

WCFP

Washington Community Food Project



Annual Report 2019

Introduction

The project was founded in 2012 by the late Joanne and Malcolm Dawson and since then has expanded to provide donations to Washington and Springwell. We also provide food parcels to people in Shiney Row and Penshaw but mostly to Washington postcodes beginning NE37 and NE38.

At the beginning of 2019 around 30 volunteers have helped to promote the project and we are helping an average of 325 people each month, a 24% rise on 2018. The food bank receives referrals from: Gentoo, Sunderland City Council agencies, National Health Services, Housing associations, voluntary support services, schools, churches and signposting from DWP and Wear Recovery.

The service users then obtain food from our distribution points, these at the beginning of 2019 were in Sulgrave, Concord Barmston, Columbia, Oxclose and Harraton. We also deliver a food parcel to each new visitor to the woman's refuge.

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Chair's Welcome from Clive Bowman

I would like to begin this report by thanking all volunteers who have been with us throughout the year and to those who have joined during the year.

We continued throughout the year to receive donations of food from members of the public who dropped off items at our various collection points within Washington. These include Churches in Washington, Springwell Methodist Church, Holy Trinity in Washington Village, St Georges in Harraton and St Michael's in Sulgrave. Gentoo offices in Concord and the Galleries, Barmston Furniture, Washington Mind.

At Harvest time and towards Christmas we were give donations from several schools, nurseries, scout troops, churches as well as the general public.



Maureen receiving festive boxes produced by the 3rd Washington Scouts, Cubs and Beavers

We have donation boxes located close to the check outs in ASDA, Sainsbury's in the Galleries, Sainsbury's Local, Teal Farm and East Boldon.

The Co-op petrol station joined us this year with a collection box. Teal Farm and William de Wessington public houses and The Wheelhouse, Albany, also came onboard in 2019. KFC have continued to support us this year along with Greggs in Concord.



Dropping off public donations

This year, through the Neighbourly scheme, we have an agreement in place with the following stores to collect on certain days, fresh produces of bakery and fresh items: Aldi Galleries, Aldi Armstrong, Lidl Peel Park and Marks and Spencer's Galleries.

We continue to work with VCAS, Shiney Row advice, WISP and other voluntary groups.

Unfortunately, the need for foodbanks is increasing year on year. We continue to monitor the number of claims we receive from each particular family and have noticed an increase in the number of claims due to the impact of Universal Credit. It is the WCFP policy not to encourage people to become dependent on the foodbank and we now have, in place, a support worker from Shiney Row Advice as the dedicated Washington Independent Support Project (WISP)



Christmas donations at Teal Farm

Committee Reports



Chairman's Report

by Clive Bowman

The year 2019 has been one of great change and upheaval for the WCFP. In last year's report it was mentioned that we had to vacate the Lighthouse Church by the end of December 2018.

In the knowledge of what was happening, the Millennium Centre, Concord management was approached and they kindly allowed us to have a room starting in January 2019 each Thursday morning between 10.15 and 12.15. This was not a dedicated room and was subject to allocation on the day. Also, there was no storage facility for us. The ways and means of continuing to support WCFP referees in Concord was discussed prior to the move with the volunteer lead in the Lighthouse, who undertook to continue the work in the Millennium Centre at the beginning of January and to try and bring with her some of the parishioners who had used our offer of drinks and cakes at the Lighthouse. In a phone call out, of the blue, on the first Sunday in January I was informed she was resigning with immediate effect. This meant the start-up of the outlet at the Millennium did not start as expected. The deputy chair, Janet Bennett, Andrew Hoseason, Krystal Wake and Emma McDonald stepped into the breach and arrangements had to be put in place quickly with Greggs, Concord for the supply of their unused stock. Colin Dodds undertook, at short notice, to collect on Wednesday night and deliver to the Millennium on Thursday a.m. We had to arrange for the delivery of parcels to be taken from the store area at base to the Millennium centre on a Thursday morning; Dave Corrigan undertook this regularly throughout the year. The feasibility of taking a refrigerator into the Millennium each Thursday was considered impractical, so the chilled items from Greggs had to be suspended.

In the 2018 report we informed you that on the 27th December 2018 all items belonging to WCFP were removed from the Lighthouse Church and taken to be stored by Radecal Machines in their factory unit in Armstrong Estate. Within two weeks of the move, we were told by Radecal that they needed the storage space for an incoming delivery of equipment and could we move everything out as soon as possible. This coincided with developments at our base in Oxclose Church where, because of alterations our storage area was halved and it was apparent that they required us to leave as quickly as possible. We had been informed earlier the previous year to vacate and we had struggled to find suitable accommodation for our storage/distribution.

An approach for help was made to Sunderland Council and we were invited to attend the Civic Centre by local councillor John Kelly and the chair of the VCAS Washington Karen Purvis where we met the manager of property services and explained our predicament. They agreed to help us in the interim period whilst investigating a more permanent place within Washington.

We were given a short-term lease at the closed Harraton Primary School in what had been the vehicle maintenance teaching unit. Everything stored in Radical and everything in Oxclose Church was moved by volunteers into our new temporary unit. This was unsuitable for members of the public to come for parcels, so a shuttle service had to be arranged by the volunteers to support Oxclose Church WCFP outlet where a much-reduced storage facility was made available to us. We were informed by the church that the evening opening hours had to cease but we could continue to operate on the Tuesday and Friday mornings, this meant at least two volunteers had to be based there for each session.

The remaining volunteers were based in Harraton making up the parcels for distribution to St Michael's, Millennium, MIND, and Barmston Furniture. We were continuing our discussions with the Galleries management regarding the possibility of a unit in the complex, but it was still not certain.

The Galleries management were aware that we only had until the end of March in Harraton and offered, in the event of us not finding a permanent site in Washington, a room called the Remote Unit at the rear of the complex. Sunderland Council was still investigating other facilities for us but by the end of March the Galleries management was hopeful that a permanent position could be found for us within the shopping complex. The management committee voted on the proposal, and chose to move into the Galleries. Sunderland Council were informed and ceased to be involved in the search and we were again on our own.

We moved everything out of the Vehicle Maintenance Teaching Unit at Harraton to the remote unit in the Galleries with the help of a man and his van from the Galleries and assisted by the volunteers. The unit had shelving either side, our furniture was stored at the back and our tables were placed to allow parcels to be made up and incoming stock stored in the crates placed on the shelving. We had sited the Lighthouse freezer in Holy Trinity Donwell, our long-term storage unit, rented from the Church and this freezer was brought into use for excess KFC.

We continued to negotiate with the Galleries Owners and engaged our own solicitor John Morgan from Gordon Brown Newcastle, to represent us.

We were advised in late October that the remote unit had to be vacated and over one weekend, we moved all stock into the old Betfred shop on the first floor, leaving the racking and our furniture still in the remote unit. Having moved all that, within a fortnight, the paperwork was exchanged and an agreement reached allowing us to move into Unit O on the 13th November 2019.

