

# ANNUAL REPORT

2025

.... Nurturing Hope One Meal at a Time



**Wansbeck Valley  
Food Bank**

Registered Charity Number  
1177303

**Company Registration Number  
CEO13360**

Principal Office Northgate Park



CHAIR:	John Rowley
VICE CHAIR	David Lea
TREASURER:	Sophie Ward
SECRETARY:	Mark Facey
TRUSTEES:	John Rowley Mark Facey David Lea Sophie Ward Richard Anderson (resigned 14 April 2025)
ASSOCIATES:	Karen Bower Dawn Hallett Sheila Rowley
FOOD BANK	
CO-ORDINATOR (Salaried):	Claire Slater
FINANCE & FUNDING	Karina Henery
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER:	Wellway Accountants Limited Borough Hall Wellway Morpeth

*Dear Friends of Wansbeck Valley Food Bank*



We at Wansbeck Valley Food Bank are very much part of the wider not for profit community who seek to provide sustenance, and offer hope to those whose simple need is for a plate of food to survive. I am incredibly grateful and deeply humbled to work alongside others who share this ideal and make it a reality in our own community.

As I reflect on some of the past year's highs and lows and everything in between, I think it well for us to remember that food is much more than just something we need to survive - it brings us together, helps us connect around a shared table and reminds us of our common humanity and belonging.

I am often reminded that in the early days of the food bank movement there was a general perception that the root-cause of food poverty would be short lived and the necessity for food banks would disappear accordingly. How wrong we were and sadly there appears no sight of an impending improvement in economic and social conditions to cause the demise of the food bank network.

And here lies the challenge. The charity sector in general is currently facing significant difficulty in raising adequate funds to sustain their good works. In recent months, many notable charities have been forced to curtail their operations. Be assured we have no intention of joining the ranks of the fallen.

In recognition of this, our number one priority over the previous 12 months has been to invest time and energy to ensure WVFB is fit for purpose, is as cost effective as possible, complies with all governance obligations, and has a sustainable future. In parallel with these efforts our commitment to help those in need and fight hunger has not been compromised.



Operating a Food Bank is not without the odd challenge but counter to that are the rewards. And if anything touches me beyond all else, it has to be the sense of “*belonging*” that embraces us as a group of friends with a common purpose – to feed the hungry. I know also that as an organisation whatever adversities we face they will pale to insignificance when compared to the plight of many of our clients.

Our amazing Foodbank staff and fellow board members have made a real difference through their teamwork, expertise, determination, passion and good humour.

Our volunteers never fail to inspire us. Whether sorting, packing, distributing food, or otherwise, their generosity and commitment to share their time and many skills has been vital in reaching those most in need.

And, of course, our donors whose endless generosity has helped us reach incredible goals. Their financial support, food donations, and partnerships allowed us to serve record numbers of clients. We never send anyone away emptyhanded.

Finally, thank you for your trust, support, and patience during my first year as I transitioned from Treasurer to Chair of Trustees. This journey has been both uplifting and humbling. I’m so grateful to work alongside wonderful, caring, and dedicated colleagues.

May our simple pledge to “*Offer Hope one Meal at a Time*” continues to guide and encourage us in all we do.

With heartfelt gratitude and best wishes for whatever lies ahead.

*John Rowley*

Chair of Trustees

# Trustees' Report



## OBJECTS AND AIMS

Wansbeck Valley Food Bank is a registered charity, created to prevent or relieve poverty or financial hardship in Northumberland. The charity achieves its aims and objectives, specifically but not exclusively by:

- The provision of emergency food parcels, items, services and facilities to individuals in financial need
- Contributing to and co-operating with charities and other organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty within Northumberland .

## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

In 2025, the Foodbank faced various challenges and opportunities as it worked to meet client needs.

### Premises

One of the main activities that has been the focus of attention relates to the transition and move into new premises on the Northgate site. Since the end of 2023, the Food Bank had been operating out of temporary

accommodation kindly provided by our host Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Hospital NHS Foundation Trust [CNTW]. CNTW made available office space for our administration - a small but secure warehouse in which to accommodate goods-



in / bulk storage – and use of car parking space where we use portable accommodation to pack and dispatch food parcels.



