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**Report To:** Planning, Leisure & Environment Committee      **Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024

**Contact Officer:** Paula Harrison

**Subject:** Community Pantry-Growing

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## 1. Community Growing

1.1 The Community Growing initiative has progressed as follows:

- Posters in noticeboards inviting residents to show interest
- Survey online
- Flyers distributed to Freshbrook area around Crawford Close
- Flyers in distribution in Peatmoor/Nine Elms (Cllr Llewellyn)

1.2 Nine residents have responded to date, two from Toothill, seven from Peatmoor/Nine Elms. All are indicating that they would be interested in community growing if they had their own patch or section to grow food in.

## 2. Community Pantry

2.1 The Parish Council was set to partner with the West Swindon Library for a community pantry. This is now on hold due to the venue issues. Work is underway to build a community pantry cupboard for Freshbrook Church ready for their use in the Spring. This will be managed by the Church but will be positioned outside of their premises. A member of the public did make contact to enquire about a community fridge proposal but this has not progressed due to a lack of suitable venue.

2.2 The Parish Council has registered with Fareshare which is the main distributor point for supermarkets however we have not yet been

2.3 The Parish Council could consider a mobile option. The benefit of a mobile pantry is that it could move to locations where there would be gatherings or high footfall such as schools, village centres and events such as councillor surgeries/drop ins. Or it could be in a car park location at a regular time

On a small scale it could be a trailer with a cover – there are many customisable options available or the team could create a form of storage.

On a larger scale it could be a walk on type vehicle. Converted buses or vans are commonly used and could be bought then converted, or, bought from specific retailers. Examples are shown below:



### 3. Next steps

- 3.1 For community growing, a number of backland spaces have been earmarked as potential spaces for growing. The main drawback is securing a reliable water supply. To create a mains connection would be very costly. Creating a structure for rainwater run-off might be a solution. Any open space used for community growing spaces would need to remain open otherwise permission for change of use would need to be secured. Leaving spaces open can also mean that they may be prone to vandalism. If a site is agreed and a decision decided to gate or fence, steps could be undertaken to secure permissions.
- 3.2 For community pantries, the Parish Council could action the acquisition of a mobile option so that the project could progress. Alternatively, the Parish Council could wait until the library service resumes.

### 4. Recommendations

- 4.1 That the Committee notes the information and instructs the Parish Manager accordingly.

Paula Harrison Parish Manager