

Healthy Eating on the Menu for Community



By Ben Garside (News Post Leader 17.3.2005)

ORGANISERS of what it is hoped will become a network of community food co-operatives in Wansbeck, are planning to get their new initiative off to a flippin' good start this week. The Wansbeck Real Food Co-operative is being launched to encourage people to eat more healthily by purchasing fresh fruit and vegetables delivered almost to their own doorsteps. The co-op, a partnership between Wansbeck's Healthy Living Centres, the 5-a-day initiative, Northumberland Care Trust, Sure Start and the East Ashington Development Trust, is this week holding a series of taster sessions so that local people find out more about how it will work and enjoy a plateful of healthy pancakes at the same time. The next session is at Bedlington Station, on March 17, from 3.30pm to 5pm. Each week from the beginning of next month, bags of fruit and vegetables will be available from a network of Real Food Co-ops around the district, packed full of seasonal produce for

just £2.50.

Membership of the co-op will cost £ 1. Each week a member of each local co-op will place an order which will then be delivered in bulk to the various outlets, the produce will then be divided into individual bags and sold to co-op members.

David Malone, the project coordinator, is hoping to establish between 12 and 15 co-ops in a variety of venues such as community centres, schools, clubs, churches, welfare or sheltered housing units and is asking any such premises that might be interested in joining the initiative, to contact him.

He is also seeking volunteers to run local co-ops as well as packing and distributing the fruit and veg bags.

For more information he can be contacted by telephoning (01670) 854422.

"There is mounting evidence that poor diets and declining levels of activity, could be leading to health problems and obesity among more and more people," he said.

"Lack of public transport in more outlying areas and a shortage of local shops, also makes it more difficult for some people to purchase fresh produce on a regular basis.