CNTW has very generously provided the use of a new building as alternative accommodation for the Food Bank as part of its Northgate Park redevelopment. This is following the land sale and premises originally provided for the Food Bank's use. Discussions regarding tenancy agreements were concluded with CNTW early in the year.

The new facility enables all aspects of the Food Bank's operations to be housed within the same building. We were able to adapt the racking used in the temporary accommodation to optimise the storage and warehousing of stock in the new facility thus reducing the need for additional expenditure. Using heavy duty racking and the previously purchased pallet stacker, the new facility enables the storage of greater volumes of stock vertically.

Apart from making better use of limited floor space, it facilitates a more considered approach to stock replenishment.



### Procurement

The challenge of purchasing the volumes of stock required in domestic sized packaging remains an ongoing challenge. In many instances the Food Bank has greater stock levels than local supermarkets. In addition, the prices in the wholesale outlets can be greater than supermarket prices. Unfortunately two sources of supplies for the foodbank came to an end during 2025. Reduced stock levels and longer lead times to order stock at wholesalers also proved to be an ongoing issue.

To respond to the challenges of stock purchase, a review of the vehicles owned by the foodbank was undertaken. To buy and collect stock more efficiently, the decision was taken to buy a long wheel



based van capable of carrying up to three pallets of stock in one journey. This was funded from reserves set aside for such purposes, a £2,000 grant awarded by the Joicey Trust and trading in two of the older domestic sized vans that were coming to the end of their operational life in terms of age and mileage.

### **Client Support**

We continued to explore alternate ways of supplying food to our clients.

Through the ongoing development of our partnership with the Full Circle Community Food Project [FCCFP] initiative based in Ashington, we formalised the provision of 40 ready meals per week to our clients. The foodbank supplies the ingredients to enable FCCFP to prepare the ready-made meals.



This works to the mutual benefit of both organisations and not least, our clients.

We are always open to discussions with community agencies to explore ways in which we might diversify client support.

Another such development includes the provision of food by The Bothy in

Ashington outside of the foodbank's normal opening hours.

The Trustees continues to be concerned about the number of clients who are using the Food Bank on a regular basis.

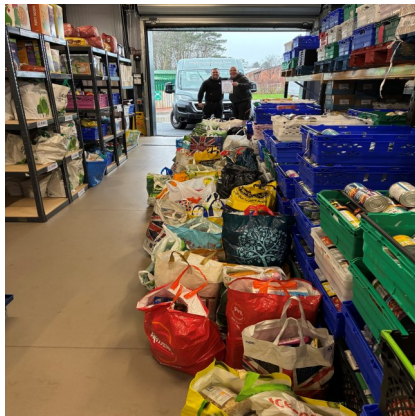
The Food Bank exists to provide emergency food parcels and while it is appreciated that some emergencies will require more than one parcel, these parcels should not be seen as a solution to the issues the clients are facing.



The two staff members permanently employed by the Food Bank continue to deliver a thorough and professional service, coordinating and overseeing the effective referral and distribution of food parcels to clients. Recently, thanks to their ongoing improvements in information systems and expertise, food parcels are provided in ways that better address the needs of individual clients. This includes accommodating dietary preferences and requirements, such as gluten-free, halal, or vegetarian options. Efficient data collection and analysis have played a significant role in achieving this progress. The staff's dedication to maintaining high standards of work demonstrates their commitment to supporting both the food bank and its clients.

### **Trustees, Volunteers and Partnerships**

The realignment and development of Trustees' roles during 2025 have led



to the development of a substantive Finance and Fund-raising role that focuses on the day-to-day operational element of managing the finances required to run the foodbank. This role continues to be developed.

In addition, through the work of our Associate Trustees, the foodbank has developed its governance arrangements. This

included the ongoing review of policies, operational procedures and forward planning to incorporate the ongoing changes.

We continue to monitor and liaise with our partner agencies who refer into the service on how best to assist our clients' needs. This includes the provision of two local client distribution points available through partnership with the Ashington branch of the YMCA and the Hirst Welfare Centre.



