

[www.nourishcommunityfoodbank.org](http://www.nourishcommunityfoodbank.org)

Reg Charity No: 1154716

Principal Funder: Town and  
Country Housing Group  
Foundation.



### Notes from the Co-Chair...

"Nourish has been really busy in March and we are really grateful to all our supporters such as Town and Country Foundation, ASDA, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Big Yellow Self Storage. However we would not have been able to meet demand for food bags without our volunteers. We have over twenty volunteers helping us to collect and store donated food in our two storage units at Big Yellow. A further ten volunteers maintain regular stock checks making sure that food is distributed in date order and alerting us to potential food shortages. More volunteers make up around forty food bags each

week so that families and individuals referred for food bags receive appropriate food for three days. We provide food to many people with special dietary needs and others who have no means of heating food so many food bags are made up to a specific brief which takes skill and initiative.

One of our ten volunteer drivers then delivers the food to families and individuals in need.

We need more volunteers. Even one hour each week helps. All these tasks require specific skill so whether it's in the warehouse and stock control or communicating with people who have special needs Nourish provides training that can be transferred to other organisations. One of our unemployed volunteers who we trained in warehouse skills last year was able to secure a paid role so although we were really sorry to lose her, we were delighted that we had helped her secure paid employment.

If you want to know more about volunteering for Nourish, please call Dawn Stanford on 07785 987532."

Olga Johnson  
Co- Chair

The lifeblood of any voluntary organisation is, of course, its volunteers. Quietly carrying out their duties and responsibilities, they are not seeking praise or accolades. They just want to know that they have helped – the organisation, their colleagues, their clients and community. In this edition of the newsletter, we have asked two of our volunteers, Helen and Laurel, to share their story and, hopefully, inspire others to offer their time to support our cause.

### Helen Stookes shares her journey...

What was your background before volunteering for Nourish and when and why did you decide to volunteer?

“My background is varied. Initially I worked as a professional violinist. Whilst my sons grew up I re-trained at Hadlow College and worked as a gardener for private clients. I have also worked as a teaching assistant in a primary school supporting children with special needs. I am currently studying for a degree in Humanities specialising in art history. Last summer I began volunteering at Ightham Mote as a garden guide. However, as this is a spring/summer position I began to look for another volunteering role and found Nourish. ”



“When I learnt that more and more people were turning to food banks for help I decided to volunteer for Nourish. I believe that no one should go hungry in this country.”

What role do you perform for Nourish and how many hours do you offer?

“My role as a volunteer is unpacking and sorting food donations and packing food into bags ready to be delivered to individuals and families. I work one morning a week but offer more time when it’s needed. I also contact local businesses aiming to raise financial support for Nourish.”

Although alleviating food poverty is a serious subject, do you enjoy your volunteer role?

“Although working at Nourish is a serious matter I really enjoy working alongside the other volunteers who are great company.”

What advice would you give to someone considering volunteering for Nourish?

“If anybody is considering volunteering for Nourish I would say please get in touch as there are many different volunteer opportunities and all help is highly valued, especially from those in real need.”

### Thomson Snell and Passmore Donation..

A big Thank You goes to Thomson Snell and Passmore, Solicitors in Tunbridge Wells, who recently held a food collection for Nourish





## Laurel Soden describes her role within Nourish..

What was your background before volunteering for Nourish and when and why did you decide to volunteer?

"I was a primary school teacher in Tunbridge Wells. After I retired I wanted to do some voluntary work and happened to see a meeting about Nourish Community Foodbank advertised in the local paper. I was impressed with the organisation and the talk that Olga Johnson (Co-Chair of Nourish) gave about the need for a food bank in our town. It appealed to me as I would be doing something for my local community."

What role do you perform as a volunteer?

"I am one of the store managers at Big Yellow Storage. Donated food is weighed in, date checked and organised on to shelves. We make up family and individual bags, weigh them out and drivers deliver them.

How many hours do you offer?

"As we have family abroad I volunteer for roughly two hours on Monday and Friday mornings when I am here."

Although alleviating food poverty is a serious subject, do you enjoy the work you do for Nourish?

"Working for Nourish is enjoyable not only because I feel that I am doing something worthwhile but also because I have met some lovely people. There is quite a team spirit and we do have a laugh."

What advice would you give to someone who is considering volunteering for Nourish?

"If you are thinking about volunteering, each week or once a month, do get in contact. There is always something to do in the Big Yellow Storage Unit."

## Help from Challenger Troops

Nourish had the pleasure of two days help from the West Kent Division of the Challenger Troops CIC on Wednesday and Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of March. Twenty eight members joined to find out about Nourish and give us a helping hand to clean our food storage unit at Big Yellow, Tunbridge Wells. They really got stuck in and emptied our



entire unit of food, cleaned the unit and replaced all the food back to the shelves. The unit looked fantastic as a result. They also got involved in weighing in donations, preparing products for food bags and they even managed to clean all the common areas and the car park of Big Yellow. Nourish would like to thank everyone who helped out over the two days, especially the twenty eight extremely enthusiastic young troop members.



