**Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank**

**Registered address:**

Magdalen Road, Blurton, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 3HS

**Charity Registration Number:**

1150820

**Company Number:**

8334798

**Trustees of Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank for the year 01.04.23 – 31.03.24**

* Mrs Lilian Dodd (Chair)
* Mrs Sheila Cowell
* Mr Glenn Parkes MBE
* Mrs Judith Woodall
* Mrs Philippa Simpson
* Mrs Karen Poxon

**Structure, Governance and Management**

* Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank Hierarchy Structure, see Appendix A.
* Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank Memorandum and Articles of Association are present on the Companies House website [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house)
* Trustees aim to meet every two months or as and when required. This model enables trustees to provide a robust system of management and governance to ensure that strategic business and decision-making continue as usual.
* Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank follows the Trussell Trust model of running a foodbank by following its guidelines and governance. Our Regional Trussell Trust Area Manager Representative provides ongoing support, including advice for the annual audit, policy advice, fundraising advice, national issues guidance, etc.
* We have partnership agreements with all 16 food distribution centres, ensuring consistency and good practices are maintained.
* Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank is a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee and registered with both Companies House and the Charity Commission. Annual Accounts and an Annual Report are submitted annually to comply with their guidelines.
* The Statement of Accounts for 2023-24 is attached - see Appendix B.
* Trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission.
* The Director of Services undertakes operational management for the Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank.
* The Independent Examiner of the Financial Statements of Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank is Daryl Denson ACMA, Vast, The Dudson Centre, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5DD.
* Trustees identify all risks to which the charity is exposed, and the Director of services reviews them regularly. Policies and procedures are in place to manage risks to an acceptable standard. These include Public and Employment Liability Insurance, Risk Assessments, Financial Conduct, GDPR, Safeguarding, Health and Safety, HR Compliance, and Codes of Practice. All governance is to the standard set out by the Charities Commission and underpinned by the Trussell Trust, which completes our annual Quality Audit.
* Trustees aim to ensure that the charity can continue to fulfil its charitable objectives even if there is a temporary shortfall in income or unexpected expenditure. All financial matters get reviewed at every Trustee meeting against the backdrop of income and forward commitments.
* Income is primarily in the form of individual donations, corporate donations, funding applications and fundraising events.
* Trustees have considered the reserve funds they wish to retain appropriate to the charity's needs based on its size and financial commitments. Trustees will endeavour not to set aside funds unnecessarily. We will ensure that we maintain sufficient reserve funds for staff salaries and general outgoings for six calendar months. Reserve funds are to be reviewed at Trustee meetings to ensure due diligence.

**Aim**

The Objects of Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank are recorded in our Memorandum and Articles as follows;

*'the prevention and relief of poverty in Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding area, by providing food to local people who are in need of emergency supplies, and by such other means as the Trustees may determine.*

Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank operates to Trussell Trust guidance for food distribution via a standard picking list. Every person with a voucher code can present at one of our foodbank distribution centres, where they will receive three days of emergency food. Food is distributed to all individuals experiencing temporary food crises due to poverty, sudden loss of employment, reduction in hours of work, benefit-related issues, or other emergencies within their household.

Generally, individuals can receive up to three vouchers per crisis. However, additional support was provided over Christmas, and guests engaging with Money Matters received ongoing support throughout their crisis.

Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank supports people referred by various frontline agencies operating across the city, including Citizens Advice, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Biddulph Town Council, Schools, and Statutory and Voluntary Sector Organisations.

Guests attending Foodbank sessions continued to receive a warm welcome and additional support through signposting. Signposting ensures that our guests receive the best support to resolve their crises. Access to financial inclusion support, including benefits and debt advice, mental health support, and a wide range of other services provided via locality connectors, are core to our service to reduce the requirement for foodbank guests to make return visits.

**Words of introduction from Lilian Dodd, Chair of Foodbank Trustees**

Good afternoon, everyone and welcome to the Stoke on Trent Foodbank AGM 2024.

This is my second AGM delivering the Annual Report as the Chair of Trustees.

As you all know, when the Foodbank was first opened in 2012, the hope was always that food banks would be a short-term solution and that, eventually, there would be no need for food banks. Sadly, of course, how wrong could we have all been?

When I first became involved with the Foodbank back in 2018, I was both shocked and very concerned about the number of guests that needed our help. Never did I envisage that in this last year, the numbers would have increased, once again to a staggering **19,643** Families, many of them working families with young children, needing to turn to the Foodbank for help and support in their time of crisis.

 How amazing that we have been able to help so many people with the support of the wonderful people of Stoke on Trent and their very kind donations.

It's exceptional times like this that we get to see the best in people, and once again, that is precisely what we, as Trustees, have seen during this reporting period.

Firstly, thanks to our amazing team based at the warehouse that has continued to work tirelessly during this period, making sure that all our distribution centres continue to receive their weekly supply of food on time, ensuring that our partnership work with schools, churches and businesses continues to expand and interact with our army of referral agents. Making sure that our guests receive the exact support that they so desperately need.

