AGM
Tues 10th Oct
7.00pm Purley URC

ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023

10 years on and we are still here - but it's no cause for celebration

by Trevor Jones, Chair of Trustees

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Food Hub giving emergency food aid to local people in crisis. That's food to more than 35,000 men, women and children - over 320,000 meals…and counting.

Back in January 2013 when we started, no one thought we would still be needed 10 years on. While we give thanks for all that God has provided since then, 10 years of a food bank is really not something to celebrate. As Revd Russell Furley-Smith, Minister of Purley United Reformed Church, said at our Evening of Thanksgiving on 7th June 2023 (and bears saying again here):

'There should be a righteous anger that there is still a need, and that the need is increasing.

And there should be a righteous anger that food banks like ours around the country are just recognised almost as something normal now. And that's not right. What is wrong with our politics? What is wrong with our economics that normalises food banks?'

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10 years on and we are still here - but it's no cause for celebration

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As an independent food bank, the Food Hub is affiliated to IFAN, the Independent Food Aid Network. IFAN is among 90 organisations that have signed a letter to UK political party leaders urging the introduction of an "Essentials Guarantee".

They point to recent research (www.jrf.org.uk/report/guarantee-our-essentials) showing how the shortfall between the basic rate of Universal Credit, received by most food bank users, and the cost of essentials such as food, utilities and household items, is a key driver of increasing levels of hardship.

They call on the UK governments to ensure that the basic rate of Universal Credit (£85 a week for a single person) at least covers the cost of life's essentials (estimated at £120 for a single person). For the benefit of our clients and their families, we look forward to an early, successful outcome.

Meanwhile, for the Food Hub, 2022/2023 was a time of consolidation as our "deliveries only" way of working settled in further. We had a very busy winter with clients facing high energy costs and rising food inflation. December 2022 was our busiest-ever month with a record 5,634 meals supplied.

The Trustees and I thank the Management Committee for keeping the ship on an even keel in stormy times, and also all of our generous donors and supporters for ensuring we are well able to meet the increased demand.

Looking forward

Joanna Walker, our Finance Officer, has again prepared a financial forecast for 2023/2024. The forecast is based on a likely fall in income, but it also shows we can continue to be generous to our partner organisations as God has been generous with us.

Our healthy balance sheet means we can increase our support to our partners, and the Trustees have agreed, from July 2023, a rise of at least 15 per cent over the amounts for 2022/2023, with Fieldway Family Centre Food Stop, New Addington, being added to the list. The year's total donation to the six organisations will be just over £36,000, made by monthly instalments.

In addition, we will carry on supplying food and other essentials to Fieldway and the two other Food Stops (at Old Lodge Lane Baptist Church, Purley, and St Francis Church, Monks Hill, Selsdon) as our stock levels permit.

In March 2022 the Trustees and Management Committee came up with five recommendations as they considered the Food Hub's future direction. Trustee **Revd Lisa Fairman-Brown** began work on a partner "audit and mapping" exercise to find out what is already happening locally and how we might work with other like-minded organisations, and Lisa is hoping for further progress in 2023/2024.

We are open to working with others, although we have agreed we won't begin any new venture until we are sure we have enough volunteers.

THANK YOU

The Management Committee continues to oversee the day-to-day running of the Food Hub - it does such a great job. Special thanks to **Jean Ludlow**, our Administrator, and to **Salli Ransom** for stepping in when needed and also for picking up the baton for organising the volunteer rota for the food distribution centre.

The Trustees and I warmly thank all our fantastic teams of volunteers: the **sorters and shelf-fillers** on Mondays, the **packers and delivery drivers and escorts** on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and all those working behind the scenes on admin, IT, publicity, website and social media.

Many past and present volunteers were at the Evening of Thanksgiving in June and it was great to have the opportunity to thank God for all He has provided over the last 10 years. We long for the day when the Food Hub is no longer needed and we can close, the day when people have enough money to buy enough to eat. Sadly, I can't see this happening any day soon, although it very much remains our prayer. In the meantime, I repeat my closing sentence from last year:

We will be here for local people in food crisis for as long as we are needed.

