

Resolving crises, Helping those in need

Welcome to our summer update! We are as busy as ever here at the Foodbank, with the rising cost of living impacting many in our community, as well as school holidays causing increased costs for many families.



Foodbank News

Welcome Ruth – Our New Operations Manager



Ruth joined us on 12 June as our new Operations Manager. You may see her at head office or out at our centres as she manages the day to day running of the Foodbank.

Ruth was formally a community mental health nurse, but has spent the last year working in the admin office at St. Mary's Church Eastrop. She brings lots to the team with her experience of supporting people with mental health challenges, and we're already benefiting from her social media and IT skills.. so good to have a 'younger person' join the team!

Gearing up for Harvest

It is that time of year again when we begin to think about our harvest donations. Last year we were delighted and overwhelmed by the generosity of our local pre-schools, schools and colleges who donated over 6.6 tonnes of food during the season, as well as the generosity of churches, social groups, businesses and individuals. These donations went to supporting the 7000 people who we fed last year.

This year, we are seeing the impact of the cost-of-living crisis in our 7 centres with an increase in demand of 31% in the first 6 months of 2023, and know that this is impacting many families. We have therefore called our schools' harvest 'Bring a tin' so that everyone can participate without feeling pressured to send several items to school or college.

Over the school summer holidays we will be getting our Schools Team together so that in September they are ready to visit school assemblies to let the children know what we do and why.

Updates

School Holiday Meals

We are aware that for some families, school holidays can be a particular strain on the finances. This may be due to the loss of the free school meals during this period, but there are often also additional costs of child care or of occupying children for six weeks.

To support these families, we have partnered with local schools and colleges in Basingstoke and Tadley and encourage them to refer any families who will be struggling to feed their children during this time. We offer fortnightly food parcels over the holidays which provides meals for the whole family for three days as well as toiletries and other household basics. This should significantly help with weekly shopping costs. By dropping into our centres to collect their food, these families also have a chance to confirm their food choices, speak with our volunteers about other support available and use the Citizen's Advice drop-in. Here is the experience had by one such family:



"I am a single mother of four children and was at an all time low with no food in my cupboards. I plucked up the courage to phone my oldest children's secondary school who issued a voucher for the Foodbank and was told where these Foodbanks are and their opening times. Last Friday a very nervous me went to St Gabriel's in Popley and was greeted by these amazingly friendly people. I was in the system and after sitting down with me, offering me tea and biscuits, they asked about my needs which were noted down and then they filled bag after bag with food, drink and toiletries. There was even a representative from Citizen's Advice who gave me lots of advice, information and links to help me. Even writing this summary brings tears to my eyes as the whole experience was so overwhelming and I'm so grateful for the kindness and generosity of others."



Foodbank Shopping List

Our website is updated weekly with our 'shopping list' items. We ask for specific items when stocks are low to ensure that our parcels contain nutritionally balanced meals for at least three days. To keep up to date with our current needs, please follow us on Facebook, visit our website <https://basingstoke.Foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food> or use the BanktheFood app.

Rough Sleepers Food Packs



Working together with Julian House Homeless Outreach Team and the Camrose Centre, we provide food packs for those sleeping rough in Basingstoke. These packs are small and light enough to be carried in one bag, but contain enough food for a whole day. We ensure everything put into these packs can be used without any form of cooking facilities, while also offering variety and nutrition.

The Statistics

From January-June 2023 we have seen an increase in the use of Basingstoke Foodbank with 32% more people fed, and 31% more stock given out, than during the same period in 2022. The main reason for referrals to us is the rising cost of living, which may also account for the increase in need, with the next most common being debt and mental ill health. During the same period there has also been a 15% decrease in supermarket donations we have received, with supermarket donations accounting for 58% of our stock coming in. We are purchasing 43% more food than last year, this being fresh fruit, vegetables and eggs.

Partner Focus



Debt Support

At our centres, we provide more than food, offering information and links to support clients through crisis and out the other side.

You may know that for the last two years we have been funding Citizens Advice drop-ins at all of our centres, providing help to our clients with bills, debt, rent and the many other challenges they face. But do you know that we are partnered with debt specific support agencies too? We work alongside Money Lifeline and Christians Against Poverty UK (CAP) to ensure our clients have access to expert debt support.