Secondly, thank you to our amazing team of volunteers across all the centres who continue their work with such dedication and kindness, ensuring that all our guests are met in a caring and compassionate way. All our Trustees continue to be inspired by the selfless giving of your time to the organisation and cannot thank you enough.

This year, we have seen the introduction of Community Lounges in some of our centres, with the City Council Locality Connectors offering extra support to all our guests.

The recent Harvest Festival campaign in our schools brought in an amazing **12297.86** kilos of food, and it was my pleasure to attend one of the school assemblies across the city and talk to young people about the work of the Foodbank and how they, too can make a difference to families and friends less fortunate than themselves. A huge thank you to all the schools that sent in this amazing amount of donations.

The local supermarkets across the city continue to support us with food collections throughout the year, for which we are eternally grateful.

In September this year, the local churches in this area, organised an event in Queens Park. Longton, supporting the Foodbank. All the children that attended along with their families, had a lively afternoon and donated an amazing 583 kilos of food in just two hours. Once again, thank you to everyone involved.

Sadly, in the past few months, three of our Trustees have needed to resign their posts due to other commitments.

Glenn Parkes, who did the very important role of managing our accounts, needed to concentrate on his very busy life at Temple Street,

Judith Woodall has worked tirelessly as a trustee while working towards a university degree. After gaining her degree with Honours, she has now been offered the post of a university tutor! Congratulations, Judith.

Finally, Sheila Cowell, who took a very active role in improving our Policies and procedures, has needed to resign for health reasons.

I would like to give my personal thanks to all three Trustees, who have done so much to support the Foodbank and myself in their roles as Trustees.

However, there is always good news!

I would like to welcome you and introduce you to our new trustees who have been appointed to the board.

Doctor Chandra Kallaganti.

Gill Millward

Chris Davis and,

Wendy Mercer

All who I am sure are going to bring their own varied skills, knowledge, connections and new ideas to support the journey of Stoke on Trent Foodbank. Welcome to you all and we all look forward to working together.

Hopefully, in time, the need for a food bank will be talked aboutin history lessons inour schools. It was a dark time when so many people could not afford to feedtheirfamilies, but how fortunate the Foodbank was there to help and support them, ensuring that no one went hungry.

**Kind Regards**

**Lilian Dodd, Chair of Trustees**

**Activity**

During the 2023/24 reporting period, local schools, businesses, faith groups, individuals and over 200 volunteers have continued to support the Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank.

Local people and organisations have donated food and other essential items, enabling the Foodbank to provide 19,643 three-day emergency food parcels to 11,997 adults and 7646 children; this is a decrease of 20.6% owing to the introduction of the three-voucher limit and the increase of available support at the point of crisis. Although we have seen a decrease, it is imperative to note that a high number of first-time referrals has been identified. Our return ratio of 1.7 remains a statistic to be proud of as we now understand from DCS data that food bank guests are utilising emergency food as a last resort.

The top three reasons for vouchers being issued are as follows:

* Rising cost of essentials
* Ongoing impact of physical or mental health condition
* Priority Debt

1. **Summary of achievements & developments during the 2023/24 operating period**

Trustees and staff have focused an enormous amount of effort during the past 12 months to ensure that the Foodbanks' priorities have been achieved; these are:

* To ensure that the charity meets its financial obligations
* To ensure that the charity meets demand with sufficient food provisions and other essentials received
* To ensure that the Foodbank operates with Pathfinder at its core
1. Emergency food continued to be distributed via the 16 food distribution centres across the city, including the two centres in Biddulph. Foodbank operations continued despite the substantial number of people who needed support.
2. This was the year we ceased issuing our own vouchers. Handing the referral process to experienced frontline professionals ensured our guests got the right support at the right time. E-referral remains a great commodity and continues to be a great success across our network of referral agencies. All referral agencies have completed our e-referral training.
3. Nicola Shaw continues as Pathfinder Lead, developing the evolving Referral Agency network, documenting the Pathfinder journey and liaising with the Trussell Trust to capture learning from across the network. Our Business and Community Liaison, Caroline Wolfe, focuses on improving working relationships with businesses, schools, and communities and continues to excel. As Centre Lead Co-ordinator, Maggie Bradley delivers volunteer inductions and coordinates centre training. These staff members have been invaluable, and their roles are intrinsic to developing our Pathfinder Priority Action Plan.
4. ARC IT Solutions' IT support has been invaluable, and the Foodbank continues to contract them to deliver this service.
5. Our AGM took place last November, during which the annual report and accounts were shared with all Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank friends, partners, volunteers, and supporters. It was great to meet in person, share stories, and enjoy a much-needed get-together. Thank you to the team at The Bethel for providing a warm welcome and an amazing buffet.
6. The warehouse has again been the epicentre of enormous activity, with a huge stock turnover.
* **Total food donated 2023/24:** **154780.34 kg, a reduction of 4.6%**
* **Total food distributed 2023/24: 146706.87 kg, a reduction of 19.38%**
* **However, 31327.78 kg of food was purchased at the cost of £59,052**

The 2023/24 annual stock audit took place, and I am pleased to report that it was extremely successful. At that time, 31 tonnes of food were in the warehouse; the audit showed only a -3.46 kg difference, which is a negligible discrepancy. This clearly indicated the efficiency and effectiveness of those running the warehouse. The discrepancy shows a -0.01 % loss, which equates to exactly -3.46 kg.

