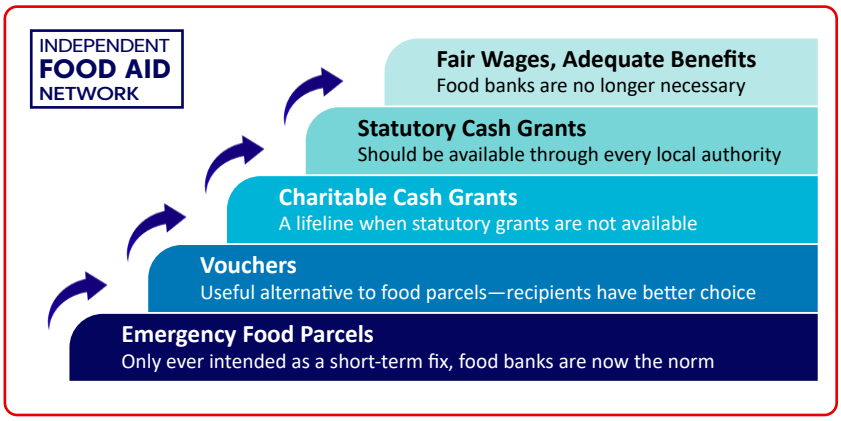
ANNUAL REPORT
2023/2024
OCTOBER 2024

We need a more enlightened approach to ending food poverty

by Trevor Jones, Chair of Trustees

After more than 11 years now at the frontline providing emergency food help to local people in crisis, sadly the need for Purley Food Hub to serve struggling families across Purley, Coulsdon, South Croydon and Waddon shows no sign of letting up.



How to end the need for food banks: the model supported by IFAN, a network of over 550 UK food banks including Purley Food Hub.

The year from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 was the second busiest in our history, second only to Covid-dominated 2020/2021. In total we provided 5,078 people with food for 45,702 meals, up from 42,534 meals the previous year and 34,047 the year before that.

Rev Russell Furley-Smith, Minister of Purley URC, was quite right when he declared at our 10th anniversary event last year: "There should be righteous anger that food banks like ours around the country are recognised almost as something normal now."

That is why we signed an urgent letter from IFAN, the Independent Food Aid Network, to new Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer the day after the general election in July 2024. The letter called on the Government to address ending the need for food banks which, regrettably, have become part of the fabric of the UK. The full letter can be viewed here.

The principal focus in reducing the need for food banks is a "cash first" campaign to ensure people who currently struggle to put food on the table will receive sufficient financial support to buy their own food without needing to go to a food bank.

It doesn't mean us handing out cash to our clients – rather, it is about, for example, increasing Universal Credit to ensure it covers household essentials (see a recent report by the Trussell Trust and Joseph Rowntree Foundation) and extending access to local authority one-off grants.

Continued on page 2 ☛

A new approach to ending food poverty

Continued from page 1

Looking back, it was a year of keeping going, yet we continue to be in a better shape than many other food banks and food providers in Croydon and we are very grateful we have been able to share what we have been given. We shared food and other essentials with three local Food Stops and donated £44,120 to eight partner organisations in Croydon borough – more details in the Trustees' Report on page 4.

Looking forward

The Food Hub is in a healthy position financially and we remain grateful to all our donors and supporters.

For as long as we stay healthy we will continue to support our partners where we can, while remembering that our reserves policy requires us to keep at least £40,000 to cover three months' expenditure.

In light of our support to others and the need to ensure we have enough money in the bank for the Food Hub's running costs and to meet any unexpected challenges we will continue to review this amount. We would also like to be in position to offer support to any new food bank which might be set up in central Croydon where there is much need.

