Banchory Bees Hive Larder and Tuck Shop

The Banchory Bees Hive Larder and Tuck Shop began with the organisers desire to give back to the school and community that had given so much to them.

Those involved, including Shirley, Hayley, Leanne, and Chloe, were once pupils at Banchory Primary School themselves. They grew up there, made memories there, and felt the warmth of a community that looked after its own. Now, as parents and guardians of children at both the school and Early Learning Centre and Childcare Centre (ELC), they want to carry that same care forward for the next generation.

After Easter, the group began working closely with Mrs Connolly, the school's Family Liaison Officer, building on earlier fundraising successes such as a Christmas event and prize bingo. Their love for Banchory shaped the project from the very beginning. They know the strength of the community, but they also understand that, behind many doors, families can be quietly facing difficult times. They spoke with real gratitude about the school and ELC, and about staff who consistently go above and beyond to make children and families feel seen, supported and included.

At the heart of the Hive Larder and Tuck Shop is the aim to support and help children, families and anyone who may need a little extra care. The group described how some children can arrive at school without a snack, and how rising food costs, bereavement, benefit changes, Covid and other pressures have left some families struggling.

They want help to be offered in a way that makes sure every child feels included and can queue alongside their friends and get through the school day without worry or embarrassment.

> *"This is about making sure help is there with dignity, kindness and no judgement. We know that children who are hungry don't concentrate as well and are more distracted. No child should feel embarrassed or left out because they don't have a snack or the things they need."*

The connection with Jane (WM2U) and the Make It Happen Fund became an important turning point. The group had ideas and energy, but they said they would not have known about the funding opportunity without Jane coming into the school, assuring them that the Hive Larder fitted the fund's purpose and encouraging them to apply.

Although the project is still at the planning stage, the group already has a clear vision for how it could work. The tuck shop has been tested successfully at school events such as sports day, giving them confidence to build on what has begun. With the funding awarded form the Make it Happen Fund, they plan to buy what is needed to get the larder and tuck shop up and running for the new school year in August. They plan to work up to food being made available daily, delivered to those who need it, taken home in school bags, or shared through specific food-order days – and they are already thinking about a special event for Halloween in October.

For the group, the initiative is about kindness, dignity, inclusion and the reassurance that no one is alone.

> *"It's about more than food or supplies - it's about showing people they are not alone. We want the Hive to be a quiet, trusted place of support when people need it most."*

While their focus is naturally on children, families and the ELC community, their hearts are open to the wider community too. As parents and guardians who have chosen to remain in the area long after their own school days, they feel a deep responsibility to give something back. They know that hardship can touch anyone, and they want the Hive to be a source of help.

What comes through most strongly is their hope, genuine care for others and their willingness to learn as they go along.

> "We know there may be bumps along the way, but we're ready to learn, adapt and keep going."

With support from Mrs Connolly, the school and parent council, they hope to grow the Hive through Facebook, posters, local groups, donations, the school garden, supermarkets, the civic centre and community growing links. Their wider hope is that every small act of giving will become part of something bigger, helping Banchory remain a place where people look out for one another and no one is left behind.