1. It is great to report that previous relationships forged and nurtured with schools, the production of the harvest 2023 video (with a huge thank you to volunteer Lucy and her family and Harpfield School for taking part), the school harvest assemblies that we delivered and the children visiting the warehouse to undertake sessions and activities, 65 schools came on board to support us. An enormous amount of food was subsequently donated by participating schools, far beyond our expectations. 12,297.86 kg of food was received during the Harvest Festival period. However, it is important that we continue to work hard to secure support from even more schools in the future so that the amount of food donated will meet the ever-increasing demand.
2. Our partnership with Steelite International continued, storing long-dated, non-perishable food at their warehouse in Chesterton. Additionally, DSV visited to see how they could help us and started six-month warehouse storage for us. Our thanks go out to the managers at Steelite and DSV for this vital support, which has enabled us to store the increased volume of food that is needed.
3. Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank is a member of many city-wide groups that oversee, monitor and scrutinise local welfare reforms and hardship issues, including:

WWRG - Wider Welfare Reform Group

FIG - Financial Inclusion Group

Stoke-on-Trent Hardship Commission

Local Authority Food Stakeholder Group

Fuel Poverty Action Group

CPAG – Child Poverty Action Group

NAWRA - National Association of Welfare Rights

Stoke-on-Trent City Forum

VAST- Voluntary Action Stoke-on-Trent

Staffordshire University - Action on Poverty

Raising Voices

Stoke-on-Trent Council Adult Social Care, Health Integration and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Foodbank continues working closely with key partners to highlight and address the impact and consequences of poverty and hardship.

1. During December 2023, Foodbank guests were issued supermarket vouchers to purchase Christmas food and extras. Each voucher was issued in addition to clients receiving their 3-day food parcel. Businesses Neida and Altecnic sponsored retail vouchers for the third and fourth year, respectively. This valued ongoing support to ensure that people locally can have a celebratory Christmas meal is very much appreciated.

Huge thanks go to PREP KITCHEN and their Ambassador, EDDIE HALL, for supplying 2,600 Christmas meals for the people of Stoke-on-Trent. Our Director of Services, Corrine, coordinated the supply of ready-to-heat Christmas dinners to multiple community groups. Eddie Hall kindly took the time to have his photo taken with visiting children from Kemball School.

Also, we were able to give some beautiful gifts to our guests thanks to the thoughtful presents from customers and staff at Wolstanton Dunelm as part of their Delivering Joy Campaign. This led to us also being featured in their nationwide campaign video. We appreciate their support and look forward to working with them again in the future.

Stoke-on-Trent City Centre BID included us in their Christmas 2023 Giving Appeal, which included a fantastic total of over 100 local businesses. We were extremely grateful for the many donations we received.

Trentham (Gardens) Estate kindly retrieved visitors’ making-a-wish coins from their Italian Fountains and thoughtfully used them to purchase food and essentials to boost our much-needed supplies.

Christmas also saw Stoneacre pool their After-Sales Service Survey funds, which they spent on a food donation. We are incredibly grateful for their support.

Several schools generously donated their Christmas collections. Thanks go to the following schools:

* St Thomas More
* Milton Primary
* Trentham High

To mark the 250 milestone, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and its contractor, Broad Oak Properties Ltd, kindly donated 254 boxes of mince pies to help spread Christmas Cheer.

For another year, We Are Stoke’s AVP charity ran six-week Appeals for us during summer and Christmas ’23, generously supported by Affinity Staffordshire, Wincanton Screwfix, Mornflake, and Go Eat Longton.

Stoke City Football Club fans and community generously supported us. We were delighted to host some of the staff and players when they visited our warehouse ahead of Christmas 2023 to deliver this year’s haul.

Chiidren’s gifts and Advent Calendars kindly came from all the different sectors of the community that support us in what we do.

1. **Food drives**

Permanent food collection points remain at Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, and Morrisons. These points make donating easier for our generous donors. We greatly value the ongoing support that we receive from the supermarket champions, especially in addition to Trussell Trust booked food drives:

* Morrisons Festival Park hosted a Christmas Bauble Appeal collecting funds to spend on food instore on our behalf
* Asda Tunstall and Wolstanton hosted Christmas Elf on a Shelf supported by volunteers from Cooperative Bank, Everlast Gyms - Tunstall and Vodafone – Stoke.
* Tesco Longton & Meir Park was supported with additional food and gifts. Food collection points and in-store food drives continued to be vital lifelines.

