

Volunteers deliver 300 meals per week to isolated locals in East Lothian

A partnership between Haddington Bowling Club and Our Community Kitchen which was forced to stop due to the COVID-19 pandemic has restarted thanks to the dedication of determined volunteers.

The arrangement began in 2018 when Our Community Kitchen started hosting meals local East Lothian residents who were isolated within the community.

The Bowling club allowed full use of its facilities three times per week with up to 90 people visiting each day for a three-course meal and an afternoon spent chatting with others.



Following the lockdown it was realised that many of those who attended would be forced to shield at home so the volunteers decided to start a food delivery service.

With help from Haddington BC who once again granted the charity full use of its facility, 66 volunteers have worked four days per week to prepare hot meals in the bowling club kitchen before delivering to residents' homes.

During lockdown they were successfully delivering 300 meals every week and the partnership has earned praise from sportscotland, the national agency for sport, and Bowls Scotland.

Colin Dick, Club Secretary at Haddington BC, explained that

the club were desperate to help the community out in any way they could, he said: "It's a great relationship actually, we see ourselves as partners. We've had a few events together and we've found our members attending the community kitchen during the week, it's working really well."

"It is a balance because we are a bowling club and we have a responsibility to our members but equally we want to try to help our community wherever we can."

"When they first approached us we were totally behind it, we thought it was a great initiative."

Elaine Gale of Our Community Kitchen said: "We feel our partnership with Haddington Bowling Club is wonderful and unique. The committee and members have always been so welcoming, they have helped us raise funds and offered help plenty of other ways too. We simply could not do what we do without them and I feel this is a perfect opportunity to say a huge thank you to them. We have all made new friends through this venture too, which can't be underestimated."

Bowls Scotland National Development Manager Sarah Pryde-Smith said: "We know how difficult and challenging these past few months have been, but we are heartened to see clubs like Haddington supporting each other and their local communities."

"This partnership approach between Haddington BC and Our Community Kitchen is an excellent example of why bowling clubs truly are at the heart of the community and we are delighted to see the club being able to provide a much-needed service to the local area. We are now in phase three of our return to the green and our clubs have demonstrated resilience, patience and creativity throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to work collectively to ensure our wonderful game returns stronger than ever."

Chief Executive of sportscotland, Stewart Harris, said: "This has clearly been an extremely difficult time for people across

Scotland. It is heartening to see the great work being done in East Lothian with so many people coming together to help others.

“As we continue to move through the Scottish Government’s route map through and out of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to work with our partners across the sporting system to support communities throughout Scotland and the phased return of sport at all levels.”