**Manager’s report November 2022**

If you compare the rota from December 2021 with the one for this December coming, you find that where we had three people on both Mondays and Thursdays, we now have 4 on Mondays and 6 on Thursdays. The shifts have extended too, as we now start at 10am on Mondays and 9.3oam on Thursdays. This increase reflects the gradual increase in demand. So far, I think we have managed to stay ahead of the curve, in that we have matched staffing to requests for food. I am keen that volunteers continue to enjoy their volunteering and have time to chat a little when they are on shift. We have plenty of volunteers so we can spread the load. Our focus must always be on getting food to those that request it in a timely way. This month we have fed 138 adults, 108 children in 95 households, which brings us to a total of 2,904 people helped this year. Last year it was just about 2,000 people so a rise of 45% in demand over the year.

We have experienced significant price inflation in our food shopping too, this year. It is a complex task identifying the best prices and seeking out stock as lines disappear from virtual shelves. Additionally, we are considering how people will cook or heat the food in the light of the fuel crisis.

The impact of the war in Ukraine has been felt even in South Oxfordshire. We agreed to offer supermarket vouchers to the refugees being welcomed into homes in our area. We have spent nearly £30,000 and the vouchers have been so gratefully received. David Tole did a remarkable job, quietly identifying and registering for suitable vouchers, and then responding to a deluge of requests in the early summer. A remarkable project, which seems to be coming to an end.

As we look ahead, we are very grateful for the steady trickle of new, willing volunteers, the continuing financial support from so many, and the flow of food donations at a time when many food banks are desperate for any of these. We hope that a new app, Bank The Food may be a useful tool in getting the right food at the right time. We need to be ready to respond to demand, considering extending our hours, increasing numbers of volunteers on shift and being imaginative about how to improve what we do.

Neville and Jean recently contacted me and asked me to pass on their appreciation to all those involved in the food bank, especially in the light of the significant rise in demand this year.

Thank you all for your wonderful support this year.

Alice Penney

November 2022