Collections included:

* June 2023 Asda Wolstanton & Tunstall; with Energie Fitness volunteer
* Additional 1-day Feb 2024 Morrisons Stoke were kindly facilitated. On other days July and September 23, with Positive HR Business volunteers
* April and June 2023 Tesco Extra Longton an additional one-day food drives
* July 2023 Tesco Extra Hanley one day
* December 2023 Tesco Winter Food Collection at Tesco Extra Longton, Hanley (business volunteering; Vodafone UK & RH Amar Foods, IQVIA, Autonet Insurance and Waterplus

Huge thanks go to the hardworking, dedicated Community Champions:

* Heather at Tesco Extra, Hanley
* Liz at Tesco Extra, Longton
* Janet from Tesco MEIR
* Becky at Asda, Wolstanton
* Damon at Asda Tunstall
* Clare at Morrisons Stoke
* Karen at Sainsbury’s Stoke
* Biddulph Sainsbury’s staff.

New store/ business collection points:

More in-store donation points are now located in smaller outlets, including One-Stop Fenton and Barlaston. Santander Bank, Hanley, and Nationwide Hanley house in-branch collection points. We are extremely grateful for this ongoing support.

Co-op Community Fund: Sincere thanks to the customers who chose us as their beneficiary charity. Also, thanks to the stores in Fenton and Finstock Avenue, Blurton, which assisted with POS information on our charity, supported collections, and invited us to spend time in-store at both venues to communicate with customers.

14**. PATHFINDER YEAR 3**

Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank has continued to work closely with the Trussell Trust and its network of 54 Pathfinder food banks across the UK to learn, document, and share best practices. In line with the national strategic vision to end the need for food banks in the UK, the Pathfinder Programme was created to explore practical measures that food banks can take to reduce the need for emergency food locally and as a network of Food Banks nationally.

The Pathfinder Team have continued to receive prearranged funding to support the Pathfinder roles and projects. The Pathfinder Lead, the Community and Development Liaison Co-ordinator and the Financial Inclusion team at Money Matters had previously been granted the funds to continue their vital work until 2025.

We joined the Pathfinder strategic journey at the very beginning of its inception and are pleased to announce that, along the way, Pathfinder and the overriding aim of working towards the end of the need for food banks are fully embedded in our everyday practices.

Some of the successes of the year to highlight include:

* Hosting a workshop for Vodafone employees during one of their wellbeing days. In the first of its kind for Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank, we shared our strategic aims and discussed the importance of businesses supporting their employees.
* We hosted our first Referral Agency Day, which helped us to improve the quality of referrals and discuss the importance of a multi-agency approach to tackling food poverty.
* Through a long-term (before Pathfinder) membership with The Hardship Commission, we began actively co-researching the plausibility of a Poverty Truth Network for Stoke-on-Trent. The research, based on people with lived experience, has been integral to participation within our and other organisations.
* Our partnership with North Staffs Mind has successfully provided food bank guests with free counselling sessions, which have improved their mental health and well-being.
* The temporary closure and reopening of Swanbank Methodist Church distribution centre proved that with time, support, and strategic planning, we could help create an excellent food bank satellite. Guests were supported throughout the closure as we piloted a partnership with the Community Grocery- Burslem. We look forward to watching Swanbank continue to thrive and to continuing our relationship with the Community Grocery.

The Pathfinder Foodbanks network has had the opportunity to meet online and in person for residential workshops in Edinburgh (October 2023) and Yarnfield (March 2024). Previously, the meetings had been more of an opportunity to learn from one another; however, as a Foodbank that has made significant progress in its strategic aims, we have started showcasing and presenting our projects and outcomes to the network at the request of the Trussell Trust. At the Leicester Forum, we were asked to participate in a Q&A session based on our Referral Agency day. Since the forum, other Pathfinder food banks have hosted similar events.

The Pathfinder network launched the first ‘Buddy Scheme’. We made good progress with Southwark Foodbank by guiding them through Referral Pathways and Partnership Working during our Foodbank sessions and look forward to welcoming them in the future.

The strategic building blocks from which the Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank Pathfinder Progra b was built have continued to evolve and adapt. Operations, governance, data, and volunteers remain core parts of the development of Pathfinder, and the following areas remain integral to our progress and future plans:

* Referral Pathways
* Financial Inclusion
* Participation
* Changing Local Minds
* Partnerships
* Changing Policy

**Referral Pathways**

The DCS is core to all Referral Pathway work. Accurate data has remained integral to evolving our service and aiding us in planning accordingly.

The first Referral Agency event in June 2023 proved to be a success. We joined with existing Referral Agencies, hosted guest speakers, and discussed good practices with a multi-agency approach. Stronger relationships were a key outcome for the day. Thanks to the Community Lounge team, The Homeless Hub, James Ibbs (DWP), and Dr Alison Briggs, who presented the fascinating research ‘Running on Empty’. Extended thanks to the referral agents who attended, participated, and gave feedback.

After the event, Foodbank guests were given guidance regarding migrating to Universal Credit. CDAS produced a document to help them better understand their clients and their financial situation. Taking onboard the feedback from the survey, the referral agency newsletter was created, and Referral Agency Training was adapted to suit the increasing number of frontline professionals needing access to the DCS. 40 training sessions hosted via Teams were carried out throughout the year, covering 45 organisations.

