

## The Atholl Centre's Response to Covid-19

The Atholl Centre, Pitlochry was awarded funding from Rural Perth & Kinross LEADER Programme in 2016 to build a fully accessible conference / meeting room, which would be available for use by the whole community.

During the current Covid-19 crisis they are utilising this space to respond to the needs of their community.



The Centre has adapted to enable them to help their community in these unprecedented times by changing their meeting room into a Food Bank, which they have open 10am – 6pm, 7 days a week for people to access. Around 80–100 people are using the service each day in comparison to the usual 2-3 people per week who were using it before covid-19. They have partnered with the local school for delivery of a number of food parcels each week to vulnerable families, including gift vouchers for each child that has a birthday that week.

Those who run the centre have said they have been overwhelmed with people's generosity and how the community has pulled together to help in any way they can; one donation of £2,500 is to enable the centre to buy a greenhouse to grow fresh food for their food boxes, the Rotary has also given £300 worth of butchers vouchers which are to be included in the food boxes also.

Aware that isolation and loneliness will be posing challenges to many people the Centre is also looking into using their kitchens to make soup which will be delivered to isolated people at least once a week giving them the opportunity to have a chat with them from a safe distance so they have some company.



The support being offered doesn't stop at food parcels and vouchers, the Atholl Centre also has accommodation facilities which are being made available to various people with short and medium-term needs. One local person had an issue with their boiler and was unable to get it quickly repaired so the centre shower facilities were made available.

Realising the huge impact covid-19 will have, the centre has developed an Emergency Business Plan which looks at how they will get through the next 12 months and then re-establish both residential and non-residential activity in the future as well as how they will continue to maintain the critical support they are providing to their community throughout the current crisis.

Always looking for ways to provide essential facilities for those in the area, the centre is determined to continue with their planning to provide a Changing Places Toilet (CPT) within the building for use, free of charge, to anyone who needs it, it will be aimed at people with complex needs from Pitlochry and the surrounding rural areas, as well as folk from around Scotland, and further afield visiting the town and going north or south on the A9 or holidaying in the area. The fundraising for the CPT continues alongside raising funds to support the food bank, anyone wanting to get involved should contact 01796 473044.

Anyone in the area who needs support at this time is encouraged to contact the Centre to get more information on the help available.