



**A big THANK YOU** to all the individuals, schools, churches & faith groups, and local business's for supporting Letchworth, Hitchin and Baldock foodbank this Christmas. Your donations have made a **BIG** difference to local people in crisis.

**Over the Christmas period we helped 40% more people than in 2017. Overall Jan 2018 – Jan 2019 there has been a 25% increase in use of the Foodbank.**

**Thanks to the generosity of our supporters we have a full warehouse:** We have had donations of food and cash from schools, churches and faith groups, businesses, individuals and from specific fundraising events including several carol service collections. Donations have been beyond anything we expected. **The phenomenal Christmas donations amounted to 8,437kg.**

We can never name all our donors, the donations received from the public via our collection boxes at supermarkets and the Christian Bookshop in Letchworth continue to be our main source. But over Christmas several of our secondary schools, including Hitchin Girls, The Priory School Hitchin, John Henry Newman and St Francis School had amazing collections with over 1,190kg of donations.



Christmas donation at St Francis School, Letchworth.

## **A big thank you must go to STS Tyres.**

On the Friday before Christmas a team from STS Tyres delivered 3 van loads of food, an amazing 1,912 kg of donations.



Rob Gainsborough, Operations Manager said "I put collection boxes for food donations in each of my 10 centres locally, had posters on the doors saying that we were a food drop off point. I got in touch with local newspapers and radio stations asking for help highlighting our appeal, we received coverage from several newspapers and 2 radio interviews. I acquired a £250 service/mot voucher from my company which we used as a raffle and the proceeds were used to buy the most needed food bank items. This enabled us to generate a huge amount to help those most in need. I must thank all my staff and customers that have helped contribute and we at STS Tyre Pros look forward to helping again this Christmas"

## **Supporting other organisations:**

Like last year the amount of donations this year has enabled us to work with other agencies to help more people who are less fortunate. We supported the Hitchin Christmas Hamper Scheme, by providing dry goods for 120 hampers distributed to needy families' many of whom have been clients at the Foodbank. 60 small hampers were distributed at Howard Day Care Centre. We provided items to North Herts Haven and the Salvation Army and continue to link with Euston Foodbank in London, sending them surplus food nearing use by date. Nappies and baby products have been sent to both Hitchin and Letchworth Family Centres to help support young families.

**Thanks to the generosity of others we continue to help people across our communities.**

**OUR VOLUNTEERS:** Without all our wonderful volunteers we would not be able to function. We have volunteers at all our distribution centres who welcome clients; drivers who collect the food parcels from our warehouse for the distribution centres and collect donations from the supermarkets & collection points. At the warehouse volunteers, weigh, sort & shelf all the donations, then make up the food parcels according to our basic pick list depending on whether the parcel is for a single person or large family. Many volunteers covered extra sessions over the Christmas period so that we could sort all the donations and get the food parcels out to clients.

One of our volunteers, who has been volunteering with the Foodbank at the Letchworth Distribution Centre since its conception in 2012, has spoken of her experience as a volunteer.

“Right from the start I knew this was something I wanted to do. Even though we can’t cure all the client’s problems, one at least has been taken off their shoulders. It’s often not about the food parcels, it’s about someone willing to listen without judging. Clients come in not even wanting to look you in the eye, but they have a cup of tea or coffee and chat with someone who will listen; something inside says job done. The best feeling is when clients come back when they are back on their feet with food donations to help others. We must never forget that we are all different; some people who walk through the door are highly intelligent but need our help due unfortunate circumstances; others are there because they do not know how to help themselves. They all need the same help and reassurance. I do not ever remember not wanting to come on a Tuesday morning to help.”

**Thank you to all our volunteers.**

**Letchworth Heritage Foundation:** Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation’s recently-published booklet, “A view of life in Letchworth today” highlights important insights into certain local groups in serious need. Foremost among these are young children suffering from daily hunger, and older people experiencing loneliness and isolation.

Research by **Age UK** has revealed that half of local neighbourhoods have many older adults usually living alone who suffer from high periods of loneliness with all its attendant consequences. Poverty often restricts their ability to engage in social programmes and activities locally, while food and home heating costs consume their limited resources.

Many children meanwhile are caught in a vicious downward cycle where 1 in 5 households are trapped in poverty. Weekly net household incomes, after housing costs, are lower in N. Herts, and in Letchworth in particular, than elsewhere in the county. A relatively high number of pupils in the area depend on free school meals – 5%-6% more than the national average – which can be linked to poor school results, low skill levels and income, and thus to continued relative poverty.

While the foodbank and other organisations are working to relieve distress where possible, such situations represent a challenge to all socially-concerned residents to be aware of, and reach out to, our neighbours who might need our attention and support. [The booklet can be obtained via the Letchworth Heritage Foundation website.](#)

## FOODBANK STATISTICS

**Summary for October 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup>– 2018**

**No. of referral vouchers fulfilled: 359**

**Number of People supported: Adults - 532 Children - 519 Total 1051**

Reason for referral	%
Low Income	43
Benefit changes & delays	30
Debt & delayed wages	7.5
Homeless	6.5
Other e.g. sickness, domestic abuse	13

Distribution Centre	No. of Vouchers	No. of Clients
Letchworth (Howard Memorial Hall)	191	557
Hitchin (Scout Hut Our Lady Church)	130	393
Baldock (St. Mary’s Hall)	12	28
Other	26	73
<b>Total</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>1051</b>

### Newsletter Feedback

Please email Susan Kostrzewska, Foodbank Newsletter Editor. [susan.kostrzewska@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:susan.kostrzewska@hotmail.co.uk)

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