



## NEWS BITES

In these unusual and troubling times, we are more grateful than ever to the wonderful supporters and friends of Kirkcaldy Foodbank. You will see from the data highlights below that despite the enormous demand for food, so far we have managed to meet that need.

We hope that as we evolve into Phase Three of Covid recovery, people will be able to return to some normality. In the

meantime, with your help, we will strive to continue to meet this enormous challenge. **Thank you.**

In this first newsletter for our supporters we are sharing the experiences of our Chairperson, Joyce; our Treasurer, Kathleen; and one of our frontline volunteers, Angela. We hope you enjoy reading News Bites and will continue to support us.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR LATEST DATA REPORT

- ⇒ Since March we have seen a significant increase in demand for food, and this has continued. June 2020 saw a 31% increase in visits over June 2019.
- ⇒ This increase is largely due to the greater demand for parcels for couples and families. June saw the highest ever distribution to families,.
- ⇒ In January and February this year, we provided an average of 19,500 meals a month. In June, we provided 31,509 meals—an increase of 62%.
- ⇒ Just under one-third of visits are to our new premises at Viewforth Church Hall, and just over one-third are to Linton Lane.

For more information or to find out how to help us more, have a look on our website [here](#)

**A**s Chair of Kirkcaldy Foodbank I am often contacted by the press

## A Reflection from Joyce Leggate, Chair of the Kirkcaldy Foodbank

and media to respond to new reports or policy changes at government level. More recently, I have been contacted to comment on the impact that Covid-19 has had on Kirkcaldy Foodbank. This can range from providing a quotation to local reporters for publication, recording a message for the local radio station, talking live on national radio, being recorded for BBC Scotland news to being interviewed for the Guardian newspaper by a French man living in Spain, and being interviewed by an international researcher for Human Rights Watch. I have also been featured in the Church of Scotland's *Life & Work* magazine on the topic of foodbanks and the church. I was once also interviewed when on holiday, while sipping a cocktail at the side of the beach, which the journalist found very entertaining, as she was in rainy London at the time!

None of this was anticipated when I took over as Chair two years ago. Fortunately for me, I had experienced this during my professional career and learned a long time ago to stick to

the facts, quote numbers and never, ever give your own opinion when

answering a journalist's questions. I also ask to see the copy before it goes to print if I do not know the journalist concerned. I can't say I enjoy it but I am aware of the importance of good, effective communication when needing to have an impact to benefit your cause.

All of this is done to raise the profile of Kirkcaldy Foodbank to the public and to highlight the plight of so many people up and down the country who are living in, or on the edge of poverty. I know, from having been invited to contribute with other foodbanks to the Social Security Committee at Holyrood, that this does influence change, albeit very slowly. It has also helped us to maintain high levels of food and cash donations to the Foodbank, which we cannot do without to meet the ever increasing demand.

On a plus point, my grandchildren were very excited to see me on TV one evening, then said I didn't blow them a kiss and say bye bye to them at the end of the interview.



***Thanks to your support, we have been able to keep our shelves stocked, and to offer our clients a choice of fresh produce.***

## Report from the Treasurer Kathleen Henderson

Let me begin by sending you, our wonderful supporters, a great big THANK

YOU! I took over as Treasurer in October and my first worry was about what our financial position would be in December, as every month the Foodbank spends more than its income. I needn't have worried, as extra donations in December were truly amazing—totalling £16,000. Some were particularly heart-warming, such as one of £13.80 from a boy who had saved his pocket money to give to the Foodbank, and an anonymous £10 donation from *a grateful client who now has a job*. Everyone at the Foodbank was delighted and grateful for all of these and we faced 2020 feeling very positive and excited to be moving to our new premises at Viewforth.

Again, the support we received from the community was outstanding. We received help from various businesses and from volunteers helping with all kinds of tasks, and we finally opened in our new hub at the beginning of March.