Our operation is entirely dependent on the continuing and incredible generosity of the community, particularly by individuals, in terms of food and financial donations. School and church-based collections of harvest goods and individuals participating in the reverse advent calendar donations have provided a tremendous boost to the supplies of food available for distribution to our clients particularly leading up to Christmas.



The generosity of organisations contributing funds has enabled the Food Bank to extend its scope beyond food. These include donations to enable the purchase and supply of essential toiletries, pet food, alongside tents and sleeping bags for the homeless.

The foodbank is indebted to the GP partners and practice staff of Greystoke General Practice based at The Mount in Morpeth. As a part of its winter flu and Covid immunisation campaign, the practice promoted and offered the opportunity for patients to bring food items into the practice at the time of their vaccination to donate to the foodbank. In total 28 crates of food were donated across the two weekends that the campaign ran. During 2026 the foodbank plans to promote this initiative across a wider range of practices during future campaigns

We also appreciated the support from the organisations who acted as a collection point for emergency food parcels over the Christmas period when the Food Bank was closed.

We continue to be grateful to our faithful team of volunteers whose efforts in sorting, stacking, collecting and delivering food are so essential to our operation.



The volunteer's willingness to adapt to changes in working practices highlights their commitment to supporting clients facing poverty. We should also recognise the volunteers who, for various reasons, chose to conclude their service at the foodbank during 2025.

In summary, thanks to the generosity of our benefactors and the dedication of all our volunteers and staff, 2025 has been an eventful and immensely positive year for the Food Bank.

None of us know what the future social and economic impact may hold for the marginalised and disadvantaged in our community. Neither do we understand how any of this might impact on future of our charity. However, we at WVFB intend to be able to rise to whatever challenges that lie ahead by continuing to serve those in need. Much of our 2025 focus has been aimed on laying a firm and sustainable foundation on which to make this a reality.

We appreciate your continued support.

## **PUBLIC BENEFIT**

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charities Commission for England and Wales

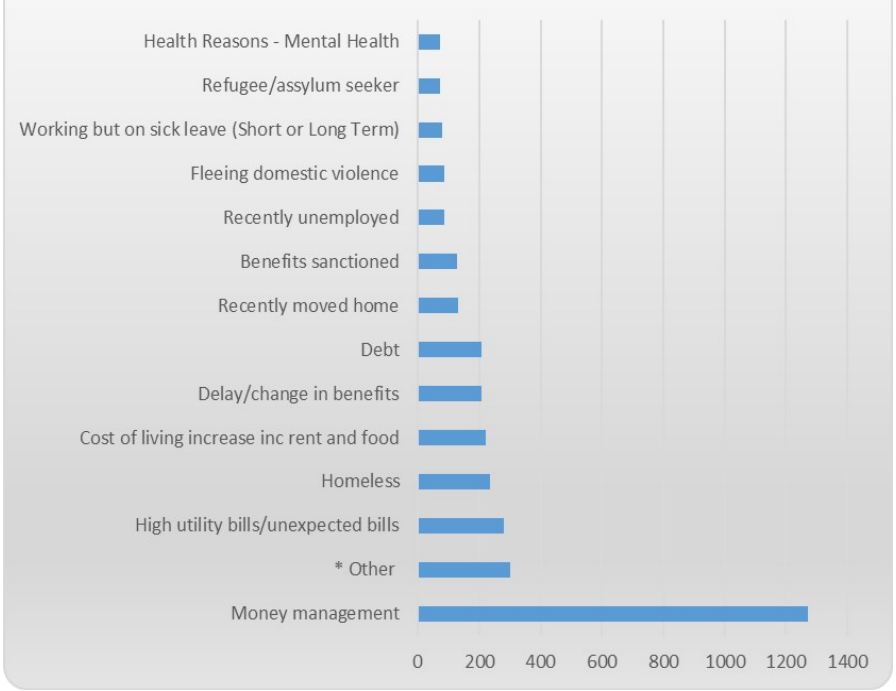
### ***Achievements and performance 2025***

In the year 2025 we received 3634 Referrals and supplied 66,366 meals to 5,773 Adults and 1,601 children. Of those clients needing support, 74% are returning clients.

Notwithstanding the challenges, we continue to provide emergency food parcels to those identified as being in need. All appropriate requests were fulfilled.

