



Press Release

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For Immediate Release

Hartnell's Community Café celebrates one year of changing lives and bringing the Lockerbie community together

Hartnell's Community Café is celebrating its first anniversary after an incredible 12 months of creating opportunities, transforming lives and becoming a cherished part of the Lockerbie community.

Located within Cygnnet Social Care's Trinity Lodge, the café was established to create meaningful training and employment opportunities for adults with learning disabilities while opening the doors of the service to the local community.

Just one year later, Hartnell's has exceeded every expectation.

The award-winning café has become a thriving community hub where friendships are formed, confidence is built and barriers are broken down. It has welcomed hundreds of customers through its doors, created employment opportunities, supported local charities and community groups, and demonstrated the positive impact that meaningful inclusion can have on people's lives.

The café's innovative approach has already received national recognition, winning a National Lived Experience Award and being shortlisted for numerous other awards.

For the residents of Trinity Lodge, however, the greatest achievement has been the personal transformation that comes from being trusted, valued and given the opportunity to contribute.

Richard Graham is one of several residents who works in the café, spending two days each week helping in the kitchen.

He said: "Working at Hartnell's is one of my favourite things to do. I love being in the kitchen, preparing food and helping the team. I've made lots of new friends, not just with the people I work with but with the customers too.

"It's made me much more confident and I always look forward to coming into work. It makes me feel proud to be part of something that people in the community enjoy."

Fellow resident Annette McGrory also plays an important role in the café, helping to keep it welcoming for customers.

She said: "I like helping to wipe the tables and making sure everything is tidy for our customers. My favourite part is meeting lots of different people and having a chat with them.

"Everyone is so friendly and it makes me really happy when people come back to visit us. I love being part of Hartnell's."

The café has continued to create opportunities over the past year, recently welcoming Ross, a young neurodivergent employee, into the team in paid employment.

Ross said: "I'm really happy to be working at Hartnell's. I enjoy my role every day and I love being in paid employment doing something I genuinely enjoy. Everyone has made me feel welcome and appreciated, and it feels good to know that the work I do is valued."

While Hartnell's was created to support residents at Trinity Lodge, it has become much more than a café.

It has grown into a genuine community hub where local people come not only for homemade food and refreshments, but also for friendship, conversation and support.

Customers regularly praise the warm welcome they receive, with many describing Hartnell's as "a great addition to the local community" and commending the team for consistently going above and beyond to help everyone who visits.

One customer, Eleanor, thanked the staff for the kindness and support they showed following the recent loss of her husband.

Another regular customer said she always feels safe when visiting the café, highlighting the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere created by the team.

The café's culture of kindness is reflected in countless everyday acts. One memorable visitor, who was cycling from John O'Groats back to his home in Belgium, stopped for refreshments during his journey. After hearing about his incredible challenge, the team surprised him with a packed lunch for the remainder of his trip at no extra cost.

As Hartnell's has grown, so too has its commitment to supporting the wider community.

Working in partnership with Alzheimer's Scotland, the café now hosts weekly dementia support sessions, providing a welcoming space where people living with dementia, their families and carers can meet, access support and advice, and enjoy complimentary refreshments and a light lunch in a relaxed environment.

The team has also supported local causes through charitable donations, giving £500 to Lockerbie Light Committee and £360 to RH Youth Organisation Lockerbie, with plans to continue supporting organisations that make a difference across the town.

Lorraine Platt, Service manager at Trinity Lodge, said: "When we opened Hartnell's a year ago, we wanted to create somewhere that truly belonged to everyone, a

place where our residents could develop new skills and confidence, where people could find meaningful employment and where the local community would always receive a warm welcome.

"To see what it has become in just 12 months is something we're incredibly proud of. The café is busy every day, we've built fantastic relationships with local people and we've seen first-hand the positive difference meaningful work and community connections can make to people's lives.

"Watching residents grow in confidence, develop new skills and build friendships with our customers has been the most rewarding part of the journey.

"We're also proud that Hartnell's has become a place where the wider community knows it can come together, whether that's through our partnership with local charities and community groups, or simply offering a friendly face and somewhere welcoming to spend time.

"This café is about much more than serving food and drinks. It's about inclusion, opportunity, friendship and belonging. Looking back on everything we've achieved over the past year fills us with enormous pride, and we're excited about what the future holds.

"As Hartnell's enters its second year, the team remains committed to building on its success, creating even more opportunities for people with learning disabilities, strengthening community partnerships and continuing to demonstrate the life-changing impact that meaningful employment, inclusion and connection can have."