



# VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



April 2022

## Message from Our Chair Person

I cannot quite believe it is 2 years today when we went into the first National lockdown. I think I speak for most folk when I say we were fearful about what lay ahead but, at Kirkcaldy Foodbank, we closed the doors for one day, regrouped, reorganised and got on with the task of supporting those in need across Kirkcaldy, Kinghorn and Burntisland. We had to adapt everything we did and I am delighted to say, we came through it all stronger than ever with our charity embedded in the thoughts and minds of so many across the town.

This will be my last message to you all as I am standing down as chair after 4 years at the upcoming AGM. I am however, staying on the board and will continue to volunteer as well as take part in some other activities that I have developed over the past 4 years. It has been a privilege as well as a challenge at times to try and lead the foodbank through such a turbulent period and it could not have been done without the amazing support of our Board of Trustees and each and every single volunteer.

The difference we collectively make to our clients is barely quantifiable as it is not just food we give to people, we give our time, our compassion and a listening ear to so many in desperate need.

We are still facing very challenging times ahead with the soaring cost of food, increasing demand and dwindling resources. The impact of all the recent events both at home and overseas is enormous but I know we will still continue to put our hearts and souls into the future development of Kirkcaldy Foodbank.

## Foodbank AGM next Tuesday—we want to hear your views

**What should the Foodbank be doing? We want to hear what you think.**

**Our AGM will be held at 7pm on Tuesday, 26 April 26 at Dysart St. Clair Church, West Port, Dysart. After the formal business of the evening, we will be holding an open forum at which we want to hear your views.**

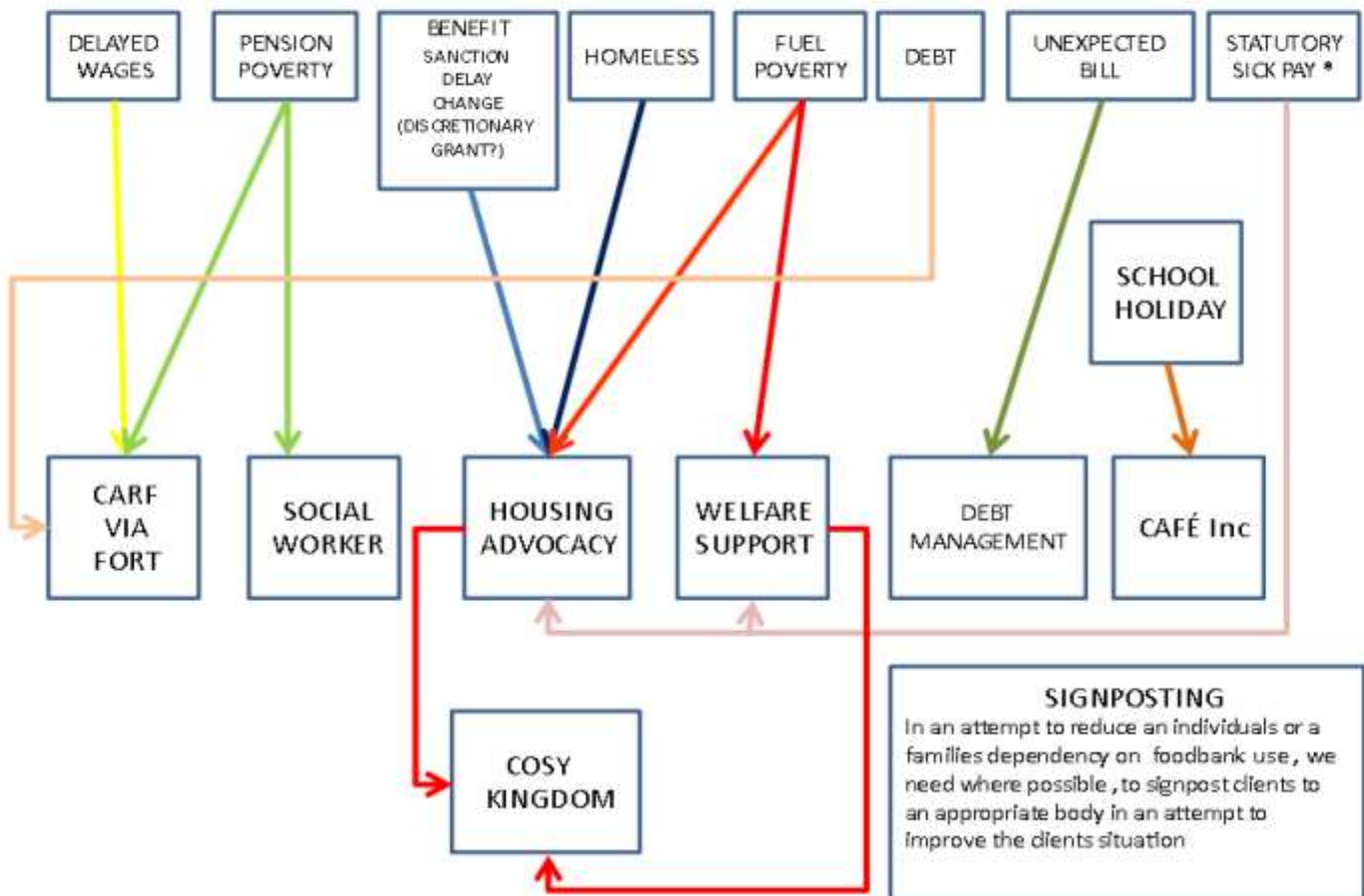
**In recent months we have been reviewing the Foodbank's purposes: what our constitution says about what we should be doing. We're asking whether we should still be focussing on providing food or should we have a broader purpose that seeks to address poverty in a wider sense?**

