

Cirencester foodbank news

Issue 6 • November 2017

Volunteers
Needed!
Please contact info@cirencester.foodbank.org.uk



There's a lot going on at the Foodbank...

It feels like every letter I write starts the same way with "there's a lot going on at the Foodbank"... But that has never been truer than right now! In many ways however it is all good news and will, in the longer term, enable us to focus more effectively on helping local people out of crisis.

As we found in Tetbury, our partnerships with local referral agencies highlighted a need in the Fairford and Lechlade areas. This has resulted in a Wednesday afternoon session in Fairford, alongside our usual Monday afternoon & Thursday morning sessions in Cirencester and our Tuesday morning session in Tetbury.

Our warehouse relocation took place earlier in the year, to the basement of the new Cirencester Baptist Church building on Chesterton Lane. Inevitably moving almost 4 tonnes of food was not without its issues but we now benefit from a much larger space at a greatly subsidised rent, due to the generosity of the Winstone Trust in funding the renovations of the basement to make it fit for purpose. We were also able to re-fit the warehouse with the very much appreciated grant from the Screwfix Foundation.

We have also continued to partner with local organisations such as P3 and the Citizens Advice Bureau so that we can signpost clients to help them out of their crises and so reduce their reliance on the Foodbank. Although, with the exception

of the long school holidays, the number of clients getting more than 3 vouchers in a six month period remains miniscule, which is as it should be. It is clear that the recent changes in the benefits system are having an effect on the most vulnerable in our society but we are now also being able to reach more families, older people and folk in work for whom a sudden unexpected bill can tip them over the balance.

Working with new organisations and individuals such as the local social prescribers is enabling us to reach this wider group. We are also excited to introduce you to the idea of Cirencester Furniture Bank, which we are delighted to be able to support. See later in the newsletter as to how our clients benefit and how you can help...

Our increased need and geographic expansion means that we are actively seeking a van to enable us to move greater quantities of food around the area more effectively. If you would like to help us contribute to funding this, please get in touch.

Dr Mandy Fry
Chairman, Cirencester Foodbank.

info@cirencester.foodbank.org.uk • www.cirencester.foodbank.org.uk

an
interview
with...

Mike
Volunteer Team Leader



How did you get involved in the Foodbank?

I was previously a volunteer and Trustee of a charity called the Wilkins Memorial Trust which works in rural Nepal providing income generation schemes and health camps. It has been running for over 20 years and involved annual visits to meet our teams and to look at on-going projects. It was a wonderful and very rewarding experience. However with the arrival of our second child life became busier and these visits became more difficult. I made the decision to stand down as a Trustee and to look for something closer to home that worked with our local community. It was perfect timing, the Foodbank was just starting in Cirencester and I was able to be involved from the start.

What is your role?

Most volunteers at the Foodbank do more than one thing and my roles are as a Team Leader for the Thursday evening warehouse session, managing the public collection point at Waitrose and producing various advertising and marketing material including newsletters! As a Thursday Team Leader I work with 3 other volunteers from 6pm -8pm replenishing the stock that has been given out to clients during the morning and book in, weigh and date donations received from individuals and groups in the area. We are really lucky to have amazing support from the local community who donate very generously every week.

What motivated you to get involved?

I had read a lot about the growing use of Foodbanks over the years and I was really pleased when I heard that one was opening in Cirencester to support members of our local community in crisis. Food is one of our most basic requirements. It seems unimaginable that there are people, most, just like you and I that cannot provide this for themselves and their family during a period of crisis. I wanted to help in a hands-on way to see if we could really make a difference.

What have been the high points and joys?

It gives a great sense of satisfaction and joy to refill those cupboards on a Thursday evening knowing that the Foodbank has helped to provide food, sign posting help and information to a number of families and individuals during the day. Also, when you work for an organisation like the Foodbank you get the opportunity to meet and work alongside many other lovely volunteers and donors from all walks of life that have a common purpose - which is really nice.

What challenges do you see for the future?

We are expanding! We now cover not only Cirencester and Tetbury but also Fairford too. This means we will need to keep our profile high and in the thoughts of our local community, ensuring they continue to be generous with donations of food and money so we can continue to offer this crucial service. With the arrival of Universal Credit the demand will almost definitely increase and we will need sustainable resources in place.

What would you say to someone who says that somewhere as affluent as Cirencester can't possibly need a Foodbank?

I would say, volunteer for the Foodbank! You will quickly see that the majority of our clients are hardworking people, some may have 2 or 3 jobs but are simply not earning enough money to provide for their families when a crisis hits. The thing that shocked me the most when I first joined the Foodbank was how similar our clients are to me!

Food donation points

We now have the following permanent collection points across the area:

- **TESCO Extra Cirencester**
- **Waitrose Cirencester**
- **TESCO Tetbury**

Each week one of our team collects all the items from these points and brings them to our warehouse for sorting and sending out to our Foodbank sessions.

Our warehouse is in the basement of the Cirencester Baptist Church and is open for donations as follows:

- **Monday 6pm-7pm**
- **Wednesday 10am-12.30pm**
- **Thursday 6pm-7pm**

Journey of the Can

Cirencester Foodbank now has its own YouTube page. We've filmed what happens to your donations as they move from the collection point to reach a client in need.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj9tn02vdF8>



Session opening times

We have now opened a session in Fairford. Our weekly Foodbank sessions are as follows:

Day	Time	Venue
Monday	1pm-3.30pm	Ashcroft Centre, Cirencester
Tuesday	9.30am-11.00am	St. Mary's Community Centre, Tetbury
Wednesday	1pm-2.30pm	Fairford Community Centre, Fairford
Thursday	9.30am-12pm	Ashcroft Centre, Cirencester

We are joined by our partners Citizens Advice and P3 advisers in each of our locations, this enables us to provide our clients with additional, immediate support and information.