The management committee then looked at all of the outlets and how the distribution would operate. The committee decided that, because we are now more central and due to the difficulties we had encountered at the Millennium and problems arising from transporting parcels, we should not continue to use this outlet. We thanked the Millennium Centre

Management for their hospitality for allowing us the use of the room free of charge but declined to renew for the year 2020.

It was also decided that MIND would cease to operate as a distribution point but we would monitor any impact this would have on Barmston Furniture. It was agreed that as Barmston offer a facility on Saturday we should continue this service. A big thank you to Dave Munneke and Muriel for their continued support.

We were no longer paying rent to Oxclose Church as the storage space we had was small so it was decided to close this as an ongoing outlet. The facility at Holy Trinity, Donwell, for additional storage, was also closed and everything brought into Betfred thus saving on electricity payments. St Georges, Harraton and Oxclose Church hold a small number of parcels to be used in an emergency situation only.

We asked, and were given, a loan of the storage racking out of the remote unit. This was dismantled by the volunteers and then refitted into the back of Unit O. The Galleries service personnel helped us transfer some of the bulkier items of furniture.

It was agreed that until the end of the year Unit O would open to the public on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Fridays between 10 and 2 pm. The back of house would be open for parcel making and receiving donations between 9.30 and 11 AM Tuesdays and Fridays as previously.

Our support worker from Washington Independent Support Project (WISP) had, through the year, visited St Michaels on Monday and Wednesday mornings and we are pleased to say she will be present in Unit O on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

The management committee discussed volunteer staffing levels at front of house and decided that at least 3 people should be present at all times. We advertised on social media for volunteers to come forward and we had a very good response. These people have gone through our induction process.

In January 2020 began our new opening times: - Tuesdays through to Fridays each day between 10 am and 3 pm to the general public

As a result of the Neighbourly Initiative we have had to develop a rota for our volunteer drivers as we are now collecting from several stores regularly each week.

We are awaiting inspection from Environmental Health to allow us to offer chilled items. This has been discussed with Greggs and will be put in place as soon as possible.



Project Manager's Report

By Carol Rowe

I became a volunteer approximately 5 years ago, when we were based at Oxclose Church. The WCFP has grown and demand has increased, which has seen us move into our new premises at the Galleries. This move was made possible thanks to Clive and Maureen Bowman.

My role consists of many duties, making sure stock is always available for our clients. I look after three outlets: St Michael's, Barmston Community Furnishings and St George's Church. I am also responsible for banking any donations, being cash or cheques, which are recorded and the treasurer (Michelle Natton) is notified. On a daily basis, I collect bread etc. from Marks & Spencer which enables clients to have fresh produce, alongside their basic food parcel.

Life at WCFP can be very challenging and always busy. But the great bunch of eager volunteers, who give up their free time to be part of the project, make it all worthwhile and provide a wonderful service to the people of Washington which I am very proud to be part of.



Secretary's Report

by Maureen Bowman

This year has been extremely eventful and full of decision making.

It began in January 2019 when we had to leave the Lighthouse, Concord at short notice. We had also been asked to find new premises by Oxclose Church after working from there for several years. So, on 1st January we were potentially homeless, although we knew we would not be put out on the street, we were in a difficult situation. Furniture was stored in garages and local small businesses took pity on us and stored things for us until Sunderland City Council came to our rescue and we were allowed to move into the old Harraton Primary School. All the stock and equipment from both Oxclose and Lighthouse was then moved for a three month stay until the end of March. During the year we had been negotiating with the Galleries management to occupy a vacant shop on the upper level, however this took much longer than we expected and by the end of March we had no-where to go. We were then rescued by the Management team at the Galleries who helped us, with a man and a van, to move into the remote unit, a purpose-built storage unit in a delivery area behind the shops.

The space was fine but sometimes rather cold and there was no access for the public, however we began to sort out our stock and establish a routine. So that was the end of March and we worked happily and very gratefully out of there until the end of October when we were asked to move again into a temporary unit in the Galleries. This move happened over one weekend at a very busy time of year for the WCFP. We were just beginning to recover from all the

generous Harvest donations, from local schools and churches, and getting ready for the mass influx of Christmas.



Santander bring some sparkle

Before we were sorted in the temporary accommodation, Bet Fred, we began getting 4 or 5 trolley loads of donations every day from ASDA and Sainsbury's plus many of the shops and businesses who took part in the Reverse Advent Calendar were coming in daily with bags of donations. Not that we were complaining, it was wonderful but hectic, as during all of that, we got the keys for our own outlet in the Galleries. On 13th November it all began again – moving into our new home. Sunderland Council came up trumps again with much of the furniture we needed for the drop in but nothing is ever straightforward or easy. A quick phone call regarding the gas

and electricity took several days and hours and at one point the WCFP became responsible for the gas bill for the whole of the Galleries complex. But we are almost there. The legal side, the insurances, the services are now all sorted and we are well on our way to meeting the food hygiene requirements which required some wall painting (thanks Sue and Sarah) a new sink unit (our thanks go to Howdens for their donation) and a stand-alone sink (thanks to Gentoo). We cannot believe the generosity of all who have come forward to help with either donations of cash, equipment or time, many, many thanks from all the volunteers.



Many thanks to Howdens, who not only supplied us with our new sink unit and tap but also made a very generous cash donation

The foodbank is operating well and the drop-in will pick up pace when we begin our first community creative activity in February.



GadCap Technical Solutions

The Galleries shopping centre is a very central location so the trustees made a decision to withdraw from the Millennium Centre and MIND, Columbia. We now have only the two main outlets. One at St. Michael's, Sulgrave and the other Unit O in the Galleries. St. George's, Fatfield and Oxclose Church hold emergency parcels only and Barmston Furniture continues to provide parcels every day except Sunday.

Our volunteer base has increased from 30 to over 40 and we are still in the process of establishing routines, roles and responsibilities in both the food bank and drop-in.

Clive has now completed his three-year stint as Chair but is happy to continue in post unless



Ready for action at the Washington Carnival

we receive any applications for the post. This will be made public in February.

Maureen and Carol both have one more year in post as secretary and administrator.

Michelle has two more years as treasurer, Christmas fayre and tombola organiser and to act as general peace -maker and calming influence when things get stressed.

Sue, Marj and Andrew have now organised the drop-in and have established a pattern of working which is flexible enough to allow group activities to take place while foodbank business is carrying on.

Marj has also recently taken on the huge demands of Safeguarding Officer. The new adult and child policies are now in place and the interview and reference system is established for new volunteers. Training is also underway to ensure that all volunteers know the correct procedures to follow should an incident occur.

St. Michael's now collects its own stock from the Galleries once a week.

