

The Unsung Heroes of Chiltern Food Bank

With all its distribution centres closed Chiltern Foodbank has continued to support the vulnerable in our community. Using volunteer drivers from Chesham Help for Coronavirus, Gold Hill Baptist Church and Wendover Christian Centre the foodbank has supplied Chiltern towns and villages from Denham in the South to Wendover in the North by delivering food parcels directly to the homes of those in need and has met the threefold plus increase in the numbers of people it feeds.

Behind the scenes, working from a town centre shop in Chesham a volunteer staff of mature ladies (mainly) and younger students (who are great in helping their elders lift the heavy boxes of incoming donations), the foodbank has managed to move, stack, label and store tonnes of fantastic donations, from far and wide, in order to keep those in need supplied with high quality food and toiletries since the outbreak of Covid-19.

In one period of just four days, over 2.2 tonnes of donations were dated and stored, 110 boxes were packed and 68 were delivered – not to mention the half a tonne of cardboard that was flat packed and sent to the tip! Vouchers are received, processed and boxes delivered within twenty four hours and many on the same day. All financial donations are acknowledged and voucher and stock details are entered on the computer so that all data is up to date. A team of drivers also collect on most weekdays from local supermarkets. It's a mammoth task and undertaken with good humour by this willing band of volunteers.

Working in tight constraints and adhering to social distancing, foodbank volunteers manage to keep team moral high by working clever to keep up with the volume of work so that superior service is maintained and a quality food box provided. Volunteers work in the knowledge that the foodboxes put big smiles on recipient's faces when they receive them, and have even greater joy when they are opened to see all the treats and additional extras. Many recipients have phoned to say a huge you for their food parcels they have received.

It is very humbling to know that this small band of dedicated volunteers is making such a big difference to the vulnerable in their time of need.

Big thanks also goes to the general public, local supermarkets and businesses, newly assembled food collection teams, and national companies who are providing funding and the best produce that is required. This enables the foodbank to ensure that all recipients receive a delivery even if they have specific dietary needs, have pets, live alone, as couples, or as a family.

Kizzy Ross, Chiltern Foodbank's warehouse coordinator says; "As a team feel we are incredibly blessed that, with the wonderful support of the community and our fantastic team of volunteers, whom I thank from the bottom of my heart, we are able to provide such great service."