Tackling digital exclusion in conjunction with Vodafone continued as Foodbank guests were supported with mobile phone sim cards containing free calls and data. SIM cards have become a lifeline for many when navigating the complex support system.

Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank provided school uniforms to prevent parents from needing to access emergency food. Twelve schools referred to us, and 114 children received school uniform support.

 **Financial Inclusion**

Financial inclusion remains a core structure of the Pathfinder delivery at Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank. We can demonstrate the importance of free access to advice on benefits, debt, and money concerns. In the past year, the Money Matters team has helped over 1,000 people with budgeting, debt management, and identifying unclaimed benefits. They have also provided fuel support and supermarket vouchers to those struggling to make ends meet.

 Here are some specific examples of their impact during Pathfinder funding:

* Live Debt Managed £4,634,837.16
* New Debt Managed was £2,218,964.42
* Debt Written off £287,367.17
* Benefits Realised £2,000,000
* Debt Relief Orders 25

The Money Matters team is making a real difference in the lives of people in our community. They are helping people to manage their finances, meet their basic needs, and get out of debt.

**Partnerships**

We are pleased to announce that our long-standing partnerships and involvement with the following steering groups and organisations have continued to be of benefit when supporting people in need of emergency food parcels and generally tackling hardship and poverty in Stoke-on-Trent:

* Financial Inclusion Group
* Hardship Commission
* Wider Welfare Reform Group
* Money Matters
* North Staffs Mind
* Staffordshire University
* The Community Lounge Team of Locality Connectors
* Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Key events included hosting the annual (2023) Community Meal in Meir with the fantastic team of Social Prescribers. 100 people attended for a pre-Christmas meal, celebration and raffle. Special thanks go to our team of volunteers who supported and served food at the fantastic event.

Additionally, for the first time since both our Foodbanks started operating, we had the pleasure of co-presenting with Newcastle Staffs Foodbank at a Financial Inclusion Group event in Bentilee. We discussed our similarities and our collective vision to work towards ending the need for food banks locally. We look forward to future interactions with the Newcastle Staffs team.

**Participation**

In January 2024, we joined forces with the well-established Raising Voices group through the Hardship Commission to research whether a Poverty Truth Commission would be a good fit for Stoke-on-Trent. The ‘Chat for Change’ toolkit was created to help us research, and the first ‘Chat for Change’ event was hosted at Birches Head Get Growing in February. Thanks to Staffordshire University, All the Small Things, and Expert Citizens. We look forward to seeing the research develop and continue to include the voices of those most affected by hardship and poverty.

**Changing Local Minds**

Substantial progress to engage and inform was made with local business Vodafone in November 2023, as we were invited to present at one of their ‘Spirit’ wellbeing days. We had the opportunity to discuss how Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank operates, why corporate organisations are responsible for supporting their employees in preventing the need for emergency food, and the value of volunteering. We were grateful for the opportunity to try something new and hope to host similar events with businesses in the future.

Investing time to attend the HR Forum has been highly beneficial in building new relationships and having the opportunity to discuss our core values. We look forward to future events and opportunities.

After attending the Edinburgh Pathfinder workshop on storytelling, we commissioned Urban Wilderness to help us bring our vision to life through film. We look forward to sharing the film, which will focus on our successes and hopes for the future.

Media continues to be a key area for sharing our vision and engaging wider networks. We encourage those who share our vision to build relationships, which often leads to volunteering opportunities, fantastic school engagement, and increased donations. We will continue to utilise social media, radio, and TV opportunities in the future.

**Changing Policy**

We have continued to influence local policy via communication and shared data to understand better local issues and root causes of poverty in our community. Referral agencies, schools, churches, businesses and other community groups are engaging with us to understand why people come to our Foodbank, what caused their crisis and whether it could have been prevented. We share our findings and data with key stakeholders and external strategic groups that actively want to see food security across the city. We have identified the power of having honest and open conversations to aid change and encourage these conversations across the network.

The Council’s Health and Scrutiny team invited us to discuss all aspects of Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank, including data, trends, and food bank drivers. There were opportunities to discuss gaps in support and advise how we anticipated our strategy to impact local communities. We later invited the team to visit Temple Street Foodbank to see a distribution centre in action. We look forward to sharing the final report and how this might influence policy change.

1. The Foodbank website is updated with information regularly. You are encouraged to visit the site, which will keep you informed of activities and plans and also ways that you can support the charity: [www.stokeontrent.foodbank.org.uk](http://www.stokeontrent.foodbank.org.uk)

News, updates and partnership activity are reported and can be followed on the Foodbank social media sites;