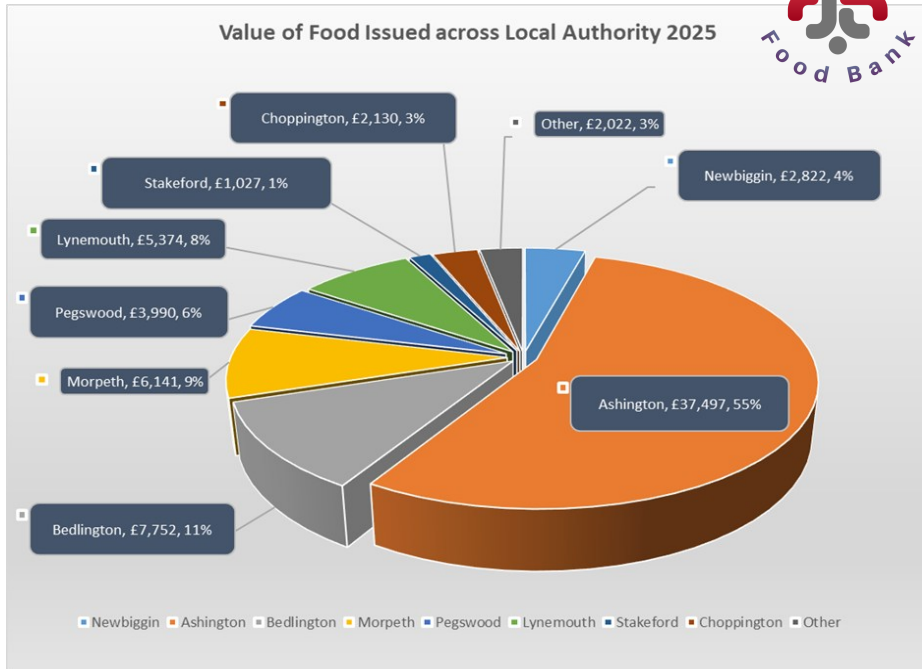


### Reasons for Referrals by Reason 2025



**\*Other Reasons Include;**

*Low income/delay in wages, Starting a New Job - Waiting on first month salary, Hospital to Home Wansbeck Hospital, Rent Arrears, Alcohol & Drug Addiction - No Money, Lost/Stolen Money, Can't work due to Health Reasons, Financial Exploitation, Evicted, Christmas - struggling financially, Fraud on Bank Account, School holidays, Recently left prison*