I end my Chair's Report by echoing the words of Sabine Goodwin, Director of IFAN:

> **"Food banks can only ever provide a temporary sticking plaster to the problem of hunger. Nobody wants to have to use a food bank and no food bank team wants to be needed because their fellow citizens can't afford food."**

Until that day comes, however, we repeat our pledge: ***We will continue to be here for local people in food crisis for as long as we are needed.***

Thank you

We say goodbye to Trustees **Shade Odupelu** and **Revd Lisa Fairman-Brown**, both off to pastures new. Shade has taken on a new role as co-Chief Executive Officer with ActionAid and Lisa has left Purley to become Vicar of Lyminster and Wick in West Sussex. We thank them very much for their support, they will be missed.

Trustees Shade and Lisa

The Trustees and I warmly thank Louise Willmer and the other members of the Management Committee for their day-to-day running of the Food Hub, and also each and every one of our 100-plus volunteers for their fantastic service in getting food to those in need.

We thank again all of our wonderful supporters who support us so generously. And especially we thank God for his many blessings and for enabling us to share these with others. The Food Hub is one huge team effort, with our volunteers, supporters and donors all playing their parts…and God at the helm.

Our 2024 AGM is being held on Thursday 10th October at 7.00pm at Christ Church, between 861-863 Brighton Road, Purley CR8 2BN.

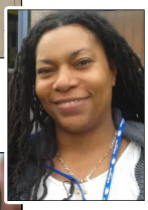
All volunteers, donors and supporters are warmly welcomed. Refreshments will be provided from 6.30pm. **Trevor Jones and Louise Willmer** will present reports on the Trustees' and Management Committee's activities in 2023/2024 and discuss plans for 2024/2025, and treasurer **Joanna Walker** will report on the Food Hub's finances.

In addition, voting members appointed by the Purley and Kenley churches will consider nominations from the churches to fill two vacancies on the Board of Trustees.

Our guest speakers are from three of our partner organisations:

- **Jad Adams, Chair, Croydon Nightwatch**
- **Julia Weller, Chief Executive Officer, Fieldway Food Stop at the Family Centre, New Addington, and**
- **Pastor Nick Graves, Purley Food Stop at Old Lodge Lane Baptist Church.**

Jad



Julia

Nick

⇦ GO TO PAGE 1

Huge thanks to everyone – we could not exist without you all

by Louise Willmer, Chair of Management Committee

I should like to start by thanking the Management Committee for all the hours they have devoted to ensure the smooth running of Purley Food Hub.

Jean Ludlow, our Administrator, deserves a special mention as she works tirelessly producing delivery lists twice a week, co-ordinating drivers and liaising with our Ticket Partners and clients as well as all the volunteers involved. Thank you, Jean.

It is with regret that our emergency food supplies are still very much needed. We were concerned that some Ticket Partners weren't always consistent in advising our clients on their options after their final food delivery, so we now give a personalised letter to each client which is hand-delivered by the driver on the last visit.

The letter outlines the details of the client's closest Food Stop and support available to access it. In addition, our team of Client Support Volunteers can give further advice if required.

Volunteers, donors and supporters – all needed more than ever.

One major change during the year was Purley Jobcentre's withdrawal as a Ticket Partner for data privacy reasons. We are very grateful that Leo Cardow and her team at **Purley Cross Centre** have helped to fill this gap to ensure that clients and their families in the local area can still be referred to receive food from us.

During the year we were pleased to offer work experience at our Monday sorting sessions to students from the 16-19 Pathway Project in Waddon, many of whom go on to a Btec course at Croydon College until they are 25. They also thoroughly enjoy coming on Wednesdays to help pack the food bags and load the drivers' cars for delivery.

Our volunteers always say what a great joy and privilege it is to work with these young people.

We continue to operate a limited hybrid system at our Wednesday and Saturday delivery sessions. Most food parcels are delivered to clients' homes by our team of drivers, but for clients living in Purley town centre, where access and parking are difficult, we ask them to come to the Food Hub to collect their food.

At present we have no plans to change this. As a Management Committee we feel it is important to continually review how we operate, as well as look at how other independent food banks provide for families in crisis.