Our IT communications are continuing thanks to Cat who has taken over from Nicola. Our thanks go to Nicola and her husband for all the hard work they have provided over the last three years. They are responsible for setting up the present computer system and sorting out any running problems. Nicola also posted all the weekly thanks and kept the social media sites updated. Nicola will continue to support us but due to work commitments she is having to reduce the time she can give us. Cat will now continue to update all the sites previously done by Nicola.

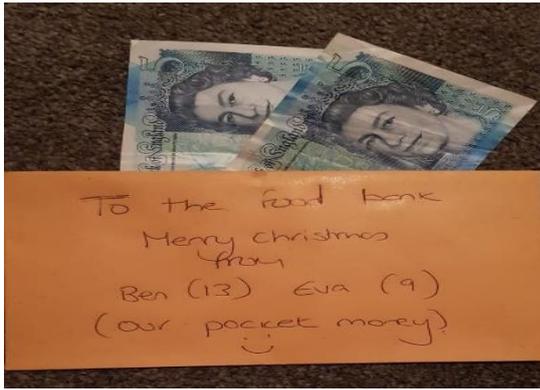
Whilst the project has operated under difficult circumstances this year, with the help of Shiny Advice and the WISP project, we continue to make a huge impact on the lives of many of our clients.

Fundraising

We have had a very successful year raising funds. We raised almost £1,500 at the Summer and Christmas village fayres and our thanks go to Michelle and Sue for all the preparatory work and to all who came on the day and worked on the stalls. Also, to Sarah who held a book sale and donated several hundreds of pounds, thank you.



We had a very hungry Santa at the Christmas Fayre



Youngsters, Ben (13) and Eva (9), posted their pocket money through the door at Unit O

Other Fund Providers

Our grateful thanks go to all of you who have donated cash to the project as this allows us to buy any items which we are short of to make up a parcel. Several people donate regularly on Paypal and, although they don't get monthly thank-yous, they are very much appreciated. And to Streetcare, HMRC, St George's Church, Holy Trinity Church, Washington Station Women's Institute, Armah Switchgear, Opec, Lloyds Bank Galleries, the management team at the Galleries and many anonymous donors we say a huge thank you from all our clients.

Christmas Eve



St Michael's Church, full to bursting with donated food and gifts from the public and local businesses

On 24th December, we held our third annual 'Big Give-Away' event.

We invited all clients who had children and had claimed during 2019, and all clients still on our books, to attend St. Michael's Church after 7pm.

Eighty-five people came and two hundred and forty-nine adults and children were supported.

Each family received either a turkey or joint of meat, vegetables, bread and cakes, mince pies, dessert or Christmas pudding, chocolates and

selection boxes, toys, gifts and toiletries.

All items had been generously donated by local shops and collected by our team of dedicated volunteers, once the shops had closed.

This year's event was our biggest and best yet, with an unprecedented amount of donations enabling us to make sure a higher volume of clients than ever could have a merry Christmas.

We have already started making plans to build on this success with our 2020 'Big Give-Away'.



Turkeys galore (and chicken...and beef...and salmon) kindly given to us by local stores

Food donations

It would be almost impossible for me to name all the people and businesses who have donated this year but please know that we could not operate without your help. Most of the local churches donate on a regular basis, the schools, the scouts, local businesses and individuals all make contributions. Supermarkets which provide regular food donations are ASDA, Sainsbury's, Marks & Spencer, Liddle, Aldi, Greggs and the Co-op.



A huge **THANK YOU** to you everyone who donated this year

Grants

Once again, we have been very successful in raising funding mainly for the provision of food but we have been able to raise £4,000 for the set up and running costs of the new drop-in community centre. This will enable us to get the computer table up and running and provide proper facilities for food storage, hand washing, and tea making. Although writing bids is very time consuming and not always successful, we have been very fortunate and our thanks go to REEDS Grassroots Fund, a local charitable trust, Hadrian Trust, Post Code Lottery, Gentoo, and The Joicey Trust. In total we received Grants for £9,600. Our financial position at the end of the financial year is very satisfactory. Our outgoings will increase in 2020 as we will have to begin to pay rates and will have some rates to pay retrospectively for November to December 2019, we will also have service charges to pay but we did live rent free for all of 2019.

Social events

Our activities were somewhat limited last year as we hardly had time to eat, drink and sleep but we did manage one trip the bingo, where none of us were winners, and one trip to the greyhound races, where most of us had a win but were losers overall. There is a lesson to be learned there!

2019 Statistics

1

Reason for visit between 2018 and 2019	
Student Loans	0.26%
Awaiting Universal Credit	2.54%
Banking Problems	0.21%
Bedroom Tax	0.05%
Change From one Benefit to another	15.19%
Overpaid Benefit	0.26%
Bereavement	0.21%
No Money	1.32%
Debt	18.62%
Low Income	1.75%
Family Changes	5.19%
One Off Reason	2.06%
Delay in Benefit	16.24%
Fleeing Domestic Violence	4.55%
Deductions in Universal Credit	1.43%
Homeless	1.85%
Delay In Wages	0.58%
Awaiting ESA	1.01%
Other	3.92%
Sickness	1.85%
Unemployed No Benefit Yet	3.54%
Maintenance Stopped	0.37%
Loan shark	0.37%
Working Fewer Hours	1.01%
Sanctioned	4.92%
School Holidays	0.42%
Struggling With Benefits	0.48%
Universal Credit	8.94%

The WCFP referral form is dependent upon the referral agency ticking the appropriate box(s) as to the reason for the referral therefore the following is subjective

A comparison of Chart 1 “Reason for visit between 2018 and 2019” all based on benefits.
 Awaiting Universal Credit
 Change from one benefit to another
 Delay in benefit
 Universal credit
 The percentage change is 34.95% in 2018 to 42.91% in 2019

2

Chart 2 highlights the continuous growth year on year of the number of food parcels issued. In 2017 there were 1154 parcels issued, in 2018 there were 1616 issued and in 2019 a total of 1999

	2015 People	2015 Parcels	2016 People	2016 Parcels	2017 People	2017 Parcels	2018 People	2018 Parcels	2019 People	2019 Parcels
Jan	74	40	85	33	116	59	214	114	367	185
Feb	93	51	81	33	167	86	230	130	299	156
March	128	67	94	40	267	116	278	138	287	152
April	69	45	93	57	180	85	181	96	354	185
May	83	49	102	61	207	104	226	127	307	174
June	111	53	97	51	215	107	297	159	267	161
July	127	57	99	54	247	118	244	128	358	174
Aug	105	50	123	69	141	78	302	156	351	175
Sept	97	47	172	83	203	107	215	123	314	167
Oct	94	51	194	109	199	85	253	145	349	178
Nov	138	66	131	110	212	100	264	159	335	153
Dec	107	51	141	72	328	109	300	141	313	139
TOTAL	1226	627	1412	772	2392	1154	3004	1616	3901	1999
AVERAGE	102	52	120	65	178	86	250	135	325	165

