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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Local Community Cuppa welcomes over 60 people weekly

Loneliness is being tackled and new friendships are being formed, thanks to the **Long Sutton Community Cuppa**, located at St Mary's Church on Market Place.

This is one of **41** Community Cuppa's that Lincolnshire Co-op supports, as part of its purpose to make life better in its local communities, by improving mental, physical and social wellbeing.

The scheme continues to grow – in the last six months, six new Community Cuppas have been established.

Long Sutton Community Cuppa currently has **11 volunteers**, ranging from their early 20's to 86-years-old, who have joined for different reasons such as wanting to give back to their community or wanting to find a new hobby during retirement.

From the Community Cuppa, strong relationships have formed, and five volunteers Kate Loveday, Joy Bowd, Maggie Devine, Rita Gibbs and Derek O'Sullivan recently went on a mystery tour coach trip, that drove them to the River Trent for a guided river cruise which included sightseeing, feeding swans and a roast dinner.

The 11 volunteers also meet up to go out for breakfast, have garden parties, enjoy a Christmas meal, and more.

Volunteer Kate Loveday, aged 68 and from Long Sutton, said: *"I first saw an advertisement asking for volunteers at the Community Cuppa when I was working full-time, but I knew I wanted to get involved. So, when I went part-time in May 2024, I was so excited to start.*

*"Our most recent trip to the River Trent was so much fun; we're always laughing no matter where we are. We're now planning our next adventure, which will be to Sheringham for a 1940s weekend later this year, and I can't wait!*

*"I'm now coming up to retirement, and I was worried I wouldn't find a new hobby. Thanks to our coffee mornings, I've made friends who I go on trips with, I'm helping people in my town, and I'm doing something I truly enjoy."*

Between **60 to 80 people** from Long Sutton and the surrounding area are welcomed to the Community Cuppa every **Friday** between **9:30am and 12:00pm**.

The service is much-loved by the community, with some attendees travelling between 90 and 100 miles in one day to meet friends and have a hot drink and biscuits, which costs **£1.50 per person**.

Jo Birdseye and Susan Benfell, from Long Sutton, set up the Community Cuppa in 2023 when they realised the need for a coffee morning in the town, following similar services in the town stopping due to COVID-19.

Long Sutton Community Cuppa Volunteer, Jo Birdseye, said: *"When we first started the Community Cuppa, we didn't anticipate the impact it would have on our local community, and we can see the difference we've made to people who may have been struggling with loneliness or finding something to get them out of their homes.*

*“It’s fantastic that so many incredible friendships are being made through the support we give each other and by sharing life experiences, especially for our volunteers who give up their own time to be here – we value them so much.”*

**Ends**

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**Notes to editors:**

1. **Lincolnshire Co-op** is an independent co-operative society. Its purpose is to bring together ideas, energy and resources to make life better in communities. It has around 300,000 members and 2,900 local colleagues in Lincolnshire and the surrounding counties and an elected board of directors who oversee the business. The society provides **valued services** and supports the **local economy** from outlets across its trading area including food stores, filling stations, post offices, travel branches, funeral homes, a florist, a crematorium and community libraries. It also cares for people’s **health and wellbeing** through its pharmacies and support for a network of wellbeing walks. Local good causes benefit through its Community Champions scheme and together, colleagues and members also look after the **local environment** through volunteering.  
As well as its trading outlets, Lincolnshire Co-op owns properties, from flats and houses to commercial premises. The society brings land and buildings back into use to create attractive environments. With Lincolnshire Co-op as landlord, rents stay local and are invested in schemes that benefit the community.