale.

Implementation/Operation

The community shop and internet café has been setup in the Aragon Housing Association retirement complex building in Shefford. The shop has been open every Tuesday since the opening event held in November 2005 to promote the shop among the community. The scheme manager manages the stocking of the shop, although a 3-4 volunteers regularly help by taking the money and stocking the cupboard. The project is being developed to include a coffee morning when the community will have the opportunity to use the computer for internet access, and have a coffee and a chat as well as buying their goods from the shop. The dry goods are purchased from a supermarket in Shefford and local producers are used to supply the fresh food. The shop has proved very popular and opens weekly, with at least 10-12 people purchasing goods from the shop each week. The scheme manager initially received 2 hours of informal training on setting up a community shop.

Sustainability

The community shop has been running since early November and has been very successful, with the majority of the stock running out each week, and customers reporting now not being able to manage without it. A small profit is made on the home-made chutneys and marmalade and when items are purchased on a buy one get one free basis to cover the running costs of the shop. It is hoped that the coffee mornings will provide the necessary funds to cover the costs of the internet connection.

8. Gothic Way Community Store

Intervention: Community shop

Implemented: January 2006

Identification

As above – through Aragon Housing Association.

Engagement

Two local residents wanted to setup a community shop after attending an Aragon Housing Association Retirement Forum meeting where the project was promoted and ideas for food access initiatives were discussed.

Research

The retirement scheme manager and the two volunteers knew that they wanted to use the food access project to setup a community shop, therefore the research element of the project was used to investigate actual need and potential use by the community prior to setting up the initiative. The research was carried via a questionnaire and informal discussions between the retirement scheme manager and the residents during daily visits. The research showed that a community shop would be well supported. A number of the respondents reported not shopping at the local convenience stores as they were too expensive and offered little variety, and for some, were too far to walk. This community also reported relying on their family or a friend with a car to help them to get their shopping. The products requested included bulky, heavy items, bread, meat and fresh fruits and vegetables as there is little provision in the village.

Intervention - Selection

The initiative was selected as there is little provision for affordable, healthy food in Arlesey, and the local shops that provide convenience foods are a long way from the retirement bungalows. The need for a local shop was previously highlighted by the residents, and there was provision for a shop within the retirement complex original building plans, suggesting previously known geographical need.

Planning

As before, the planning consisted of a number of meetings with the scheme manager and the two volunteers to discuss exactly what would be required to setup the shop. This included the planning of the products on sale, the pricing structure, potential retail outlets, equipment requirements and advertising. The results of the questionnaire were used to determine opening times and the products that would be on sale.

Implementation/Operation

The community shop has been setup in the Aragon Housing Association retirement complex building in Arlesey. The shop is open on Mondays and Fridays and is run predominately by the two volunteers, although they do have the full support of the retirement scheme manager. The shop sells both bulky and heavy dry items and a range of fresh produce, sourced from local suppliers, which includes fruit and vegetables, meat pies, milk and eggs. The scheme manager and 2 elderly volunteers were involved in setting up the shop and now run it on a weekly basis. The 3 volunteers received 3 hours of informal training on setting up and stocking of a community shop. The shop is in its early stages after opening on 30th January 2005, however 9 community participants attended the opening day and an average of 6 people have purchased goods from the shop each time it opens.

Sustainability

At the time of writing the shop was in its early stages of development, although the group add a small profit to the goods to attempt to cover the running costs of the shop.

9. Mums and Tots cooking workshops, Flitwick

Intervention: cooking workshops

Implemented: October 2005

Identification

Identification of the group was through meetings with Spurgeons Childcare via Mid Beds Healthy Living Initiative.

Engagement

A meeting was set up to discuss the food access project with the group at their regular drop-in sessions. In addition, Spurgeons Nursery Nurses contacted the Mums that had previously attended the sessions to see if they would like to get involved in the project.

Research

An informal meeting was held to discuss the project and the initiatives that the group would like to setup. The group decided that healthy eating advice and cookery skills would most benefit the group. A post-it-note session was used to capture the groups' ideas and determine actual need. This research highlighted the time to cook with the children wanting attention and knowledge of cooking healthy meals for children as the major factors affecting food choice.

Intervention – Selection

The research shaped the selection of the initiative, although the group needed a lot of help to formulate practical ideas of how they would address their needs. It was decided that healthy eating advice and cookery skills could be achieved through a series of cooking workshops.

Planning/Implementation

The planning of the cooking workshops was completed during the research session and included discussions on possible locations and convenient times for the group to attend the workshops, childcare and recipe suggestions.

