

www.nourishcommunityfoodbank.org

Reg Charity No: 1154716

Principal Funder: Town and
Country Housing Group
Foundation.



Notes from the Co-Chair...

"Foodbanks have come in for criticism recently from one of the national daily newspapers for failing to run proper checks on people requesting food bags. Here at Nourish we work with a wide variety of carefully vetted local referral agencies that are best placed to establish a criteria of need and ensure that it is genuine.

Our aim at Nourish has always been to discourage a culture of dependency, preferring to support families and individuals in whatever crisis is going on in their lives, until they are able to move on. Our policy is, and continues to be,

to issue a maximum twelve bags per family or individual in any 12-month period.

In a perfect world there would be no need for foodbanks, but the fact is that a need exists now. Everyone at Nourish, with your support, will continue to ensure that no-one need be hungry in Tunbridge Wells."

Carole Wanless
Co-Chair

Creaseys and their Easter collection..

Loyal supporters of Nourish, Creaseys Chartered Accountants of Lonsdale Gardens, Tunbridge Wells recently supplemented their monthly donation with the thoughtful addition of Easter Eggs. As Assistant Client Manager Louise Tunstall explained:

“As we were approaching Easter it occurred to us that many local families would not be able to afford Easter Eggs so we asked everyone here whether they would like to donate some kind of Easter treat as well as the usual food items. Everyone was really enthusiastic about the idea and we ended up with a really good collection”



Creaseys collection recently provided Nourish with over 57 kgs of food which makes a huge difference to us. The two pictures show their donation and the Easter treats which they collected. As always, thank you very much to the generous staff of Creaseys.

Creaseys have been providing forward – thinking advice for almost 150 years and can be found at www.creaseys.co.uk

Foodbanks in the media..

Although it is not the place of this newsletter to express a political opinion on why, in 2014, there is a demand for the services of an organisation such as ours, the news that came out this week was disturbing, to say the least, Recent data from a large foodbank organisation suggested that demand for their food parcels had leapt from 347,000 parcels to over 913,000 food parcels in the past year. They commented that 33% of their service users were repeat visitors but overall they had seen a 51% rise in clients to established foodbanks. The reasons for the rise in demand has been well reported – increases in utility bills, inconsistent regional growth in employment despite increasing confidence in the economy, changes to the benefits system over the past twelve months and the increased use of sanctions to withhold payments have all contributed. We hope that all those in a position to influence and manage the benefits system understand the issues and work together to resolve the current problems. In response, Nourish Community Foodbank will continue to work towards our stated objective of ensuring that no one in Tunbridge Wells or the surrounding communities should ever go hungry.

In Other News...

Nourish recently benefited from the Waitrose 'Community Matters' scheme where stores select local good causes to support and customers of the store indicate

Community Matters

So far you've helped us give over £14 million



how they would like the support distributed by placing a token into a box. Launched in 2008, the scheme has provided over £14m of support to local charities. Waitrose in Tonbridge were very kind in supporting Nourish in March and the scheme raised £236. Thank you very much to Waitrose and to their customers who offered their support.

Nourish now has its own BT Donate Page. The page allows you to make a donation to Nourish as well as set up your own fundraising page if you are planning to take part in any charity events.

Curves of Tunbridge Wells, the fitness and weight-loss facility specifically designed for women, has a special offer running currently where new members get £30 off their joining fee if they make a donation to Nourish. More details about this offer can be obtained from Curves, 1 Calverley Street, Tunbridge Wells.



Loyal supporters of Nourish, Lloyds Bank in Tonbridge once again held a collection for us leading up to Easter. The picture shows some of the donations.

Mary Harris at The Courier reported last week on this lovely story about the generosity of the pupils, parents and staff of Holmewood House School in Tunbridge Wells

"School holidays have become a time for pupils, parents and staff at Holmewood House School in Tunbridge Wells to help those who might not be lucky enough to have three meals a day. Mums Katy Beaton and Kay Taylor, who between them have five children at the Langton Green private school, set up collections for Tunbridge Wells Nourish Community Foodbank at Christmas and last week, for the Easter holidays.