We realise that we are blessed with a large number of volunteers whose wealth of experience helps ensure the Food Hub runs efficiently.

We are also really grateful to all the generous people who donate food and money. Some prefer to do this anonymously, while many others do this regularly basis and have become firm friends.

Thank you all so much, volunteers, donors and supporters alike - we could not exist without your support.

⇦ GO TO PAGE 1

Now we have eight: Partner groups receive extra financial support

The Trustees met six times during the year and we returned to meeting in person rather than by Zoom. Most importantly, we distributed the following amounts to our eight partner organisations:

Croydon Nightwatch	**£1,800**
Croydon Refugee Day Centre	**£3,360**
Fieldway Family Centre, New Addington	**£4,000**
Happy Baby Community	**£5,700**
Purley Food Stop	**£11,850**
Renew 23	**£2,690**
St Francis Food Stop, Monks Hill	**£8,410**
The Vine Foodbank, New Addington	**£6,310**
Total	**£44,120**

These amounts consist of monthly donations plus additional funding from some very generous supporters such as **Croydon NEU (National Education Union), Theatre Workshop Coulsdon and South London Harriers**.

Key actions

Our key actions during the year focused on financial management.

- We added **Fieldway Family Centre, New Addington**, to the list of partner organisations who we support financially.
- We also added **Croydon Nightwatch**, our money donations replacing our previous regular donations of soup, pasta, etc.
- We reviewed the monthly financial support for our partners and agreed an increase of at least 15%.
- In May 2024 we agreed an additional 10% increase to the partners we support regularly.
- We set up a reserves account with our bank (HSBC) which pays a small amount of interest each month.
- We assigned a Trustee to each partner to visit and review use of our financial support in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines.
- We allocated extra funds to **Purley Food Stop** for their Christmas Hampers project.
- We also set aside sufficient funds for the **Purley & Kenley Churches Together** Christmas Projects.

Two roles for Noel: Trustee and volunteer

My involvement with the Purley Food Hub began a few years ago when I volunteered to bring the monthly food donations from the parish of John the Baptist, *writes Noel Brownsell*.

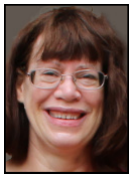
I was struck by the well-organised way in which the donations were dealt with and the friendly greeting that I got as I unpacked everything from my car. When the Trustee from our parish stepped down a new volunteer was sought and I was happy to offer my services.

Most of my fellow Trustees have professional backgrounds in areas like human resources, accountancy, law, etc. Not having any such background except fostering for Croydon over many years, I was not sure what I could add to the mix. However, I was made welcome and they always accommodate my queries and suggestions.

I am most impressed by the hard work and commitment of the Management Committee and the volunteers. Since becoming a Trustee I have volunteered to make deliveries to our clients. It is during these visits that I see the circumstances that make the Food Hub so indispensable.

⇦ GO TO PAGE 1

It's the new normal – food poverty going from bad to worse



by Julia Lee, Client Support Team Leader

The UK's poorest families have endured a "frightening" collapse in living standards over the past year as a result of soaring energy and food prices, with nearly two thirds experiencing extreme levels of poverty and deprivation.

That was a story in *The Guardian* last year, and it is still the case this year. There is no doubt that food poverty has become normalised, and the dramatic increases in food and energy prices over the last couple of years have had the highest impact on people on low fixed incomes.

Nearly all the clients we meet have significant physical and/or mental health problems that prevent them from working. Many have little family or social support.

Most of the people we support never thought they would need a food bank. For example, **client P** has significant health problems and cannot work. He is waiting for benefits to come through.

T and his wife work on low incomes and support their child at university. They were going without food at times. After four weeks' support from the Food Hub they transitioned to Purley Food Stop where they now go whenever they are short on food, and their situation is more stable.