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Some interesting challenges… and an abundance of blessings

This has been an interesting year for the Food Hub and not without its challenges for the Management Committee.

The increased need, as more people struggled to feed themselves and their families and relied on the Food Hub's services, often became a serious challenge to our resources.

As a Management Committee we were challenged in considering the way forward in organising the distribution of clients' food. Should we revert to them coming in person to collect their food or remain as a delivery service?

At the present time we feel that the delivery service for meeting clients' emergency short-term food needs is a valuable and unique service for this part of the borough. After four deliveries clients usually move on (with some support if required) to one of the local Food Stops that give them the opportunity to shop independently.

It would be lovely to see our clients face to face again at the Food Hub but to do this requires more space than Purley United Reformed Church can offer. Just at the time the Food Hub was established in 2013 the Church was given a Grade 2 Listing. This restricts the amount of alternative space that can be made available to receive our clients. Our original rather cramped welcoming area is now considered far too small to receive the numbers of clients we are helping at the present time.

However, we are blessed by the

by Louise Willmer

Joint Chair, Management Committee

generosity of the Church in allowing us to take over so many areas of the building to store and sort our food donations. Thank you to the Minister **Revd Russell Furley-Smith** and the Elders and congregation for being so supportive of the Food Hub. Mountains of donations are a blessing to us but a potential eyesore in the Sanctuary!

We are richly blessed also with our volunteers who worked even harder this year to cope with the increased demand.

On Mondays the team of sorters check and label donations for the shelf-fillers to restack the shelves ready for the client delivery sessions on Wednesdays and Saturdays - we are grateful for their dedication each week.

And we're thankful to **Brian Gibbs** who orders food directly from Morrisons to plug gaps in our stock as well as collecting food donations weekly from Morrisons Fiveways Croydon, and also **Bill Jackson** and **Richard Parris** who dutifully deliver donations from the collection points at Morrisons Caterham and Sainsbury's Warlingham.

Similarly we are grateful to our Administrator J**ean Ludlow** who also worked harder in the face of the increased demand. She and her understudy **Salli Ransom** can easily spend 25 hours-plus a week organising the twice-weekly client delivery lists and contacting clients and drivers with their delivery information.

The distribution session volunteers happily came in earlier on Wednesdays and Saturdays, working really hard to ensure the food parcels were packed and ready on time for the drivers to transport to the clients. Some say they actually *enjoy* the extra pressure of organising 30 or more parcels in a morning!

Our loyal drivers deliver food for sometimes three or four clients a session. For one of our larger families this can be as many as 12 bags to load and take to the client's door.

In particular we feel blessed with our large number of generous supporters who kindly donate food and money, some on a regular, weekly basis. Even in the depths of winter they arrive with full carrier bags, boxes and trolleys.

THANK YOU EVERYONE!

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Volunteering that comes from the heart

They make the Food Hub tick. Here some of our 100+ team tell what volunteering means to them

PACKER: Cassie Neish

‘I have been packer for just over a year. When I applied I didn’t expect such first-class organisation and attention to detail. For me it is a joy. I get far more from volunteering than I can ever give back.

Starting promptly at 9.00am, we work through the picking lists. One page covers items from cereals to

Cassie (second left) with fellow packers Fiona, Vasanthy and Louise

baby food and nappies, the other from baked beans to toiletries. The sheets also give any special dietary needs or allergies and we always make a special effort to meet these. We work in a lovely caring atmosphere and there is always time for laughter and a short chat.

After tidying the shelves and wheeling trolleyloads of donations through to the store rooms we finish by midday. Always with a good feeling of a job well done!’

TEAM LEADER: Jenny Morgan

‘I lead the packing and despatching team of volunteers every third Wednesday. The day before a session I buy some of the bread, then after a stock check one of the team goes out to buy the rest, plus any baby formula needed, before the session starts.

The night before, our Administrator Jean sends the list of the next day’s clients, with details of numbers and preferences. I complete the picking lists so that the team can put together the right packages.