3

Number of People in Household	2018	2019
1 Person	57.25%	53.88%
2 Person	15.51%	20.61%
3 Person	13.55%	11.21%
4 Person	9.43%	7.65%
5 Person	3.98%	6.65%

Chart 3 “Number of people in household”

Single people in each household claiming has remained at over 50%, 51.43 %in 2017, 57.25% in 2018 and 53.88% in 2019

Similar changes have occurred in the 2 and 3-person parcel ranges 4 person households peaked in 2017 at 9.91 % falling in 2018 and in 2019

The main increase has occurred in families of at least 5 which has increased from 3.98% in 2018 to 6.65% in 2019

Chart 4 “Number of Visits”

This table shows a dramatic change in the number of visits and support the foodbank gives In 2017 people making 1 visit only 50.24%, 46.8% in 2018 and 31.87% in 2019

People making a 2nd visit in 2017 was 19.57% and in 2019 is now 16.61%

Three time increased from 7% to 12%

This increase is confirmed by the higher number of visits 4, 5, 6 and 7

The need for more than 11 food parcels has increased from 1.76% in 2017 to 6.45% in 2019

Number of Visits	2018	2019
1	46.8%	31.87%
2	18.3%	16.61%
3	7.04%	12.66%
4	9.15%	9.35%
5	3.16%	6.90%
6	5.63%	5.25%
7	3.52%	3.35%
8	2.46%	2.60%
9	0.52%	2.05%
10	1.23%	1.70%
11	0.35%	1.20%
11+	1.76%	6.45%

4

5

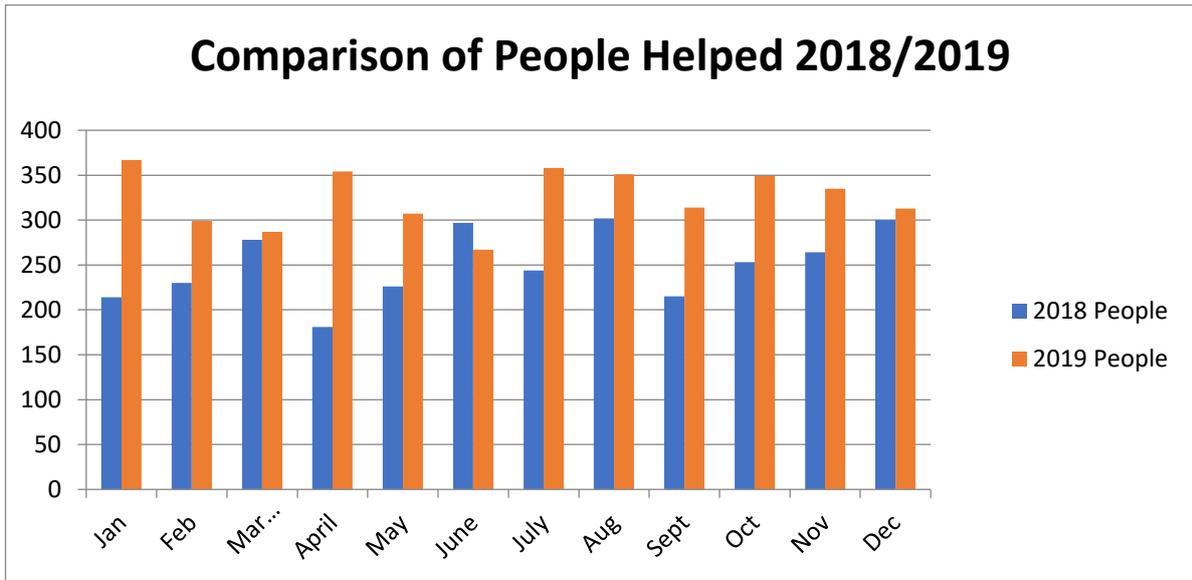


Chart 5 “Comparisons of people helped”

This information is taken from Chart 2 comparing month by month People columns 2018 and 2019

6

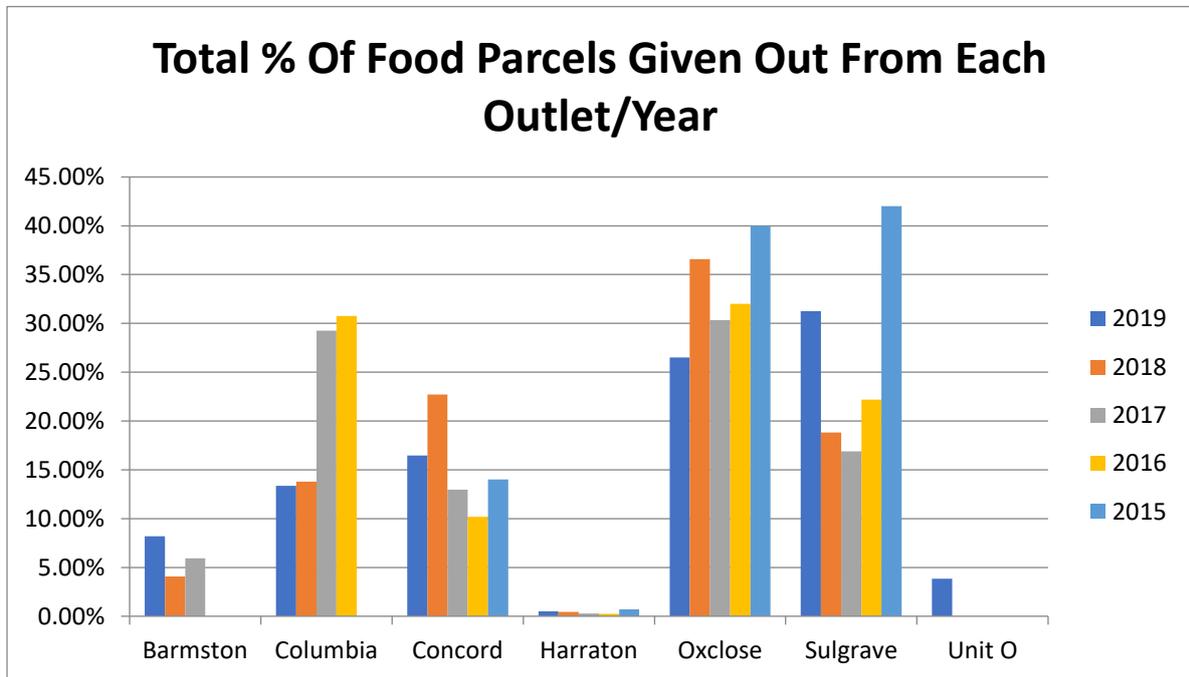


Chart 6 “Total % of food from each outlet”

