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**Threehills Supermarket, Café, and Community Hub**

**The problem**

Food bank usage in Glasgow has been rising due to a combination of factors including homelessness, issues with the benefits system, in-work poverty, and the increased cost of living. COVID-19 has dramatically increased demand and the legacy of the pandemic will include redundancies and joblessness, further exacerbating the problem. Food banks are a compassionate solution for crisis provision, but can be very limited in respect of both preventing crises from arising and providing tailored support for people with ongoing money and food challenges.

**Our aims**

1. To reduce the pressure on households who are struggling to pay the bills and put food on the table, before the need for food banks or food parcels arises, by massively improving their access to affordable nutritious food.
2. To give dignity and choice in shopping for food by supplying subsidised food in a normal supermarket environment.
3. To re-purpose waste food from within the food supply chain.
4. To ease people out of poverty with dignity and respect.

**The concept**

*Threehills* will include a shopping area, a community café and an advice hub. It will provide immediate financial relief for households on low incomes, by improving their access to affordable, nutritious food, while addressing some of the underlying issues which may have left them vulnerable to hunger and food insecurity. The café will be open to all and access to the shopping area will be through a membership scheme.

An important aim is that *Threehills* will be sustainable in the long term, through the income generated by the café and through members fees. Because stock comes from surpluses within the food supply chain, we can ensure that people have affordable access to good quality, nutritious food while covering our costs.

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**Progress to date and key facts**

* We have agreed terms on a 20-year lease of a large shop in Nitshill Shopping Centre on Nitshill Road. This is well-placed in the heart of the community and is easily accessed on foot and by public transport. This represents a long-term commitment to the area, with the project being financially sustainable within three years.

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* The project is supported and managed by the food charity *Feeding Britain* initially, and we have been building up a local Steering Group who will form a Scottish charity which will take on full ownership and responsibility within three years. *Feeding Britain* has a strong track record of helping communities help themselves, by supporting projects which are designed and run by local people to meet local need. Collective, affordable food networks across *Feeding Britain’s* 20 regional partnerships are saving people £2 million a year on their food shopping. Locally the project is known as *Threehills,* following Feeding Britain’s desire to build a local identity for projects and enable local ownership.
* *Threehills* is part of the G53 Together food group: this network of organisations includes food banks, a cook school and pop-up food projects responding to the pandemic. *Threehills* aims to complement and support this work and has provided a van for partner organisations to make food deliveries. Feeding Britain has also supported the supply of food to the network.

A white van parked on the side of a road

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* The café will be open to the public and the supermarket will be accessed by members of *Threehills*. Members will be issued with a card and pay £4 when they visit the supermarket. Points will then be added to their card – based on a system designed between *Feeding Britain* and *FareShare* – and can be redeemed against food purchases in the supermarket. £4 of points will equate to around £20 worth of food. In this way, the supermarket will work very much like Food Pantries which are becoming popular in Glasgow and beyond. Membership will be open to all. *Threehills* is engaging with The Scottish Pantry Network as the project develops.
* We are planning wraparound services to support people in the challenges they are facing and which threaten their ability to afford good quality food and other essentials. Glasgow charity *Money Matters* are working with us and will provide tailored financial support within *Threehills*. Our aim is to provide direct assistance and signposting for a range of services including benefits advice, budgeting, debt advice, cooking sessions and access to a Credit Union. Members will be able to save points to help smooth their budgeting patterns, and earn rewards in the form of loyalty points to be redeemed against purchases in the supermarket when they engage with these wider services.
* We will offer a range of volunteering opportunities and we have registered with the Government’s Kickstart programme to provide 3 job placements for young people facing unemployment.
* Over £350,000 has been raised so far to launch the project plus we have the support of the ISG Global Outfitting Group, and they are refurbishing and fitting out *Threehills* as part of their CSR.
* We are applying for Building Warrant in May 2021 and are aiming for the facility to be open in July 2021.
* The work of *Threehills* is being independently evaluated by Prof. John McKendrick of Glasgow Caledonian University and the lessons from that will be widely shared with stakeholders and interested parties throughout Scotland.

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*Number 7 – the Citizens’ Supermarket, Birkenhead*

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