Facebook       <https://www.facebook.com/stokeontrentfoodbank>

Twitter            <https://twitter.com/OnFoodbank>

Instagram       <https://www.instagram.com/stokeontrentfoodbank/>

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/stoke-on-trent-foodbank/>

1. **Media Engagement:**
* We have responded to requests from The Sentinel and Biddulph Chronicle to react to and comment on 'live' news items, including the June 2023 Sentinel Article and guest interviews at our Wesley Hall church-based centre, which was struggling on Universal Credit after overpayment was reclaimed.
* We provided media updates in response to the release of the Trussell Trust’s latest figures and predictions for Winter 23/24. We had multiple positive interactions with BBC Radio Stoke via the Stuart George Morning Show and the Adam Smith show. We also welcomed Cross Rhythms to the main warehouse in November to interview different team members for footage. This is an important channel for communicating with churches. Extensive sound footage went out in a feature with a video trailer. Repeated mentions were made in the morning show.
* The importance of business support was highlighted and published digitally in the Chamber of Commerce Daily Focus in May 2023.
* Business media releases regarding business volunteering have been jointly produced with Waterplus and featured in the Daily Focus.
* A written newsletter collaboration with the Cooperative Bank Head Office and our warehouse volunteers was published.
* Channel 4 and Sky News came to visit distribution Centres to discuss fuel poverty, and funeral poverty, guests gave interviews on how their lives have been impacted due to the cost of living crisis.

Social media continues to be a valuable resource for publishing business and community thank-yous and recognition.

1. **Training, development and experience:**

 Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank Trustees' Skillset

 **Lilian Dodd, Chair of Trustees**

Lilian secured significant funding for Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank. She is an expert in charity governance. Previously Stoke-on-Trent Lord Mayor, Lilian also sits on a number of strategic boards.

**Glenn Parkes MBE**

Glenn has over 40 years of experience as a qualified accountant, bringing substantial knowledge to the Foodbank. Glenn is also the designated GDPR Trustee.

**Karen Poxon**

Karen contributes a wealth of safeguarding knowledge and continues to attend relevant training in this area as the Safeguarding Trustee. Karen is also a member of the Senior Leadership at the Church to which she attends.

**Judith Woodall**

Judith, a Doctor of Philosophy, contributes her expertise as a church Minister. Judith is the designated HR trustee.

**Philippa Simpson**

Philippa has a local working background as a PA in ceramics and is responsible for being the banking trustee.

**Sheila Cowell**

Sheila joined the board of trustees with a sound understanding of food bank operations. As a previous employee, Sheila spent a vast amount of time supporting guests directly; this has armed Sheila with an all-round knowledge of Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank. Sheila is also the designated Pathfinder trustee.

**Staff Training Achieved Through Foodbank Employment**

**Corrine Boden**

Degree in Social Welfare Law, Safeguarding Champion, GDPR, Employment Law Management and Leadership, Benefit and Debt Advisor level 1 & 2, Life skills Coach Induction Training, Health & Safety, and Pathfinder

**Nicola Shaw**

AET level 3 Teaching, Safeguarding Champion, Induction Training, H & S, GDPR - general, Assemble, and Pathfinder - Lead.

**Caroline Wolfe**

GDPR - Data Champion, Safeguarding - general, Pathfinder - Deputy

**Faith Asplin**

First Aid, Health and Safety, Moving and Handling, Safeguarding, Induction Training and GDPR - general.

 **Mary-Anne Rapson**

A Fellow Member of the Institute of Certified Bookkeepers.

**Karen Poole**

Degree in Social Welfare Law, Level 3 Health and Safety Management, Induction Training, GDPR - general, First Aid and Safeguarding.

**Carol Lowe** First Aid - Lead, Health & Safety, Induction training, GDPR - general, and Safeguarding.

**Jon Bennett** First Aid, Health and Safety, Moving & Handling, Fire risk assessments/ Fire Marshal, Induction Training, GDPR - general and Safeguarding - general.

**Boz Dujnak** Induction Training,GDPR, Moving and Handling- general

**Volunteer Training with the Foodbank**

Two hundred active volunteers

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Induction Training  | Completed |
| Health & Safety | Completed |
| Safeguarding | Completed |
| Data protection  | Completed |

 **Other initiatives:**

Lord Mayors’ Charity 2023/2024, The Football Tournament took place at Shapes, Fenton Manor, this was a fantastic day and very successful in the raising of funds for the three nominated charities.

The Lord Mayors Afternoon Tea sponsored by local businesses, there was a fantastic turn out, Guests and Council staff were extremely supportive as many of those that gave to a generous food collection which was a huge success.

* Football Tournament and our Summer Community Fun Day.
* We continued working closely with Biddulph Town Hall and its community, attending community information events and gratefully receiving thoughtful seasonal donations.
* We have increased the number of subscribers to our Supporter Newsletter and Email Communication. Quarterly Mailchimp Newsletters have been emailed with additional event updates, including news on our activities, the difference we are making together and initiatives available to encourage engagement.
* Year on year, the number of businesses on our live permission-given database has risen from 120 to 160, and individual supporters from 490 to 525.
* The Young Ambassador Programme continued to grow over the summer months. It included more school engagement with secondary schools, including the Discovery Academy, where we delivered a collection of assemblies in March 2024, and the Cooperative Academy, which received a presentation and Q&A session in school to launch their first ‘Giving Social Community Project’. This was followed by a visit to our central warehouse for a taster volunteering session and the nearest distribution centre ahead of its weekly foodbank session. Their resultant fundraising and final project presentation on our behalf won a £1,000 award, which they donated to us as their charity of choice. The project was spot on, showing an understanding of our Pathfinder values and vision, and we were delighted to congratulate them on their win. (The engaging presentation delivered by the team of four pupils included a poem that we could later use in our Harvest 24 video).

