

In this month's newsletter:

- * Poverty Truth Commission
- * Call For Volunteers
- * New Community Development Worker - Kathryn Moorcroft
- * New Trustee - Finance - Ian Oulton
- * Reflections Over 5 Years
- * Lent Reminder

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Poverty Truth Commission Report

West Cheshire Foodbank was a key driver in getting the Poverty Truth Commission off the ground, and it was launched in February 2017 to bring together some of Cheshire West and Chester's key decision makers with those living at the sharp end of poverty. For the last twelve months, 15 Community Inspirers have spent time with local civic, business and faith leaders, getting to know and trust each other, listening and learning from each other. In February 2018 interested parties were updated by the PTC and **Emma Greenwood reports**.



The work has focused on 3 areas:

(a) Person Centred Approach (b) The Benefits System (c) Mental Health

And there are some very tangible outcomes – there's an online tool for navigating local mental health support and a commitment from Chester West and Chester Council to ensure its online search tool enables people to easily find information about local support services.

Letters sent out about housing benefits have been reviewed with the Community Inspirers and have been improved. A pledge has been written to help organisations commit to treating people with respect and not erode their self-esteem and self-worth.

Henry Terefenko, Director of Operations at ForHousing, was involved in the process and, reflecting on its outcomes, posed the question. 'Is there more milk in people's fridges? Maybe not.....yet.'

The results are not immediate, but there is a huge amount of potential in this approach and many lessons we can learn as a foodbank. We need to be committed to finding ways to work in partnership with the people we help who are struggling.

At the Foodbank we can't end hunger in West Cheshire on our own. But we can listen, and must do everything we can to continue to ensure our provision of emergency food is a two way process, not just a transaction. **(See the full article on our website)**

New Community Development Worker

Kathryn Moorcroft has been appointed as our foodbank Community Development Worker for Ellesmere Port and Neston. This part-time staff role was created as part of our strategy to develop "Meeting Places" in community venues where those struggling with poverty can easily access a wide range of support. This new post is focused on working with volunteers and agencies to make this vision a reality. Kathryn will join Foodbank on 3rd April and work closely with Vicky Porter who has been appointed by Citizen's Advice, Cheshire West, as their Community Advice & Support Worker. Kathryn and Vicky will be based at the Citizen's Advice offices on Whitby Road, Ellesmere Port. We are pleased to appoint Kathryn and believe that her chaplaincy with the UCE Academy and experience working with volunteers and numerous agencies will be invaluable to our vision for Meeting Places. (Read more on our website.)

"Five Years helping at Foodbank!"

We asked Terry, a volunteer at Wesley Church in Chester, who has been with us since the very beginning, to reflect on his experiences of West Cheshire Foodbank over this time.



"I was taken aback last October to realise that Foodbank in West Cheshire had been operating for 5 years and I had been involved from the start. I clearly recall being at an introductory meeting at Wesley Chester in summer 2012 when a woman from Trussell Trust explained why foodbank was needed and what it involved. Plans were being made to start foodbank in Ellesmere Port and Chester and I just had to put my name down to volunteer at Wesley in Chester. We had a training day and started in October.

Looking back over those 5 years my first thought is one of thankfulness that we have been able to give food to so many people who were without food, largely due to benefit issues or because living on a low income and paying a bill left them without money for food. It is of great concern that this is necessary: but at present it certainly is!

My second thought is another thankfulness for all those who have donated food so that we have always been able to provide it to people who came to us with vouchers needing food: a modern day miracle of so many generous people giving because of their great concern for those in need.

Another delight is that I have been privileged to meet a variety of people over those 5 years (including fellow volunteers) and had some really good conversations helping people through the process of seeking food in difficult circumstances. For many it is not easy to come in and ask for food: some feel quite ashamed.

It is also so good to see new ventures such as 'Meet, Greet & Eat' where Foodbank recipients can learn new skills and share in a group situation where self-esteem can grow, with a good measure of fun included.

It seems that Foodbanks will be needed for some time yet, and in West Cheshire we have a great organisation to provide for people in a crisis with not enough money for food."

New Trustee - Finance



Ian Oulton appointed Trustee, Finance Ian Oulton has joined the Trustee Board in February. He will take over accountability for matters relating to Finance from fellow trustee, Diane Jenkins, who has been

covering the role for the past year. Prior to his retirement, Ian had a successful career in Banking and Finance for over 35 years. He has taken an active interest in supporting the Foodbank since its inception through his local church (Helsby Methodist) where he is a worship leader.



Volunteer with us!

Would you enjoy spending a few hours a week...

Driving our van?

We need people to deliver and collect food around Chester, Ellesmere Port and Neston. Hours are between 9am-1pm, Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri.

Sorting food in our warehouse?

We need people to help sort and date food that people donate, and prepare orders for delivery. Hours are flexible between 9am-1pm, Mon, Tues, Thurs, F

The warehouse is Unit 3/4 Stanney Mill Industrial Estate, Dutton Green, Chester, CH2 4SA.

Contact Lindsay on 0151 355 7730 or email volunteer@westcheshire.foodbank.org.uk for more information and to ask for an application form.

We would like to thank everyone who has been collecting for our **LENT APPEAL**. At the end of March bank the money you have collected and send a cheque together with our Gift Aid Form to: West Cheshire Foodbank, Unit 3 - 4 Stanney Mill Indust. Estate, Dutton Green, Chester, CH2 4SA or donate the money on-line via our website.