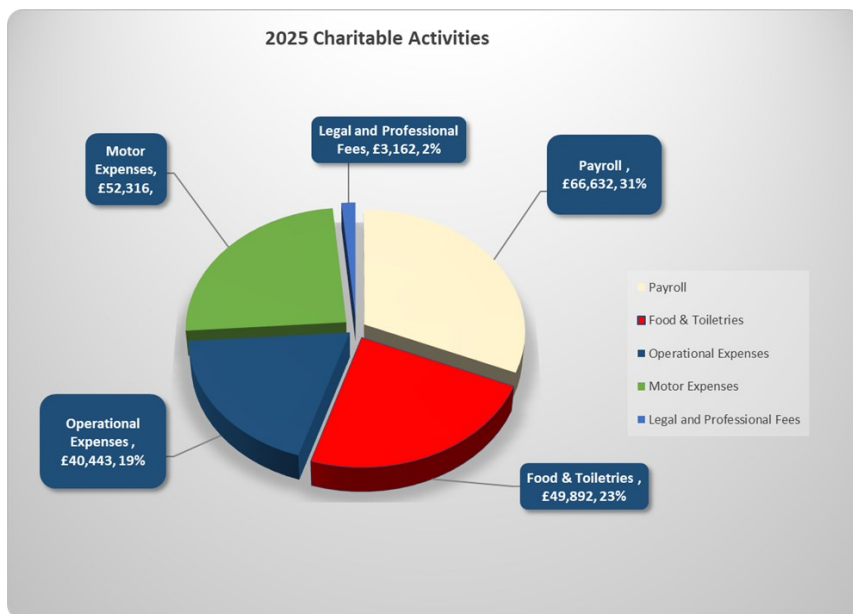
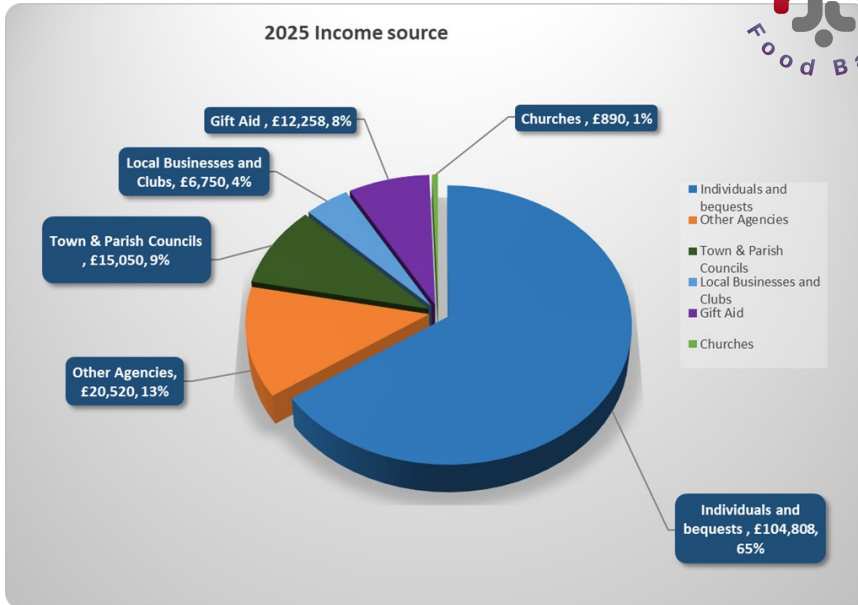


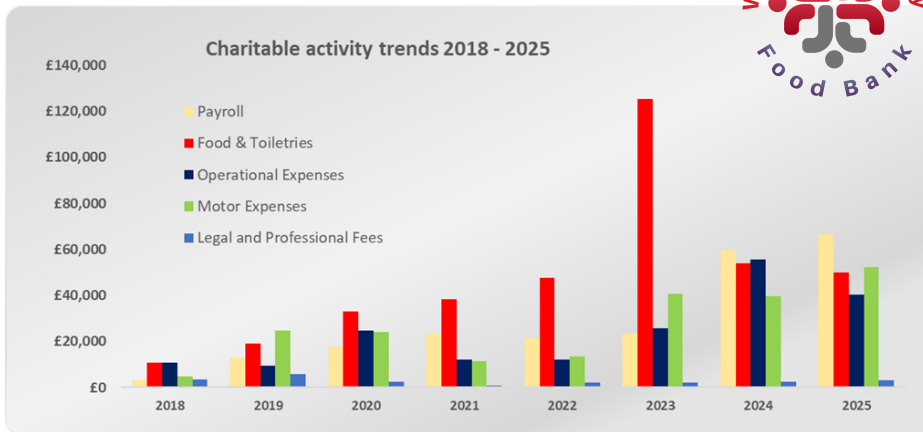
<b>Expenditure on Food</b>	<b>£53,861</b>
<b>Value of Donated Food</b>	<b>£28,274</b>
<b>Value of Issued Food</b>	<b>£82,136</b>

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

The charity's current account will be maintained at approx. £10,000. This can be increased with trustee approval for exceptional items. The deposit account will be maintained for the remaining balances

## Finance at a glance ....





***Policy on reserves***

Our aim is to hold in reserves no less than 3 months of the total operating budget for the current year [or an amount no less than £100,000, whichever is greater]. This will ensure that all expenditure, including core salary costs will be covered in the event of a shortfall in funding. This amount to be reviewed quarterly in the light of operational costs.

Fundamental to the food bank operation is having an adequate warehouse distribution facility and associated office accommodation. We currently enjoy the tenancy of aa office and warehouse facility generously provided by CNTW. However, we need to be mindful that such arrangements are dependent on the landlord’s continued goodwill.

