

Welcome to the newsletter of Norwich foodbank. We hope you will find this to be of interest whether our local Christian charity is new to you or you are a regular supporter.

First Comes, First Serves

Bus operator First Eastern Counties began a relationship with the Trussell Trust in 2015, when they ran a pilot with Stoke-On-Trent foodbank, giving free bus tickets to foodbank clients who would otherwise struggle to get home with their food parcels. Whilst the specific reasons for a referral to foodbank can be varied, all are experiencing financial difficulties and some walk miles to get to the nearest foodbank centre or the centre open on the day they get a voucher; some walk even further due to embarrassment at the idea of meeting someone they know or being seen attending a more local foodbank. After the success of this pilot, the scheme expanded to the West Midlands in March 2016 and then to the East of England in October 2016, where we were invited to take part.

Since the pilot, First have gone one stage further and also allow free travel to be issued to clients who can't access vital appointments such as those related to housing, benefits or medical issues and to allow volunteers to get to the foodbank to undertake their duties. To see how it would be received, we started the scheme off at four of our busiest centres, and early in 2017, have been taking the scheme to other interested centres in our patch, including our centre at Wroxham and at New Hope in Lakenham. Since we joined the scheme, we have given out travel vouchers to 26 clients, helping 44 adults and 15 children in total. First have continued to roll this project out across other Trussell Trust foodbanks and are now active in Colchester, Southend and Chelmsford. This is one extra way we are helping to give 'more than food' and support clients with practical issues, alongside emergency food supplies.



Norwich foodbank is a local Christian charity that does not affiliate itself with any political party. We are non-judgmental and inclusive, providing assistance to people of all backgrounds, with or without faith, who are found to be in genuine need.

Christmas Abundance!

Following our anticipation of a busy Christmas with a successful launch of the Reverse Advent Calendar campaign, we thought we'd better give an update – we had a HUGE amount of support with over 3.5 tonnes coming into our warehouse through this campaign alone! During December – our busiest month for referrals, with 999 food parcels being distributed in the month – we received the biggest ever amount of donations in one month with almost 20 tonnes making its way through our doors!

Although we were a bit overwhelmed at times (!) we were – and remain – incredibly grateful for the support of the community and the way everyone got behind us and donated so generously. Before the end of the year, we were already receiving messages from people asking if we'd run the campaign again in 2017 as they (and also many families who did this together) so enjoyed it, they were already looking forward to repeating the exercise!



Lent Campaign #40for40

Are you giving anything up for Lent? We are taking part in the Trussell Trust's '40 for 40' campaign, asking people to consider putting aside 40p for the 40 days of Lent, with the proceeds and gift aid (if appropriate) being donated to the local foodbank, giving up to £20 to support local people in need. And judging by the feedback received for our Reverse Advent Calendar campaign, we have high hopes!

You can find out more information by visiting our website—www.norwichfoodbank.co.uk—and we'll be posting throughout Lent on our social media pages so you can get involved there too! Find us on Facebook using @NorwichfoodbankUK and on Twitter which is @norwichfoodbank—do please like and follow us!



All Change Please!



We're really keen that those who support us are aware of all aspects of the charity, as it can feel that each area is quite separate if that's all you see—the warehouse sees between 50-60 people volunteering each week, 14 people make up our driving team, the office has a team of 8, the distribution centres have approximately 80 and we have over 100 people on our supermarket collections list! We offer the opportunity to all volunteers to visit other areas to see how their work fits into the charity as a whole and were pleased to take a few of our supermarket volunteers to a distribution centre—Jennifer said 'Thank you for this morning—I found it really interesting and not what I expected at all.'

In November, we held a collection at Waitrose and this was resourced entirely by volunteers from the warehouse and driver team—many comment on the items that get donated so it was a great opportunity for them to chat to customers (and therefore donors!) and to see first hand what happens before the donations reach the warehouse.



Thanks for the Feedback!

It was lovely to receive an email from one of our donors recently, following our letter of thanks—'It is something I do to put a small bit back into the community. You do a marvellous job at supporting local people and I am happy to add to that.'

Norwich FoodHub

In October 2015, a meeting of councillors, charities and groups met together to discuss a proposal for a new charity, and, with the help of a number of passionate and dedicate volunteers, 'Norwich FoodHub' began early in 2016.