Sessions start at 9.00am. I welcome two teams of two volunteers who pick items from the shelves and pack the bags, plus one volunteer to label the bags and add bread and any extra items from our rummage box. We take out the bags as the drivers arrive at intervals from 10.00am or earlier. Each one usually makes two or three deliveries.

Very occasionally individuals turn up requesting food. We chat to

Jenny (right) with her team

them and explain how the referral system works. If their situation is particularly risky, we provide an emergency food pack and direct them to the appropriate agency. We also receive, sort and store donations. Some sessions can be very hectic but we all pull together and there is a good team spirit.

It is hard not to be affected by each individual story. I remember the despair of an older man having to apply for a benefit for the first time, and I was shocked at the plight of a young man living in a garden shed in winter after a relationship breakdown.

As much as I enjoy volunteering at the Food Hub, it would be good to hope that one day food banks will no longer be necessary. Sadly this seems unlikely any time soon.’

DRIVERS: Denise and David Miller

‘We were introduced to the Food Hub through St Gertrude’s Church, South Croydon, where we have collected donations for many years. In 2020 we were recently retired, so with time to give we volunteered.

I (Denise) make deliveries on Wednesdays and David on Saturdays. Jean sends us our lists of (usually) two or three deliveries the night before, and after collecting the bags from the United Reformed Church we phone the clients to let them know we’re on our way.

David compares us to a football team with the delivery people as the strikers - the lucky ones who get all the thanks from our clients when most of the hard work has been done by the team behind us.

Some clients are embarrassed at receiving help, some want to tell us all about their circumstances. We have both learned to smile, say hello and mainly listen. I hope we are able to continue for as long as there is a need.’

David and Denise receive food bags from Fanny (left) and Rebecca

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SHELF FILLER: June Atherton

‘Having been very fortunate in my life, the Food Hub is an opportunity to give something back. I help on Mondays with the teams of volunteers who sort, date and store all the donated items.

In the last few years my jolly band of colleagues and I have been involved in keeping the shelves fully stocked, ready for the Wednesday and Saturday packing teams.

We start by assessing what items are low. Our wonderful trolley boys, Jim, Clive and Anthony,

June and some of her team

bring the heavy crates round to us from the store rooms. All the tins, packs, jars and toiletries have already been sorted and dated and we fill the shelves to capacity. It’s hard work but very rewarding…and great exercise!

Thank you to the shelf stacking team of Pat, Yvonne, Jackie and Annie, and also to Fiona and Judith who look after the biscuits, rice and pasta.

Special tribute too to Jenny, Sally, Salli and Clare who are in charge of the store rooms, while Louise oversees the whole process.’

Income & Expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2023

	2022/2023			2021/2022		
	General	*Christmas**	***Total***	*General*	*Christmas**	***Total***
Income	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Grants & donations	92,329	12,896	105,225	63,848	1,664	65,512
Gifts in kind: food for distribution	145,132	-	145,132	104,717	-	104,717
Agreed allocation to Christmas	(5,750)	5,750	-	(5,000)	5,000	
Total income	**231,711**	**18,646**	**250,357**	**163,565**	**6,664**	**170,229**
Expenditure						
Charitable activities:						
Food & gifts distributed to clients:	134,568	13,662	148,230	89,837	5,225	95,062
Support to partner organisations:						
Food	9,171	-	9,171	17,086	-	17,086
Grants	32,280	-	32,280	26,541	2,000	28,541
Food Hub running costs	21,407	-	21,407	12,953	-	12,953
Total expenditure	**197,426**	**13,662**	**211,088**	**146,417**	**7,225**	**153,642**
Net income for the year	**34,285**	**4,984**	**39,269**	**17,148**	**(561)**	**16,587**
Reconciliation of funds						
Total brought forward	142,416	8,374	150,790	125,268	8,935	134,203
Total carried forward	**176,701**	**13,358**	**190,059**	**142,416**	**8,374**	**150,790**

* The Christmas Fund supported projects to provide food vouchers and toys to families at Christmas.

The year to 31st March 2023 has been a remarkable year in many ways and one way has been the very generous financial donations we have received. Details of these are given in the table below, along with a breakdown of our running costs.

