



Affiliated to the Trussell Trust (Charity Number 1172470)

Newsletter Number 8 – October 2020



**A brief word from the Editor.** Welcome to our eighth newsletter and the second which, because of the Coronavirus pandemic, has had to be produced solely in online form. Nevertheless, we hope this will help all volunteers, linked agencies, churches, members of Rochdale Council and other friends and supporters of Rochdale Foodbank to still feel connected and up-to-date with our work.

## A MESSAGE FROM STEVE FIELD, CHAIR OF OUR TRUSTEES

It's been a very busy summer indeed at the foodbank and again our considerable thanks go to Adrian, Cath and the team from the Council for their hard work, organisation and dedication which have enabled us to continue providing essential food relief to our clients throughout this challenging time. I also want to express my thanks to the Trustees who have had to make several difficult decisions to ensure our service can continue, albeit in a different way.

We know how much many of our volunteers have been missing their work at South Parade. It is such good news that we are now able to welcome a significant and increasing number of them back there and to our warehouse as we take back some responsibility gradually for running the Foodbank.

As they return, the safety of all our volunteers and clients is our priority and everything has been organised with this in mind.

We remain grateful to our Team Leaders who have worked hard over the last six months to stay in touch with the members of their teams; we know that contact has been very much appreciated. In total around 40 volunteers are now involved: at South Parade, the Wheatsheaf warehouse, our drivers and those working from home processing the vouchers.

There have been some exciting developments too. Importantly we have moved to appointing a Coordinator to start soon; largely to manage the new regime we operate under and to relieve our working trustees of some of the increasing strain of the day-to-day operation. We fully expect Cath Entwistle, seconded from Rochdale Council, to take up her post in October (***Ed note: and we'll make sure we introduce her properly in the next newsletter***).



STEVE FIELD – THE INCOMING CHAIR OF TRUSTEES OF ROCHDALE FOODBANK

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## A MESSAGE FROM STEVE FIELD, CHAIR OF OUR TRUSTEES

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As many of you will know we have recently been able to buy our own van (more information later in the newsletter). We have been extremely well supported throughout the pandemic by many organisations including the local Council, a number of supermarkets and local companies; again, there is further appreciation of their efforts later in this newsletter. Without that support we would have struggled to have the time and resources to continue to serve our clients in the greatest need, across the local community.

So, as we say goodbye to Martin and I begin to take on my duties as Chair of the Trustees, I know I have the support of a fantastic team and of many other local supporters. Let's hope that we can return to something more like our old selves in the not too distant future. In the meantime, please stay healthy and safe!

## MARTIN COUPE: AN APPRECIATION



**MARTIN COUPE – WHO SADLY LEAVES HIS ROLE AS  
ROCHDALE FOODBANK CHAIR OF TRUSTEES**

Sadly, we say goodbye to our Chair of Trustees, as Martin is retiring in the next few days after chairing his last meeting on September 7<sup>th</sup>. He was one of the “founding fathers” back in Summer 2012, with Iain and Margaret Wight taking part in the first training in the old Liberal Club on Drake Street. Shortly after and to no surprise he was invited to become a Trustee and served in that role for 5 years, until he took over as Chair in the turbulent times of February 2018, when Iain and Margaret retired.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to you Martin for making such a massive contribution over these 8 years and particularly as Chair through all the challenges of the last 18 months.

Whilst your commitment, energy and collaboration have always been evident, it has been your forward thinking that has had the most telling impact. Your guidance to insure all the stock in 2015, to move us to become a CIO in 2017, and then to assess early and clearly the impact of the pandemic in February 2020 is to cite three key areas.

We wondered how we would cope early in 2018 but we need not have worried; throughout the most difficult of circumstances Martin has ensured that the Foodbank continues to carry out its vital service.

As you leave your post, with the Foodbank (sadly) needed as much as ever, you leave us better equipped to deal with the demands upon it. Martin, we are thankful that you will remain part of the team of drivers and currently working in the warehouse. Thank you again for all you've done; hopefully you'll be able to enjoy more free time than has been the case recently!

