

Food with Friends: Bringing people together with the power of good food

A community is loosely defined as a group of people living in an area. They may know what their neighbours look like, but probably walk past them every day not knowing their name. Councillors from across Gorseinon and Penyrheol want to change this by bringing their community together with the power of good food.

In February of this year the first committee meeting was held at St. Catherine's Church in Gorseinon. Organisers agreed that the aim of Food with Friends would be to bring people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities together for a meal, so that people who might otherwise never have met, have the opportunity to get to know one another. The first community meal, held in March, welcomed over 100 people and served a free home-cooked meal of Cawl and bread, followed by Welsh cakes and Bara Brith.

Food with Friends has since gone from strength to strength and is now held every month at St. Catherine's church. Every person who attends receives a free two course meal and a free raffle ticket. Prizes have included a £25 Asda gift card and a vegetable box donated by Shepherd's, a local fruit and vegetable shop.

Organisers were thrilled to learn that Margaret and Julie, two strangers, left the March meal as friends and have since met up for Tea at Framptons and shopping in Carmarthen and Cwmcerrig Farm. Julie has been saving a seat for Margaret ever since.

"This is what Food with Friends is all about" said Councillor Kelly Roberts. "Strangers in the community coming together, sharing a meal and leaving as friends".

The success of Food with Friends is down to the dedication and commitment of its organisers. Councillor Kelly Roberts is the Secretary and Treasurer of Food with Friends and organises the advertising of the meal. Councillor Andrew Stevens and Dr Rev. Adrian Morgan seek food and raffle donations from local businesses and Councillor Jan Curtice cooks the main course while Kathryn Lewis, as well as other church members, make the

dessert. Volunteers on the day include Gorseinon Town Councillors, members of St. Catherine's Church and Asda community champion, Jayne Davies.

Food with Friends is a simple idea! It isn't out to make money and it has no hidden agenda. It is simply a free community meal that aims to create a space for old friendships to be strengthened and new friendships to be made.