

Breaking news

Message from the manager

When the foodbank was created 13 years ago, we became part of St Nicholas Church charity in Alcester. We found out just a couple of weeks ago that changes the Church is making to the way it is governed, combined with changing requirements of Trussell, mean that we can no longer continue like this.

The **exciting news** is that we now need to set ourselves up as an independent charity. This will not happen quickly because the Charity Commission's requirements, and the legalities, will take some months. We are hoping that this may be concluded by the end of this year, but sadly much of this is outside our control.

The important thing to know is that this will not change anything for our clients or any of our volunteers. It will just mean a lot of work will be being done behind the scenes by the management team.

Trussell are being very helpful, and their legal partners Trust Advice are already in touch with me to provide advice throughout the process.

I will keep you updated on developments in the next newsletter, by which time I hope to have a lot more to tell you.

Helen (Watson)

**Ending hunger
together**



People we have helped this year

As most of you know the number of clients visiting us in the first six months of the year is lower than the previous two years. We now know similar reductions are occurring in several Trussell foodbanks across Warwickshire and Worcestershire. This could be good news. People's circumstances and household income may be improving. Only time will tell if this is the case.

From January to June we fulfilled **278** vouchers for **122** different households, which provided food for a total of **631** people, including **245** children.

You might be surprised to learn that **14%** of those vouchers were for people in work.

The main reasons given for needing a voucher included

47% because of the rising costs of essentials

32% because of ongoing physical or mental health conditions

30% because of debt

Support for families during school holidays

This summer, as in previous years, we have worked with our local schools, to reach those families who may need a little extra help during the long school holiday.

We are offering breakfast and lunch packs to those families for each of their children. Each pack contains five breakfasts and five lunches for every child.

Big thanks go to the customers of the Little Lark in Studley who raised an amazing £200 in their raffle of a giant Easter egg donated to us by Alcester and District Lions. This money has been used to pop some treats in each pack. Big thanks also go to Hillers who are donating fresh fruit each week to also go in the food packs.



Families have been invited to come and collect their food packs from either the Eric Payne Centre in Alcester on Friday afternoons or Studley Methodist Church on Tuesday afternoons. Packs will be available for collection from 2.00pm - 3.30pm at

Alcester from 18 July – 22 August inclusive
Studley from 22 July – 26 August inclusive

We are also delighted to say that this summer we are supporting Aunty Jen Production's Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) with breakfasts and snacks. This is helping them to offer 10 free places to children whose families cannot afford a place on their Theatre Academy which runs from 4 - 8 August in Studley.

Team Arden Foodbank out and about



In May volunteers Janet, Helen B and Christine were at Alcester Food Festival. They enjoyed meeting people visiting our stall on Church Green outside St Nicholas Church and chatting to them about our work to combat poverty.



In June volunteers Janet and Christine were joined by our MP Manuela Perteghella on our stall at Alcester Court Leet Street Market. Doug and Gill Reah, two of our original founding members, also stopped by to support us.

Manuela said " it was a pleasure to raise awareness of Arden Foodbank today. Thank you to all those who stopped by. A big thank you to all the fantastic foodbank volunteers for the important work they do every day."

Introducing our new Partnerships Manager

Hello. My name is Dawn McKee and I am a relative newcomer to Arden Foodbank having been introduced by a friend, also a volunteer, who thought I may enjoy the role of a Team Leader in Alcester, which had recently become vacant. I immediately felt welcome and realised I was joining a very friendly, committed and professional team of volunteers.

Now, fifteen months on I have taken on another role as Partnerships Manager.

As the name suggests, this involves getting to know the people from our referral agencies who issue e-vouchers as part of their role supporting people in crisis, to improve our links with them, and to find more ways to promote the services we offer.

At present, Arden Foodbank has around eighty registered organisations in its database, some local and other larger ones covering parts of Warwickshire, although not all of them appear to be referring clients to us at the moment something I hope to address as things progress.

Progress so far ...

I have made initial contact with our main referral partners, the local health centres, housing agencies, energy charities and Warwickshire County Council's Family Information Service. Larger agencies can have a number of people trained to generate electronic e-vouchers, a relatively simple process, by logging onto their page on the Trussell website where everyone with access within the same organisation can share client information.

At the moment I am busy updating our Referral Agency contact sheet for clients, so they clearly know how and where to obtain a voucher quickly. If clients come to either of our centres without a voucher, they will be able to use this list of contacts to phone for a voucher there and then, and volunteers will be on hand if they need any help.



Although this is a big role, and it can sometimes be a little daunting, the reaction, support and positive responses from everyone I've contacted makes the role very worthwhile. Please feel free to email me at ardenfoodbankvouchers@gmail.com. If you have any suggestions or would like further information.

Working in partnership with local schools

We have long had links with all our local schools, and plans are afoot to develop those and hopefully build strong and enduring relationships. Schools are a vital link in helping us reach out to those families who need us now, and also in our longer term work to combat poverty.

This is a really **exciting new venture** for the foodbank. Our manager, Helen W, already has meetings arranged in September with the head teachers of four schools. She is right now putting together a small team of **school liaison volunteers** who will work with her, alongside Dawn, to start building these relationships.

If you would like to know more, or be part of that team, and help to shape how these relationships form, just email Helen at manager.ardenfoodbank@gmail.com. These new roles will not be time specific and can fit around your other commitments.

Celebrating volunteering

All of us at Arden Foodbank are unpaid volunteers. We are delighted to say that since our last newsletter Team Arden Foodbank has welcomed two new members. Vicki Arthurs and Sarah Boardman have both joined the teams at Studley.

In April we joined with others to celebrate the life of our much loved volunteer Vincenzo D'Elia who very sadly passed away that month. His cheeky smile and his larger than life personality is greatly missed by all his friends at the foodbank.

A huge thank you to you all



The first week in June was national Volunteering Week. Each day we ran different social media posts thanking you all, and showing everyone the precious gift you give us, your gift of time.

The response was overwhelming. Here are just a few of the many comments we received.

- You are all amazing
- Angels, one and all
- The best of humanity
- Thank you for everything you do
- You are wonderful people. Thank you

A note from our new Treasurer, Helen Bicknell

Easyfundraising is a very easy way to raise funds for Arden Foodbank as you shop online at no cost to you.

Easyfundraising partners with over 8000 brands who will donate part of what you spend online to a cause of your choice. It will not cost you any extra. The cost is covered by the brand. If you have questions about how this works. Either go to their website at

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/admin-dashboard/> or download the app and follow these steps:

- Sign up
- Support a cause
- Choose 'Arden Foodbank'
- Select 'Start raising free funds today'
- Create an account, using your email address, a password and your name
- When you shop online go to Easyfundraising first and then to the retailer you need...or if you want to shop direct with the retailer, when you register with Easyfundraising follow the instructions to set up a one time Easyfundraising reminder. Then when you start to shop with a retailer, you will see a pop up that asks if you want that retailer to donate to Easyfundraising.



Raise regular donations for us when you order your weekly food shop!



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**Ending
hunger
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