Steve Field

## MASSIVE DONATIONS RECEIVED FROM SUPERMARKETS



THE EXTENT OF THE DONATIONS CURRENTLY BEING STORED IN THE WAREHOUSE

Throughout the pandemic our Foodbank has been in receipt of massive and regular donations from Tesco, Morrisons and ASDA; for good reasons these have now either stopped or are tapering off. On average Adrian and his team have been honouring around 80-85 vouchers each week and stocks are now beginning to decline, with some additions having to be purchased. We are continuing to pick up the weekly donations from Tesco's.

During the pandemic there has not been the time or need to date and organise food in the way we used to; most of the donations were direct from supermarkets. We are now beginning to do this again. Currently we have a small group of volunteers from the Monday, Wednesday and Thursday teams going into the warehouse to undertake this work.

We do not know how busy we are likely to be this autumn – as you will know, October to December are usually our busiest times for donations but this year that will depend on the extent to which churches, schools and other organisations are able to hold Harvest and Christmas collections.

The Trustees have asked that, while Harvest collections will as always be very gratefully received, schools/churches should either place their food in our van when it comes to collect, or deliver it themselves to the Council offices at Riverside. Please get in touch with us through our website contact page at <https://rochdale.foodbank.org.uk/contact-us/>

We won't be able to accept donations at South Parade for some time and our volunteers cannot go into schools or churches to pick up donations. All donations will continue to be placed "in quarantine" at our warehouse for 72 hours before being dated and distributed as needed. We know that the Trussell Trust is going ahead with its annual national Tesco collections from November 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> (16<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> in Express stores). There will certainly be work to be done sorting the donations.

## FALINGE PARK HIGH SCHOOL DONATION



FALINGE PARK STAFF MEMBER ADBULLAH VISITS A LOCAL ROCHDALE STORE TO PICK UP FOOD USING SCHOOL DONATIONS

Back in early summer Falinge Park High School was able to re-admit Year 7 students on a part-time basis.

Even in such difficult circumstances those wonderful young people showed their concern for their local community by raising money to buy in supplies for our foodbank.



STAFF MEMBER ADBULLAH PRESENTING THE STUDENTS' FOOD DONATION TO OUR EDITOR – SOCIALLY DISTANCED OF COURSE !

## OUR NEW VAN ARRIVES

As many of you will know, our Foodbank was recently able to purchase its own van for the first time, to help with undertaking the collection of donations and moving food between the warehouse and the Foodbank proper.

We were able to dedicate the donation of £5,000 from Countryside plc as a major contribution to this acquisition. Long-time supporters of the Foodbank, Hanson Springs, have generously agreed to support the running costs in year one.

We are very grateful to RRG Toyota for regularly loaning us their van; owning our own will save further time and effort.

Massive thanks to both Countryside and Hanson Springs, and also to the Trustees who researched and made the purchase for us.



ROCHDALE FOODBANK NOW HAS ITS OWN TRANSPORT

## OUR CURRENT FINANCES

### A report by Rochdale Foodbank treasurer Mo Evenson

Although many things have changed for the Foodbank as a result of the pandemic, one thing that has not changed is the generosity of the local community. The many who have kindly supported us over the years continue to do so and they have been joined by several new donors, including two significant individual donations.

Funds awarded by Forever Manchester Community Support will contribute towards the employment of our new Project Coordinator, as well as further purchases of food and toiletries to maintain stock levels. We have already used a grant from the Trussell Trust to purchase PPE, thus helping to provide a safe working environment for volunteers as we seek to continue serving those in need.

A number of other charities and companies operating locally have also given very generously. There's not room to list them all, but they include the Duchy of Lancaster Benevolent Fund, the Cotton Industry War Memorial Trust, Countryside Properties, McCormick UK, and Freudenberg (the parent company of Minky).

The Trustees are extremely grateful for all the donations. When added together they put our Foodbank in a healthy financial position as we face up to "the new normal"!

*(Ed note: and we're very lucky and grateful to have such a safe pair of hands in charge of our money).*



MO EVENSON: ROCHDALE FOODBANK TREASURER

## NEWS FROM THE TEAMS

I hear from various Team Leaders that they and the volunteers in their teams are continuing to keep in regular touch through phone calls, WhatsApp groups, emails etc. Everyone is keeping as safe as possible, sticking to the rules (when we understand them!) and really missing meeting up in person. So, here's hoping.....and thanks to all those Team Leaders who have worked hard to stay in touch.