* 19 schools were visited for Harvest Assemblies or activities. School visits to our main warehouse and nearby Hive foodbank centre occurred during the spring and summer. Our very grateful thanks go to Sheila and the team at The Hive for their support in this). Other 'It’s Good to Share' Assemblies were delivered during the year and in-school activities.
* Several schools, including St Thomas More CA, Milton Primary, and Trentham High, also collected Christmas food for us.
* We partnered with Stoke City in a Healthy and Economic Cooking Initiative with St Peter’s CE Primary, Longton.
* We Attended Stoke-on-Trent City Centre BID Summer 23 Better World Festival with our trolley, information stand, and children’s craft. We were pleased to be visited by our Business Friends Santander UK to receive the latest of their regular donations and thoughtful donations from Boots and The Potteries’ Centre team.

**Business Volunteers/ Business Friends:**

* We were grateful to have been selected as the Positive HR Charity of the Year 2023/2024. Positive HR organised an online event, donating to their Christmas Event fundraiser (£200 plus £142 cash). We are pleased to announce they received their GOLD LEVEL Business Friend award.
* Thanks to Leek Building Society for selecting us as their Charity for Winter Quarter 23/24.
* Specsavers continue to support us, and we look forward to further interactions.
* Support activities from our valued Business Community Friends included businesses joining in with seasonal collections, including the Harvest 2023 collection from Moorcroft staff and customers,Advent Calendars, and Christmas Treats from Staffordshire Emergency Services Call Centre, which has now become their annual Christmas non-uniform food collection.
* Other support included local pottery firms Portmeirion and Emma Bridgewater organising food collections and Steelite, which generously presented us with their Charity cheque nomination and food collection.

**Music Events**:

We were invited to attend and collect donations with Circa Waves at the Sugarmill in February ‘24 and Diversity at the Regent Theatre in March ’24 (thanks to Grace Church volunteers for crewing this).

**Volunteer Day**

Take-up continued to increase and enabled us to process through the warehouse the large quantities of food needed to support people locally through another challenging winter with rising living costs. Many businesses sponsored staff time, including Vodafone, Sodexo, Co-operative Bank (Leek offices), Closomat, GXO, Advantis Credit, Altanta, Altecnic, Benx, E2 Lighting, Entregraps, Ixion, IQVIA, Stairbox, Santander, Michelin, Nike and Nandos. New PetsRUs, Leek Building Society, Cooperative Bank (Manchester offices).

Extra thanks to those who brought in food donations and have continued to do so periodically throughout the year.

The Cooperative Bank in Leek has been a long-term regular volunteer day contributor. The Manchester office staff are new to volunteering in our warehouse and then put an item in their in-house newsletter to encourage others to do so. They assisted with newsletter content, including Pathfinder comment.

As Leek Building Society, Hanley branch’s charity for this quarter we met with the team and briefed them on our work. They took up a community food collection, volunteered in the warehouse and completed a Christmas fundraiser. They also invited Foodbank staff members to spend time in their branch, talking to their customers about how we work.

**Church and Community**

Churches and other community groups generously supported Harvest 2023, Reverse Advent 2023, and Lent 2024 appeals. A narrated PowerPoint video and newsletter featuring Ruth Jeffries's thoughts at Swanbank using the Parable of the Mustard Seed were successful, with over 400 views.

Our Adlent and Easter egg appeal received good responses from churches. We were delighted to receive Easter Eggs from all across our supporter communities, including; The Hive, S-o-T Lion Club, Balfour Beatty, Star Bikers and Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy

We attended the supportive Church Leaders' Prayer Connect Monthly meetings to share updates.

Presentations were made to Blythe Bridge and Burslem Rotary Clubs, sharing our vision and thanking them for their ongoing support.

 **20.** **2023/2024 Financial Donations**:

Despite rising costs adversely affecting individuals and businesses, we saw another year of community-minded, supportive and generous giving from the following corporate, individual, charity and church donors:

* Co-op LCF and Coop Finstock Avenue via their Community fundraiser
* Neida
* Altecnic
* John Slater Foundation for a second year
* Bestway
* Hoppecke Ltd
* Kudos TV
* Populus Housing CLC
* First Trenitalia
* NISA Local Making A Difference Locally in Baddeley Green & Al Madina Superstore, Normacot)
* Amazon Charitable and Amazon Smile
* Alsecco Ltd
* RH Amar
* The Rotary Club, Burslem, and Blythe Bridge
* St Lawrence’s Church
* Potters House
* Stoke North Methodist Circuit
* Trentham Parish
* Trentham Methodist
* Oasis Church
* St Francis
* Peter Taylor
* T&DA Roughton
* Ducal
* Mr I Browne
* P A Vickers
* H Kenderdine
* P Collins
* P Graham

We continued to be blessed by many churches and individuals who faithfully gave money and contributed to covering our monthly core costs. Corporate financial giving rose by 22.32%. Churches donated 8.77%, and other community groups, including schools, donated 4.45%; Individual giving remained significant at 42.28%, and 22.19% came in through JustGiving, mainly from individuals.