Clients had access to fresh food as well as the tins and packets we have been able to provide from the beginning of the Foodbank. Everything was going well and then there was ..... The Virus. This became everyone's worry. We knew that more and more people would be needing our

support and we would need more money to give that support. Yet again though the

help came in from many places. Donations increased hugely: donations from individuals, community groups, various trusts, schools, online fundraising events, and many, many more. We also received an amount from the Supporting Communities Funding from the Scottish Government, to enable to provide food quickly to those who needed it; that was very welcome. All of this has meant that we have been able to provide good, nutritious food for those who need it, and they are very grateful.

We send thank-you e-mails or letters when we have contact details of donors, but many people give through bank transfers, or give anonymously. I send everyone who has contributed in any way to the Foodbank a heartfelt thank you for thinking of others at this time when the whole world is worried. Your generosity is amazing and gives everyone hope for the future.

We will keep you informed about how things are going on our website and social media pages. In closing, I hope you all keep safe and stay well. Take care.

## A Volunteer's View from the Frontline from Angela Campbell

Although I have been involved with the Foodbank from the start,

both as a lead volunteer for the packing teams and as a trustee, I did not have a great deal of experience of the frontline work. So I wanted to share with you all my experiences working there during this period of "lock-down".

I consider this time to have been an absolute privilege: not only to have been working with such wonderful volunteers, but also to have met and helped so many of our clients during this

difficult time. It quickly became apparent that many

other frontline services had closed and, as a result, clients were extremely relieved to see that we were staying open to support them. Often their words of appreciation were spoken through tears.

We had to hastily reorganize the Viewforth Hub so it was safe for both volunteers and clients. Social distancing, PPE and hand sanitiser were

quickly introduced and we washed our hands more often! We also reorganised the packing areas and introduced “bays” for safe distancing in the packing teams, and allow us to carry on safely. This was constantly reviewed to make sure we kept up with advice.

The demand for food parcels increased at an alarming rate. We saw many new clients who were so apprehensive about what to expect when coming into the Foodbank, and it was heart-breaking to see some people feel so ashamed and anxious like this. However, all of our frontline volunteers recognise these moments and always work to put everyone at ease, reassure them and treat them with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

We are extremely fortunate to be in the new Viewforth premises, with room for new fridges, new freezers and ample space to store fresh food. This means we can offer what had been planned after moving into the new premises despite the challenges of “lock-down”: fresh fruit and vegetables and eggs. Microwavable and frozen meals from a number of providers are also available and we receive other donations, such as bread, pastries and salads. The choice that we are now able to provide is really wonderful.

We also continue to receive our weekly delivery from Fareshare, which has recently contained delicious quiches, pork pies, cold meats, yoghurts, sandwich fillers and cheeses. We are truly blessed by the support we are getting which, in turn, allows us to be able to offer such a wide variety of food.

The choice and quality available provides nutritious meals to our neighbours in most need. It is absolutely heart-warming, and all of this is making such a difference in the community. And it is frequently commented upon and always gratefully appreciated. There

is nothing nicer than seeing a family’s reaction when they are offered macaroni cheese, stovies, sausage casserole, fish fingers and chicken, along with fresh potatoes, fruit and vegetables.

One family came in recently which had a parent who could eat only gluten-free food and they were delighted when we showed them our whole shelf of gluten-free products! The children were jumping with excitement seeing this food that they could take home which their Daddy was actually able to eat. They left unable to speak because they were so pleased.

We have had outside agencies, support workers and mental health nurses collecting parcels for their clients who cannot believe the service we offer. They are impressed not only by what the food parcel contains—fresh meats, produce, etc.—but they are then delighted to be offered the toiletries that we have available too, at this critical time.

It is truly humbling to be part of the Foodbank team that continues to provide such a lifeline for so many within our community. What stays with me most is seeing the change happening in front of your eyes when you welcome a client with kindness and compassion.

We are often referred to as “angels” or “heroes” by the clients. They say the volunteers deserve medals, which is of course lovely of them to say. But the truth is that we are providing an essential and life-saving service during this time of crisis for the whole of the community and that in itself contains its own reward.

In the words of one client “the nicest part is that you call me by my name”. We show them they are not forgotten and that we stand in solidarity with them.