Client B needed our support while she moved to Universal Credit and faced five weeks without benefits. She was already in debt so didn't wish to take out a crisis loan. Support from the Food Hub enabled her and her children to get through a very difficult period.

There's a myriad of stories like these - week after week we find people living in very poor housing, with little help, struggling to get by.

Our small team of Client Support Volunteers talk to clients when we deliver food, listening to their issues and concerns. From September 2024, if a client is not already accessing support through their ticket partner, we phone them after their fourth food delivery to see how they are doing. Where appropriate we encourage them to go to their nearest Food Stop or use the Olio or Too Good To Go food apps for further support. We can also offer a face-to-face meeting and signpost them to organisations such as Citizens Advice Croydon, Purley Cross Centre, Christians Against Poverty, GP social prescribers and Crisis Skylight.

We are always looking for people to join us, so if you can spare a few hours a week, and are able to drive food to clients, please contact me at pfh.support2@pfoodhub.org.uk.

Our 100-plus volunteers all play a part

We are blessed with over 100 active volunteers, some taking on more than one role, with all playing a key part in our operation.

On Mondays around 28 volunteers sort our food and toiletry donations, replenish the shelves and collect customers' donations from local stores.

Each Wednesday and Saturday a team of six volunteers, drawn from a 50-strong pool, pack and dispatch the clients' food parcels, and another volunteer inputs essential computer information.

Then 16 or more volunteer drivers and escorts from a pool of 38 arrive to deliver the parcels to the clients' homes.

Also, during the week we have five volunteers supporting clients face to face or on the phone to ensure they get any extra help they need, while others carry out vital admin tasks, draw up rotas, run our website, post items on social media, etc.

To join our team (no previous experience necessary), please contact Jean Ludlow, Administrator, on 07546 635295 or email purleyfoodhub@gmail.com for an application form.

⇦ GO TO PAGE 1

Statement of financial activities for year ended 31st March 2024

Despite reduced annual income and a significant increase in expenditure, the Food Hub's overall financial situation remained healthy in the year to 31st March 2024, say the Trustees in their statutory report to the Charity Commission and Companies House.

Total income including money donations and the value of the food and items received was £233,332, down £17,025 on 2022/2023. Expenditure of £230,970 – £19,882 more than in 2022/2023 – included the value of food etc. provided to clients and the money and food given to partner organisations.

Running costs totalled £20,904, £500 less than in 2022/2023. At year end our balance was £192,421, £2,362 up on 2022/2023.

	2023/24			2022/23		
	General	Christmas	Total	General	Christmas	Total
Income	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Grants and donations	89,943	6,318	96,261	92,329	12,896	105,225
Gifts in kind: food for distribution	135,537	-	135,537	145,132	-	145,132
Interest	1,534	-	1,534	-	-	-
Allocation to Christmas	(16,183)	16,183	-	(5,750)	5,750	-
Total income	**210,831**	**22,501**	**233,332**	**231,711**	**18,646**	**250,357**
Expenditure						
Food and gifts distributed to clients:	146,488	15,859	162,347	134,568	13,622	148,230
Support of related organisations:						
Food	3,599	-	3,599	9,171	-	9,171
Grants	44,120	-	44,120	32,280	-	32,280
Food Hub running costs	20,904	-	20,904	21,407	-	21,407
Total expenditure	**215,111**	**15,859**	**230,970**	**197,426**	**13,622**	**211,088**
Net income/(expenditure)	**(4,280)**	**6,642**	**2,362**	**34,285**	**4,984**	**39,269**
Reconciliation of funds						
Brought forward	176,701	13,358	190,059	142,416	8,374	150,790
Carried forward	**172,421**	**20,000**	**192,421**	**176,701**	**13,358**	**190,059**

The Christmas Fund supports projects to provide food vouchers and toys at Christmas.

