

Glasgow's first food pantry to open in April

The project, in Ruchazie, will give the local community access to fresh, quality food at a fraction of the cost of a regular supermarket.

Glasgow's first food pantry which aims to cut down on surplus food and social inequality in a dignified manner will open in April.

Ruchazie residents are expected to benefit from the project at 435 Gartloch Road which will offer reasonably priced fresh produce rather than have people rely on food bank donations.

Every year the UK wastes 400,000 tonnes of food which equates to £85 million. Work to transform the building will start today.

The pantry model is one which will give the community access to fresh, quality food at a fraction of the cost of a regular supermarket.

Glasgow City Council has been working with the Glasgow Housing Association, Ruchazie Parish Church and **Glasgow** FareShare to bring the idea to life.

Jim Burns of Glasgow FareShare said: "Ruchazie is the more advanced of our four development food pantries and is ready to go. This is about using surplus food, which FareShare receives, and distributing it in a dignified way.

"The food pantry will provide reasonably priced food in an area which experiences high levels of deprivation.

"It is a different approach to foodbanks as it looks like a shop. It will offer a variety of fresh produce and using food which would otherwise go to waste.

"This community project has brought people together."

Local councillor Mandy Morgan said that City Building already had the keys to the shop and were expected to start renovation work today (Monday).

She also explained how the scheme, which is also helping tackle climate change, would work.

Ms Morgan said: “Planning permission is now in place and we reckon the project will take about seven weeks to complete.

“We are upskilling the community as well. We will be taking on volunteers, who will run the shop, providing them new skills.

“This is the first pantry in Glasgow. It costs £1 to register and £2.50 per membership which gets you £15 worth of food. There is no limit to how many memberships you can buy.”

The pantry will also include a board room to offer where it is hoped advisors from Citizen’s Advice and DWP will be able to offer services to those who need it.

Denise McGuigan, of Ruchazie community council, added: “The pantry is going to make a difference to people being able to buy food at low prices, to start cooking real meals and gain the ability to budget.

“No one wants to rely on food banks and this will go some way to ensure equity. In our community people need to believe they have worth. Many have been told they are not good enough throughout their lives and been written off.

“With training opportunities, they will gain a sense of belonging and empowerment. By investing in our community everyone gains.”

Anyone who wants to register to use the food pantry or volunteer can get in touch with organisers by contacting heather@ruchaziechurch.org or phone 0141 774 2759.