

Ely Foodbank Newsletter August 2021

So far this year ... over 40 tonnes food distributed through 1390 food parcels, helping over 3700 people.

Together we can

To state the obvious the pandemic times have proved so hard in many ways! Yet it has also led to communities pulling together with resourcefulness and a simple desire to help. Ely Foodbank has often been on the receiving end of this, as donors have gone above and beyond not just once or twice, but week on week on week.

Our volunteers and staff have embraced this sense of pulling together. They have worked hard to re-configure the way they work and have adopted new and innovative ways to interface with the other frontline agencies. In addition, the trustees are looking at the bigger strategic picture, considering new partnerships and approaches that aim to enable people to live beyond their current crisis, freeing them to afford themselves food and essentials without needing to rely on Foodbank parcels.



It is all part of a '*together we can do ...*' philosophy that has been embedded in Ely Foodbank from the outset. A very long time ago a serious thinker mulled over many aspects of life, was troubled by difficulties, but also celebrated positives that he saw. He noted how people working together could achieve more than those working apart. His writings are found in a small part of the Bible known as Ecclesiastes, and in chapter 4 verse 12 he writes: '*Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken*'. The philosopher could see that working together is good, and involving God is even better! That aptly describes our approach at Ely Foodbank - from the beginning we stepped out in faith weaving together partnerships. It continues today, like a cord not easily broken. – Karl Relton

Ely Foodbank, run in partnership by local churches, and seeded by the Trussell Trust. Registered Charity no 1150746.

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 ElyFoodbank
 @Ely_Foodbank

Help at the time of crisis, help to move forward

Craft packs

Thanks to funding from Cambridgeshire County Council and National Lottery and Heritage Fund, Ely Museum was again able to provide us with craft packs to distribute this summer.

These themed packs include everything needed to have fun, whether it's a dinosaur scavenger hunt around the house, playing a traditional Anglo-Saxon game or making a World War II spitfire plane! There are packs for children aged 3-7 and 7+, and we are looking forward to giving them out.



Citizens Advice Partnership

Last September our partnership with Citizens Advice went up a gear, as they employed case workers funded by grant money from ASDA and Trussell Trust, along with some funding put in directly by Ely Foodbank. We have made an average of 20 direct referrals per month, giving timely and expert advice to clients on a range of issues affecting them. Over the first 6 months a quarter of the people who took up the extra help offered saw their situations improve so that they no longer needed the Foodbank parcels any more. Another clear impact has been helping clients reach the benefits that should already be in their hands - with a staggering £1,800 per annum additional benefits claimed *per client* who engaged with the case workers!

The other advantage of the partnership's dedicated case workers is the time and tenacity devoted to complex cases. One client had suffered an erroneous decision by the DWP, which removed all their benefit

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income and left them with incorrect advice that they could not appeal. The case worker was able to bring in expert legal help to give the client the voice they deserved, eventually leading to a court over-turning the DWP decision and ordering back-payment of 9 months unpaid benefits.

These stories highlight that our work is seldom just about 'a meal on the table' - each person has a unique story. Our work at Ely Foodbank, in partnership with many agencies, is about each and every person as their story unfolds.

Modern Slavery

Trustee Jenny Gage from Ely Cathedral offered online training to foodbank staff and volunteers on how to spot the signs of modern slavery. We learnt that the most vulnerable in society, including our clients, are often at risk, and anyone can be a target. Anyone with safeguarding concerns should speak to Cathy Wright, our safeguarding officer.

High Sheriff Award

The High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire, Mrs Caroline Bewes DL, recently visited Cathy Wright and the team at Ely Foodbank to present the High Sheriff Award of Recognition for Community Services. We really appreciate the recognition and are proud of all the hard work from staff and volunteers that makes the foodbank the success it is.



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Ely Charity FC

The newly formed Ely Charity FC got off to a flying start with a win against Huntingdon Rangers. They had a raffle and collection for Ely Foodbank, raising £220 and much needed stock. Our logo will be featured on their team tops, and we look forward to working with them again!

Celebrating together

We got over 30 of our volunteers together online in May to say thank you for all they do for us. While it wasn't the same as meeting in person, it was still lovely to 'see' so many of them. Those who wanted it received a sweet treat as well, such as a slice of this amazing Thank You cookie!



Get Cooking

We have been posting a recipe every Wednesday on our Facebook page that uses mainly foodbank ingredients. Ely Foodbank has been shadowing these, including the recipe card and essential extra ingredients, like herbs and spices, in their food parcels. We were also selected as a distributor for World Book Night in April and were given 80 copies of Jack Monroe's new budget-friendly cookbook to give out in our parcels. This will help our clients get the most from their food parcels.