Fundraisers included Dean Bromley, a Trentham Park Run and Trentham Running Club regular, who ran the Manchester Marathon, and Phil Shaw, who completed the Oulton Park 10k. Both raised much-appreciated funds.

**Food donations include:**

Corporates gave 13.05% of the food donated, churches 23.63%, supermarket customers donated 23.63% at supermarket collection points. Individuals donated 6.46%, charities and community groups donated 3.10%, and

the education sector 8.15%.

Specific donors to mention are:

* Tesco Longton Extra
* Tesco Hanley Extra Supermarket
* Tesco Meir Supermarket
* Trentham Parish Church
* Asda Wolstanton
* Fresh View (Veg)
* Sainsbury's Stoke
* Asda Tunstall
* Sainsbury's Biddulph
* Lord Mayor Corporate
* Temple Street Methodist Church
* West End Methodist Church
* Morrisons Stoke
* St Andrews Church Centre, Weston Coyney"
* Trentham Methodist Church
* United Reformed Church Longton Church
* Lidl (Longton)
* The Discovery School
* Aldi - Biddulph
* Closomat Ltd Corporate
* St Stephens Community Church, Bentilee
* Baddeley Edge Methodist Church
* Parsley Box
* Werrington Methodist Church
* Lidl (Bentilee)
* BID Festival Corporate
* Swan Bank Methodist Church
* Lidl Hanley
* Blythe Bridge Rotary Club
* St Francis of Assisi Church
* Wesley Hall Methodist Church
* Christ Church Biddulph Moor
* St Marys RC Church Norton
* St Lawrence Parish Church, Biddulph
* Bassetts Transport
* Stoke City F.C.
* Milton & Norton churches
* Stoke Minster
* Lidl (Tunstall)
* English Martyrs RC Church, Biddulph
* Light Church Church
* St Johns Church Knypersley
* St Gregory’s RC Church
* Lidl (Stoke)
* Carol Black (Caxtons)
* Potters Church
* Amazon Workers

Subsequent thanks go to Closomat’s much-valued monthly food giving started in the previous financial year and has been part of a relationship built upon business volunteering and site visits to share updates. Goddard Dunbar and Associates commenced on June 23 and has since continued at regular intervals. They include their mascot, ‘Jack,’ in many different creatively themed food donation activities interlinked on social media. Trentham Park Run thoughtfully made repeated food collections for us and Nowell Mellor gave at regular intervals following a Christmas collection for us.

We gratefully received thoughtful surplus seasonal food from Deeset and, at regular intervals, from TK Maxx. Amazon's workforce has taken up previous support for the wider community. Major supermarkets' collections have continued to be a vital lifeline for our work; food drives are covered explicitly in point 13. Business communities continue to support our work, with their donations increasing significantly in recent years. Christmas giving remains a focus, but thankfully, the importance of more all-year-round support has been recognised.

In addition to our foodbank centre churches, Trentham Methodist, Werrington Methodist, Baddeley Edge Methodist, Werrington Methodist, St Francis of Assisi (Meir Heath), Christ Church (Biddulph Moor), St Mary’s RC (Norton), St Lawrence Parish Church (Biddulph), Milton & Norton Churches, Stoke Minster, St Gregorys RC and Potters’ Church to name just a few, have been greatly supportive through their food donations

For another year, we would like to express our incredibly gratefulness to the team who crew the Trentham Parish Church weekly Saturday morning collection and to the Man in Space for facilitating the use of their car park. 5647.88 kg of food were collected in one year!

**21.** **Successful funding applications are as follows:**

* £48,468 Trussell Trust Pathfinder
* £54,819.32 Trussell Trust Financial Inclusion for staffing and development
* £1,395.90 Co-op Community Fund – towards fuel for the vans
* £200,000 Stoke-on-Trent Council – for the provision of Foodbank services

The generosity, support and commitment local individuals, companies and organisations provided to the Foodbank during 2023/24 has allowed Trustees to strengthen logistics and infrastructure and continue with our 'Financial Action Plan'. Trustees and the Director of Services continue to concentrate their efforts on strategic delivery and decision-making, ensuring that an effective and efficient service is maintained for all our guests.

**Conclusion:**

I know that the coming year is going to be more challenging than ever. Still, I am more confident than ever that the Stoke on Trent Foodbank charity, run by an amazing team of Trustees, staff and volunteers, is prepared and ready to face whatever challenges come their way.

Thanks are therefore extended to all those who have continued to work, volunteer, and generally support the work of the Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank charity, and may your support continue.

I present to you all this 2023/2024 annual report and sincerely hope that your support will continue into 2025 and beyond.

Kind Regards

Lilian Dodd

Chair of Trustees