"We provide more than food, offering information and links to support clients through crisis"

We are aware how hard it can be to seek support when feeling the shame and anxiety so many people feel about their debt. One of the ways we seek to make this easier is by providing access to Diana, our local

CAP Debt Coach, at our Foodbank centres. Diana visits a different centre each month and is available for our clients to speak to about taking the first step in the process of freedom from debt.

Both CAP Debt Coaches and Money Lifeline Advisors offer independent, non-judgemental, support. They work with their clients to sort and organise debts, create an affordable payment plan, deal with creditors on their client's behalf and continue to support them until they are debt free. We would encourage anyone facing debt, no matter how big or small, to seek this support.

For more information about Money Lifeline, visit www.moneylifeline.org and to find out more about CAP debt support, visit www.capuk.org/get-help/cap-debt-help



Find out more about other support services and agencies on our website by scanning here:



Introducing a Foodbank Centre

Brighton Hill

Our Brighton Hill Centre is located in Basingstoke Baptist Church and open on a Wednesday Morning 10.30-12.30. It is run by our team of volunteers, Marilyn, Kevin, Sue, Iris, Paul, Pat, Vanessa and Elizabeth. The Team describe themselves as a friendly group who like a laugh and a dance! They enjoy spending time together outside of Foodbank, and often do this by visiting The Café Dome, a community café located in Brighton Hill.

When asked what they enjoy about being part of the Foodbank, one of the volunteers said "I really love it when we meet someone for the first time and can put them at ease so they leave feeling better than when they arrived".



We will meet another centre in the next issue of Foodbytes!

Meet a Trustee

Phil Thomas – Chair of Trustees



What inspired you to volunteer with Basingstoke Foodbank?

I'm a mug when someone wants a job done...I find it hard to say no. And seven years later I'm still at it!

How long have you volunteered with Basingstoke Foodbank?

Seven years and counting!

Which roles have you covered during that time?

I'm Chair of a great and talented bunch called 'Trustees', who ensure the Foodbank is kept street legal and always moving forwards and developing to meet Basingstoke's needs.

What's your favourite food/meal? (Please say pasta or baked beans as we have plenty we can give you!)

Ha ha! Actually anything Mediterranean floats my boat, but in these days of expanding waistlines I'll pass on the pasta thanks!

What is the most memorable 'stand out' moment from your time with the Foodbank?

What stands out for me (and still does every week) is reading the tragic circumstances of our clients who've asked for prayer as seen in Chris Clarke-Williams' prayer list. It's a real motivator to try even harder to meet the needs of the whole person. And I must add the way God has been so faithful in His provision for Foodbank's work.

In true 'Desert Island Disc' tradition, what is your favourite piece of music and what item would you take to your island?

I love Jazz, so anything of the 'Chilled Jazz' variety would do nicely. And of course I must have a Bible.

If you could have one Foodbank wish, what would that be?

In true Trussell Trust fashion I should say 'to see the end of the need for Foodbanks'. But more realistically I would love to successfully put in place some in-Centre provision for people's mental health needs, as so many of our clients need it.

'Marmite'? Yes or no?

Haven't tasted it since I was a kid...so no. Hmm just realised I forgot Twiglets, so can I say 'maybe'?

What do you love most about volunteering with Basingstoke Foodbank?

The amazing spirit and can-do attitude of our wonderful volunteers.

What do you think is the biggest challenge Basingstoke Foodbank is facing at the moment?

It has to be the impact on our clients of the cost-of-living crisis which just seems to be deepening with every passing month.

Favourite Hobbies / pastimes?

Walks by the sea, cycling and car DIY. I used to say playing squash, but lockdown and turning 70 put paid to that!

Where would you like to see Basingstoke Foodbank in five years time?

Falling demand and many more 'associated services' working with us to help clients out of crisis.

Thank you.

Sign up to our Foodbytes mailing list by visiting our website at <https://basingstoke.foodbank.org.uk> or by scanning here:



Find us on 

Basingstoke Foodbank takes data security very seriously. You have received this newsletter because you are on our list of supporters. If you would like to see a copy of the privacy statement for supporters' data, please email admin@basingstoke.Foodbank.org.uk. If you do not wish to receive newsletters from Basingstoke Foodbank, please select the unsubscribe button found at the end of this newsletter. Alternatively, please email admin@basingstoke.Foodbank.org.uk with "unsubscribe" in the subject line, and your full name in the body of the email.