

Update from the Foodbank:

The run up to Christmas was an incredibly busy time for the Foodbank. Both from number of donations and number of people fed.

In December alone we helped 574 people an increase on last year. In addition, we supplied hampers for Howard Day Care Centre and Settle Emergency Housing Team to distribute to their clients plus food items for the Hitchin Christmas Hamper Appeal, who supplied hampers to 150 families.

2019 overall was a very busy year for the Foodbank. We distributed over 30% more food parcels, 150% more children's summer holiday lunches and distributed 2,700Kgs of toiletries via our distribution centres.

This was all made possible by the continuing generosity of you, our donors... Thank you!

You donated over 43 tonnes up 16% from the previous year. Over 40% came from our usual supermarket donation boxes and we had many donations from specific collections by schools, playgroups and business's.

Unfortunately, included in this total, were 1,500 Kgs of either out of date or opened products, thereby rendering them unusable.

Donations of any size are always welcome. However, we currently have good stocks of pasta, baked beans and soup.

Please consult our monthly shortage list for items we urgently require. This can be found on our website and on the supermarket collection boxes, so please if you can take a look before you shop.

Items need this month include:

Sponge puddings

Long-life Fruit Juice

Long-life/UHT Milk



We continue to link with the Foodbank in Euston, sending excess or nearly out of date food for use with their clients, so nothing is wasted.

Thank you all once again for your tremendous support of the local Foodbank.

Our warehouse team have done an amazing job in sorting and packing the food bags; working several hours more than at other times; making sure our clients received food parcels before Christmas.

So, a very special: **Thank you to the Warehouse volunteers**

Preston School held a Christmas cake sale to raise funds for the Foodbank. Thank You



**To all our volunteers
Save the date:**

To say Thank You to all our volunteers; we will be having our summer social gathering on the evening of Friday July 10th 2020.

More details later, but please put the date in your diary. Hope to see as many of you as possible.





Sandy McBain, RIP

It was with great sadness that we learned that Sandy had passed away on Christmas day. Alexander Gillies McBain was a founder member of the Baldock Distribution Centre and inspired us all with his selfless devotion to the cause. Sandy did more than any of us to keep our centre running, even when not on duty, he often dropped in to check that all was OK.

We will miss him greatly, as I believe the United Reformed Church in Baldock will too. Some of our clients will miss him too, as he always had time for them, and shared their problems. He was always cheerful, and even through his illness he kept his humour. When I last spoke to him about 10 days before Christmas, he had hoped to be home for the festivities. Sadly, his rare lung condition could not be cured.

At the service to commemorate his life, there was a very good turnout, including quite a few foodbank volunteers, and we said goodbye to the tune of "When the Battle's Over" played on the bagpipes.

The collection from the service will go to the Foodbank.



Letchworth Garden City Charity of the Year 2019:

Each year the staff at the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation vote to appoint their "Charity of the Year". The Letchworth Foodbank had the honour of gaining this title for 2019.

The staff organised cake sales, plant sales, quiz nights etc. and even ran a garden design consultancy to help raise funds for the Foodbank. They also had collection boxes for the Foodbank at Standalone Farm, Broadway Cinema and all of their leisure facilities.

We were privileged to be able to display our banner and literature in the new "Discover Letchworth" space on the Broadway, which is part of the Heritage Foundation, to raise awareness of our role in the town.

The staff raised £2,357.63 which will be matched by the Heritage Foundation.

Thank you all so much for all your efforts and the funds you have raised. We are immensely grateful.

FOODBANK STATISTICS

Summary for period – October 1st -December 31st 2019

No. of referral vouchers fulfilled: 430 Number of people supported: 1150

Reason for referral	%
Low Income	55
Benefit changes & delays	27
Debt & delayed wages	8
Other e.g. sickness, domestic abuse	8
Homeless	2

Distribution Centre	No. of Vouchers	No. of Clients
Letchworth (Howard Memorial Hall)	231	633
Hitchin (Scout Hut, Our Lady Church)	156	412
Baldock (St. Mary's Church Hall)	36	94
Other	7	11
Total	430	1150

Low income is now the main reason for referral to the Foodbank, whereas previously it was due to benefit changes and delays, indicating how people in our community struggle to make ends meet.

Newsletter Feedback

Please email Susan Kostrzewska, Foodbank Newsletter Editor. susan.kostrzewska@hotmail.co.uk

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