

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during 2018

In 2018 the total number of referrals was 1102, an increase of 19% over 2017. The number of individuals that this helped was 1874, made up of 638 single people, 234 couples and 230 families.

Demand for food aid continues to increase. This is driven in many instances by the transfer to Universal Credit and the difficulties that clients find particularly at the start when they have to wait 5 weeks for their first payment.

As well as food aid, we continue to be able to help clients to access the Scottish Power Hardship Fund for their prepayment card customers. In 2018, there were 132 referrals to the fund, which provided these clients with a grant of £49 in winter and £36 in summer. It is now possible for us to submit the claims for this fund on-line, which is quicker and more convenient than the original call centre based system.

In addition to the normal food packs, Christmas food hampers were put together again in 2018. Uptake was up 57% on the previous year bringing the total to 99 hampers. As before, these were made up in premises in Clyde Street kindly lent to us by Stephen Noon and John Richmond. The hampers included the ladies' handbags and men's bags donated by Woman Kind in Biggar.

Details of any deficit

In 2018, the charity showed a loss of £3260. This was due to the increase in demand for food packs outstripping the level of physical donations. The shortfall had to be made up by buying extra stock.

Donated facilities and services

The food bank exists purely on voluntary donations both of **physical goods** and of **money**. We are indebted to the general public of Clydesdale and to a growing number of businesses who continue to support us. We now have collection points in Tesco Carluke and Tesco Lanark, Morrisons Lanark, Brownlees and Coop in Biggar, Scotmid in Carluke and in Blackwood and in Douglas Grocers. That list has grown significantly over the year and it allows a growing number of people to donate easily while out doing their own shopping. In addition, there is a long list of churches around Clydesdale who regularly collect for us and we are very grateful for their support. Some local businesses support us by donating goods eg Tesco, Greggs, Borders Biscuits, RW Scotts, Londis Carstairs Junction among others.

During the summer, we received weekly donations of fresh vegetables and fruit from Clydesdale Community Initiatives. They have formed a Food Growers Cooperative with groups in Forth, Lanark, Lesmahagow and some of the smaller hospitals around South Lanarkshire. Growers either plant crops especially for us or donate their excess production. It

has been top quality produce and goes some way to reducing our fresh food bill over the summer.

In addition to the physical donations, the gifts of money are crucial. Special thanks are due to those who have committed to a regular donation by standing order. In many cases this has been gift aided thus increasing the value by 25%. In 2018 we were able to claim £1143.41 in gift aid which is a huge help. At this point, I particularly want to thank Choices shop for their monthly gift of £200 and Calvary Christian Fellowship for their £60/month. Several churches have been very supportive in their giving either by encouraging individual donations on a monthly basis or through special collections. Schools, clubs, guilds, uniformed youth organisations and have also supported us during the year. Victoria Park School raised an amazing £985.

Other information

During the year, we were pleased to have new signage and notice boards installed by Carluke BID. This has made the Carluke hub more visible and has allowed us to display both food bank information and posters relating to community events.

We did have a problem with flooding in our back store area for a while which seemed to be difficult to resolve but it was eventually satisfactorily fixed. At the same time, we had a larger sink installed in the back store.

We have also added to our storage capacity by installing extra shelving. Even then, we did not have sufficient storage space for the huge influx of donations in the last three months of the year and we had to store a considerable amount of stock off-site.

We have now joined the Independent Food Aid Network. The aim of this organisation is to publicise the work done by the independent sector, which has been largely ignored by the media and governmental agencies since data was not generally available. They are collating anonymised referral information with a view to publishing it alongside the data from the Trussel Trust in order to give a more complete account of food poverty and food aid in the UK.

Our volunteers who unpack and pack food, drive and deliver to clients are the heroes of the operation. Last summer we held an afternoon tea attended by about 30 out of a possible 40. This was a good opportunity to allow people to chat, exchange experiences and for us to thank them for their commitment. We hope to repeat this later in 2019. We have been pleased to welcome some new volunteers who have fitted into the operation very smoothly