## Nourish In The News..

Nourish would like to express their thanks to Index Magazine for promoting awareness in their March edition. Nourish feature as their Charity of the Month in an article written by co-chair Carole Wanless.

## Harnessing the Power of Social Media..

We reported on our web-site recently about a community initiative that embraces modern social media in an interesting way. Mat, a resident of Stephens Road in Tunbridge Wells is a member of a group of residents who started a Facebook Group for their street two years ago. It has now become a highly effective way of posting requests, invites, offers and information and also offers a way to keep in touch with neighbours. The site, since its launch, has been used to organise



street parties, baby sitters and to canvas opinions on issues like parking and street lighting.

For the past twelve months the Facebook group has also been used to organise a monthly food collection for Nourish Community Foodbank. As Mat explains

“The logistics are pretty simple: an informal committee of nine neighbours, who volunteered through the group, have met a couple of times to agree dates, with two people handling the collection each month. In the run-up to the appointed day, they post reminders on Facebook, to remind people as they

make their weekly shop. Then on the morning they split up and take one half of the street each, collecting donations from doorsteps. Then it’s off to The Big Yellow, a quick pic of the collection on the page and we’re done. A member of our nearest church, St Luke’s, lives on the road. As a result, there’s a collection box at the back of the church for donations, which are pooled with ours and dropped down at the same time. At Harvest Festival, that was quite a haul.

Not everyone is on Facebook, of course, and not everyone checks it frequently. So at our last meeting we put together a leaflet that explained Nourish and how our collection is organised, and it included a list of items that would be welcome and collection dates. With a self-adhesive magnet stuck to the back that became a fridge reminder, posted through every letterbox earlier this year.

There’s more we could do, I’m sure: it tends to be the same households that donate each month, for example, so making a better case to others – and to the new people in the road – would be worthwhile. But I also like to think that a collection like this benefits the street too: it’s an expression of neighbourliness, a shared cause.

What an incredible story about harnessing community spirit through the power of social media. Thank you, Mat, for sharing the story and to the residents of Stephens Road for their continued generosity.

From Our Operations Manager...

"This has been a very busy month for Nourish. Our visit from 28 students and leaders from the Challenger Troop was fantastic! The unit at Big Yellow was cleaned from top to bottom and restocked in just two days! Huge thanks to all who helped before, during and after...they even had time to do a little sprucing for Big Yellow as a Thank You for their continued support by litter picking and sweeping the corridors and loading bay.

We are in discussions with TWBC to have the use of a desk in The Gateway/own Hall as unfortunately we need to vacate the office at Bridge Trust due to a change of use.

We have had donations arriving from the Amazon wish list a few times this week. This has made things so much easier for people to donate and the donations are sent direct to Big Yellow who kindly store them until we are next there and notify me when I have parcels waiting.

Curves, a ladies gym in Tunbridge Wells have also decided to support Nourish by offering to waive the joining fee for their gym in exchange for a few bags of groceries for Nourish A good deal all round and at a popular time for new gym memberships as people see a hint of summer approaching.

Open mornings to the unit have proved very popular this month. A huge team from King Charles the Martyr visited on sunny Saturday (yes, I did say sunny) and saw where we work from, how we put together a parcel and how our unit is organised. The visits have resulted in more volunteer applications and the forming of a Nourish support group within the congregation of King Charles.

This leads me nicely to our volunteers. There are a dedicated band of volunteers who work every day to make sure Nourish can operate. Without our volunteers the unit would be empty, our parcels would not get delivered and we would not be raising funds to help us carry on. We operate from Big Yellow three mornings a week from 10:00 to 12:00 Mon, Weds and Fri. Laurel, our store manager, is in twice a week to organise and coordinate our deliveries out and donations in. We are looking for someone to take over running the Wednesday shift. There is a very good team that works on Wednesday - it just needs someone to take the lead. It is important to have at least two store managers to allow for holiday and sick cover as well as support each other and the team. We have volunteer mentors for unit workers and drivers who new volunteers can 'shadow' while they find their feet. We also really need a volunteer administrator. The amount of volunteer enquiries we have need replying to quickly and applications processing, reference requests sent out and followed up and CRD checks completing. If you can help, please get in touch. It is better to have a little commitment from a lot of people than to have a lot on a few.

One last note, the website is updated all the time and lots of photos posted so feel free to have a peek and see what's happening between newsletters. And...if you're shopping in Waitrose in Tonbridge this month, don't forget to pop your green tokens in the Nourish box.

Thanks all,

Dawn"

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](mailto:office@nourishcommunityfoodbank.org.uk)

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