

Issue No.4: January 2026

A message from our Chair of Trustees

Arden foodbank has always been a place of compassion, generosity, and hope — made possible by the kindness and commitment of our volunteers. Every welcoming smile, every packed parcel, every conversation of comfort reminds us that we are more than a service; we are a community of people who care deeply for others. **As the needs around us continue to grow and change, we have an opportunity — and a responsibility — to build an even stronger future for our foodbank together.**

Developing a stronger future means ensuring that the work you give your time and energy to remains meaningful, dignified, and sustainable. It means creating better systems, deeper partnerships, and more supportive ways of working in the year ahead so that we can continue to serve people with respect, compassion, and understanding. It also means valuing and supporting our volunteers — recognising your skills, your voices, and the heart you bring to this work.

By strengthening and developing our foodbank now, we are not only responding to today's challenges — we are helping to shape a kinder, more resilient community for tomorrow. **Together, we can build a future where no one faces hunger alone, where every person who walks through our doors feels seen, heard and cared for, and where every volunteer knows that their contribution truly matters.**

This journey forward belongs to all of us. With shared purpose, teamwork, and hope, we can continue to grow, to serve, and to make a lasting difference in the lives of the people who need us most.

Christine Lewington



On 20 November Arden Foodbank CIO officially launched as a Trussell Foodbank with the transfer of the franchise from St Nicholas Church Alcester, to our new charity.

Our Vision

A future where no one in our communities goes hungry.

Our Mission

Arden Foodbank is striving to be a caring, compassionate presence in our communities, offering a warm welcome and food to those in crisis.

In partnership with others we aim to give help, advice, hope and opportunities to all.

Our Values

Arden Foodbank
Respect
Dignity for
Everyone
Now

People we helped in 2025

From January to December we fulfilled **635** vouchers, which provided food parcels for a total of **1372** people, including **522** 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 **12,350** meals. In total we gave out **15,240 kgs**, just over 15 tonnes.

We also provided toiletries, household cleaning materials and even food for clients' dogs and cats.

The top reasons why people came to our Foodbank in 2025 were:-

- Insufficient income to meet the rising cost of essentials
- Priority debt
- Benefits delay
- Long term physical and mental health conditions

Top 5 myths busted

Myth: Only people on benefits use foodbanks.
No. Low wages, insecure hours, and rising living costs mean even full-time workers can struggle to afford food.

Myth: You need a food voucher to come to the foodbank.
No. People don't need a food voucher if they have never been before. Anyone is welcome.

Myth: You need to live in Alcester or Studley to come to our foodbank.
No. Anyone can come.

Myth: You need to give loads of personal details.
No. We just need a name, address and how many people in the household need food.

Myth: You get pre-packaged bags of food.
No. We sit with people and go through our shopping list to let people choose food they are going to like.



We do more than just provide food

Signposting is an important part of the support we provide. Although emergency food is vital and meets people's immediate needs, it does not address the underlying causes of our clients' crises.

In 2025 we recognised this and started to signpost clients where we could, to other help and support.

Since August we have signposted 81 clients to other organisations that can provide the help they need.

The top five organisations were:-

- Act on Energy
- Warwickshire County Council Family Information Service
- Alcester Community Fridge
- Citizens Advice
- Coventry and Warwickshire CDA



Record number of Christmas hampers delivered to schools



Over two days in December a team of 21 amazing volunteers packed 247 Christmas hampers and delivered them to our 11 primary schools for distribution to families who needed a little extra help at Christmas.

That was 2.3 tonnes packed into 494 bags. Each child received two bags. One containing store cupboard essentials. The other with special Christmas extras to go under the Christmas tree.



All of this was only possible because of the generous donations of both food and money we received. This year for the first time each pack included a washbag with toothpaste and toothbrush, thanks in part to Studley Daytime WI's donation as part of the WI's national "Dental Health Matters" campaign.

A huge thank you to all the local people, organisations, businesses and community groups who supported us with collections, fundraising events and donations. Thanks also to our schools for helping us reach those who needed us most, and to our committed team of volunteers.

Team Arden Foodbank out and about at Christmas events

We were delighted to be invited to join Minerva Mill's Christmas Fayre at the end of November.

The Court Leet got proceedings off to a great start and visited us at our stall.

A small team of volunteers spent the day talking about our work to visitors who attempted to guess the weight of an emergency food parcel. Great fun was had by all.



December 6th saw us joining in the celebrations of St Nicholas Night in Alcester.

It was cold but that didn't dampen the spirits of our volunteers who joined in the procession.



A note from our Treasurer

A volunteer recently asked “where does the Foodbank get its money from”?

There is a simple answer ... we rely on the goodwill and generosity of our financial donors.

We are lucky enough to be supported by some **individual donors**, who make regular monthly payments. Others donate on an ad hoc basis. The value of their donations can be enhanced by 25%, with the permission of the donor if they are a UK taxpayer, thanks to HMRC’s Gift Aid.

Local churches, businesses and organisations also support us. In addition we are fortunate to receive **grants** from time to time. These are usually given for a specific purpose. In 2025 the two largest grants received were from The People’s Postcode Lottery and Stratford-upon-Avon District Council.

We are signed up to **‘Easy Fundraising’**, which benefits us when registered supporters of Arden Foodbank make online purchases via the Easy Fundraising app. Around 8000 retailers will donate at no cost to the purchaser.

Our last fundraising stream is **‘Just Giving’**. For a nominal monthly fee, our details are posted on their platform. Donors are able to donate online, very quickly and easily, and we receive the aggregated funds monthly.

Thanks a million

To everyone who supported us with financial donations in 2025, and also to

- All those who hosted our donation baskets and to all those who left food in them
- The kind people who brought food donations to our foodbank centres
- The churches and many community groups who supported us in so many ways
- The local businesses who gave their time for free, and to those who donated food.

A warm welcome to our new volunteers

All of us at Arden Foodbank are unpaid volunteers. We are delighted to welcome four new volunteers to Team Arden since our last newsletter.

Dave Glasbey has joined the re-stock team responsible for transporting stock from the warehouse to the distribution centres each week.

Christine Bell-Scott and **Alan Sibley** will be joining the team at Alcester on Friday afternoons and **Hannah Webb** 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.

Since our last newsletter we have said goodbye to **Annette Mutton** and **Ann Mattocks**, who have stepped down after many years of volunteering. They will both be missed. We wish them well and thank them for their contributions.



Volunteer Workshop Shaping the future for Arden Foodbank CIO

Your chance to be involved in helping to shape the future direction of our foodbank.

- Wednesday 18 February.
10.00am – 12.30pm. Greig Hall, Alcester.
- Saturday 21 February.
10.00am – 12.30pm. Studley Parish Centre.

Book your place on Assemble.

Arden Foodbank

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

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Ending
hunger
together