Grants and donations	2023/24	2022/23
Individuals	60,031	65,470
Local organisations	18,060	12,919
Churches	2,754	4,052
Other organisations	500	50
Fundraising	192	117
Gift aid	8,406	9,721
Christmas	6,318	12,896
Total	**96,261**	**105,225**

Running costs	2023/24	2022/23
Insurance	1,842	1,609
General running costs	593	444
Carrier bags	1,698	2,943
Storage boxes	1,276	228
Printing and Publicity	397	849
Computers & phones	1,036	1,425
Bus tickets	1,055	995
Pest control	816	1,104
Depreciation	1,165	1,373
Room hire	9,079	8,125
Donation collection charges	1,947	2,312
Total	**20,904**	**21,407**

The things people say

Mother of two boys:

"I cannot express how greatly I appreciate your help and how much of a relief my children and I won't go hungry this month. I was moved to tears - I can't wait for them to come home from school and see all we have.

Jemi, one of our volunteers:

"I thoroughly enjoy volunteering. It's a humbling experience that reminds you to give thanks for our fortunate circumstances.

Waddon councillor Rowenna Davis:

"Thank you for your compassionate and professional service. It is such a comfort to be able to refer vulnerable residents and know they will receive such support.

Client who asked for prayer:

"Please give your driver my heartiest thanks - her prayers were answered: I got the job!

Mia and Bella, aged 9:

"Dear Purely food hub, we are very greatful you have let us visit and help out. Us, year 4, are helping out with your food because we are learning how to be good citizens around the world. We love to help people and allways try our best.

⇦ GO TO PAGE 1

2023/2024: Our year in numbers

5,078
clients & family members received food, including 2,060 children

45,702
meals provided at 3 meals a day for 3 days for each person

7.45%
increase in deliveries compared to 2022/2023

2,041
food deliveries to 563 clients
= 3-4 average per client

193
Aldi gift cards provided to people to buy food for a Christmas meal as part of the *Come Dine with Jesus* project

650 people received a total of 5,850 meals in December 2023

10
people (3 adults & 7 children) in biggest family who received food

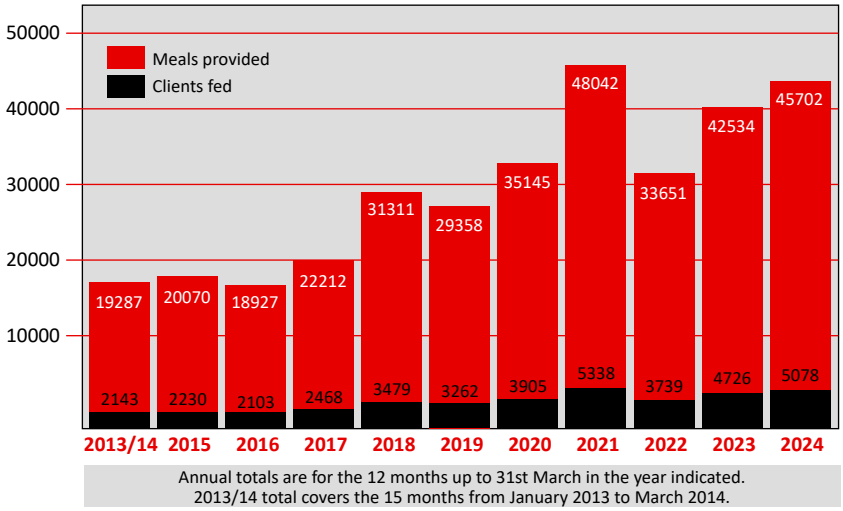
72
ticket partner agencies referred clients

24%
of clients referred by Purley Jobcentre

104,939
food & other items provided to clients included:

