

North Cotswold Foodbank NEWSLETTER

June 2024

Message from Kevin

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter.

Last month we published our annual statistics and it was not good news. During the twelve months from April 2023 to March 2024, we provided 1,742 emergency food parcels to people facing hardship in our communities. That's an increase of 11% compared with the previous twelve months, and a significantly greater increase than seen by the Trussell Trust overall (+4%). Sadly, we are seeing that more and more people are struggling to make ends meet as the cost of living continues to rise and they are unable to afford essentials such as heating and food.

Government statistics show that 1 in 5 families claiming Universal Credit had to turn to a foodbank last year. And according to recent research by the Joseph Rountree Foundation, over 14 million people are currently in poverty in the UK, 3.2 million people are only £40 a week from poverty, and nearly a million of these are only £10 a week away. Millions of low-income households are taking drastic measures to cope with a crisis that is far from over.

In May, I visited Stow Primary School and gave a talk to 25, five to seven year old pupils about North Cotswold Foodbank. I was delighted by their interest and all the very grown-up questions they asked. But there was an acceptance of foodbanks and why they exist and it struck me that for the youngest generations the presence of foodbanks in society is normal.

It's time to create a more just future where there's no longer a need for foodbanks and everyone can afford life's essentials.

Kevin Carden
Project Manager

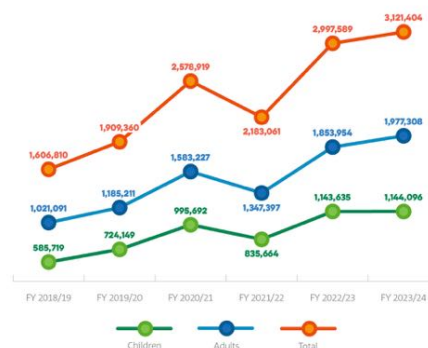


11% increase in emergency food parcels as people struggle to get by on low incomes

Figures released last month by North Cotswold Foodbank show that 1,742 emergency food parcels were provided to people facing hardship across our communities between April 2023 and March 2024 – an increase of 11% compared with the previous 12 months – as more and more people struggle to afford essentials such as heating and food.

Kevin Carden said, "It's 2024 and we're facing historically high levels of foodbank need. The significant increases we have seen over the last few years are linked to the soaring cost of living and the fact that people's incomes have failed to keep up with these costs. While it is welcome that inflation is now finally slowing, the high cost of essentials, particularly food, continues to make it harder for families to make ends meet. The result is more people having to turn to foodbanks for emergency food."

Foodbanks in the Trussell Trust network as a whole distributed more than 3.1 million emergency food parcels last year – the highest number in their history and nearly double the



Number of emergency food parcels given out by foodbanks in the Trussell Trust network in the past six years.

number compared to five years ago. More than 1.1 million of these were provided for children.

These statistics help to shine a spotlight on the extent of hardship facing communities across the UK.

Emma Revie, Chief Executive at the Trussell Trust, said: "As a society, we cannot allow these rising levels of need to continue, and we know what needs to change to help people who can't afford the essentials. We must not let foodbanks become the new norm. We urgently need all political leaders to set out how they will build a future where no one needs a foodbank to survive. Foodbanks are not the answer. They will be there to support people as long as they are needed, but by taking bold action our political leaders can build a future where everyone has enough money to afford life's essentials. The time to act is now."

Hidden Hardship project update

Following Dr Stephanie Denning's research into rural poverty in the North Cotswolds, a devotional study guide has been produced based on the research findings. This uses Scripture and reflection alongside the experience of individuals

enduring hardship, to help us all recognise that hardship is not just an economic issue but also a theological matter and a relational opportunity. You can read or download the guide here: https://hiddenhardship.coventry.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Hidden-Hardship-Devotional-Study-Guide_final-web-accessible-1.pdf



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The Foodbank is very grateful for the generous financial support of: the Notgrove Trust; Co-operative Community Fund; the Baptist Union; the Summerfield Trust; Gloucester Community Foundation; the Moreton Charity; Edith Mann Charity; Bourton on the Water Trust; the Northleach Club; Sudeley Lodge; Yorkshire Building Society; Dormer House School; Muslim Hands; Emporium Gifts; Moreton Conservative Association; The Unite Union; and many parish councils, churches, town councils, individual donors and groups.

My year at the foodbank: What I learned about modern Britain

Sophie Gallagher is deputy features and lifestyle editor at online news site the "i". This is an extract from her account of volunteering at her local foodbank.

