



Sid Valley Food Bank Newsletter December 2021

The Food Bank has weathered the pandemic well and managed to meet the needs of our clients as they arose this year. The second quarter was not nearly as busy as 2020, but there were unusual surges and declines in demand from August onwards and now we are finding more and more clients coming to us as winter energy costs, the £20 decrease in universal credits and inflation begins to affect families on low incomes.

We have been blessed as usual with food and cash donations from the public with special help at times from local businesses. Thank you to Waitrose, Sidford Spar, Lidl and Co-op, for providing collection points and special extras when we needed them. Thanks too, to the Factory Shop, Kyle Baker, Fords, and the local hotels. We have nearly 50 volunteers who have unfailingly turned up to collect donations, sort and move stock, pack food parcels and do the necessary admin.

We became a charity in February and have worked hard to improve our policies and processes. We did an extra large stock check in July and held a long awaited volunteer training and social event in November when Covid allowed!

We continue to take part in Fare Share and Neighbourly to help use good food that would normally be wasted by the supermarkets. To do this we have created additional roles of collecting the Fareshare food and wrapping Lidl's bakery goods.

At Christmas we were also supported by Pobby and Blue, Sidmouth and Sidford Methodist churches (who organised a collection) plus all the other local churches who encouraged donations. Sidmouth College collected hamper donations organised by the students, Sidmouth Temple St. Spar, Tipton St John Beavers, the Factory Shop, Sidsoft and the lovely residents of Pathwhorlands Rd who do a secret Santa collection each year.

Christmas treats went out to 72 households (117 children and 97 adults) on the 16th December. There were lovely foods, gifts for the adults and children, and vouchers to buy fresh food for Christmas. Thank you to our wonderful volunteers and Trustees who worked so hard to collect, sort,

wrap, pack and deliver the goods. It was a mammoth undertaking and we have already been thanked by people who have found themselves struggling in these unpredictable times or have been affected by life changing events they could never have foreseen. We have spoken to clients who were not expecting to have much at Christmas this year. One lady told us she and her child would just be watching tv as they couldn't afford treats. We have had some lovely private thank you's, but here is a publicly posted thank you:

"Would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart the Christmas hamper was so thoughtful and helpful to me and my daughter. With life being a struggle at the moment it put a much needed smile on both of our faces knowing we have all the yummy treats for Xmas and help towards meat and other bits for the big day!! I can't say how thankfull we are to the kind, generous and thoughtful people who volunteer!! One very happy family"

The week leading up to Christmas we gave extra food to our food bank clients to cover the following week and give our volunteers a well-earned break. We reopen week commencing Monday 3rd January ready to face whatever comes our way!