



Dunstable Foodbank

Autumn 2022 Newsletter

A note from the Vice-Chairman

This edition of the newsletter comes as people across the country and throughout the world are still coming to terms with the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. We share together a sense of sadness and loss but also a sense of privilege of having had the Queen as our Monarch for so many years.

I feel sure you will join me in giving thanks for the Queen's long life, her example of dedicated service and her positive influence on the lives of so many people. Our thoughts and prayers are extended to the royal family at this time and, in particular, to His Majesty King Charles III, as a significant chapter in our nation's history closes and another begins.

For Dunstable foodbank, too, this is a season of new beginnings. In recent weeks it has been our pleasure to welcome Dave Butler onto the Board of Trustees as its Secretary, and Elton Ginsberg as the new Warehouse Manager. We wish them both well as they take up their responsibilities.

Finally, you will see on page 4 that we have a significant anniversary to mark. It is 10 years since Dunstable Foodbank began its work. Sadly, our support is needed just as much today as it was then. So, whether you have been with us for 10 years, 10 months or 10 days, a huge thank you to you for the part you play to make everything happen here at our Foodbank. It wouldn't happen without you. *Stephen Brevitt, Vice-Chairman*

Cost of Living crisis

The Big Issue defines a cost of living crisis as "a situation in which the cost of everyday essentials like groceries and bills are rising faster than average household incomes." This is reported on an almost daily basis as households have significantly less money to spend and are facing increasing challenges. The Government have started to issue one-off 'Cost Of Living Payments' to households on benefits, however the crisis is affecting more and more people and is set to become more difficult as we move in to the winter period.

As a Foodbank, we have again been issuing supermarket vouchers which have been funded by Central Bedfordshire Council through the Government's 'Household Support Fund'. This round of support has been in place since May this year and to date, we have given vouchers of £15 per person for 264 unique households.

As the number of clients attending our Distribution Centres increases, Citizens Advice are able to provide support and guidance following our referrals. Our Foodbank Advisor is always busy helping families and we are also in the process of securing additional funding from The Trussell Trust, part of which would allow us to expand the current project with Citizens Advice so as to help more clients.

Money matters

Dudley Peacham, Treasurer: 'As a bank manager for many years, coming on board as Treasurer to a bank that deals in tins and packets rather than loans and banknotes, was a different experience. But with every day that I continue to help out, I become increasingly convinced that ensuring everyone has food to eat is right at the heart of what being a community is all about.

Financially, things are difficult for many people at the moment but for those of us who are blessed with the ability to help, there has never been a better time. Whatever you are able to give will help.'

Dunstable Foodbank have recently become a CIO and so have a new bank account with immediate effect.

Name : Dunstable Foodbank

Bank : HSBC

Sort Code : 401930

Account Number : 91749064

The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Matthew 25:40

A message of thanks

"Thank you for being so warm and welcoming to my son and I today. We have never been to a foodbank for support. I have always donated to the foodbank on our monthly shopping trips and taught my son the importance of helping others in their time of need. Today, we needed this support and I was overwhelmed by the hospitality of each team member. So I thank you all from the bottom of my heart."

Behind the shutters of our Warehouse

Part one of a two-part feature on the hidden hive of activity that forms the hub of our Foodbank operations.

Turn off the road linking Ivinghoe to Leighton Buzzard at the signpost pointing the way to Ledburn, Mentmore and Wing, and you pass beneath a railway bridge where not a single clue is evident that might reveal the site's notorious past.

Referred to locally as the Bridego Bridge, it was here in the early hours of 8 August 1963 that a gang of 15 criminals stopped a Royal Mail train and stole £2.6 million – the equivalent of nearly £60 million today – in an outrage that became known around the world as 'The Great Train Robbery'.

Pass beneath the West Coast Main Line, turn left into an unassuming industrial site called the Oakland Enterprise Park, and a visitor to Dunstable Foodbank will pull up outside a warehouse unit, nestled between an eyeglass wholesaler and a sports car garage, which is just as anonymous as that nearby bridge. There is nothing visible to suggest what goes on here. Yet, behind a shuttered entrance large enough to accommodate the loading and unloading of the Foodbank's Transit van, another 'gang' might be discovered undertaking the kind of work that would have put the crooked ambitions of the Great Train robbers to shame.



Bridego Bridge. The scene of the crime.



Members of a team totalling almost 50 volunteers toil here for at least three days a week in an attempt to solve the on-going crime of hunger in the community.

They come from all walks of life. Former teachers, nurses, police officers, driving instructors, supermarket workers, international project directors, and journalists are among those who give their time freely to sort, date, stack, and crate not just food but also household items and products for personal health and hygiene.



Packed shelves standing sentinel over four long gangways soar so high toward a distant roof that volunteers have had to be specially trained to manage a small electric hoist and a large, manned Hugo lift so that goods can be stored safely and efficiently.