The trustees have thus decided to hold the sum of £100,000 in reserve to cover the cost of relocation to alternative accommodation should this be necessary. The food bank operation currently depends on the use of three vehicles. When the cost of repair and maintenance of individual vehicles becomes higher than the asset value then consideration is given its replacement.

A sum of £25,000 has also been reserved for this eventuality.

The total value of reserved/designated funds is £225,000 [1st January 2026]



## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### ***Nature of governing document***

Wansbeck Valley Food Bank is governed by a Constitution of Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

### ***Recruitment and appointment of trustees***

Trustees are appointed at the AGM, however the trustees may appoint a new trustee to temporarily fill a vacancy or to bring in additional skills or experience. Such a trustee will retire at the next AGM but can then be reappointed.

The role of Trustee Associate has been created to complement and broaden the experience and skill set of the Board of Trustees. It is particularly suited to those who are unable to fully commit to the demands and responsibilities of being a Trustee. It also offers potential Trustee candidates an insight and better understanding of the Food Bank governance. Associates will contribute to the routine working and decision making alongside the Board of Trustees.

The Trustees, where practicable are involved in the work of the Food Bank.

### ***Organisational structure***

Work continues to further define the specific roles and responsibilities of the Board, Salaried staff and Volunteers in order to make best use of their skills and aspirations and to the benefit of the food bank and our clients

The Annual Report was approved by the Trustees of the charity on 9th January 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

*Revd John Rowley*

## **Independent Examiner's report to the trustees of Wansbeck Valley Food Bank**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2025 details of which are summarised here. The full report is available on request.

### ***Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner***

As the charity's trustees of Wansbeck Valley Food Bank you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act")

I report in respect of my examination of the Wansbeck Valley Food Bank's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

### ***Independent examiner's statement***

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention with the examination giving me cause to believe that any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of Wansbeck Valley Food Bank as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

R Thompson  
ICAEW  
Borough Hall  
Wellway  
Morpeth  
Northumberland NE61 1BN  
Date 23 March 2025

## Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2025



<b>Current Assets</b>	<b>Year ended 31 December 2025</b>	<b>Year ended 31 December 2024</b>
Debtors		2832
Cash at bank and in hand	266690	313590
<b>Creditors:</b> Amount falling due within one year*	<u>(5806)</u>	<u>(5726)</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b><u>260884</u></b>	<b><u>310696</u></b>
 <b>Funds of the Charity</b>		
<b>Restricted Funds</b>	-	-
 <b>Unrestricted Income Funds</b>		
Unrestricted Funds	<u>260884</u>	<u>310696</u>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b><u>260884</u></b>	<b><u>310696</u></b>
 *Creditors falling within one year		
Other Taxation and Social Security	2934	718
Other Creditors	314	223
Accruals	<u>2558</u>	<u>4785</u>
	<b><u>5806</u></b>	<b><u>5726</u></b>

**Wansbeck Valley Food Bank**  
**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the**  
**Period**  
**for the year ended 31 December 2025**



	<b>Total Unrestricted funds 2025 £</b>	<b>Total Unrestricted funds 2024 £</b>
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>		
Donations and legacies	160275	241958
Investment income	5269	7778
<b>Total income</b>	<b>165544</b>	<b>249736</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>		
Raising funds	(1559)	(1175)
Charitable activities	(213797)	(210304)
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>(215356)</b>	<b>(211479)</b>
<b>Net income</b>	<b><u>(49812)</u></b>	<b><u>38257</u></b>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(49812)</b>	<b>(38257)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>		
Total funds brought forward	310696	272439
Total funds carried forward	260884	310696

**Wansbeck Valley Food Bank**  
**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for**  
**the Period**  
**for the year ended 31 December 2025**



	<b>Total 2025</b>	<b>Total 2024</b>
	£	£
<b><i>Donations and legacies</i></b>		
Legacies and bequests	-	1202
Donations - Individuals	104403	97205
Donations – Churches	890	4677
Donations Town and Parish Councils	15050	12825
Donations – Collection Boxes	405	362
Donations – Local Business and Clubs	6750	19925
Gift Aid Tax Reclaimed	12258	13531
Grants – other agencies	20520	92231
Grants—other agencies	-	-
	<b>160275</b>	<b>241958</b>
 <b><i>Investment income</i></b>		
Interest on cash deposits	5269	7778
	<u><b>5269</b></u>	<u><b>7778</b></u>