This has been discussed in detail in Chart 7

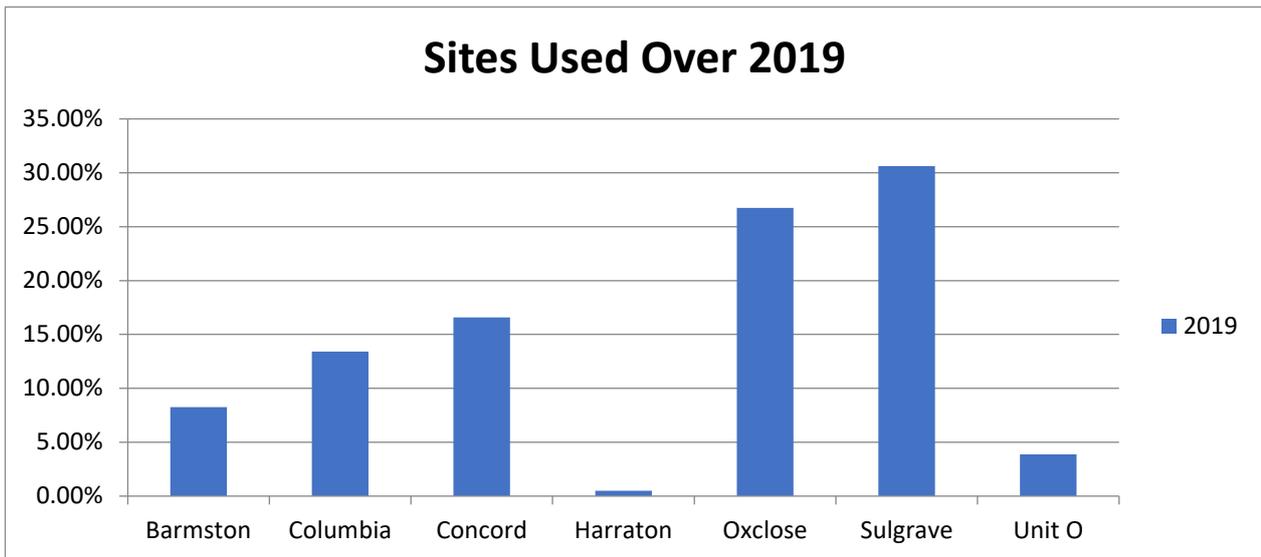


Chart 7

“Sites used 2019” shows an increase in use at Sulgrave. This was a result of a number of claimants receiving a large number of parcels.

This was investigated and a decision made that the agency would signpost only and that particular claimants would have to work with WISP.

The analysis showed an increase from 65 parcels issued in 2017, to 197 parcels in 2018 and 303 in 2019.

As a result, if this intervention by WISP this situation has been resolved.

With the support of WISP, the monitoring will be applied to claimants in Unit O

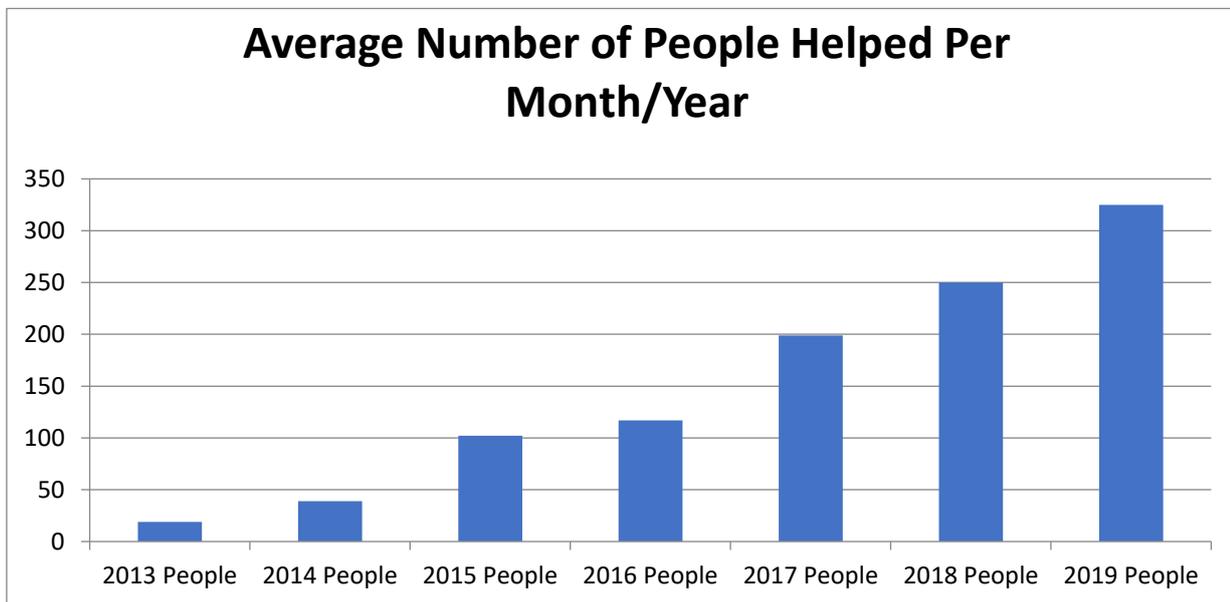
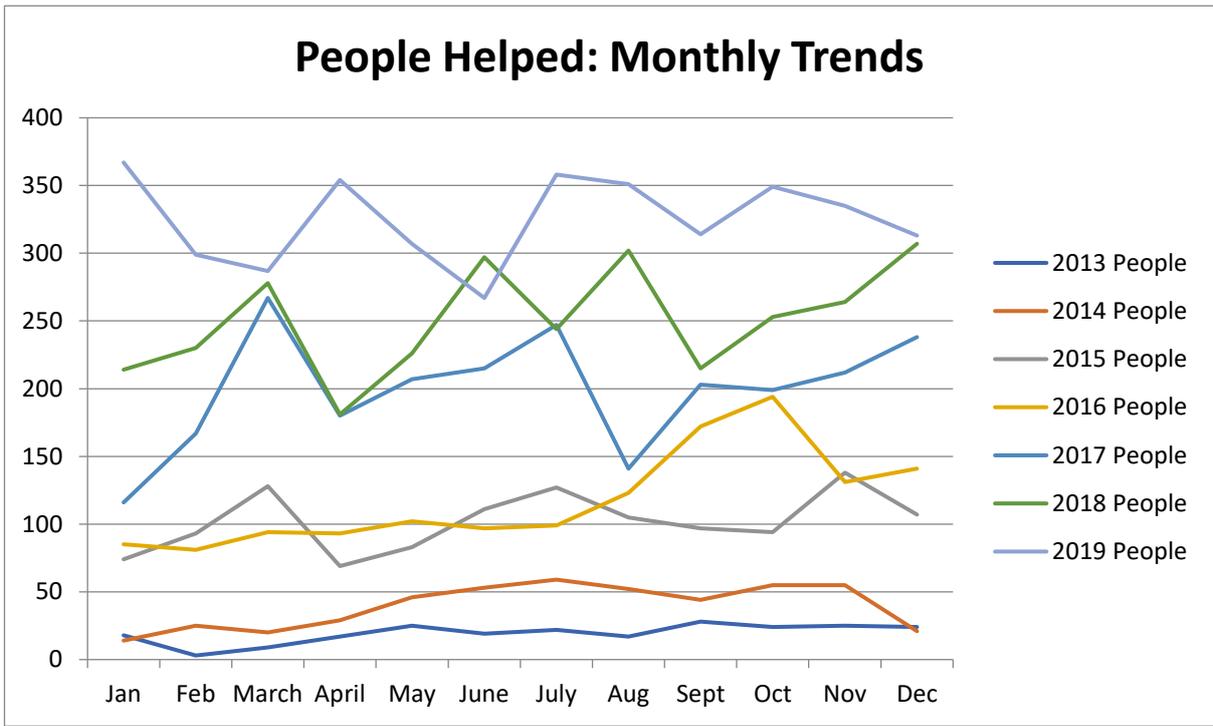