**Please come along and join in the discussion.**

## Signposting Chart Offers Extra Help to Clients

At Kirkcaldy Foodbank our clients come to us for many reasons. To ensure we are helping them in the most effective way we have come up with a signposting chart to enable our volunteers to point them in the right direction.

If you, as volunteers, identify additional issues which may be preventing clients from moving forward from their situations, this new chart can help you direct clients to additional help, be that from Fife Council's housing service or other private landlords, to problems with benefits, heating or other local or national organisations. The signposting chart below clearly identifies issues clients may be experiencing and directs volunteers to the places where they can receive extra help.



Copies can be found at all the Foodbank service delivery outlets and frontline volunteers should make themselves familiar with them.

Contact with many of the Council services can be made directly by volunteers via FORT on the Surface Pros, and contact details for the others are available on the rear of the flowchart, along with details of when members of the organisations are available at Foodbank premises.

Ann Connell, Volunteer Co-ordinator with Kirkcaldy Foodbank said: "This signposting chart will help our volunteers be able to direct clients to people who can help them with a whole range of issues, from benefit sanctions and homelessness to help with fuel poverty and much more. It is vitally important that this information is available so that these professionals can give the proper and most up-to-date information to those who need it.

"We have been invited to take part in a pilot scheme in Kirkcaldy to give two clients from our Viewforth hub and two from Linton Lane the chance to receive support with their finances and in other aspects of their daily life by a social care team, to help them break their reliance on the foodbank, which we think is a great idea."

## Highlights from the our data reports

In March we had more visits than ever before - higher even than in the lockdown in April 2020. This amounted to 38% more than in March 2021. In every month since October last year, the number of visits each month has shown an increase from the previous year.

The percentage of children receiving food is 36%..

For the first time since 2019, the March data report included an analysis of the number of times clients visit. Particular figures to note are:

- ◆ 72% of clients visited 5 times or less.
- ◆ 82% of clients visited 10 times or less.
- ◆ 92% of clients visited 20 times or less.
- ◆ Just under 2% of clients (42 in total) visited 50 times or more—these accounted for nearly 20% of total visits.
- ◆ 2,186 individual clients made 14,843 visits to the foodbank in 2021.

The latest data report can always be found on our website by clicking on Stats.

## Our Unseen Volunteers

We are very fortunate to have so many committed volunteers—144 at the time of writing. Many of their jobs immediately come to mind: the frontline volunteers in Linton Lane, New Volunteer House and Burntisland, and Viewforth, where the packers and the stock group usually work. But did you know about all the other people who volunteer on a regular basis?

