**Manager’s report March 2024**

We have seen yet another uplift in demand this month, feeding 334 adults, 210 children in 180 households. This compares with 245 adults, 172 children and 148 households in the same month last year. With Easter falling quite early, we are missing a day compared to last year too so the real increase would have been higher if we compared like for like.

This month last year saw a peak in food price inflation (over 19%). Now the rate of inflation is falling – but prices are still rising. Wallingford food bank is part of the Independent Food Aid network. They put out the following statement recently:

*IFAN has seen unprecedented increases in demand for food banks year on year and we do not anticipate this drop in the rate of food inflation to impact soaring need for food banks, because large numbers of household have built up debt, cost of living payments have been removed and, in England, the*[*household support fund*](https://www.bigissue.com/opinion/household-support-fund-spring-budget-ifan-sabine-goodwin/)*has been belatedly extended temporarily, impacting on the level of support that local authorities can provide.*

*Multiple issues, including insufficient wages, the waiting time to access universal credit, and increased numbers of sanctions on benefits recipients will continue to drive demand for food banks.*

*Nobody wants to have to use a food bank and no food bank team wants to be needed because their fellow citizens can’t afford food.*

I hope this helps to understand the current situation. We are very grateful for your support which allows us to help those in need locally.

Waitrose are also great supporters of Wallingford food bank and this month offered us the opportunity to be in store again both encouraging donations and promoting the Bank the Food app, (which allows you to see what we really need, if you are kind enough to donate food to the food bank.) I am very grateful to Waitrose for the opportunity to promote it in the store. It was good to meet many of our supporters and indeed we gained a new volunteer as well! We now have over 600 people using the app and it has made a real difference to what is donated. Thank you all.

With my best wishes for Easter

Alice Penney