DRAFT 1

Carol Hunter

Carol met Jane at Abercromby Primary School when Jane was looking to recruit local community members to serve on the Make It Happen Fund panel. Carol has a long association with the school, having previously sent her children there. She volunteers at the Foodie Matters group, which brings parents together during school hours to help them learn cooking skills, build friendships, and offer a supportive space where children could also join in. She helped with cooking and contributed wherever she was needed. The funding for the group came through What Matters 2 You (WM2U) and the school identified mums who needed extra support and encouraged them to attend.

In addition to this, Carol volunteers as a mentor for a young person at the school. She meets with the young person once a week for an hour, spending time talking, playing games, or simply catching up - always following the child's lead in the conversation. Carol has been mentoring for nearly a year and sees it as an important commitment: something the young person can rely on. If the young person expresses interest in activities or opportunities, Carol helps them explore how to access them. The mentoring is organised through Emma Craig, a teacher who acts as a link between parents and the school and who previously worked in home support.

Carol is also active in the local foster carers group, which is run by the Council's Family Placement Team. Carol has been fostering for about sixteen years and has looked after many young people - some staying only a week or two, while others were with her for years.

'Many still keep in touch with me phoning or messaging me regularly, and most are still in the local area – they are like an extended family really.'

The members of the group, all local foster carers, meet monthly to share experience, discuss challenges, and support one another.

Jane mentioned the Make it Happen Fund (MIHF) to support community based activity was being set up and invited Carol to become a panel member and Carol quickly agreed. Together, the panel members designed the criteria for applications to the fund, making sure they kept the process simple, agreeing that applicants could apply for up £500.

"I really enjoyed being part of the panel. People were friendly and we worked together really well."

They promoted the fund within the community and then met together to review each submission carefully. The group later hosted a celebration event for successful applicants and in turn were delighted to be invited to attend some of the activities they funded including a ceilidh organized by St Bernadette's School.

One of the projects that was funded was submitted by Abercromby School parent council. It was to establish a school garden, with the idea that the children would plant and grow vegetables and then cook them at the Foodie Matters group.

Through her involvement with WM2U and the MIHF Carol also agreed to take part in the Transformation Space, joining online consultations that explored what women and girls need in terms of safety and support, adding her perspective to discussions about community needs and wellbeing.

Carol is motivated by a strong sense of community responsibility and enjoys meeting people, helping others, and knowing that her efforts make a positive difference.

'I believe young people need support and connection, to know that someone is there for them.'

Her commitment to mentoring, volunteering, fostering, and community participation reflects her belief that strong relationships and local support networks can change lives.