There are people who collect weekly from businesses like M&S, Sainsbury's, The Co-ops at Bennoch, Lauder Road and Templehall, Lidl, Tesco in Cardenden—and as far afield as Stephen's Bakery in Rosyth. The RBS, Nationwide and Bank of Scotland ask for someone to take their donations from customers to Viewforth every few weeks. There are also the people who lend their vehicles and drivers to collect larger donations, as well as the courier firm which delivers crates to the centres on Fridays, and the volunteer who sends the orders to the supermarkets.

Schools are very generous in collecting food from their pupils over the year, but can't always deliver it themselves, so someone from the list of volunteers will collect these donations when needed.

Then there are the many volunteers who supply and empty the coin boxes held in businesses throughout the area. Some volunteers give their time on various teams behind the scenes, helping with the work of finance, stock, volunteers, referrals, communications and fundraising.

Our donors of food and money receive thank-you letters or e-mails written by a group of volunteers, and yet more volunteers deal with social media, answering e-mails and, of course, producing the newsletters. **A big thank you to you all!**

## The Cornerstone Café

In addition to providing food to its clients, the foodbank in the Solid Rock, Burntisland also provided a place for its clients to socialize and enjoy a snack (stovies and bacon rolls) and a cup of tea or coffee. The departure from the Solid Rock, coupled with the restrictions of lockdown, put an end to this and it has been sadly missed.

Not any more! Led by Pat Gibson the Burntisland Foodbank team leader, the Burntisland Parish Church has stepped into the breach with the Cornerstone Café, serving a weekly lunch in the church hall. While the Cornerstone Café is quite separate from the foodbank, it is serving our same clients, giving them a healthy meal and a safe place to relax and chat.

## Best Foot Forward for Kirkcaldy Foodbank

Grace Kinsella, a volunteer at the Viewforth Hub on Wednesdays and new Foodbank Board member, is preparing for a huge challenge. She and four of her friends are in training for a 50-mile bridge-to-bridge sponsored walk. And the most testing part of the task as well as the distance, will be the fact that they are aiming to finish it in under 20 hours!

The mum of 3 grown-up girls, who runs her own small interior design business, as well as a short-let accommodation business locally, is hoping it will be third time lucky for the group, as the walk has already been postponed twice due to Covid.

“I have been a keen runner for many years and enjoy being active. My friend and neighbour Jo had been involved in the organisation of the original walk and had all the info, maps, route notes, etc., so the five of us have decided to go ahead with it ourselves on June 18th. We will be setting off from the Forth Rail Bridge at North Queensferry at 5am and aim to finish at the Tay Rail Bridge at Wormit by 12 midnight—so it will be quite a challenge.



“I wanted to do the walk for Kirkcaldy Foodbank, which I have been a member of for around five years, because it is my belief that nobody should ever go hungry. It might bring some attention to the plight of many people in our communities who sadly struggle from day to day.

“We are experiencing higher numbers of families having to use the foodbank’s services as a result of the increasing cost of living crisis we are all suffering from—and it is only going to get worse.

“We have been doing a number of practice walks to prepare ourselves and next month will be the longest yet—32 miles from Leven to St Andrews, along the coastal path. Although not part of our walk, we have been enjoying its beautiful scenery in our practices.

“If anyone can spare some cash to make a small donation, it would be very much appreciated, and all the money will go directly to the charity.”

**To donate to Grace’s walk, visit [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/grace-kinsella1](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/grace-kinsella1)**

### What it means to be a Member of the Foodbank

The Kirkcaldy Foodbank is a registered charity with a formal constitution that governs how we are organised. This constitution makes it clear that although we have a Board of Trustees, our members are also important decision makers. The members have the ultimate authority to decide who is on the Board of Trustees, and to decide what our constitution says. Our members are the only people who can vote at the AGM. Members can also be involved in sub-groups, set up by the Board to oversee our operations and other tasks.

If you would like to be a member of the Foodbank, please email [kirkcaldyfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:kirkcaldyfoodbank@gmail.com)