Operation

The workshops are run monthly at Ellenshaw Community Café. Toys are provided for the children and the group take it turns to look after each others children throughout the session. Each workshop has followed a theme, the first session focused on making your own healthy convenience foods, followed by easy cook meals for families, cooking with children and healthy packed lunch ideas for those with children about to start nursery. The group were given the opportunity to shape the ideas for the following sessions. Five cooking workshops have been run at the café, with 6 mums and 10 children attending each session.

Sustainability

The sessions are particularly reliant on the CDW to organise and run the sessions, and on the food access project to provide the funding. Unfortunately the groups themselves do not at present have the confidence to run these sessions without the support of a CDW. However, it

is hoped that the group will continue the healthy eating theme by attending, or possibly developing, the drop-in sessions that are running at Flitwick Baptist Church mums and tots drop-in detailed in the next section.

10. Flitwick Baptist Church Mums and Tots Drop-in

Intervention: Healthy eating advice, healthy snacks

Implemented: November 2005

Identification

The group of volunteers were identified through contact with the church and the Nursery Nurses working with the group at the Spurgeons Childcare drop-in sessions.

Engagement

A group were engaged in the project after a meeting with the church volunteers to discuss the project.

Research

The CDWs and the Nursery Nurses working with the Spurgeons Childcare group highlighted the need for further drop-in sessions to focus on healthy living for the families that have completed the 15 weeks of support available from Spurgeons Childcare. Through the CDWs discussions with the families it was felt that these sessions should include healthy eating advice and the provision of healthy snacks to encourage the children, and the parents, to try new foods without worrying about the cost.

Intervention – Selection

The group knew that they wanted to setup sessions to provide healthy living advice and healthy snacks to families in the area and had previously discussed setting up a community café that would be open to groups of all ages. However the initiative was shaped by the need highlighted through Spurgeons Childcare and it was felt that the project could be developed in the future to provide a café service to a wider range of groups.

Planning/Implementation

The group planned the session length and times to open based on when the volunteers and the church hall were available. Further details, such as the advice to give the families, the snacks to provide, and the equipment required were discussed, although it was decided that the initiative would be shaped by the families attending during the first few weeks of opening.

Operation

A drop-in group, targeted at vulnerable families in the area, is open on a Monday morning at the Baptist church in Flitwick. Four volunteers from the church run the sessions. Healthy living advice and support is given to the group and healthy snacks are available at mid-morning. These snacks encourage the parents and the children to try new foods, without worrying about the cost, and provide fruit in the form of fruit pieces for fruit smoothies. The snack time also helps to facilitate the discussions around healthy eating, when the mums are able to discuss their circumstances in a non-threatening environment. Four volunteers from the church initially set up the project in November 2005, and a further 6 volunteers now help with making the drinks and the snacks and to tidy up after each session. One of the volunteers attended a food hygiene course at Bedford College. The community participants have increased each session, with an average of 2 adults attending the first 3 sessions, which increased to 5-6 adults and their children for the following 4 sessions, with 8-9 adults attending the sessions in January. The actual numbers of the group fluctuate with participants dropping in and out of the sessions and some of the children attending nursery or school.

Sustainability

The initiative has the full support of the church and the group is not charged for the use of the facilities. In addition, the volunteers are keen to continue with the sessions and the church actively recruits new volunteers. The only issue for this group is the provision of the healthy snacks, although the group have been signposted to sources of additional funding.

11. Mums and Tots Drop-in Café, Sandy

Intervention: Cooking workshops/cafe

Implemented: January 2006

Identification

Identification of the group was through meetings with Spurgeons Childcare via Mid Beds Healthy Living Initiative.

Engagement

A meeting was set up to discuss the food access project with the group and the CDWs at their regular drop-in sessions. Initially, the group didn't show a great deal of enthusiasm for setting up a food access initiative, although the Spurgeons CDWs felt that this was due to a lack of confidence. Therefore the meeting was followed up with a series of meetings with the Spurgeons CDWs to discuss the opportunities that the project could offer the group. A small group of Mums formed later in the year.

Research

The initial and subsequent meeting to discuss the project with the group prompted an interest among the group to learn new cookery skills. The Spurgeons Nursery Nurses and CDWs conducted informal research with the group at the weekly mums and tots drop-in sessions by discussing healthy eating and encouraging the mums to discuss their experiences with feeding their families.

Intervention - Selection

The informal research shaped the selection of the initiative, and the group were helped to formulate their ideas into a workable initiative during the regular mums and tots drop-in sessions over a period of 4 months. The group decided that a healthy eating mums and tots drop-in café would provide the necessary skills to address their needs.

