

# CARESCO News



Newsletter No.17  
July/August 2024

## Customer Services

It looks as though summer has finally arrived, I type this very optimistically as the weather is still being a little erratic. The projects that fall within Customer Services are affected by the weather in many ways. When it rains sometimes customers come to the Charity Shop rather than to town because they don't want to be out in the wet weather. The Coffee Shop attracts people who are happy to enjoy the lovely cakes and savouries inside and close to home. Not as much gardening can be done at the centre but the plants get plenty to drink. If the Colts are playing, we're never too sure if the Tuck Shop will get a last-minute text to say the game's been called off because of the weather. When the sun is shining some Customers may come to the Charity shop because they don't want to travel into town as they don't want to be out in the heat for too long. You can see a bit of a pattern here can't you. The Coffee Shop attracts people who are happy to enjoy eating their purchases in the air-conditioned centre or out in the lovely gardens. Plants need to be watered and we can enjoy time out in the garden looking after them. We know for sure the Tuck Shop won't be getting a text to say the games have been called off because the season is over! What is clear for Customer Services is that whatever the weather, we are here to give whatever our Customers, Volunteers and Projects need!

You will see from my reports below that it has been another busy time for everyone and come rain or shine our Volunteers have been working hard behind the scenes to help the CARESCO wheels keep turning.

Sharon Dougherty – Customer Service Manager

## Coffee Shop

The Coffee shop is attracting new customers each week, young and old. It's so good to see our regulars bringing along their friends and to also hear children playing with our toys or in the garden. Our latest table event was really popular, a Tombola is always good fun to do and there were lots of lovely prizes supplied by donations that had been received at the Charity Shop. We have another one planned for August where you will be able to indulge in all sorts of things to pamper yourself. We have welcomed another new Baker to our team of Volunteers which is great news and much needed to relieve a little of the workload. The card machine is working well and has fitted in nicely with customer's needs. There are now 2 Bistro sets in the gardens where people can sit if the sun's shining and enjoy the view whilst having a chat with their friends. 558 slices have been served to 309 customers over the last couple of months. Our Takeaway service is still as popular, and we have another new idea which we will be launching in the next few weeks so watch this space.

We're always looking out for more Volunteer Bakers so please contact me if you are interested in supporting this wonderful project – [sharon.dougherty@caresco.org.uk](mailto:sharon.dougherty@caresco.org.uk)

## Tuck Shop

We were invited to provide a BBQ at the Sawtry Colts Presentation Ceremony on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July. The sun was shining which is always a bonus. The Tuck Shop team had a wonderful system which worked well.

An amazing 172 Burgers and 148 Hot Dogs were sold, plenty of water and soft drinks were also available.

I met up with Tom Walton from Academy Leisure to have a wander round the 3G site and to discuss how it will affect the Tuck Shop when the new season starts again. I'm really pleased to say that it has been agreed that we can hang two banners from a fence explaining where we are and what we can offer to Players and Spectators. This has relieved us somewhat and we are looking forward to providing Bacon Rolls, Hot and Soft drinks again when the season starts.

## **CARESCO Centre Gardens**

We have been very busy in the Centre Gardens. Having now received the National Garden Scheme Community Grant money, it has enabled us to progress with items on our long-term plan.

Like any garden, it can take years to time to establish but we are starting to see such an improvement already and so are our Members, Coffee Shop Customers, Volunteers and Staff who are enjoying it when they can.

Our Wildlife Garden is in place, Tomato plants and summer plants have been planted in our raised beds. The Anglia in Bloom judges came to see our work and listen to our plans for the future, they seemed very impressed, results of this will be in September. The taking part has been a great experience for the Volunteers and it has set us several challenges that we have met. We are all very proud of what we have achieved so far. Whilst the sun is shining, we have a good rota in place for watering our plants. Come along and take a look when you are next passing, just let the office know you're there!