The two collections have seen more than a tonne of food given to Nourish which stores the item at Easistore in Longfield Road.

It is here that the Nourish volunteers make up bags of non-perishable food and household items – from tea, coffee and pasta sauces to toilet rolls, cereals and baked beans – for individuals, couples and families who have been referred by doctors, social services and other organisations. Mrs Beatton said she and Mrs Taylor felt it was important that youngsters appreciated there were areas of deprivation on their doorstep and that 'life ain't all a box of chocolates'.



She added: "They have to learn to be grateful for what they have. They are in their brand new blazers and wonderful cars and it's important they know they are in the 'top x' per cent in the country and not everyone lives like that".

She had also been moved by a remark from a child in Sherwood who believed her parents loved the dog more because "the dog was the only one in the house who got breakfast". Mrs Beatton said: We got in touch with Nourish and said we wanted to help. We wanted to do it just before the major school holidays because it's a time when parents have three meals to think about when usually breakfast and lunch are taken care of. Holmewood has been very, very supportive. Even the headmaster helped collect in the food. To see tiny tots lugging these heavy bags of food was heart-warming. The majority brought Sainsbury's bags half full and some people emptied the boot of their car, people were bringing half a dozen bags of food."

Thank you very much to all at Holmewood House for their support. It is very much appreciated.

Volunteers Meeting – Saturday 22nd March

We were thrilled by the turn out at the volunteers meeting on Saturday, with 18 of us in attendance. Olga Johnson, (our Joint Chair) led the meeting and Dawn Stanford (Operations Manager) answered many of the questions about how we work. They were supported by some of the Trustees (Paul Haines, Helen Lindop, Adrian Tofts and Jackie Osborne). People who attended were a good mix of long standing and new volunteers.

It was interesting to hear about what people did or do outside their volunteering. We have a marvellous range of knowledge and experience including housing, social care, & psychiatric services management, public relations and communications, overseas aid, gardening and from the many functions within the commercial sector. It seems that for Nourish it really is a case of 'the sum of the parts is greater than the whole'. There seems to be very few areas where we don't have expertise that can be utilised but of course we always need more! We started by getting a feel for what questions people had; these mainly focussed on two areas: how Nourish is organised/decisions are made; and, our aims and objectives. People also spoke about why they volunteer and especially why volunteer with Nourish. A key reason is to do something that in a town as obviously wealthy as Tunbridge Wells. We all agreed that would be easy to assume that everyone here lives a comfortable life without problems and emergencies. Dawn gave us some insight into the type of people and families referred to receive crisis bags from us, and they come from all parts of the area and across broad social strata – it's easy to forget that people in big houses can also be felled by a death, or redundancy, or violence, or marital breakdown.

Overall I think we all left the meeting feeling we knew each other better, had met some very interesting people, and with a greater understanding of Nourish. The group has decided on a number of actions that will help Nourish to continue to develop. These include: assisting with our forthcoming warehouse audit; how we communicate deliveries to the people who are receiving crisis bags, a volunteer skills audit, and of course ways that we can engage more people in supporting us. On this last point we agreed that we need to establish 'Friends of Nourish' and this project would seek to get 1000 x £3 per monthly direct debit donations. A great way to fund our monthly overheads and to help us towards expanding our services.

Finally, and perhaps as a testament to the success of the meeting, we all decided that we'd like to make these meetings a bi-monthly event. The next, depending on whether we can book St Stephens Community Centre, will be on 17th May from 10:00am to 12:00pm – Lesley has volunteered to make cakes! Please let Dawn know if you can come along – we look forward to seeing you.

Jackie Osborne

If you would like to contact Nourish to offer your support in any way or to discuss a potential referral, here are some contact details you may find useful:

Main E-Mail: office@nourishcommunityfoodbank.org.uk

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