## A RETURN TO SOUTH PARADE



CHRIS MARTUCCI – HAPPY TO BE BACK ON THE WEDNESDAY TEAM

Wednesday Team Volunteer Chris Martucci is one of the small team of volunteers willing – and young enough! – to help out in recent weeks at South Parade. Chris was invited by his team leader, Jo Hill, and went along, on Wednesday morning to be met outside our South Parade headquarters by Adrian, the leader of the Council team, and by trustee Wendy Fell.

Chris said that the way team leaders have been keeping in regular touch with their volunteers, along with the emails sent by Martin Coupe and Steve Field, helped him enormously in being prepared for the new regime.

He and fellow Wednesday team member Caroline Pickersgill were busily employed filling bags with food for the clients. They had been asked to take their own masks though these were also available in the Foodbank if needed, along with plenty of plastic gloves. They tried at all times to observe the two-metre rule, though that is obviously difficult in the confined space of South Parade.

Their first week was a particularly busy one, with 25 clients, though these were exclusively met and dealt with by the Council team. Deliveries to the back door were only accepted from the Foodbank's new van, with the contents being left in quarantine for several days. Chris helped bring some supplies down from the upstairs store, though he said this was largely empty (nearly all recent donations having been taken to the warehouse).

Chris obviously felt it was good to be back – and our thanks go to him and all the other colleagues who have volunteered to return!

## MARCUS RASHFORD ON FOOD POVERTY



MARCUS RASHFORD: FOOD POVERTY CAMPAIGNER

Manchester United and England footballer Marcus Rashford had a massive and unexpected effect upon Government policy back in the summer when he persuaded them to continue meal vouchers for poorer families throughout the school holidays.

He has now written to MPs to reveal that major brands including Aldi, Tesco, Kelloggs and Deliveroo and charities including Fareshare have joined him in forming an action group called the Child Food Poverty Task Force. Marcus says that “Food poverty is contributing to social unrest” and remembers his own mum crying herself to sleep when, after working a 14-hour shift, she went to bed unsure how she could manage to feed herself and her children.

This is a truly remarkable action by a truly remarkable young man who has spent time during the pandemic visiting foodbanks and meeting parents and children in desperate need.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE TRUSSELL TRUST

Emma Revie, CEO of the Trussell Trust nationally, posted a video message in August in which she commented on what has been, in her words, “A challenging few months for everyone”.

However, she hoped and believed that foodbanks were now settling into what might seem a very different way of operating in “the new normal” and were looking to the future with more confidence.

She concluded by saying “Thank you as always for all you do. You are amazing!”



CEO OF TRUSSELL TRUST: EMMA REVIE

## THE LORD LIEUTENANT SAYS THANKS!

Back in June our Chair of Trustees Martin Coupe received a letter from Sir Warren J Smith, HM Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, congratulating and thanking us all for the work we have been doing.

Linking this to the national “Volunteers Week” Sir Warren wrote “You provide food and sustenance to your customers, you treat them with respect, you demonstrate compassion, you remind people when they are at their lowest ebb that somebody else does care.”

A lovely accolade and a pretty accurate resume of what we are trying to achieve! Sir Warren is the Queen’s representative in North West England.



SIR WARREN J SMITH: HM LORD LIEUTENANT OF GREATER MANCHESTER

## AND FINALLY,

First of all, my thanks as always to all those who have contributed to this Newsletter and thereby made my 2-week isolation, imposed for being so unpatriotic as to visit France for 10 days, less tedious! Enormous thanks of course to Dave Drake for putting together the finished article.

I felt it was really important to do this Newsletter because, like many volunteers, I have been seriously missing my Wednesday mornings at the Foodbank. Like many of you I’d built up a really satisfying relationship with our team over the past eight years. Like many of you I’ve been seriously missing most of the activities which made my life enjoyable: meeting with friends and family (possible only for a short while in early summer), music concerts, theatres, football – and volunteering.

Our service to our clients is of course the fundamental reason for our Foodbank’s existence, but I never under-estimate the importance to volunteers of the social contacts we make and the structure that this often helps give many of our lives in retirement. So, until the next edition in January, here’s hoping more of us will actually be able to meet again before then!

**Best wishes from the Editor, John Rowe**