

No.24 now open for business!

The official opening of our new premises at 24 Old Street was held on February 15. Volunteers, donors, distributors and other supporters were treated to an afternoon of tea and cakes and the opportunity to see some of the rooms 'behind the scenes'.

Tim Pemberton, managing editor of *BBC Radio News Bristol*, was on hand to declare the premises officially open for business.



Praise for the whole community: Tim Pemberton

In his opening remarks, Tim praised everyone involved in the enterprise including, most importantly, the members of our community who generously and regularly donate food.

The facilities available at No.24 give us the opportunity to offer a significantly better service.

On the ground floor there are two large, bright rooms for listening.

Movable screens ensure privacy is maintained. There is also a separate kitchen with tea and coffee-making facilities.

On the second floor are the main storage rooms.

Sandy Gale, our stock control manager, has taken the opportunity to rationalise our storage system. "The availability of extra rooms," Sandy commented, "means that we can have a more systematic approach, which will make stock control easier and more efficient."

Up on the third floor there is now a much-needed office, where our administrator, Kelly Croxton, is busy establishing filing systems that should help to keep our burgeoning paperwork in order.

Overall, No.24 represents a step forward in the development of the foodbank.

In less than two years we have become an established local charity that is known and respected in the community. We can move forward with the assurance that, all the time we are needed, we will be here.



Cake mix: The tasty treats made by foodbank volunteers to celebrate the official opening of No.24

Manager's musings

A recent newspaper headline posed the question, "Food banks or dignity: is that the choice we offer the hungry?" This is a question to which I take exception. We do everything we can to preserve people's dignity – we do not interrogate them,



we do not demand that they do certain things or say certain words. In short, we treat everyone with respect. We show that respect by listening to what they have to say without judgement. Volunteers will know that we sometimes offer to pray with clients, making it clear that we take no offence if the offer is declined. Sometimes a volunteer gets upset because they have been busy and have forgotten to offer to pray. My answer is always the same. By listening we are making a loving connection with our fellow human being. When we make that connection, we are sharing God's love and that, in itself, is a form of prayer. By treating the people who come to us with loving respect, we pray that they leave us with their dignity intact.

Paul Gale, project manager



Coffee or tea? Michelle Harrison (left) and Sue Davidson offer the choice at the official opening of No.24



Distributor leads

The agencies that hold food vouchers and give them to those in need are known by us as distributors. Here our distributor manager, John Clarke, gives us more information about our distributors and the important role that they play.

The number of distributors supporting Clevedon District Foodbank has steadily increased over the last few months.

We currently have 80 registered distributors spread across our area. They include churches, schools, charitable organizations, housing associations, health services, and local government agencies.

This diversity allows us to reach out to people in need in our community, whatever their circumstances.

Distributors play a vital part in our process. By issuing vouchers to people who they have identified as having a genuine need, they ensure that the food we give out is going to people who need us to act swiftly to help them through their emergency.

For the vast majority of people, one or two vouchers are sufficient to help them out of their crises. However, it is inevitable that there are a few occasions when people are beset by issues that take longer to resolve. In these

cases, communication between the distributor and the foodbank is vital. If we know that underlying issues are being addressed we can agree how much more help we can offer from the foodbank. The number to ring if you wish to have a confidential discussion with the project manager about a particular situation is 07722 769529.

For more vouchers, Portishead distributors can call Pat Gordon on 07790 508069 and Nailsea distributors can call Richard Worthington on 07927 472649. Distributors based in Clevedon and other locations can call me, John Clarke, on 07803 347934.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Every little helps

Look out for our new permanent collection point at Clevedon Tesco. This is a handy way to donate to the foodbank whenever you want, and 30% of the value of all donations is given back to us in cash by Tesco! The collection point can be found near the customer service desk at the front of the store.

Volunteer boost

The new year has seen a significant increase in foodbank volunteers. Sue Davidson, our volunteers manager, is working hard to accommodate everyone on the rota. Please be patient while she tries to ensure that everyone works on the days they want!

Rotary whisk

Following a talk by Paul Gale, members of Clevedon Rotary whisked up a donation of £70 worth of toiletries for the foodbank. Thanks to their generosity, we are now able to give a small bag of basic toiletries to everyone who comes to us, in addition to their food allocation.

Good neighbours

We are making lots of good neighbours at our new address. We are especially grateful to Maggs and Carl at The Veg Box, who are supplying us with fresh fruit for distribution every Friday.

Opening times

There is no change at Portishead (Fridays 12 till 2) and Nailsea (Fridays 12.30 till 2.30). At 24 Old Street we are open for those needing food every Monday and Friday from 12 till 2. For those wishing to donate food, we are also open on Mondays and Fridays from 11 till 12. Please try to keep to these times and, most importantly, please do not leave food outside the door at No. 24.

Branch lines

We asked branch managers, Richard Worthington (Nailsea) and Pat Gordon (Portishead) to tell us what has been happening in their areas.



At Nailsea we have had a steady stream of people through our doors and fed 24 adults and 22 children since the beginning of this year. This has resulted in the rapid draining of the limited stocks we held and meant almost weekly trips to Clevedon to replenish our supplies.

Nailsea Town Council has stepped in to help us, purchasing 12 large plastic storage containers, and giving us space in the Tithe Barn to store these.

This means that we will be able to keep extra supplies at the Tithe Barn.

This makes replenishing our stocks held at Southfield Church that much quicker and easier and helps us to continue to offer an efficient and discreet service to the people of Nailsea.

Since Portishead opened on October 1, 2012, and particularly in the last six months, the numbers needing our help have increased tremendously.

So far this year (Jan & Feb) 38 adults and 38 children have been helped. For the same period in 2013, one adult and one child came to us. This is a shocking increase. It is upsetting for us that people find themselves in the position of having to ask for help in order to survive.

Fortunately we have been given extra storage space, which means that we can keep more parcels of food to cope with the increase in demand. And in

January this year Portishead churches had a unity service, at which I was interviewed about the foodbank. As a result, some much-needed new volunteers came forward. What's more, a collection raised a magnificent £1,133.78p to help us continue our work.

Prayer
Father God
Thank you for reaching into the hearts of so many people and motivating them to help us to continue the work of Clevedon District Foodbank. Please continue to move those who help us and also grant those in need the strength and courage to seek our help.
In Jesus' name. Amen.