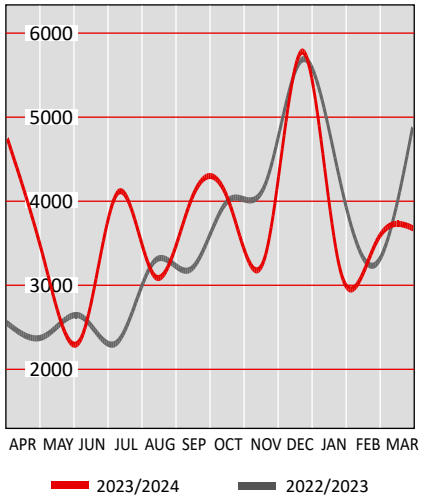
6,121 ready & plain meat meals
4,960 fruit
2,325 cereal
1,488 washing up liquid
509 nappy packs
5,717 vegetables
4,701 milk
1,567 tea & coffee
879 sanitary products
181 can openers

Meals provided and clients fed 2013-2024



Annual totals are for the 12 months up to 31st March in the year indicated.
2013/14 total covers the 15 months from January 2013 to March 2014.

Monthly food trends



⇦ GO TO PAGE 1

CONTACT US BY:
email at purleyfoodhub@gmail.com
phone on 07546 635295
or go to our website at www.purleyfoodhub.net

Thank you… 95,000 times over!

We received a massive 95,000 items in donations of food and household essentials in 2023/2024, as well as grants and donations of more than £96,000.

On behalf of our clients, we say a ***HUGE THANK-YOU*** for every jar, tin, box, bottle and pound. These are just a few of the year's donations:

2023 APR: Staff in the **Renaissance** building in East Croydon gave us fresh fruit, food and £600 from their wellbeing day, and the **Coulsdon Mandir** temple marked the Hindu festival of Akshaya Tritiya with two car boots of donations.

MAY: The **6th Coulsdon Guides, Brownies and Rainbows** (*left*) collected two carloads of food to mark the King's Coronation, and **Kern Roberts** nominated the Food Hub to receive £1,575 for winning a charity bake-off run by his firm **Chatham Financial**.

JUL/AUG: Croydon Ramblers raised £1,620 from sponsored walks while supporter **Amy** was instrumental in her then employer **CVC Capital** donating £7,415, which we shared with local Food Stops and The Vine Food Bank.

SEP: Tilly and Matieo at Margaret Roper Primary School, Purley, asked guests to their joint sixth birthday party to bring items from our food list instead of presents.

OCT: Harvest collections from 19 schools and one nursery, plus donations from 24 churches.

NOV: Coulsdon-based **South London Harriers** running club donated £2,500 from their Elmore 7 road race in July.

DEC: Croydon building merchants **Harris & Bailey** donated 5,000 food and other items, Coulsdon building maintenance firm **Lloret** (*above*) brought donations from **Riddlesdown Collegiate, Purley**, and helped to deliver Christmas food parcels, and **Theatre Workshop Coulsdon** put out food donation baskets at their performances of *A Christmas Carol*.

2024 FEB: We received £500 from football's **Premier League Supports** campaign and £834 from a disco by **Royal Russell Junior Schoo**l.

MAR: Seema and Amish Patel, who run **Infohealth Pharmacy** in Coulsdon, emailed to say that "with the cost of everything increasing" they were increasing their monthly donations of toiletries by 25%.

ABOUT PURLEY FOOD HUB

We are a food bank set up by the churches of Purley & Kenley in 2013 to provide emergency food support to local people in crisis.

We are based at Purley United Reformed Church in the town centre and deliver food parcels to clients' homes across Purley, Coulsdon, South Croydon and Waddon.

Clients are referred to us by agencies such as Purley Cross Centre, Croydon Council, Citizens Advice, schools, GP surgeries and the NHS. We work closely with other food aid organisations including Purley and St Francis (Selsdon) Food Stops where many of our clients go for ongoing support after receiving our emergency food.

Generous food and money donations are received from many churches, schools, uniformed groups, supermarkets and businesses as well as families and individuals.

Our list of the food and household essentials most needed each month for our clients is posted on our website and social media, or we can email it to you.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

⇦ GO TO PAGE 1