

Local Community Fund



Hi, my name is Fionnuala and I'm a Co-op Member from County Tyrone.

My favourite Co-op own-brand product is Wensleydale cheese with Cranberries. I love the flavour and texture and I usually eat it with Co-op's Sea salt and black pepper crackers, which are just amazing and work really well with the cheese. It's my usual Friday evening treat, along with a glass of Prosecco or Shiraz.

It's a nice feeling to know that every time I buy my favourite cheese and crackers and swipe my membership card, I'm also raising the funds to provide vital support for local causes in communities across the UK through the Co-op Local Community Fund. It feels like a little treat for me but an essential benefit for others in my community.

It was great to spend a day visiting one of my local causes - Me You and Them. I learned how they provide help with food, household essentials, a drop-in centre, and a befriending service. There's a real focus here on promoting and improving mental health and the lives of the people in Dungannon by supporting those on low income and helping to ease the burden of hardship. The charity, which was only set up a few years ago, works with a diverse group of people, where English isn't necessarily their first language.





The group host a range of regular activities, offer financial advice, and even help improve peoples' spoken English. When I visited, there was an up-styling furniture workshop taking place where people were bringing old furniture back to life. It's something I found interesting, and I would have loved to have got involved if I had a little more time. It's so great that people can come here and learn the skills they need to improve their lives and wellbeing.

I was impressed by the number of new products that had been donated - including relatively new furniture and clothing with labels still attached. There was a lovely community atmosphere that didn't feel like a charity. In fact, I'd say people probably felt empowered by being there.

The staff were so genuine and really cared about the people that they were helping. They knew some of them by name so obviously it's somewhere where people feel welcome and comfortable visiting regularly to get the help they need.

It was great to see a local cause on my doorstep reaching out to help. You could really feel the community spirit coming through, and to think I didn't even know it existed!

I knew that just by being a Co-op Member and using my membership card when buying Co-op products, I was helping to raise funds and support communities but, until my visit to Me You and Them, I wouldn't have been able to put my finger on exactly what I was helping to do, and how much of a local impact I was having.

It makes me feel very proud to know I'm helping to raise money which is directly benefitting my local area. Now when I buy my cheese and crackers, I know somebody just a few miles down the road is benefiting. It's also heart-warming to know that there are so many other places like this across the UK, all funded by members like me through the Local Community Fund. It's made me realise just how important it is for me to choose a local cause to support through my membership too.

Thanks for reading!

Fionnuala