**Wansbeck Valley Food Bank**  
**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for**  
**the Period**  
**for the year ended 31 December 2025**



	<b>Total 2025 £</b>	<b>Total 2024 £</b>
<b><i>Raising funds</i></b>		
Fundraising costs	(1559)	(1175)
	=	=
<b><i>Charitable activities</i></b>		
Food and Toiletries	(49829)	(53808)
Packaging	(1371)	(1348)
Wages and Salaries	(64223)	(58053)
Staff NIC (Employers)	(511)	-
Staff pensions (Defined contribu- tion)	(1552)	(1373)
Recruitment Cost	-	(105)
Rent	(17084)	(19468)
Insurance	(837)	(817)
Telephone and Stationery	(5314)	(4446)
Equipment and IT	(5148)	(8965)
Printing	(2599)	(1781)
Sundry Expenses	(25)	(536)
Northgate Premises Expenses	(9334)	(17441)
Motor Expenses	(52283)	(39618)
Accountancy fees	(2714)	(2448)
Legal and professional fees	(696)	-
Bank charges	(60)	(97)
Other interest payable	(154)	-
	<b>(213797)</b>	<b>(210304)</b>



**Notes to the Accounts: (Full details of these can be provided on application)**

The trustees have prepared the trustees' report and financial statements in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable to the UK and Republic of Ireland.

***Financial guarantee contracts***

The trustees confirm, in accordance with the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (General) Regulations 2012, that at the year end the CIO did not have any outstanding guarantees to third parties nor any debts secured on assets of the CIO.

***Tangible fixed assets***

Individual fixed assets purchased are written off in the year of purchase.

The charity owns three vans and a pallet stacking truck..

***Trustees remuneration and expenses***

No trustee, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.



Just a snapshot of your incredible generosity ....





## **And numbers at a glance ....**

### **The Organisation:**

70+ - Volunteers [including Trustees]  
2 - Salaried staff members  
£160,275 - Total income 2025  
£213,797 - Total expenditure  
40 Tons – Weight of Food Processed

### **Public Benefit**

15 - Average referrals process daily  
3,625 - Total Referrals  
5,773 - Adults fed  
1,601 - Children fed  
59,400 - Meals issued  
£49,892 - Value of food purchased  
£32,244 - Value of food donated  
£82,136 - Total value of food issued  
1,582 - Households  
132 - Homeless referrals  
£52 - Average value of food received by each household  
74% - Clients returning on a regular basis  
3,285 - Referrals Delivered  
349 - Referrals collected from distribution point

**THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING:**



Academy Northumberland CofE	Akzo Nobel
ASDA Ashington	Ashington Football Club
Ashington Running Club	Ashington Town Council
Banks Group	Bernicia Foundation
Charities Trust	Community Life Champion
County Durham Community Foundation	Crossroads
Deputy Chief Exec NCC	Elaine House
Elsie Davis Trust	Food Standards Agency
Forum Hairdressers Ashington	Full Circle
Glenton's Bakery	Greystoke Surgery
Hadrian Trust	Hadrian Trust
Handelsbanken	Hirst Welfare
Jewsons	Joicey Trust
Karbon Homes	Lidl Morpeth
Local Churches	Local Schools
Local Scout, Brownies & Rainbow Groups	Lynmouth Power
Maritime Centre Newbiggin	Mary Hollon Trust
Masonic Northumberland Mark Benevolent Fund	Morpeth CO-OP
Morpeth Dispensary	Morpeth Herald
Morpeth Lions	Morpeth Rotary
NCVA	Newbiggin Co-op
Newbiggin Learning Hive	Newbiggin Town Council
Newcastle Building Society	Newcastle Building Society
News Leader	Nissan
North East Organic	Pavers
Pets at Home	Sainsburys
St Georges Ladies Coffee Club	Stakeford Scouts
Stobhill Link	Stobhill Link
The Bothy (Everyturn Mental Health)	The Manager Morrisons
Thriving Together	Timley
Tranemo Workwear Ltd	Word of Life Church
YMCA	

*21 March 2026*