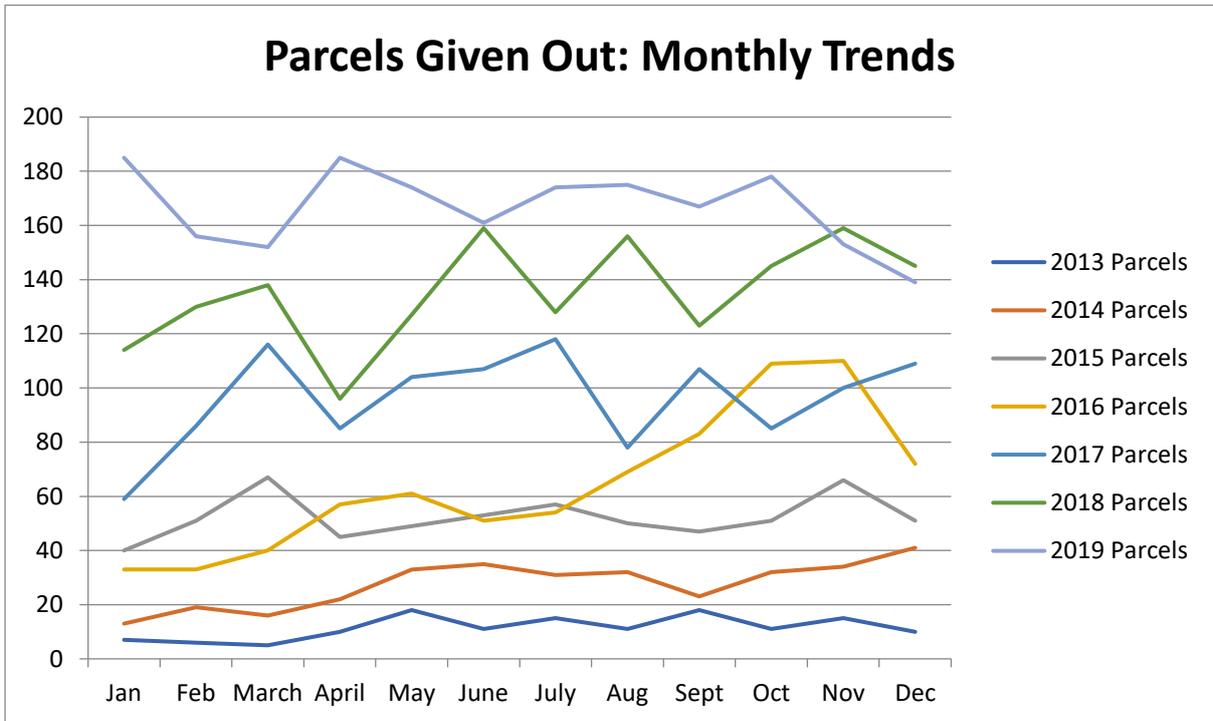
Chart 8

“Average number people month/year” shows an increase from 250 people to 325 as the average number of people the foodbank is helping per month/year.



9

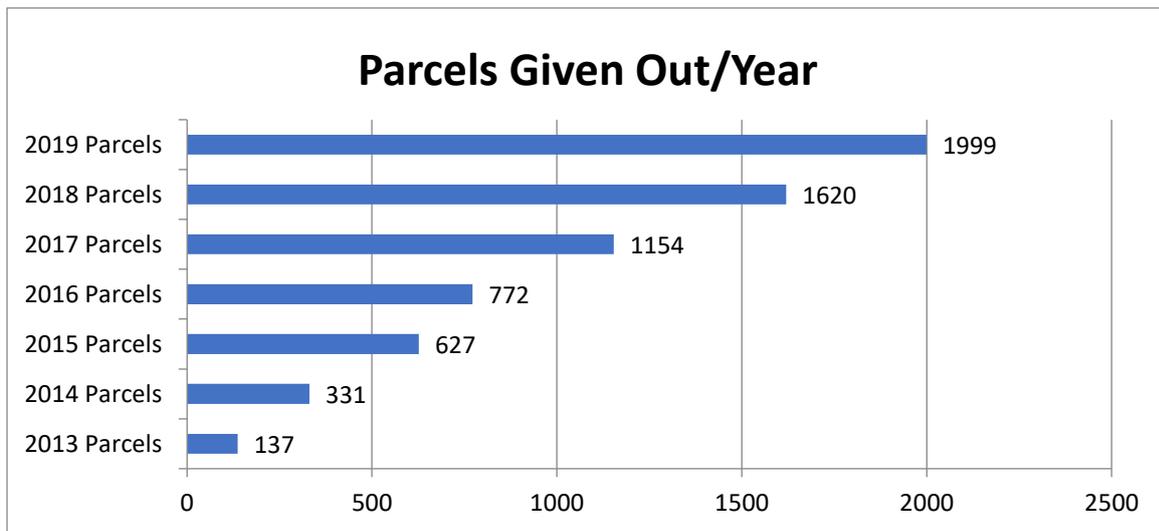
Charts 9 and 10
 The “People Helped Monthly Trends “and “Parcels Monthly Trends” shows the trend towards parcel increase over the 2 years.