The man walked in and silently sat down, a large rucksack on his back, wearing a winter hat but no coat. I offered him a drink. Tea? Coffee? Bourbon biscuit? A glass of water? He politely declined and didn't seem in the mood for a chat. This isn't unusual. Often the first time that many people find themselves at a foodbank they are full of heightened emotions. Sometimes embarrassment, shame, fear, overwhelm. The lingering question: how did I end up here?

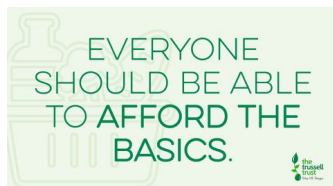
I gathered his details and packed the reusable bags full of food (some baked beans, Fray Bentos pies, long-life milk, a box of cereal) while the man, in his late 50s, surveyed the church hall around us. The vaulted ceilings, the altar, the huge stained-glass windows. As I carried the bags over, he turned to me: "I was one of the builders on this church, I never got a chance to see it finished, and well... I didn't think I'd be coming back under these circumstances," his voice broke.

For 11 months, from 9.30 to 11am on a Saturday morning, I've been one of the 28,000 volunteers working for the Trussell Trust foodbank network. I started working here when I moved out of London. I've always volunteered in some capacity or another and wanted to meet new people in my community so it made sense.

There's the woman with three young children whose husband – the breadwinner – recently left them. She's wondering how she is going to make ends meet. She can't work because of the children (to apply for universal credit takes at least five weeks for the first payment). Then there is the lorry driver in his early 50s, who worked his whole life but was recently made redundant and is struggling to find work. These people come here when they don't know what else to do.

Read the full article here:

<https://inews.co.uk/inews-lifestyle/food-bank-year-what-learned-modern-britain-2974045>



News update

During Lent we hosted a Lent lunch at St James Church in Chipping Campden. The event was extremely successful with around 60 people attending who were treated to delicious soups made by our volunteers, cheese and crackers and tea and coffee with biscuits. The lunch raised over £400 for our Foodbank.



At the end of March we had a very successful one-day collection at Tesco in Stow, collecting a huge 535kg of food. A massive thank you to everyone involved: Tesco and their generous customers and of course our wonderful volunteers who braved the cold weather and helped with the collection, transported the stock to the store and put all of the stock away.

We have been fortunate in obtaining a grant from the Trussell Trust which will secure the funds to support the employment of our dedicated advisors based at Stroud & Cotswold Citizens Advice for another two years. The three part-time advisors support our outlets in Moreton, Chipping Campden, Stow and Bourton.

Baden-Powell once said that Scouts should "try and leave this world a little better than you found it". The Beavers from 1st Woodmancote have taken this to heart and have been out doing activities to help both the community and the planet. They recently visited our warehouse where, as well as learning more about the work of North Cotswold Foodbank, they were able to put away their generous donations and make up some food parcels ready for the following week.



Recently, 20 pupils from Stow-on-the-Wold Primary school visited Karen and the team at our Stow centre and brought along donations they had very kindly collected for us.

Our friends at the St Vincent De Paul Society very kindly donated 24 Easter hampers which we distributed to grateful families for Easter. One of the recipients wrote to us to say: "I want to say a big thank you again for your help. It was a surprise donation today. Really thank you, one million times thank you."

Donate Food

We always welcome non-perishable food and hygiene and cleaning products. The items we need change regularly, so please check the list on our website to see the latest shortages.

<https://northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

You can take your donations to the store in Guiting Power, which is open on Tuesdays from 10.00 - 12.00.

You can also take donations to our Foodbank centres whilst they are open. For a list of our centres and opening hours, visit our website at <https://northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk/locations>

There are also collection points in the following locations:

Post office and One Stop shop, Chipping Campden

Bishops Cleeve Parish Council Office, GL52 8LR (Monday-Friday 9.00am-12.00pm)

White House Surgery, Moreton, opposite the North Cotswold Hospital

Tesco in Stow and Bishops Cleeve

Co-op in Bourton, Moreton, Winchcombe and Bishops Cleeve

Coventry Building Society, Winchcombe

Please note that supermarket collection points are for in-store purchases only.

Details of how to donate money can be found on our website here: northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/

Contact details

Store:

North Cotswold Foodbank
Unit 2, Glebe Farm Buildings
Guiting Power
Cheltenham GL54 5TZ
Tel: 07879 375562

Email: info@northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk
Website: northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk

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