

PUB LUNCH CLUB SCHEME

Frequently asked questions

Q: What is the Pub Lunch Club Scheme about?

A: The aim of the Pub Lunch Scheme is to help communities set their own pub lunch club and for the new club to become self-running. Each club meets once a month on a recurring day eg. 1st Monday, at the same local venue to enjoy each others company and reduced price 2 course lunch with tea or coffee.

Q: Do I need to join?

A: No there is no membership required – the only requirement needed is to prebook your lunch and always cancel before the lunch if unable to attend for whatever reason.

Q: Do I need to book or can I just turn up on the day?

A: All lunches must be booked in advance by telephoning the individual club's co-ordinator / booking secretary. Unfortunately people who turn up on the day without booking cannot be catered for.

Q: What are the typical menu choices?

A: The Pub Lunch Clubs across the county do vary but in general, all clubs enjoy a main course, dessert and tea or coffee for a set reduced price. Most clubs have a choice of 2 dishes for the main course with vegetarians and special diets being catered for upon request. Typical choices will be a roast dinner with an alternative choice.

Q: Why do we need to prebook our lunch?

A: Several reasons.

First, one way that we are able to negotiate reduced prices with the venues proprietors is by ensuring that their costs are kept to a minimum through pre-ordering the meals approximately 5 days in advance. Secondly, pre-ordering allows the minimum of organisation for the volunteer co-ordinators on the day and lastly this affords less waiting time for the lunch clubs members.

Q: Is transport provided?

A: Unfortunately no. As a charity, the funding that we receive from both Shropshire County Council and Telford & Wrekin council to run this scheme, is only enough to pay for the initial setting up of new pub lunch clubs and support of existing clubs as and when is needed. As far as possible, we can provide information about local transport services, and our priority is to help the community choose a suitable venue which is on local transport routes.

Q: Does the club meet at the same venue each month?

A: Yes. As the club will eventually be run by one or more of its members on a voluntary basis, the aim is to keep this organisational workload to a minimum. The aim of the scheme is to ensure that as many people as possible from that community can benefit by going to the lunch club. If a lunch club was to go to

different venues each month the volunteer organiser/s would need to ring everyone and re-publish in their local community which would involve considerable cost, time and effort. However, clubs do move venues when necessary, for example when the food and service quality change for the worse due to new ownership.

Q: Do I have to go every month?

A: No. Everyone has different commitments and you are free to go as often or as little as you like as the only requirement is prebooking your lunch for that month approximately one week before (varies between clubs).

Q: Do people sit in the same place each month?

A: Wherever possible we ask newly formed clubs to try to avoid people sitting in the same places each time they go, to encourage sociability and to nurture a welcoming environment to new members. Some of our best practise guidelines include a roaming table policy, grouped or banquet style table layouts, sticky label name badges.....

Q: This will be the first time I have been to a social club of any kind for quite some time. I am unsure about going on my own. Can you help?

A: Please be assured that many of the lunch club members are or have been in exactly the same situation themselves. The volunteer host will have checked with the booking secretary prior to each lunch and know who will be attending for the first time and whether they are coming on their own or with friends. The host will be looking out for you and will do everything possible to make you feel welcome. In older clubs that don't have one specific person welcoming people it is always a good idea when you telephone the booking secretary for the first time to book in, ask them to look out for you and tell them if you are coming on your own so that they will make sure you feel comfortable and introduce you to some people.

Q: Do I have to go to my nearest lunch club?

A: No. You are able to go to any of the pub lunch clubs in the county that you would like to. We know of some people who enjoy going out to lunch clubs several times a month. To avoid disappointment, when enquiring about a particular pub lunch club for the first time, please ring the volunteer co-ordinator well in advance of the lunch date as some club's venues have limited capacity.

Q: Do clubs run all year round?

A: Some clubs decide not to meet during July and August with a few also not meeting in June. This may be because any members are typically away on holiday etc.

Q: Who runs the pub lunch clubs?

A: When helping a community set their own pub lunch club we look to appoint a minimum of 2 volunteers to co-ordinate the new club to ensure the smooth running from month to month. They are people who have expressed an interest in joining the new club and who have kindly offered to help. We still provide ongoing support to the lunch club volunteer co-ordinators or committees if they ever require help in any way at anytime.

Q: What do the volunteer co-ordinators do?

A: The 2 complimentary roles are *initially as follows;**

Bookings secretary (approximately 4 hours workload per month)

This person is the main liaison between the club and the venue and at a time to suit him or her, club members will telephone them approximately 5 -7 day before the lunch to prebook their meal. This person will also from time to time receive general enquiries from people who are interested in joining their club. Another aspect of the role is to, alongside the host, ensure the smooth running of the lunch and to deal with any matters that arise.

Host (approximately 4 hours workload per month)

This person would actively help to ensure that new members are welcomed and help them to settle in by introducing them to other members along with helping the booking secretary to ensure the smooth running of the lunch and to deal with any matters that arise.

Potential new pub lunch clubs will not be able to start until volunteers have been recruited. Age Concern Shropshire Telford & Wrekin's Pub Club Scheme co-ordinator provides support to volunteer Pub Club organisers as and when required. We encourage more people to step forward to form a committee so that the workload can be shared and ensure cover during the volunteer's absences, ie holidays.

**All of the kind people who co-ordinate their pub lunch clubs each month really do a great service for their communities and go to many lengths to ensure the smooth and successful running of their clubs. The above guidelines for the voluntary roles are our recommendations for the minimum anticipated workload.*

Q: How can we raise funds for our lunch club?

A: Some lunch clubs raise funds by hosting a raffle each month. In order to be able to do this, a small committee must be formed of members who attend that particular pub lunch club. We can provide support to do this. Clubs can then use the profits of each month's raffle to go towards something of the clubs choice, for example, subsidising the Christmas meal, an annual day trip, charitable donations.

Q: I would like you to set up a new club in my community. How can I help?

A: There are many factors involved in setting up a new club in a community as follows;

Finding a suitable venue which:

- Provides good food in a comfortable environment.
- Is easily accessible to those on foot ie on bus route and also has adequate parking.
- Wherever possible has good access for persons using a frame or wheelchair.
- Proprietors willing to host a group lunch.
- Proprietors willing to offer a reduced price lunch.

Generating enough interest in the community in order to be able to get the club started. A venue's landlords/proprietors are usually willing to reduce the cost of a set lunch if the potential group is going to be on average 10-15 people. Waiting for enough interest ensures adequate attendance numbers during winter months.

Initially finding volunteers to become the lunch club co-ordinators. Ideally, each new club would set up a committee so that they could host a raffle during each lunch in order to be able to raise funds for the club and also so that the workload can be shared. It is usually the case that finding 2 people to become the volunteer co-ordinators for the club to be able to start and become self-running is initially easier than finding more people to be able to form a committee.

How can I help?

Spreading the word in a community is often the best way for people to hear about the potential new pub lunch club and help our Pub Lunch Club co-ordinator to gather enough interest to be able to get the club up and running. We will publicise as much as we are able to but any further help in informing people is always much appreciated.

For more information please contact us on 01743 233123 during office hours on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday each week.