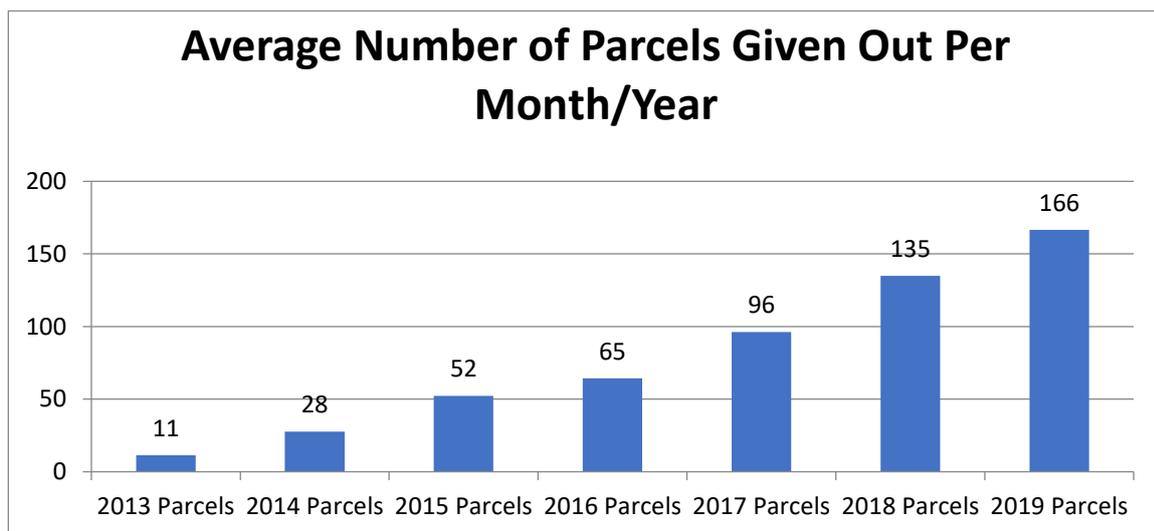
10

Charts 11 to 13 “Parcels given out in a year, Average number of parcels given per month/year and People helped in a year”

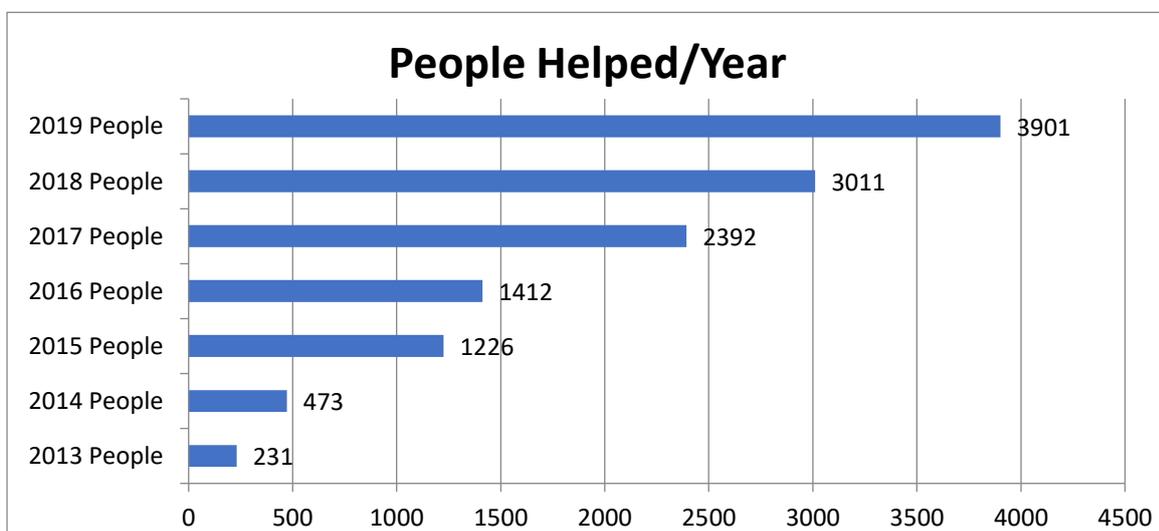
This information is taken from Chart 2 and past reports where years 2013 and 2014 were detailed, but omitted from this table for clarity.



11



12



13

Team Reports



Report from Oxclose Church/Unit O Front of House

by Susan Laws, Front of House Lead and Deputy Administrator.

2019 has been a challenging year for Front of House. When the storeroom had to be moved from Oxclose Church to Harraton and then to The Galleries remote unit we were left with only a very small amount of storage space in the church, for ready made up parcels, which had to be delivered weekly. We also, still needed to hold a supply of nappies, toiletries and sanitary products and space was therefore at a premium. However, Krystal initially, then Cat, Emma and I managed to maintain an excellent service despite the upheaval as the church was being modernised and improved to suit its new role in the community

The church asked us to discontinue evening sessions therefore with only a Tuesday and Friday morning session, we had to deal with an ever-increasing number of referrals, in a shorter period of time.

As anyone who has volunteered for Front of House will know it is very difficult to guess how many referrals and the size of parcels that will be needed in any one day. However, I am proud to say that only once, when there was an unprecedented demand, did we need to request an unscheduled delivery of parcels.

However, donations continued to be dropped off at Oxclose and with nowhere to store them, frequent requests had to be made to our volunteer drivers to pick up these donations.

Front of House moved to Unit 0 The Galleries shortly after the storeroom moved there from the remote unit. Our first day was December 3rd which coincided with the official opening by Sharon Hodgson MP.

We initially opened 10 still 2 with me leading Tuesday and Wednesday and Marjorie Prince on Fridays. The New Year saw the time increase to 10 to 3pm and Andrew Hoseason joined us, as lead, on Thursdays after the Millennium centre outlet closed. We have increased our front of House staff to include as well as Emma and Cat, Krystal, Maggie, Lisa, Chris, Judith and two new starters Carrie and Nicki.

We have seen a considerable increase in food and monetary donations since moving to The Galleries which is fortuitous as we have also seen an increase in referrals. We frequently have visitors popping in just to see what we're about and maybe stopping for a cuppa and their feedback has been very positive.

We have been able to create a friendly environment in Unit 0 with free tea, coffee and snacks and now are able to offer benefit and debt advice with Julie Lynn from WISP who attends two afternoons a week. It is envisaged that we will become more of a community venue as well

as a Foodbank and already a craft session is planned for Fridays and it's hoped more community activities will be set up in time.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the volunteers at Unit O for the tremendous amount of hard work and dedication they have shown. I hope we can continue to grow and provide this valuable service in the next and subsequent years.



Millennium Report A
by Andrew Hoseason

Unfortunately, the Lighthouse closed in December 2018 and was recently sold. We then had the opportunity to use the Millennium Centre in Concord. Whilst thankful for their provision of this building for free, it was much less convenient. Firstly the prospect of entering the building proved daunting for our users since they had to ask at reception where we were located, which could well be embarrassing for them. Secondly, our volunteers had to drive the stock to the location each morning and drive away whatever was left at the end, since we had no provision for storing on site. We had to anticipate what stock would be required, which was not easy to get right. On a couple of dates we ran out of stock completely and had to direct people elsewhere. On many occasions we had a great deal of heavy stock left to cart back to our store room, either at Oxclose or the Galleries. Thank you to our long-suffering drivers, particularly Colin, Dave and Emma for doing that arduous task. In January 2020 we were able to transfer the Thursday operation to Unit O at the Galleries, which has resulted in a much easier scenario for our volunteers. Thank you to Emma, Krystal and Janet who regularly helped run Thursdays during the last year.



