



NEWSLETTER NUMBER 4 MAY 2011

Welcome to our fourth Newsletter and the start of our new financial year. So many good things have happened during the year and I know you will be interested in the statistics - like how much food has been donated and how many clients we have helped.

But right at the beginning of this Newsletter, on behalf of the Trustees of Waterside Ecumenical Projects, of which Foodbank is a part, I want to say a big "thank you" to all the volunteers, for without you the Project just wouldn't function. We do so appreciate your willingness to give of your time so that Foodbank is open for clients and customers. This, of course, also includes the "back room" boys and girls! A lot of hard work goes into the Warehouse, especially at this time of year when they had to weigh and itemise every packet and tin AND make the figures balance with what had been donated, given out and what was left! After our disastrous audit last year, we got our act together and were only +12.1kg adrift!!

Statistics: Over the year **5446.7kg** of food was donated and **5083.7kg** was distributed. Almost every school on the Waterside contributed their Harvest produce and donated **1834.2 kg**.

However, it's the support from local churches and Ron the Barber that keeps the food coming in week by week, so that during the last 12 months we fed **716** people: **417** adults and **299** children. In line with national figures, the top crisis is benefit delay, closely followed by low income and debt.

There are now 100 Foodbanks nationwide and all our stats are used by Trussell Trust to put pressure on Ian Duncan Smith and the Government to do something. He is keen for Job Centres to be Voucher holders and we hope this will be a reality soon. Our local Job Centre has one of our posters and is advertising volunteering opportunities for those out of work.

During the year 7 new agencies have requested vouchers, so there are now 28 agencies working across the Waterside. Two new churches have joined us as donors.

Food Collection Days: We have held these at The Co-Op, Tesco in Blackfield and Waitrose. Waitrose requested us to do a collection and we did this just before Christmas, which for the first time enabled us to give 20+ families a special Christmas hamper.

Two more days have been booked:

The Co-op	Saturday 4th June	9.30-4.00pm
Waitrose	Saturday 9th July	9.30-4.00pm

These days are vital to keep our supplies going so if you could do a 2 hr stint on either or both of these days, please let Jan know.

We were awarded £300 of Waitrose food vouchers from the token scheme. Due to shortfalls in coffee, tea, milk and sugar, this has been very useful.

The Shop opened in September, selling second-hand clothing at affordable prices, we have a ceiling of £2, which has been of benefit to the local community; and clients can take clothing free of charge. The modest income is helping with the utilities bill.

It is hoped to appoint a **Volunteer Shop Manager** during the coming year to oversee the clothing, keep the shop attractive and provide a cohesive plan for the volunteers to work to. If this is something you would be interested in, please have a chat with Jan. A Job Description will be to hand soon.

Health and Safety - We all need to be aware of the H & S policy as we are all responsible for each others safety whilst on the premises. We are all required to sign that we have read the policy located in the orange ring binder in the shop, so please do so when you are next in the shop.

We are hoping to recycle old clothing stock and raise some funds by holding a Jumble Sale at The Good Shepherd Church in Holbury during October.

Debt Counselling: We have been delighted to have Linda Matthews and her team using our premises during the past year and are pleased to announce that the re-branded **Waterside Debt Advice** has come under the umbrella of Waterside Ecumenical Projects. This is a great addition to our work.

Funding: Our Treasurer, Tony New, has been very busy applying for grants to enable us to continue. £4000 was awarded by Dibden Allotments Fund; Brian Dash has agreed a grant of £500 and The Sir James Scott Memorial Fund has awarded us £250. It costs around £7000 p.a. to maintain our Project, so funding is something the Trustees will be looking.....

.....at in the coming year. Any fund-raising ideas will be gratefully received!

The Future is in God's hands, as the past and present most certainly has been, but we hope and pray that we will be able to continue to meet the crisis needs in our local community and maintain the integrity and goodwill we have gained amongst the professional agencies across the Waterside and beyond.

There is a serious problem on the Waterside for single homeless young men. Perhaps this is something we will have to look at in the coming year.

But I end where I began. None of this is, or will be, possible without YOU, our faithful band of volunteers, voucher holders and food donators. As we are all aware, the economic climate is such that sadly what we offer is more vital than ever.



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Donations by cheque to: Waterside Ecumenical Projects