Planning/Implementation

The group planned the day to open and the length of the session based on when the group and the church hall was available. Further details such as who would run each session were agreed by the group.

Operation

The group run a weekly mums and tots drop-in session that provides a healthy lunch on a Monday at the church in Sandy. Each week 2 of the mums take it in turns to plan, shop and cook for the rest of the group. Healthy eating advice was initially given to the group to enable the mums to plan the meals according to the balance of good health model. The mums are encouraged to provide the lunch for the group with a budget of £15, write up the recipes used for the session, and share any lessons learnt with the rest of the group. The group are currently supported by the Spurgeons CDWs, although it is hoped that the group will develop the confidence to take ownership of the sessions. The group has been running since January 2005 and three volunteers from the Spurgeons group are currently running the project, although it is hoped that their role develop into a more supportive role in the future. Two of these volunteers attended a basic food hygiene course at Bedford College. The group has 8 adults and 6 children attending the sessions each week.

Sustainability

The initiative has the full support of the Spurgeons CDW, although it is hoped that the group will eventually take ownership of the sessions. The only issue for this group is the funding for the hire of the hall and the budget for the lunch.

12. Young Mums and Tots Cooking Workshops, Biggleswade

Intervention: Cooking workshops

Implemented: October 2005

Identification

The young mums were highlighted by the Health Visitors during the initial investigation of existing groups in the area that would benefit from the project.

Engagement

A meeting was set up to discuss the food access project with the Health Visitors and Nursery Nurses responsible for the Young Mums Drop-in sessions. A follow-up meeting was held with the group during their regular drop-in sessions to determine need.

Research

The Health Visitors working with the Young Mums in Biggleswade highlighted the need for healthy eating advice and cookery skills for this group.

Intervention – Selection

The Health Visitors and Nursery Nurses working with the Young Mums group wanted to hold cooking workshops during the weekly drop-in sessions as the group had expressed an interest in learning cooking skills because they had recently, or were about to move into their first home. The group reported learning to cook healthy food on a budget and knowledge of portion sizes for children as their greatest need.

Planning/Implementation

The planning of the workshops was developed through a series of meetings with the Health Visitors and the Nursery Nurses.

Operation

Cooking workshops have been run monthly during the Young Mums drop-in sessions at the Lawns Children's Centre in Biggleswade. The Nursery Nurses have fully supported the initiative and looked after the children while the parents have worked in the kitchen, enabling the parents to concentrate on the cooking. Plastic boxes have been supplied to the group to enable them to take the food home. Informal discussions on the subjects of food safety and healthy eating have been facilitated while the group cook in the kitchen. A total of 6 cooking workshops have been held and the number of community participants has been different each session. Six mums attended the first workshop, although this number dropped to an average of 3 mums attending the following sessions. Three volunteers have looked after the children for each session.

Sustainability

It is possible that the Nursery Nurses employed at the Lawns Children Centre, or a volunteer from the local church will continue to run the cooking workshops, although funding for the food maybe an issue.

13. Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, Kensworth

Intervention: Co-operative vegetable buying group

Implemented: November 2005

Identification

The residents association were identified through investigation of existing groups in the area.

Engagement

The group were approached after an initial presentation of the food access project to the members of the Kensworth over 60s club highlighted the need for younger volunteers to setup an initiative to provide fresh fruit and vegetables in the village. The members of the residents association felt that they had the capacity to run such a project.

Research

The group of residents at Kensworth, contacted through the over 60s club and the residents association knew that they wanted to use the food access project to setup a fruit and vegetable cooperative as there was little provision of fresh fruit and vegetables in the village. The group therefore didn't need help to research their own particular food access issues.

Intervention - Selection

The initiative was selected due to the lack of provision of fresh fruit and vegetables in the village. The newsagents and the post office in the village were contacted prior to setting up the initiative to see if they would like to get involved in the project, however both shops felt that they didn't have enough time.

Planning/Implementation

The planning and implementation of the initiative consisted of a number of meetings with the volunteers to discuss exactly what would be required to setup the cooperative. Investigation of local producers and retailers was conducted and it was agreed that a Greengrocer that previously worked with the Luton Food Network would deliver the fruit and vegetable bags with a minimum order of 35 bags. Samples of the fruit and vegetable bags were delivered to the group and 16 people initially agreed to purchase one fruit and one vegetable bag each. A mobile phone was purchased to enable orders to be taken from the residents and phoned through to the grocer for delivery.