Grants & donations	2022/23	2021/22
Individuals	65,470	38,163
Local organisations	12,919	9,124
Churches	4,052	7,786
Other organisations	50	4,019
Fundraising	117	111
Gift aid	9,721	4,645
Christmas	12,896	1,664
Total	**£105,225**	**£65,512**

Running costs	2022/23	2021/22
Insurance	1,609	1,501
General running costs	672	1,217
Carrier bags	2,943	1,419
Printing & publicity	849	301
Computers & phones	1,425	1,280
Bus tickets	995	378
Pest control	1,104	-
Depreciation	1,373	1,831
Room hire	8,125	4,442
Donation collection charges	2,312	584
Total	**£21,407**	**£12,953**

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Increased financial support agreed for our partners

The Trustees met six times during 2022/2023, each time on Zoom. Highlights among the actions agreed during the year were:

- To continue financial support for partner organisations with similar aims of supporting local people in crisis: **Purley Food Stop, St Francis Food Stop, The Vine Food Bank, Happy Baby Community** and **Croydon Refugee Day Centre** - see below.
- To transfer an extra £5,000 to the Christmas Projects for food vouchers and toys due to very high demand. This was on top of donations by supporters and funds allocated previously.

Amounts donated to our partners during the year were:

Purley Food Stop £10,142
St Francis Food Stop £7,153
The Vine Food Bank £6,353
Happy Baby Community £4,570
Croydon Refugee Day Centre £2,580
Renew 23
(Purley & Kenley Churches Together) . .£1,482
TOTAL £32,280

The Trustees welcomed **Noel Brownsell** who was seconded to the Board of Trustees in February 2023. Noel, a member of St John the Baptist Church, Purley, brings a wealth of experience and will stand for election at the AGM on 10th October.

Other matters discussed/agreed included:

May 2022: whether the Food Hub should change to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). In the end, it was agreed not to as it felt there was nothing to be gained as we are a well-organised charity and it would only reduce some reporting. We reviewed the financial reserves and agreed to increase these to £40,000.

July: following visits by Trevor, Chair of Trustees, to some of our partner organisations, it was agreed to continue supporting them and increase our financial support by 10 per cent in 2022/2023.

September: we focused on finalising arrangements for the AGM in October, including approval of the Annual Accounts.

November: we increased support for Purley Food Stop's Christmas hampers project. Trevor met with Mark Tomlinson of Sutton Community Works with regard to supporting people in food crisis living in The Mount, Coulsdon - an estate located within the Borough of Sutton. This was agreed and we exchanged information about how each organisation works.

February & March 2023: we reviewed financially supporting a possible Energy Project to help clients struggling to pay gas and electricity bills. After much discussion with potential partners and the Management Committee it was agreed it was not the right fit for the Food Hub. However, Purley Food Stop - where a lot of our clients move on to - was in a position to provide such support itself.

Annabel: Trustee and volunteer

Each Trustee has a focus, usually linked to their personal or professional background, *writes **Annabel Wright***.

As a Chartered Accountant, my duties include overseeing the Food Hub's finances - made much simpler thanks to the detailed work by Treasurer Joanna and David, the Independent Examiner, who prepare the accounts in accordance with all appropriate financial regulations.

This year we have focused on ensuring that our reserves are sufficient to support the Food Hub for a sensible period. We have also regularised our support of partner organisations. We are blessed to have a fantastic Management Committee whose day-to-day activities are so well executed that our job as Trustees is made very straightforward.

My Food Hub connection started as a Saturday packer back in 2014. Now I am a volunteer driver (with support from my family), and this helps to inform my role as a Trustee. While I wish and pray that our activities are no longer needed, I am very pleased to be part of the Food Hub and help in a small way.

