

Celebrating Empty Kitchens, Full Hearts

Cllr Gavin Barrie has used the upcoming meeting of the full council to highlight the work of various organisations in Edinburgh who have been working hard over the last few months in the struggle to provide food for all of our citizens.

He has been a volunteer driver with the organisation, Empty Kitchens Full Hearts who are working from Leith Theatre.

By the end of July the Leith-based community organisation had delivered over 100,000 meals to people in need. As well as daily meal packs including breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks, Empty Kitchens, Full Hearts run two daily hot food services dubbed 'Lunchtime on Leith' and 'Teatime at the Theatre'- from their home at the iconic Leith Theatre.



Cllr Barrie has lodged the following motion for the council to approve on Thursday:

“Council notes the outstanding efforts of community organisations such as Spartans Academy, Bridgend Farm, Scran Academy, Empty Kitchens, Full Hearts and many others who provided a food provision delivery service across the city to those facing more challenges than most due to issues associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and particularly the effects of lockdown.

“Council recognises that with the gradual lifting of lockdown many of the food delivery operations have wound down and are returning to their core operations.

“Council further notes that Empty Kitchens, Full Hearts, wholly dependent on food donations from many sources and entirely staffed by volunteers is intent on continuing to rescue food that would normally go to waste and carry on delivering daily food packs to circa 500 citizens in need. In addition, they will continue to provide food to circa 100

walk-in guests daily.

“Currently based in Leith Theatre, Empty Kitchens, Full Hearts (EKFH) is a group of community volunteers, many from a hospitality background who, amid great uncertainty in their industry, set concerns for their own future aside to focus on helping to improve the lives of others. This voluntary team is comprised of professional chefs who are supported by teams of packers, drivers and administrative staff who ensure that meals are delivered to doorsteps every day of the week.

“They have a mantra of not turning anyone away and rejecting the humiliating practice of means testing and in August alone produced and distributed fifty thousand meals.

Since lockdown began, they have distributed over 160,000 meals totally free of charge with only £3,000 from Edinburgh Council and some donations from different housing associations, the vast majority of their funding so far has been from inside the very communities that they feed.

Council recognises that when it is appropriate, The Lord Provost has plans to recognise the wonderful efforts of the wider voluntary community appropriately but seeks that he visits Empty Kitchens Full Hearts to meet their founder, Lewis McLachlan and the team; to recognise and support their ongoing efforts to provide food security for families and individuals across the City and beyond.”

The Edinburgh Reporter met with Lewis MacLachlan and he explained what they do – and what they need to help them continue.



Lewis Maclachlan at Thomas Morton Hall PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter