



Welcome to the Spring Edition of Our Food Bank Newsletter!

As the flowers bloom and the days grow warmer, we are reminded of the importance of community and togetherness. The Food Bank continues to thrive, thanks to the generous donations and tireless efforts of our volunteers. In this edition, we bring you exciting updates, and inspiring stories.

Community Impact

Our Food Bank has made significant strides in helping those in need. Over the past two months (January/February), we have received over 651 referrals and fed 1056 adults and 299 children. This achievement would not have been possible without the support of our volunteers, local businesses, organisations, and individuals who have come together to make a difference.

New Build

We are edging that little bit closer to moving into the new food bank, Office staff are hoping to move by the end of this week, as CNTW need to occupy Bothal building for patients. David Lea is working hard in designing the warehouse layout, which will be the next phase of the move, and the final phase will be the warehouse.

Once we have the green light, we can invite you all over to the new building for a look around, which I'm sure you'll be very impressed with everything that CNTW have done for Wansbeck Valley Food Bank.

Full Circle Food Workshop

On the 25th of March, Karina and I had the pleasure of attending a workshop event at Full Circle Food. This event was organised with the aim of designing a recipe booklet for our food parcels, and we invited a handful of our clients who have larger families to join us and contribute their valuable ideas.

Each client who attended the workshop received a free lunch, an air fryer (from FCF), and a food parcel from the Food Bank. This gesture was not only a token of our appreciation for their participation but also an incentive to encourage their involvement in the project.

The insights and suggestions gathered during the workshop were incredibly insightful, and we believe they will significantly enhance the quality and usefulness of our food parcels. The goal is to include the recipe booklet in all our food parcels, providing recipients with practical and creative ways to make the most of the ingredients they receive.

It was a rewarding experience to collaborate with our clients and see their enthusiasm and creativity shine through. We are hopeful that the recipe booklet, once finalised, will be a valuable resource for many families in our community.

Once we have the booklet together I will update you the details, as the QR code will link up to a video so clients can watch how the food is being prepared.



AGM

Our AGM took place on Monday 24 March 2025 at St George's United Reformed Church, Morpeth. Our Trustees reported on the events of 2024. John spoke about the new building. John also gave a breakdown of the Food Bank expenditure and donations received. Richard Anderson spoke about our growing range of partners, and thanked the local churches, supermarkets, local companies who support the Food Bank with donations and a special thanks went to CNTW for their support with the new Food Bank, and accommodating the us with storage space whilst we were waiting to move into the new building. David Lea spoke about the Food Banks strategy plan up till 2028, the three areas he spoke about were the relocation, controlling costs of food, and responding to future needs.

We had a guest speaker at our AGM Michael Martin from Groundwork NE & Cumbria, he explained what Groundworks provides, employment support one/one and lifestyle advise, their programme is funded via NE Combined Authority and is part of a consortium with Newcastle College, Kings Trust, Winnovation, Children NE and the Education partnership. Michael explained that they can arrange referral on debt management, nutrition, and lifestyle changes. Claire met Michael through a network event and invited him along to our distribution hubs to speak with our clients and through that signed up to 50 of our clients on to their programme.

Sarah from Full Circle Foods also said a few words, she explained how Full Circle Food is a charity based in the Hirst area of Ashington, and their mission is to enable happy, healthy lifestyles for everybody through cookery, gardening, and group activities. Sarah provided some recent statistics from the Food Foundation

- Healthy foods are twice the cost per calorie than unhealthy foods
- Single adults on low income would have to spend 45% of their funds to have a healthy diet
- Adults with children on low income would have to spend 60% of their funds to have a healthy diet.

Sarah reiterated that without the hard work and time of both trustees, staff, and volunteer's charities could not function. She thanked the Food Bank for their help and collaboration over 2024 and she gave an updated figure for the number of premade meals they have supplied which is 2000.

Local Business Support – Harmony Fire/Karbon Homes & Hirst Running Club

Harmony Fire are a contractor for Karbon Homes, and they are teaming up with Rapid Relief Team on the 10th April to pack and distribute food parcels to communities they work in, as part of this initiative, Karbon Homes have selected Wansbeck Valley Food Bank, to receive 50 food parcels. They will be arriving on the 10th April.

Ashington Hirst Running Club this is the second year that AHRC have raised money for WVFB. They held another running event Margison Mile Charity Event on Saturday 22nd March at the Community Woods in Ashington. Claire went along and thanked the runners for their support from the Food Bank and collected the food items they brought along before the race took place. WVFB was one of three charities the club was running for, we've not had a total yet, once I know I will let you all know.

Success Stories

Every now and then, we hear heartwarming stories from individuals and families who have benefited from the Food Bank. One such story is that of **Leanne (not real name) and her six children. **Leanne has been sick from work, and we were asked to support the family by the referral agent for three weeks until she returned to work, which we did without hesitation. Thanks to the Food Bank, **Leanne was able to access nutritious meals for the family and sampled on one of the weeks, the tasty meals from Full Circle Food. **Leanne was so grateful and thanked us with a phone call.

Aiden's Back

Aiden, is one of CNTW patients at Northgate, is back helping at the Food Bank on Thursday afternoon's much to Isobel's delight. If you do happen to be on a shift on Thursday, I'm sure you'll make Aiden feel very welcome and enjoy his very happy nature.

See you next Month.....