Operation

The vegetable cooperative is run by three volunteers through the Kensworth Residents Association which meets weekly in the village hall. The fruit and vegetable bags are pre-packed by the grocer and picked up by the customers, reducing the time input required by the volunteers. The customers are asked to pay for the following weeks order when they pick up their bags which should reduce wastage. The cooperative was advertised through the residents association, contacts with the local school and the over 60s club, and recently, with a leaflet drop around the village. The group hopes to extend the project in the future by offering a delivery service to the elderly or disabled residents with help from the village care scheme. The possibility of providing fresh produce will also be investigated. Three volunteers run the scheme each week and the number of community participants is reflected in the number of orders, which have increased from an average of 25 for the first 8 deliveries since October 2005, rising to an average of 62 for the following 6 deliveries. Each community participant orders an average of 2 bags, consisting of 1 bag of fruit and 1 bag of vegetables, and it is now hoped that the latest number of orders will be maintained.

Sustainability

After the initial support and help with setup costs the initiative is self-sustaining. The post Christmas leaflet drop increased the fruit and vegetable orders to 62 bags a week. The hire of the hall does not cost anything and any further advertising can be done through the residents associations regular newsletters. The group have also agreed to advise other villages in the area on setting up a similar scheme and meetings at Hockliffe have been planned.

14. Acorn Pre-school, Cranfield

Intervention: Allotment growing scheme, cook and eat sessions

Implemented: October 2005

Identification

The group was identified through discussions of groups that would benefit from the project with the Mid Bedfordshire Community Dietitian.

Engagement

A meeting was set up to discuss the food access project with the pre-school workers following the discussions with the Community Dietitian,

Research

The group already knew that they wanted to further develop their mini allotment at the scout hut and the football club and therefore didn't require any assistance to investigate their needs.

Intervention - Selection

The children gained so much from previously growing tomatoes in grow bags and potatoes in old tyres that the group wanted to develop their vegetable garden further. The group also decided to use the funding available to purchase cooking equipment to enable them to cook and eat the fruit and vegetables they have grown during the session to teach the children where their food comes from.

Planning/Implementation

The planning of this intervention developed through a series of meetings with the pre-school workers and volunteers.

Operation

The group worked to develop their existing vegetable and herb growing area at the scout hut and at the football club into mini allotments to enable the children to get more involved in planting and growing their own fruits and vegetables. A plastic greenhouse and other gardening equipment for the children to use were purchased and the group has received training on creating an allotment and organic gardening practices. Future plans include building up the growing area to reduce flooding problems and the development of the cooking sessions to enable the children to cook their own produce to give them an understanding of where their food comes from and encourage them to try a greater variety of foods. The four nursery nurses that run the pre-school twice a week manage the food access project, which includes an average of 15 minutes of time during the pre-school sessions. The number of children attending the pre-school is not currently known.

Sustainability

The workers and volunteers at the pre-school have run the project themselves, and will continue to do so post March 2006.

15. Dunton Community Garden

Intervention: Co-operative vegetable buying group

Implementation: January 2006

Identification

An event was held to present the project to members of Dunton Community Garden and Dunton residents. This was poorly attended; although 3 attendees were keen to arrange a vegetable delivery service to the village.

Engagement

The group were engaged through Dunton Community Garden and the volunteers from the presentation event.

Research

The research into the food access issues for this community was carried out through informal discussions with the group attending the event and discussions with the local shop keeper and visitors to Dunton Community Garden.

Intervention - Selection

Through the discussions during the research phase of the project, the group decided that there was a need for fresh fruit and vegetables to be delivered to the village. Interest from local producers was investigated and a local company (Scroups) agreed to deliver vegetable boxes to the garden with a minimum order of five. In addition, the provision of an organic vegetable delivery was investigated as a number of people preferred this option. Three volunteers were involved in this process.

Planning/Implementation

Planning of the project was through a series of meetings and discussions with local suppliers and producers. A leaflet drop advertising the project to the village to encourage more members.

Operation

Two companies were selected to deliver vegetable boxes fortnightly to Dunton Community Garden. Scroups, a local producer, agreed to deliver £8.00 vegetable boxes to the garden with a minimum order of 5, and River Nene organic produce agreed to offer a 5% discount as the delivery is to one place, not numerous households in the area. River Nene is an established company, therefore no help was required and the produce is delivered to the garden for members to pick up at a convenient time. Help has been given to the local producer and it has been a learning curve with regards to the amount of produce required (how many potatoes, onions etc to add to the box) and the number of boxes required to keep everything going. The project has been up and running for 3 deliveries, averaging 8 boxes each fortnight.

Sustainability

It is hoped that the orders will continue and the project will be self-sustaining.