## **Charity Shop**

Our stalls at the Carnival were a huge success and, along with the support, the weather didn't let us down. We were on the field this year which was a nice experience. We had something for everyone, Young and not so Young, even the pets enjoyed a bowl of water and some biscuits for the dogs. Our most unexpected visitor was a tiny cat on a lead who enjoyed a drink too.

The shop has welcomed 2 new volunteers to its team over the last couple of months. We have welcomed 1464 customers through the door during July and have received 362 units of donations. Our gift aid numbers continue to rise which is helping to boost our income which as you know is very much needed to help keep our services to the community going.

We have a dedicated Holiday Rail at the moment where you can find lots of bargains whether you're holidaying at home or away. We also have a good range of Swimwear too. There is a Sportswear rail just in case you need that extra something to look good whilst keeping fit!

Our sales have been a little erratic just like the weather but every day we welcome people through the door and they always leave with that something they've always needed but didn't realise until they saw it! Our customers are continuing to evolve which is great to see. Children that were brought into the shop with their grown ups on the way home from school are now grown-ups who come in to buy a bargain or two themselves.

There is a well-stocked School Uniform rail which is refreshed every Wednesday depending on what has been donated. With the cost of uniforms, it really is helping to relieve the pressure for the young families of the community.

All items donated are quality checked before they go out by our Volunteers which means we not only have the best bargains money can buy but also the best quality.

We have completed our second Basket Challenge for the Foodbank which was well received and we have also reinstated our larger collection basket at the front of the shop which will hopefully help with replenishing items that are always needed for food parcels.

It is always good to receive the feed back we do from our customers and the majority of them are really positive with many complements referring to how well organised the shop is and what a great welcome customers receive when they visit. We never rest on our laurels though and are always happy to receive constructive criticism and take them on board. Our Volunteers work tirelessly to keep the shop at its finest and, just in case Tina and I have not mentioned it before, you are simply the best!

## **Services Manager**

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July was Jacqui's last day as Services Manager before she returned to her first love at CARESCO which is Fundraising. I am temporarily looking at the Services Manager's role and hopefully seeing what the job entails for the future.

It's been a bit of a swift learning curve but there have been some changes already. The Community phone which was manned by Jenny from the Cave has come back to us as Jenny is moving away from the area. The phone service will now be run by the Office and its hours will be 9am to 12pm. The messages will be passed on to our lovely Volunteers so that they can continue to run the Prescription Service from Boots.

The Car scheme phone is being covered by CARESCO whilst the Volunteer Driver Co-ordinator has a well-deserved holiday. We are always looking for drivers, so if you have a roadworthy car and some spare time and a driving licence (I know, big ask!) and would like to do your bit to help those who don't have wheels and who do need to get to their medical appointments, please give Steve, our co-ordinator a call on 07810 476979. Likewise, if you need to use the service. Please call them for a chat - preferably when Steve is back from his holiday on the 12<sup>th</sup> August or you'll just get me answering the phone.

I have a meeting with the two ladies who run Sounds Good very soon, so there will be an update on that by the next time you get a Newsletter. I do know that they need a baker to provide cake on the odd occasion so if anyone would like to have a go, please contact me.

I attended Chatterbox earlier in the month. They have a different Speaker, when possible, at their meetings. They are a very sociable group and do enjoy their tea and cake. They support each other when needed, which is the lovely thing about this group. The coming months bring an Afternoon Tea at Conington Airfield and an Air Fryer demonstration (with nibbles). The group is always on the lookout for interesting Speakers. You know what's coming next. Please get in touch if you think you could share something which they might find interesting.

Changes don't necessarily have to be a bad thing. There is no progress without change. I'm sure you will all agree, we all need to keep trying our best to ensure CARESCO continues to help the people that need us.

