



NEWS from Purley Food Hub

Issue 1 • February 2013

WELCOME to the first issue of our Purley Food Hub newsletter!

▶▶ Our aim is to keep everyone up to date with all that's happening in the Food Hub – that's our volunteers, food ticket partners, churches and all our other friends and supporters. So we will be sending you this newsletter every 4-6 weeks with all the latest news about the Food Hub, and we would love to hear back from you with any thoughts and encouragements to share – as well as your suggestions on anything you think we can be doing better.



The story so far...

▶▶ As most of you will know, Purley Food Hub has been set up by Purley & Kenley Churches Together to provide food for people in crisis, such as those hit by the recession and by delays in receiving benefits. After a year in the planning, the Food Hub was officially launched on Saturday 12th January 2013 by the Bishop of Croydon, the Rt Revd Jonathan Clark, at an event attended by more than 100 people. It opened its doors to the first clients three days later.

So far more than 120 volunteers have been recruited to work with the Food Hub, mainly from the churches, but also some people from our local community have also joined us, which is great! Around half of the volunteers are covering sessions in the food distribution centre at Purley United Reformed Church, which is currently open on Tuesday and Saturday mornings each week.

Clients in urgent need of food are identified by community agencies, such as social services and voluntary organisations, and issued with up to three tickets. Each ticket is exchanged at the distribution centre for a supply of tinned and other long-life food. Other items, such as baby milk, nappies and soaps and toothpaste are also available.



Our food ticket partners

▶▶ Around a dozen agencies hold tickets at present, and a small team led by Frank Widdowson is aiming to increase the number to 30 over the next few weeks. As more food ticket partners come on board, so client numbers will quickly increase, especially after new housing benefit arrangements are introduced locally from April.

Most of the clients who have come to the distribution centre so far have been referred by a local Christian charity working with those at risk of offending and ex-offenders and by a Croydon women's charity. All have been highly appreciative of the bagfuls of food and other items they have received – and also the volunteers' warm welcome and caring concern through the process.



Food donations

▶▶ Food has been donated by churches, businesses, schools and individuals and by collections from shoppers at Waitrose supermarkets in Sanderstead and Coulsdon. At the collection at Waitrose Coulsdon last month customers gave 12 trolley loads of food and other items during the day – plus £150 in cash donations.

Most of the food is initially stored at Christ Church before being transported to the distribution centre at the URC, where it is sorted and counted and put on the food store shelves. Frank Widdowson is leading the search for a warehouse.

If you are thinking about donating food, please bring it to the URC on Tuesday or Saturday morning. But, please, **NO MORE BAKED BEANS OR TINNED SOUP**, at least not for now!!! In fact, we have so many tins of baked beans and soup that we would be happy to sell some to volunteers working at the distribution centre for, say, 50p per 400g tin, with the proceeds going into Food Hub funds.



Other news in brief

▶▶ In December the Food Hub became a founder member of **Croydon Food Network**, which aims to co-ordinate the work of the various food banks and other organisations providing food to people in need across Croydon. The launch of the Network was co-ordinated by Croydon Council, which also organised a food trolley competition at Christmas in which Council staff donated over £11,000 worth of food.

▶▶ Work is progressing on setting up a **company limited by guarantee which will be registered as a charity** and carry forward the work of the Food Hub. Each of the churches in Purley & Kenley Churches Together will have the opportunity to become a member. The directors of the company will be the trustees of the charity and they will be elected by the member churches.

▶▶ The churches are being asked to identify **people who will pray specifically for the Food Hub** during the times the distribution centre is open – for the volunteers on duty and the clients attending. A Food Hub Prayer is currently being prepared and will be circulated to the churches shortly.

▶▶ **Red, hooded sweatshirts** with the Food Hub logo on the front will shortly be available for volunteers to buy as uniform for when they are working at the distribution centre or collecting food at supermarkets, etc. The cost will be around £22. Sashes will be available for those who don't wish to buy the sweatshirt.

▶▶ The Food Hub's **website** is due to be launched at the beginning of April. Offers of help from any volunteers with skills in website design or hosting would be much appreciated – please email purleyfoodhub@gmail.com or phone 07546 635295. A volunteer application form which can be completed online is also being developed.



And finally: THANK YOU ALL!!!

▶▶ A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who has been involved in any way with the Food Hub so far. We would never have got off to the good, solid start that we have without a whole army of welcomers, refreshment servers, food sorters, counters and packers, data inputters, session co-ordinators – and also food ticket partners, planners, publicity team, prayers and many others.

We are continuing to recruit volunteers, and if you know someone who is interested, please ask them to contact us (tel/email details below) so that we can send them information about the various roles and a volunteer application form. All new volunteers will need to attend a training session – the next two sessions are on Wednesday 6th March (7.30-9.30pm) and Thursday 7th March (10am-12noon), both at Purley Baptist Church.

Specifically we are looking for **someone with admin/secretarial skills to take the minutes of meetings of the Food Hub's Management Committee**, held fortnightly in the evening. If you are interested in doing this important role (it could be done as a job-share), please contact Helen Harris, Chair, on 020 8660 8560.

PURLEY FOOD HUB

Tel: 07546 635295

Email: purleyfoodhub@gmail.com