



Registered Charity No: 1163226

# **Beverley Cherry Tree Community Centre**



## **Covid Territory Timeline March 2021**

## Background

When the pandemic struck early in 2020, no one could have predicted what would follow. With everyone ordered to 'Stay at Home' from March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020, the country faced uncertain times.

Almost straight away at Beverley Cherry Tree Community Centre, we experienced a huge upsurge in the number of members of the local community contacting us for help. We had calls from people furloughed and people suddenly out of work, people suddenly facing no income and people with no food, people needing support who had never previously claimed any benefits and many other desperate situations. Whilst dealing with our own challenge of trying to work remotely from home, we started putting a plan together of ways we could help and where support was needed the most.

All of our departments worked hard to offer support.

## The Community

During lockdown the centre manager, trustees, staff and volunteers have worked incredibly hard to support the community.

Seeing the struggles people were facing and the number of families going without food, the need for affordable food was quickly identified. The Cherry Tree Pantry was formed. The community room at the centre was turned into a Pantry shop, with support from Fareshare and a number of local businesses.

The Pantry allows people to visit once a week and pay just £4 for 10 items, from a choice of goods including fresh meat, cheese, frozen food, cleaning products, tinned food, cereal etc. as well as unlimited fresh fruit and vegetables.



We have also created a new Community Garden to the side of the centre. A group including our manager and some of our trustees and their families worked hard to create this. The Community Garden lets different groups based at the centre have a place to take part in different outdoor activities, such as growing vegetables.



The wider community are welcome to spend time in the garden too. Members of the community have donated time and plants to the garden. The garden also contains a bench in memory of our much-loved receptionist Rose, who is missed greatly by everyone.

The centre has been updated to ensure it is fully covid compliant. This has included work to replace windows to ensure good ventilation.



Following the start of lockdown, our happy, busy pre-school room was empty. Gone were the happy, smiling children's faces. Our pre-school manager and staff were immediately thinking of ways they could support and keep in touch with our children and families.

All of our families received regular welfare phone calls from our pre-school staff. This gave parents the chance to talk about any concerns they had, and allowed us to find out how we could help.

Cards were sent out to children for their birthdays, and at Easter each child received an Easter Egg. Packs of work to do at home were sent to each child, along with photos of the child's time at the pre-school. To support the families further, food packages were delivered to their homes.



In June, as soon as the Government gave the go ahead, we reopened the pre-school. It was lovely to have the children back with us and gave us chance to say goodbye to the children leaving us to start school.

## **Youth Club**

As our thriving Youth Club could no longer meet, our youth workers were busy thinking of ways to carry on supporting our families.



Well being packs were produced and delivered to the homes of the young people who normally attend the youth club. These included Unworry books, sanitiser, sweets and other items.

When we had the go ahead to reopen we hired a venue and moved the club to bigger premises to allow us to meet with space for social distancing. Sadly further lockdowns have meant we have needed to temporarily stop meeting, but plans are in place to reopen very soon.

## **Advice**

Our Advice Service has been busier than ever before. Over 1000 calls a month have been coming into the centre, and our staff have worked very hard to help everyone.

Our team have been busy issuing food vouchers, giving advice on debt, benefits and employment, applying for benefits to helping people who have found themselves suddenly with no job and income, along with giving advice on a number of other issues.

As lockdown carried on longer than anyone could have predicted, we soon realised that the situation was only going to get worse. Two new advisors have joined us, allowing us to work with more clients.

## **Thanks for Support**

Beverley Cherry Tree Community Centre would not have been able to achieve all of this without the support we have had from Fareshare, local supermarkets, local businesses, local churches, the local community and our amazing team of volunteers. A big thank you to everyone for all of your support.