



Young
Wolverhampton
Local Group

Charity number: 1048167

Group Organisers Report 2024

2019 - present

We had a small group of families attending events pre covid and a very cheap room in Pendeford. Due to existing funds, bring and share buffets and donations we were able to keep the group going. We ran some online events during covid but it was mostly Leanne and Sally on our own chatting on Zoom. Earlier in 2023 we organised a visit to Baggeridge adventure playground in January which one family attended and a visit to Pizza Supreme in February where no families came along.

Running the group with Michel as treasurer was time consuming and included maintaining the website, the Facebook group and planning and running events. Leanne and Sally discussed restarting in person events for families after covid and running for a year to see if there was a need for them.

We had already decided to change the group to a Community Group as we could never easily get a committee together and felt it would be easier. Since the growth of the group and offers of donations and help from other parents we decided to go back to a full Local Group with committee, hence this AGM.

At the 2023 Easter event we had 7 children, Leanne's three, Kerry's three and Nathaniel with his mum and Nana.

We knew that we needed a presence on Instagram and this is where Kerry kindly said she would help with our Instagram and the group. This has been key to much more engagement. Kerry has also put in a lot of time and effort in to getting samples from suppliers and setting up lovely goody bags for families to take home.

May - Walk

With Wolverhampton Coeliac Group, lovely weather and well attended. Couldn't organise a reduced price this time as Cupcake Lane needed exact numbers and the price of £6 seemed expensive. Everyone enjoyed the selection of gluten free cakes at Cupcake Lane

June - Picnic

With Wolverhampton Coeliac Group, lovely weather. Took picnic tables and the hot/cold water flasks so we could have drinks and create a buffet table for sharing items.

September - Cooking

Very hot day and very well attended event with lots of new families. Good for children of any age. First time in the room and the oven needed cleaning and the second oven didn't work properly. Things to think about for next time. Time spent setting up due to new room and cleaning meant preparations for the event were slow. People needed to wash up utensils so there was a long queue for washing up. Some people had to leave before their items were cooked. Made pizza and cupcakes. Michel was amazing sitting by the hot oven and cooking. Lovely to see so many new families at the event.

October - Halloween

Well attended event and a variety of activities for all ages. Decorated the room and had a great buffet with lots of samples from suppliers. Some people dressed up and we got people to bring their own pumpkin which kept the cost down. Anya brought along her cupcakes to sell.

Pumpkin carving, apple bobbing, gunge tank, Halloween cocktails, nail painting and tattoos, colouring table and wrap the mummy. Buy better quality toilet paper for the wrap the mummy!

November - Christmas Party

We wanted our Christmas Party to be a proper event where there was gluten free food for everyone and no one had to bring any food with them. Our Christmas Party was our first event that was organised by NICS wellbeing at Woodfield Social and Sports Club. Having the room free of charge meant we could spend money on the event. Woodfield donated many things to our event. We were able to spend time setting up due to no time/cost restrictions to make the room look nice. With the support of Bree at NICS wellbeing and Woodfield, the party was a fantastic evening.

Disco and party games	Les the DJ came free of charge and did a great disco and party games organised by Carl (Woodfield)
Glow sticks	Carl (Woodfield) organised glow sticks from a supplier
Santa	Santa and his elf were fantastic giving out the Christmas gifts (Woodfield and Bree)
Food	Chilli/veggie chilli and chips - chips took too long to cook at the venue. Mark (Woodfield) cooked the two gluten free chillis for us.
Santa gifts	Haribo selection boxes organised by Carl (Woodfield)
Raffle	Books, GF tins, Baileys and Quality Street – the raffle was good and we should do the same again with maybe more smaller prizes. Donations from companies plus some items bought by the group
Goody bags	Advent calendar bought by the group

January - Movie Night and Dietitian

Well attended. Everyone brought blankets, cushions, cuddly toys. Children watched the film while Natalie Yerlett (dietitian) did a talk for the adults. All the parents found it beneficial from asking questions to learning tips and hints.

The group spent money on the cinema boxes and the chocolate fountain. Had a very good buffet with hotdogs, buns and chips.

March Easter

Well attended event but definitely more for younger children and need to look at what we could do for the older ones.

Amazing bring and share buffet, people seemed keen to contribute and went to a lot of effort.

Feedback Results

Love the events, enjoy the friendly relaxed group and value for money.

Children like meeting the other children and parents like talking to other parents who understand.

Improved confidence for some children around food and at the events.

Enjoy the buffet and the opportunity to try different foods.

Other suggestions: Bouncy castle, picnic, sports day, savoury cookery ideas.

Stalls at summer fayres to raise awareness and fundraising events.

Need more activities for older children

Fundraising

We receive no funding from Coeliac UK and must fund all the events ourselves. We currently have free room hire but need to plan for when we need to pay for room hire. We are expecting cash donations from two sources. We need to look at fundraising ideas for the group.

Summary

The idea when restarting the group was to run it so that it was affordable for as many families as possible. We also wanted to ensure the group was financially viable with committee members able to claim for expenses. The Committee need to maintain our own wellbeing and make sure that the time spent on the group is proportional and fits in with our own families.

Our group is a safe environment around food, makes children with coeliac disease feel included and helps them to meet others with the same condition. It allows families to relax around food and gives the children an opportunity to be independent when helping themselves to the buffet table as well as being able to return to the table whenever they want. Parents feel relieved to talk to other parents who totally understand and can understand that the party/sleepover invitations children receive come with a level of anxiety for the parents and the child. Parents like to discuss concerns, recipes and strategies for supporting a child living with coeliac disease and what to do when out and about. All of these things contributes to children's wellbeing and mental health and it supports the wider family group.

The amazing donation of a function room for the year from Bree at NICS wellbeing has allowed us to grow the group and run our first year of events since covid without worrying about attendance and room hire costs.

It has enabled us to

- Purchase black tablecloths to use at all our events which makes the whole event look more professional.
- Purchase flyers for promotion at our events, community events and to send to hospitals to give to parents when children are diagnosed.
- Set up with more time so we are more organised before each event starts which has reduced stress.
- Spend a little more on little treats like the cinema boxes, chocolate fountain and cute goody bags

Bree completely understands our group and her support has been invaluable.

We have had amazing contributions, support and help from all the staff at Woodfield who again understand how our group supports families.

Thank you also to Michel, Phill and Martin (our husbands) have also contributed a lot of time to the group to make sure our events have run smoothly.

We are looking forward to our future events: walk, picnic, cookery, Halloween and Christmas
Sally, Leanne and Kerry