Tina Campbell

## **Fundraising**

Hi Everyone,

I am now back doing my old role of Fundraising Manager within CARESCO something which I am looking forward to. I have lots of new ideas and will be putting these into action. There will be another big quiz in October at the Sawtry Social Club and this is always a great night, a date to follow. Also, the return of the Pumpkin Trail from 28<sup>th</sup> October to 3<sup>rd</sup> November – this is a fabulous event for the families to get involved in within the village. I am looking forward to the village turning orange!!

We also have the "Funding Our Future" campaign which is a great way for anyone to regularly donate £4 per month to CARESCO. If you would like details of how to join in with this then please contact me and I will tell you how. There is also the chance to have a "Green Bottle" in your home, office or share amongst friends. I can let you have a green bottle and you can fill it with any loose change you might have. Once this is filled, I can collect it and then it is counted and you receive a certificate with how much you have collected. If you or anyone you know are interested then please contact me.

If you have any old coins, British or foreign then we can accept them, and they can be turned into cash for CARESCO. There is a pot in the charity shop or you can bring them to the centre too.

If there are any fundraising ideas or suggestions that you have then please contact me on 07512 201378 or email me on [fundraising@caresco.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@caresco.org.uk) and we can have a chat.

Jacqui Hedington  
Fundraising Manager

## **Green End Day Club**

We had a lovely visit to Stilton Wednesday Club. They were all so welcoming and we are delighted that four of their members now join us every Thursday. We have another new lady with us too, who is also from Stilton and two new people joining us for the first time the last week of July. We are now full on a Thursday and a Monday, which is brilliant.

We have a visit to St Neots Centre in August organised, which we are looking forward to.

We welcomed Amanda, The Singing Gardener to the Club and she went down a storm, the members had such a good time singing along with her.

Our next Quiz Supper is on 30<sup>th</sup> August. We have already sold 12 tickets and our numbers are limited so please pop into the Centre if you would like some tickets reserving.

We have a shopping trip to Springfields on September 6<sup>th</sup>. We pick up from home starting from 9.00 am and aim to leave Springfields no later than 2.00pm. We have only 4 seats available now so please let either Vicki or Suzanne know if you would like to book.

Enjoy your Summer everyone and lets hope the sun continues to shine!

Vicki, Suzanne & Helen

## **Foodbank**

We have been busy in the Foodbank with an average of 15 food parcels a week.

We had a large donation of cereal and bags from Sprint-E-logistics in Peterborough. It was a team effort to organise the collection, thanks to everyone involved. Some boxes were near the Best Before date, so I shared them with other foodbanks and Community Fridges in our area.

The Summer scheme, which supports local families in the School summer holidays, had 10 families on it this year, 26 children. The food parcels were delivered on 19<sup>th</sup> July.

We have received three Basket Challenges back from our local community recently and they all helped to boost our stock levels.

We would like to welcome Jeremy and Debbie to our Delivery driver team and we hope that they enjoy their volunteering experience with us.

We send our congratulations to Ann and Keith Parker, who attended the Hunts Forum Volunteers Awards 2024 with Tony Stefanelli. They were nominated as CARESCO volunteers and won the Gold award, we are proud to have them on our team.

Thank you to all our volunteers for your continued support and hard work,

Pat

## **The Cave**

Once again the CARESCO Cave has been a hive of activity, seeing regularly between 10 and 18 members in the building at any one time. Many community projects have been completed including items being repaired or constructed e.g. bird tables, garden chairs, leaf boxes, bird boxes and electrical items PAT tested. A few 'Cavers' have also enjoyed completing personal projects, such as model building or painting. We have also continued to receive some specific project requests e.g. to make fairy doors, give garden ornaments a fresh lease of life and for memory bears to be made from a loved one's clothing. The Cavers have risen to the challenges and customers have gone away extremely happy. The Cavers recently had a social gathering to say Goodbye and Good Luck to Jenny, who is off to start a new adventure in Somerset. We would like to thank her for everything that she has done for the Cave and wish her every happiness in the next chapter of her life.

Shaun Pollock