

## Foodbank Update:

Once again, the tremendous support and generosity; of all our supporters, donors and volunteers has enabled the Foodbank to help many more people and families in need throughout the pandemic and particularly over the Christmas period. By working with both statutory and voluntary organisations and the generosity of the local community, we continued to maintain the work of the Foodbank.

**Donations:** Over the last 3 months of 2020 and the run up to Christmas we received an incredible amount of food. In December over 10 tonnes of donations were sorted and distributed by the warehouse. Even in these challenging times the public have continued to fill our collection boxes at the supermarket collection points and many schools, churches and faith groups and local organisations have undertaken collections.



Hitchin Girls School collected over 700kg of food, 4 carloads were taken to our Warehouse.



St Christopher's School collected over 140kg. of food

**Financial support and Grants:** We have been fortunate to receive financial support from Letchworth Heritage Foundation. Plus, many very generous individual monetary donations have been received.

Many community groups have supported us in fundraising events from selling Christmas cards to virtual knitting groups.



Barley Knitters Group Christmas Yarnbombing Fundraising

In addition, we were successful in applying for two grants to continue to support those most in need in our community. We received funding from North Herts District Council Covid -19 community fund and a substantial grant from the **National Lottery Community Fund**. This funding enabled us to extend our work and supply hampers at Christmas to many families in our community.

**A new Christmas Hamper project** was undertaken across Letchworth and Baldock.

By working with schools, our local churches and faith groups, plus specific community organisations; Social Services Resolve, Herts Welcomes Syrian Refugees, needy families were identified in Letchworth and Baldock. 248 Christmas food vouchers for use in Morrison's or Tesco supermarket were distributed.

In addition, 137 food hampers, made up by the warehouse team, were given to Howard Day Care Centre and Stevenage Against Domestic Violence to distribute. Food was also donated to Settle, the Salvation Army and Kings Community Church which contributed to a further 290 hampers.



### **Making up Christmas Food Hampers at Fortescue Hall, St Hugh of Lincoln RC Church.**

Hitchin has an established Christmas Hamper scheme which the foodbank supports and this year a financial donation of £1000 was given to the scheme. In Hitchin 158 Christmas food vouchers were distributed to families. The Foodbank has linked with the Hitchin Food Provision Team who support families in need throughout the last year.

The Christmas hamper project was in addition to our normal food supply to the community via our Distribution Centres. We are delighted that we could help so many people at Christmas and thank all those who worked with the Foodbank to make this happen.

On behalf of the Foodbank Ciaran McGill Chairman of the Foodbank Management Committee said "We thank all our donors, corporate and private, who through their generosity made this Christmas initiative possible. You have helped greatly in making Christmas for many families.'

**Client Referrals:** In addition to the Christmas hamper initiative, our normal client referral scheme and Distribution Centres have continued to be extremely busy throughout the months leading up to Christmas.

During December alone 109 referrals were made to the Foodbank and food parcels were distributed from our three Distribution Centres to help 348 people.

The main two reasons for referral to the Foodbank continue to be low income 54% and benefit delays / changes 22%

The work the Foodbank can do is only due to the incredible generosity of our donors, supports and volunteers. Without the generosity of the local community, we could not maintain the service.

**Best wishes for 2021 and a very big Thank You.**

**Our work in 2021:** The work of the Foodbank will continue to be needed during this year. Our aim is to reach out, by working with other agencies, to help those in crisis in our local community.

**Please donate if you can:**

**Our Supermarket collection boxes are in use:** We are extremely grateful to our local supermarkets, Waitrose and Sainsbury's in Hitchin, and Morrison's & Sainsbury's Local in Letchworth.

**Monetary support is always welcome. If you feel you can help in this way, please refer to our website on how to donate:** [www.letchworth.foodbank.org.uk](http://www.letchworth.foodbank.org.uk).

For further information on the Foodbank, how to obtain a referral, find our Distribution Centre, or make a donation please go to our website: **or See our Facebook page**



#### **Newsletter Feedback**

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

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