Since 2019, when the Foodbank moved to Ledburn from a smaller site in Leighton Buzzard, this Aladdin's Cave of humanitarian wealth has served as the hub for a network that embraces over 20 local churches, nearly as many schools and businesses, up to a dozen shops and supermarkets, and three distribution centres...

What's in the Warehouse?

The Warehouse is still currently very well stocked with: baked beans & pasta.

Items most-needed at this time:

- Tinned vegetables
- Tinned meat
- Instant mashed potato
- Tinned fruit
- Sponge puddings
- Rice pudding
- Teabags (packs of 40 / 80)

Who are the Trussell Trust?

Carol and Paddy Henderson founded the Trussell Trust in 1997 based on a legacy left by Carol's mother, Betty Trussell. Their initial project was based in Bulgaria, focused on improving conditions for more than 60 children who were sleeping at Central Railway Station in Bulgaria. However, in 2000, Paddy received a call from a mother in Salisbury, who was struggling to afford food and faced sending her children to bed hungry.

Paddy investigated data on poverty and deprivation in the UK and found that significant numbers of people faced going hungry as a result of a sudden crisis. So Paddy started Salisbury Foodbank in his garden shed and garage, providing three days' emergency food to local people in crisis.

The foodbank model spread rapidly through church networks and, in particular, inspiration was drawn from a verse from Matthew's gospel in the Bible which reads: **"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was in prison and you visited me."** (Matthew 25:35-36).

There are now over 1200 foodbanks in the network, which is about two thirds of all the foodbanks in the UK, and their vision is to end the need for Foodbanks in our nation by influencing changes to community, mindsets and policy at a local and national level.



So where does Dunstable Foodbank fit in?

Dunstable Foodbank are a franchise of the Trussell Trust; we are an independent charity (soon to become a CIO) who 'opt in' to being part of the Trussell Trust network and, as such, we benefit from resources and expertise that are available through being a part of this well-known and trusted charity network of foodbanks. Through this partnership, we have access to advice & guidance, training, policy and key document templates, branding, supermarket partnerships, grants and other sources of funding, network & community partnerships as well as much, much more.

Tesco Summer Collection review



- Volunteers who took part: **30**
- Shopping lists given out: **1600+**
- Crates filled: around **110**
- Weight of food donated: **1.7 tonnes** (equivalent weight to feeding at least 170 people with a 3 day emergency food parcel!!!)
- Cash donations collected: **£483.62**
- Pasta sauce jars donated: **A LOT (thankfully!)**

One of the wonderful things about the Tesco Collection event is the customers we get to speak to: those who donate; those who have questions; those who, in the past, have needed help from our Foodbank and who are back on their feet again and now want to give something back. One lady, Doreen, told us that she saves up her 'Tesco £1 Saving Stamps' each year and, instead of using it on her Christmas shopping, she donates them to Dunstable Foodbank for us to purchase items we need the most. The Collection event boosts our supplies for summer months, before we head in to Harvest time. And don't worry if you missed out and couldn't be a part of this event! Pop the date in your diary for our Winter Collection now: **1st-3rd December 2022** and look out for more details nearer the time about how you can help!





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100 years; 100 items!

This year, Dunstable Foodbank marks the 10 year anniversary of its opening!

Since 2012, our volunteers have given out close to 13,000 food parcels, feeding almost 40,000 people who were facing crisis or hardship.



Alan Sutton, founding Chairman, opening the Foodbank in 2012 with Andrew Selous MP, Cllr John Chatterley & wife, Anne Chatterley.



The Eaton Bray Women's Institute is celebrating 100 years this year, and as part of their celebrations, they donated 100 items (actually, it ended up

being quite a bit more than that!) to the Foodbank to give back to the local community. Thank you to Deidrea and the WI ladies for their generosity and thoughtfulness!! Every donation is so helpful, particularly in these challenging times, to help us provide food parcels for those facing crisis and hardship.



Houghton Hall Harvest

We're excited about a new partnership with the staff and volunteers at Houghton Hall Park Kitchen Gardens and are thankful for them

sharing their wonderful harvest with us to supplement the food parcels we provide. Our DCs have been trialling the provision of other fresh produce and we'd also like to thank Houghton Town Council for the funds they are donating to us in order to help us with this project. **Please note:** we are still only able to accept donations of non-perishable goods at this stage (and not fresh food).



Dunstable Foodbank Key Contacts

General enquiries

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Elton Ginsberg, Warehouse Manager

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DUNSTABLE FOODBANK

HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE IN CRISIS

Other ways to get involved

- **Date for your diary: Tesco Winter Collection: Thursday 1st - Saturday 3rd December 2022.**

Volunteers needed to greet customers and accept donations at Tesco Extra on Skimpot Road. Please hold the date(s)! More details to follow.

-  **Join our Facebook group, 'Dunstable Foodbank & Surrounding Villages'** to receive updates. Share the page with friends, family and neighbours to spread the word about who we are and what we do!