Warehouse revamp complete

Early in 2017, we moved from our small warehouse in Cirencester, to a much larger space in the basement of the Cirencester Baptist Church. We were able to fit it out with thanks to a grant from the ScrewFix Foundation and it is now a much more functional, useful space, enabling us to better support our clients.



We've also been able to welcome larger groups of schoolchildren, Beavers, Cubs and Brownies than ever before.





Van Appeal

Are you a local company?

Could you help us to fund a van?

Cirencester Foodbank is looking to acquire a van to enable it to better reach its clients.

£20
buys
1 months
fuel

£100
buys a
tyre



If you would like to offer your support please
email info@cirencester.foodbank.org.uk

 @CirenFoodbank

 Ciren Foodbank

Charity registration number: 1159810



Stroud District Furniture Bank expands to Cirencester

The Stroud District Furniture Bank is a local social enterprise which collects unwanted furniture and other household items and distributes them at a nominal cost to those in need throughout the Stroud District- often on flexible payment terms to help those living on a limited budget. They currently work in conjunction with the Stroud Foodbank in the Stroud District, however over the past 6 months it has been growing and now they are expanding out to cover the Cirencester area.

The three aims of the Cirencester Furniture Bank are to help the residents of Cirencester recycle and re-use their unwanted furniture, provide low cost subsidised furniture for the residents of Cirencester who need a bit of help, and to provide employment opportunities across Gloucestershire.

Already the Stroud District Furniture Bank are working in Cirencester and over the past few months the Stroud District Furniture Bank along with the residents of Cirencester have furnished the houses for the new Syrian refugee families who have moved into Cirencester.

The Furniture Bank works in partnership with the Stroud and Cirencester foodbanks and was set up by

Jo Mansell who works alongside the Stroud District Foodbank. She says "Food is an obvious need but we discovered that furniture was a long term problem for lots of our customers and so we launched the Furniture Bank in Stroud but we have been increasingly pulled into Cirencester as knowledge of our service grows."

"Beds, chests of drawers, wardrobes, tables and chairs along with fridges and freezers are all desperately needed," says Jo. "At the same time, we know that many people are replacing good quality items in their home – and which still have plenty of life left in them."

The Cirencester Furniture Bank can collect from various locations around Cirencester from South Cerney to Kemble and Tetbury to Ampney Crucis.

For further information on the Cirencester Furniture Bank or to book a collection visit

www.cirencesterfurniturebank.org.uk

or call **01453 367260**



Fundraising and marketing news

- Earlier in 2017, we held a Foodbank Banquet with over 120 people attending, we challenged Relish to create a delicious three-course dinner from the contents of a Foodbank parcel. The event was hugely successful and raised over £12,000.



- "Food for Thought" sweatshirts have been designed and created by local Cirencester ThirtySix store. We love the creativity and kindness of ThirtySix store & all customers buying a sweatshirt. ThirtySix has kindly donated food to the Foodbank from the profits of the sweatshirt sales. Thank you!



Quotes from the frontline...

From a client

"Thank you so much for your help this week, the food has been invaluable. I don't know what we would have done without your help."

From a referral agency

"Thank you for helping my client through a very tough time. We engaged with CAP on your recommendation, they have assisted in debt management and are looking forward to a brighter future and being able to return to work."

From a referral agency

"Thank you for all the support you gave my client this week, she was over the moon with how much you helped her. Thank you."

From a client

"I'd always been the other side of the table and donated food. I never expected to have to come to the Foodbank. I am so grateful for all that you have done for us, I'd have soldiered on, but for the sake of my children I've asked for help and I'm so glad I have."

To help fund our work

Individuals and local community groups generously donate the food that we give out, and volunteers undertake the vast majority of the Foodbank's activities. However, the Foodbank still has running costs to consider, such as our warehouse rent, utilities, our project manager and funding our more than food activities. We would therefore welcome regular financial contributions to our work.

Your gifts help us to enable families manage themselves out of a crisis situation. A recent example is of a family we supported earlier in 2017, the family was having ongoing financial problems, we were able to signpost them to CAP for further advice and support. The family is now thriving again and says it is hugely grateful for the help they received.

We know that it costs £3.60 to feed one person for one day, and just £47 would feed a family of four for three days. So please, if you can, help with a monthly gift. Having regular income every month will help us ensure we are always there for families and individuals in crisis.

<https://mydonate.bt.com/donation/start.html?charity=154048>

Volunteers needed

Like many charities, Cirencester Foodbank couldn't function without our amazing team of volunteers. There are lots of different roles available, ranging from a couple of hours twice a year to help at supermarket collections to a regular commitment at one of our distribution centres. We are particularly looking for support in our Fairford and Tetbury centres.

If you'd like to get involved and want to know more please contact us at: info@cirencester.foodbank.org.uk

Cirencester Foodbank - Social media

You can now follow Cirencester Foodbank on twitter or visit us on Facebook. Do sign up for updates so you can see how you can get involved!



 @CirenFoodbank

 Ciren Foodbank

Cirencester foodbank in numbers

Food
donated
97,372
kilograms

Food
given out
91,305
kilograms

Number
of adults
fed
6,257

Number
of children
fed
4,469

Number
of voucher
holding
agencies
89

Number
of donor
groups
174

For further details of the work of the Cirencester Foodbank and how you can be involved please:

email: info@cirencester.foodbank.org.uk

or check out our

website: www.cirencester.foodbank.org.uk

find us at

 @CirenFoodbank  Ciren Foodbank

or write to us at

Cirencester Foodbank, Cirencester Ashcroft Church, Ashcroft Road, Cirencester, Glos, GL7 1RA.

Charity registration number: 1159810