Millennium Report B
by Janet Bennett

With regard to the annual report, I thought it only right to give advance notice of moving and resigning as Vice Chair. I miss my fellow volunteers at our Concord outlet and would like to thank the staff at the Millennium Centre for their welcome and cooperation.

It is regrettable that the need for the foodbank has increased but I have been encouraged by the many staff at local businesses who have enquired about how things were going when I went shopping and sometimes when walking our dog. A new feature in 2019 is the number of families reluctantly attending the food bank because of extra strain on finances due to buying school uniforms. The number of homeless (mainly sofa surfing) has also increased.

I have enjoyed volunteering for the past four years.



Report from Sulgrave
by Revd Julie Wing, Rector of Usworth

Sulgrave distribution point St Michael and All Angels Church. We continued throughout the past year with an increase in people needing food parcels. We are grateful to Carol and the team who have supplied food from the unit throughout the year as many of you know we have very limited access to transport and even more limited in people being fit enough to carry the food. We continue to endeavour to ensure only those persons in crisis receive parcels and our thanks go to Julie Lynn for accessing the referrals & assisting people to get back on their feet



Treasurer's Report
by Michelle Natton

It's been quite a year! I would like to thank all of our amazing volunteers and trustees, for their hard work and commitment during the last twelve months. We are finally settled into our new premises, at The Galleries; it would not have been possible without their support.

The publicity around our move to Unit O, along with its prominent location, has raised the profile of WCFP. We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the local community. Both our food and cash donations have increased and it has been lovely to see so many people, who have called in to say hello.

Once again, we were able to secure stalls at Washington Carnival and Washington Village Festival. Thank you to Megan Guttridge, for being so accommodating. I would also like to give a special thanks to the many local businesses, which responded to our Facebook request, and donated some fantastic prizes.



Financial Update

- We began the year with a bank balance of **£13,717.92**
- We received donations from individual members of the local community and businesses totalling £7,211.01
- Donations to our PayPal account totalled £234.04. (With an additional £1,209.08. This was transferred into our bank account on 02.01.20, and will appear in the 2020 accounts).
- Our fundraising events at Washington Carnival and Washington Village Festival, along with an awareness day at Sainsbury's, totalled £1,449.34
- We have received 8 grants, totalling £9,600

£2000 POSTCODE LOTTERY
£1000 COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
£500 GENTOO
£1000 STREETCARE
£1300 THE GALLERIES
£500 HADRIAN TRUST
£3000 A LOCAL CHARITABLE TRUST.
£300 GENTOO

- Our total expenditure, including £8,860.51 on food purchases, was £12,667.36
- We had a closing balance, for the year, of **£19545.33**



Safeguarding Report

by Marj Prince

This year we have been reviewing and updating both our Safeguarding Adult’s and Safeguarding Children policies and procedures to ensure they are robust and meet current legislation.

No Safeguarding concerns have been raised this year however, all volunteers are aware of the importance of reporting any concerns they may have, and all new volunteers have also been briefed in Safeguarding before they start.

I have taken over the role of the Safeguarding Officer. Maureen and myself will be attending VCS Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children training in January 2020 and all volunteers will receive mandatory Safeguarding training delivered by VCS or in-house.



Social Media Report

by Cat Spellman

Social media has been reasonably active for WCFP, particularly in the run up to Christmas, and surrounding interest towards the move to the new unit in the Galleries. We currently have 2,222 followers on Facebook and 101 on Twitter. There was an online engagement surge as we moved into the Galleries. Facebook remains the main point of communication for WCFP regarding donations and volunteer enquiries. Shared photos particularly of individuals making donations, and also tagging businesses who donate seem to get the highest responses - so possibly something to think of in the future for increasing reach and awareness and engagement across the social media platforms. The ‘reverse advent calendar’ shared on Facebook also generated a good response, with many people bring in donations on the back of this. A weekly update of lists of products that we are short of seems to be communicated from those donating, especially from those who donate regularly.

The Way Forward

I will look backwards first and say how far we have come this year, especially since November, 2019.

We got the keys to Unit O on 13th November, having moved into BetFred's old premises two weeks before. Christmas donations were arriving quick and fast, we had taken on a lot of new volunteers in anticipation of the new premises, but they had not had any training and we, as an organisation, had not had time to establish regular routines. So, for a few weeks everyone did their best to keep things going.



Back-of-house begins to take shape

Now almost three months on things are beginning to take shape, people are coming to terms with the new set up, rules, regulations and expectations. We still have some way to go but we are still confident, excited and sure that we have done the right thing.

The foodbank quickly got itself up and running as many of the procedures were already established, however we still had a lot of stock stored in BetFred and it became obvious that we needed to appoint someone to take control of the sorting and stock rotation of hundreds of tins of beans, soup and dried pasta (all of which will be gone by June/July). This worked well and the stock is now all sorted by date. The beans are now being sorted into months!!



The grand opening of Unit O by Sharon Hodgson, MP, and Mayoress, Councillor Dianne Snowdon

We now need to appoint an overseer in the foodbank section. Everyone is getting on with the job but we need someone to bring it all together. The stock rotation, the drivers 'pickup rotas, the parcel making, the deliveries - it is all being done but no one has an overall picture except the Chair. This is unsustainable, but we need to get it right and we need to find the right person.

The drop in is going to take some time to become established with the community as it is still seen as the 'foodbank'. We see the way forward as naming the front of house 'The Meeting Place' and encouraging the curious who pop in from time to time to stay and have a cuppa and chat.

Our first activity sessions will start in February and will be craft events. Every other Friday 12.30 – 3.00 pm . Hopefully word will spread and other groups will take the opportunity to use a warm friendly place to meet.

We would love to have a young parent’s group and we could organise someone to talk with them if they have a problem. We have the capability to run money management courses and the computer table will soon be operational and we will have someone on hand to help complete benefit forms, job searches etc. The possibilities are endless. We just need to get out there and get it started.

Our policies and training, our volunteer applications and inductions are all in place, the financial systems work, the record keeping is in line with the data protection act. WE ARE ALMOST THERE, but we still have one more session with the food hygiene before we can really get started...



First meeting of our Friday Crafting Club

WCFP

Washington Community Food Project



**You can help us to help others.
Please donate any tinned or packet food.
No fresh food.**



@washington_cfp



Washington Community Food Project

Website: wcfp.org.uk

Contact us on the details below:

Tel: 07450766226 or email Washingtoncfp@gmail.com

Or find us at:

Unit O, The Galleries, Washington, NE38 7SD

-Thank you for your support-