Claiming that over 1,000 tonnes of food is wasted in Norwich each year, they were keen to do something about it, given the almost daily news we see and hear about the levels of poverty and numbers accessing foodbanks. The charity has 3 main aims: to collect food that would otherwise be wasted by retailers due to it having passed its sell-by or best-before date, or as a result of over purchasing; to bring this food to an accessible centrally-located unit to be weighed, sorted and recorded; and to coordinate the redistribution of such food to organisations helping to tackle food poverty in the city. As a known food 'provider', we were approached to be a recipient and arranged for our Friday distribution centre at Gateway Vineyard / Alive church to receive weekly donations. One of the centre's volunteers quickly came forward as being able to collect the items and the rest, as they say, is history! Due to increased donations from retailers, we then rolled the scheme out to our Wednesday distribution centre at St Stephen's church. Both are working very well and report that volunteers enjoy giving out perishable items to complement the tinned and dried goods in the food parcels and clients are grateful to receive extra, fresh items to help make the food parcel go a bit further.



As with foodbanks generally, we are pleased to support something so worthwhile and that perfectly edible food is not going to waste, but sad that there is a need for this kind of service and that a charity had to start up to tackle this issue in our city.

Pictured left and right are examples of donations we have received



On (and Off) the Wish List...

As you saw from the Reverse Advent Calendar feedback, we had such a lot of support in terms of food donations that many of the key items we include in the nutritionally balanced food boxes we give out, were well stocked so our 'most needed list' was vastly reduced—which was brilliant!

Long life sponge puddings remain on our list as one of the least donated items, but these go in each family box as a standard item. We also really appreciate donations of **tinned vegetables** such as carrots, peas and green beans which go in all the food parcels we make—single, couple and family boxes.

To keep you up to date, following reviewed guidelines from the Trussell Trust, we have removed bags of sugar from all food parcels and now offer these as an extra item instead.

Lastly, we hope to be able to give every child an Easter Egg when the time comes and, if our supplies allow, offer one to all adults referred to us as well!

John Lewis Support

We told you about Helen, our Swiss volunteer in the last issue and we want share another volunteer's story:

John Lewis operates the Golden Jubilee Trust, allowing up to 18 secondments each year for staff to help charities—Claire applied, was accepted, and started in July!

We were awarded one day a week for six months and during this time, Claire supported various aspects of the charity including admin and FISH. Her placement ended in January, but she's really enjoyed working with us and is staying on in the office supporting us with a variety of tasks—and we're delighted!



Claire said: 'Spending time at the foodbank has opened my eyes further to the day-to-day struggles some people experience and the acts of kindness the charity is able to deliver has been overwhelming. Thank you for this opportunity!'

Partnership Working

As of the beginning of 2017, we have over 375 Care Agencies—such as Age UK, Citizen's Advice and Social Services—and Care Professionals—such as Health Visitors and Pastoral Workers within schools—signed up to hold foodbank vouchers and who can refer clients in crisis to us.

In 2016, almost 4,000 vouchers were given out by our partners and this enabled 8,791 food parcels to be distributed. As well as our 10 distribution centres, a handful of agencies hold parcels on their site, to allow immediate access for those in desperate need and also to relieve staff pressures when clients are unable to access a centre and staff accompany them or collect on their behalf. Baseline, part of Future Projects in the NR5 area (the drop-in area is pictured below), is one of our largest partners in terms of the number of clients they refer. As well as providing practical, emotional and social support for people with an NR5 postcode, the Baseline centre is the venue for our Marlpit FISH club and also hosts Foodcycle once a month who provide a free, hot meal for the community.



Laura Bloomfield, Service Manager of Future Support said: 'Future Projects is proud to work in partnership with Norwich foodbank. We are able to provide holistic advice and advocacy for clients combined with the practical offer of food and toiletries in response to immediate crisis and deal with people at their most vulnerable time. In addition, through FISH, we are able to engage with families in our community. We often find that families will approach us for advice after being in the centre for FISH, which is a nice, welcoming way to engage people.'

If you would like more information on the services Future Projects provide, you can visit their website: www.futureprojects.org.uk

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." Proverbs 31:8-9

For more information or to send us details of what you are doing for Norwich foodbank please email us at admin@norwich.foodbank.org.uk or contact us at Norwich foodbank, Henderson Business Centre, 51 Ivy Road, Norwich NR5 8BF; Tel 01603 251733; website: www.norwichfoodbank.co.uk; Charity number 1143528

Norwich foodbank Patrons: **The Right Revd Graham James Bishop of Norwich, Delia Smith CBE & Susan Hill CBE.**