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2022/2023: Our Year in Numbers

42,534
meals provided at 3 meals a day for 3 days for each person

1,755
food deliveries to 394 clients = average of 4-5 per client

26.4%
increase in deliveries compared to 2021/2022

4,726
clients & family members received food including 2,071 children

DELIVERIES

12
people (4 adults & 8 children) in biggest family who received food

62
ticket partner agencies referred clients

34%
of clients referred by Purley Job Centre

626
people received 5,634 meals in busiest month December 2022

181
families given Aldi cards at Christmas - total value £13,100

PROVISIONS

94,283
food items, toiletries and household items given out to clients, including:

4,662
Vegetables

4,486
Baked beans/spaghetti

4,442
Milk

4,441
Treats

4,397
Fruit

4,014
Soup

3,675
Tomatoes

3,648
Toilet rolls

3,559
Fish

3,419
Washing powder

3,325
Pulses

3,134
Ready meat meals

2,741
Rice pudding

2,595
Custard

2,541
Pasta/rice

2,482
Plain meat

2,418
Savoury spread

2,358
Potatoes

2,345
Bread

2,185
Pasta sauce

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WHAT PEOPLE TELL US

A sample from our postbag of emails, texts and voicemails…

“A massive thank you for my delivery! I was blown away by the things we received and my boys are so excited they get to have a hot chocolate today. When I can I will make sure I pay it forwards one day.

***Client** expressing her gratitude*

“Thank you to all my friends coming to my 7th birthday party. Please can I ask instead of buying presents, can you help donate food to Purley Food Hub.

***Teddy**, whose Mum said the response was “overwhelming”*

“With people facing real hardship, [the Food Hub] is needed more than ever, and the generosity of the community, including local businesses, schools and churches, is clear.

***Cllr Samir Dwesar**, now a volunteer*

“Usually we give our top customers a Christmas hamper, this year we decided to donate to a food bank. You were worthy recipients - what you do is outstanding.

***Neville** from Croydon firm Harris & Bailey*

“Seeing the impact of receiving a few bags of food had on someone's day made me reflect on the luxuries I take for granted in my own life.

***Abbie** from Riddlesdown Collegiate who spent a morning with us*

“It has been a privilege to work with such amazing people through the years. God bless you all.

***Judy**, a long-serving volunteer, recently retired*

“Thank you so so much! My empty cupboards are stocked again and the constant panic about feeding my bottomless pits of sons has lessened a little. I cried when I saw it all!

***Mother** of boys aged 16 and 10*

About Purley Food Hub

The Food Hub is an emergency food bank run by the churches of Purley and Kenley since 2013 to provide food to local people in crisis.

We are based at Purley United Reformed Church, next to Purley Hospital, where until the start of Covid in spring 2020 we met our clients face to face. Since then we have operated as a home delivery service, packing the food parcels on Wednesday and Saturday mornings and delivering them to clients’ homes in Purley, South Croydon, Coulsdon and Waddon.

Clients are referred by agencies including job centres, Croydon Council, GP surgeries and mental health services. Food is generously donated by churches, schools, supermarkets, businesses and community organisations and many families and individuals.

Each month we publish a list of the food, toiletries and other items most needed for our clients, which we post on our website www.purleyfoodhub.net.

To contact Purley Food Hub you can:

* **Email us at purleyfoodhub@gmail.com**
* **Phone us on 07546 635295**

Follow us on

Facebook **Instagram** **Twitter**

Thank you for each jar, tin and £

Just over 92,000 items - food, toiletries and household essentials - were donated in 2022/2023.

We can never overstate how hugely grateful we are for every sngle item. A tiny snapshot of the year’s donations:

APRIL 2022: Cracking supplies of Easter eggs from **19th Purley Scout Group, AIG Croydon, Caridon Property** and **Yodel Mitcham**.

JUNE: £2,500 from **Wing Yip** supermarket, Croydon, which we shared with three of our partner organisations.

AUGUST: £2,270 raised by 26 children in a charity triathlon organised by nine-year-old **Shayan**.

AUTUMN: 30-plus **schools, churches and others** responded to our Harvest appeal.

DECEMBER: A lorry-load of 5,000-plus items from Croydon building merchants **Harris & Bailey**, and another 5,000 items from **Riddlesdown Collegiate**, Purley.

FEBRUARY 2023: **Éden**, aged five, spent his £10 pocket money on items for us, and **Jack**, aged four and a half, helped choose his family’s monthly donation from the local supermarket.