

Issue No.3: October 2025

Introducing Arden Foodbank CIO

In our last newsletter, we started by explaining that Arden Foodbank was having to change the way we are governed. After 13 years of operating as part of St Nicholas Church charity in Alcester, we found ourselves having to establish our own charity.

After much hard work over the summer, the exciting news is on drum roll please

5 September 2025
Charity Commission registered
Arden Foodbank as a Charitable
Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
Charity number 1214819.

So from that date, we have a new Board of Trustees, responsible for the governance and strategic direction of the new Arden Foodbank CIO. (Meet them all on page 3). They are working hard to put all the new governance arrangements in place to ensure we are complying with all the necessary legal requirements of a new charity.

At the same time, working alongside the management team, they are working through the process of transferring the Trussell franchise to our new charity. This is well underway and is due to be completed on 20 November.

So from 20 November Arden Foodbank CIO will officially become a Trussell Foodbank.

**Ending hunger
together**



People we have helped

From January to September we fulfilled **423** vouchers, which provided food parcels for a total of **922** people, including **342** children. Every nutritionally balanced food parcel contains at least enough food for 3 meals for 3 days for each person, so we provided food for around **8,300** meals.

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% rising costs of essentials

32% ongoing physical or mental health conditions

32% debt

12% benefit delay or sanction

In the same period, we signposted a total of **44** people to **further help and support**. This included support for debt/finance advice, help with energy bills, housing issues, family relationships and mental health.

Support for families during school holidays

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

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



In total we gave out **210** packs to families and were able to offer them fresh fruit too. A huge thank you to **Hillers Farm Shop** who donated apples and oranges each week.



A special thank you also to **our warehouse managers, Cathy and Bryn**, who not only packed every one of the 210 packs themselves, but also gave up their Tuesday and Friday afternoons for the whole of the six weeks to greet, and give out, all the packs.

We were delighted to be able to support **Aunty Jen Productions HAF Theatre Academy** in August by supplying breakfast, lunch and snacks for the children

Team Arden Foodbank out and about this summer



August saw us at **Studley Christmas Lights Summer Fete**. We were blown away by their generosity in donating £300 from the proceeds of the fete. Thanks also to everyone who donated food on the day in the 'Big Village Give'.



Roger, one of our small team of volunteers who transport food every week from our warehouse to our distribution centres set out to raise £2000 by cycling 500km in July, all in support of **Maggie's**, a fantastic charity set up to give people and families living with cancer practical and emotional support. He smashed his target, **cycling 841kms and raising over £2,300**.



More recently, we spent the day at **Waitrose** in Alcester, where the generous customers donated a total of **442kgs** of food during our food drive. A **huge thank you to everyone**, to the staff at Waitrose who made us feel so welcome, and to Manuela Perteghella MP and councillor Susan Juned who came along to support us.

Meet our new Board of Trustees



Let me introduce you to our new Board of Trustees. From left to right, they are Cathy Watkins, Doug Reah, Christine Lewington (Chair), Helen Bicknell (Treasurer, and Data Protection Lead), and Helen Watson (Lead for both Safeguarding and Health and Safety).

Christine, as Chair, brings with her many years' experience working in senior management positions in social care and operating as a consultant at national level. She is an active member of the community already, being the founder of Coughton Choir and Chair of Coughton Parish Council, as well as being mum to 2 grown up children, and has 3 grandchildren.

Doug, was a founding member of Arden Foodbank 13 years ago and has been an important part of the foodbank since then. He has lived in Alcester for over 50 years and is involved with St. Nicholas church. He is married with 2 grown up children.

Helen B, has been a volunteer at the Foodbank since 2019, when she joined the small warehouse team. She took over as warehouse manager in 2020 when covid hit. Stepping back from that role in 2023, Helen joined the team of volunteers on Friday afternoons distributing food parcels at the Eric Payne Centre in Alcester. She took on the role of Foodbank Treasurer in April this year.

Cathy worked as a radiographer in the NHS for 35 years, during which time she also spent 18 months working in a similar role in Australia. She joined the Foodbank in 2023 as a volunteer packer at the Friday afternoon sessions in

Alcester, before taking up the role of warehouse manager with her husband Bryn a few months later. She lives in Studley and has 2 grown up children.

Helen W brings considerable management experience, having run her own management consultancy with her husband for over 25 years. She joined the Foodbank in 2023 as social media volunteer, before stepping up to the role of marketing and communications manager in July. She was appointed as Foodbank Manager in May this year. She is mum to 2 grown up children and is excited about being mother of the groom next April.

A word from the Chair

Firstly I want to say a huge thank you to the volunteers of Arden foodbank. I hope you know how valuable and cherished you are. Without our volunteers it would be impossible to alleviate food poverty in our communities.

Powered by you, and in harmony with our partners, in the coming years Arden Foodbank CIO will evolve from providing emergency food to a dynamic community hub that will address not just food poverty but its root cause.

I look forward to working together to create a space where everyone feels welcomed and valued for who they are.

Welcome to our new volunteers

All of us at Arden Foodbank are unpaid volunteers. We are delighted to welcome five new volunteers to Team Arden.

Brenda and Tony Harrison will be jointly taking over the role of Marketing and Communications Manager, as well as helping to distribute food parcels.

Barbara Keel and **Julie Newton** are joining the team at Alcester on Friday afternoons, and **Maureen Campion** will be joining the team at Studley on Tuesday afternoons.

A huge welcome to you all. We hope you will enjoy being part of Team Arden.

In September we also said goodbye to **Sonia King**, who retired after many years volunteering at Studley on Tuesday afternoons. You will be missed Sonia. We wish you well and thank you for all your contributions.

A huge word of thanks

None of our work would be possible without the generosity and kindness of our many donors whose support has enabled us to provide people living in Alcester, Studley, and our surrounding communities with food for over 8000 meals. We are truly grateful for your continued support.

Thanks also to our many referral agency partners for all you do in helping us reach those struggling to afford the essentials that so many take for granted. We simply could not operate without you.

The biggest thanks though must go to each and everyone of our 56 volunteers whose time, dedication and commitment means that every week the donated food which has been stored in our warehouse is transported to our foodbank centres and given out to our clients. You are all amazing.

Christmas Hampers

Last year we packed 2.5 tonnes of food into



226 hampers for families of our local primary schools. This year we are expecting to pack a similar number.



We are busy making plans to provide hampers to families who might appreciate a bit of extra help this Christmas. We have asked our 11 primary schools to let us know the number of hampers likely to be needed.

Each child will receive two bags. One full of larger staples, the other full of Christmas goodies. This year that will include at least a 550g box of biscuits, mince pies, chocolate, sweets, cake, and a selection box donated by **Alcester Town Walking Football**. The **WI in Studley** are busy making bags for a toothbrush and toothpaste, and a kind Studley resident is knitting an angel to go in each hamper too.

This year the bags will be packed on 10 and 11 December and distributed to schools for them to give out to their families.

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Arden Foodbank is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales with charity number 1214819

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