



Ormskirk Foodbank – Annual Report

June 2016



‘For I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in...’ Matthew 25:35

About us

Ormskirk Foodbank is a small charity run entirely by volunteers to provide emergency food and advice to people in Ormskirk and district who are at a time of crisis in their lives. It is an initiative established through Churches Together in Ormskirk and opened in June 2013 with support from the Trussell Trust, a Christian charity that provides guidance on setting up and running foodbanks. We meet with clients in the Boiler Room in Burscough Street, Ormskirk and are open on Tuesdays and Fridays between 11am and 2pm. The Boiler Room is provided by Ormskirk Christian Fellowship for which we are most grateful.

Our second full fiscal year (April 2015 to March 2016)

In this our second full year of operation, there has been a considerable growth in the use of the foodbank. The number of food vouchers processed has increased to 293 (up 30%) and meals provided to 440 adults and 186 children. There doesn't appear to be any particular reason for the increase - it may be because people are becoming more aware of the foodbank or it could be the implementation of Universal Credit in the West Lancs area. Our busiest month ever was December when meals were provided to 108 people. The main reason that the clients cannot afford the food is still because of benefit delays (30%), other reasons include benefit changes (16%) and low income (12%) and the Jobcentre Plus in Ormskirk continues to be our main source of clients - over 60%.

The food (nearly 11tonnes of it!) has been collected from a number of sources - local supermarkets, churches, schools, Edge Hill University, businesses and individuals. The Trussell Trust has a national agreement with Tesco and we had major collections in July and December at the Burscough store. In addition to these two collections there is a permanent food collection point. As well as collecting food, Tesco also make a cash donation based on the weight of the food collected - this year it has totalled over £2,500. We have recently agreed with Morrisons to collect food which they can't sell for various reasons, such as the packaging is damaged or it is close to its Best Before date. Edge Hill University have also had a couple of special events to collect food - the students held a 'Trick or Eat' day and the staff held a 'Hot Cross Bun' day and they also have special collections at the end of term.

Christmas is a very busy time for the foodbank not just because of the number of clients but the many organisations and people who make extra food and toy donations. Of particular note this year are Mooney Everett Solicitors who also provided help with weighing, labelling and sorting the large Tesco collection and NSW properties and Prestige Flooring who donated children's toys. Katharine MacKenzie organised the creation of over 60 Christmas Hampers containing Christmas food and gifts for any children in the families. Thanks also to Christ Church Aughton who donated toys from their Toy Service.

Each week Bill Jones organises the weighing, labelling and storage of the food donations at facilities provided by Mark Hudson, one of our trustees, for which we are most grateful. If we have any surplus food this is sent or collected by other local Trussell Trust foodbanks in Skelmersdale, Liverpool and Waterloo. Other surplus food which is also surplus at other foodbanks, particularly soup and beans, is sent to Southport Shoreline Church who provide meals and food to those in need on a daily basis.

We continue to work with Skelmersdale Community Food Initiative (SCFI) in running a number of one-off courses for our clients by offering practical cooking sessions on a budget using good quality, wholesome meals - including special 'bake-offs' in July and December. The courses were held in the Civic Hall until its sudden closure in January, then moved to Skelmersdale, but are expected to resume in the Civic shortly.

During the year we were given notice that the foodbank, together with West Lancs Debt Advice and the Street Pastors, would have to move out of the Boiler Room because it was becoming too costly for Ormskirk Christian Fellowship. Several locations have been investigated, the most favourable at the moment being the New Church House at Ormskirk Parish Church. Alternative locations, ideally near to the centre of Ormskirk, continue to be investigated.

As regards finances for the year, the income has been £6,261 and expenditure £4,304 with a closing balance of £9,424. Many thanks are due to all those who have donated to the foodbank over the year, including the many regular and one-off donors, businesses, schools and support groups. During the year our Treasurer, John Rigby, sadly passed away after a fairly short illness. John was a founding member of the foodbank and as well as looking after the finances he was actively involved in running the warehouse. He will be greatly missed and our thanks go to Mike Newman who has stepped into the Treasurer's role at very short notice.

This year was our first full year of offering fresh fruit and vegetable vouchers for the Barn Owl shop - £3 for a single person and £5 for a couple or family. Clients receive the fresh food directly from the shop, improving dignity and eliminating the need to store fresh food. In total this service cost £907 for the year.

Also during this year a number of meetings were held concerning a potential merger with Skelmersdale Foodbank. However in the end it was decided that there would be little benefit for Ormskirk and we would continue operating as we are.

During the year we had a Quality Assurance visit from the Trussell Trust and their report on the visit said that Ormskirk Foodbank 'provides a confident, compassionate and organised service' and that it 'continues to be a credible, well-liked and valuable project in the community'. This could not have happened without the support of the volunteers. One of the recommendations from the report was to organise a referral agency meeting and as a result a lunchtime meeting was held in March which was attended by a few agencies with one new agency signing up - Ormskirk Community College.

During the year one of our founding trustees, Beth Blamires, moved out of the area and we would like to thank her for help with setting up the foodbank and particularly with producing its constitution. Beth was also one of our Safeguarding Officers and we thank Stacey Dolan for taking over this role.

Finally, we thank God for all our volunteers, of which there are about 50 very active helpers, and to whom we are most grateful for all their time and dedication and without whom we would not be able to operate. Special thanks are due to those who help run the Boiler Room teams namely Jo Cave, Jeanette King, Diane Nalborczyk, Magee Noble and Margaret Wiechers (who also manages the volunteers) and to Helen Murphy and Linda Turner who manage the administration and the referral agencies.

What next?

The following are in our plans for the coming year:-

- The priority is to find alternative premises for the Boiler Room distribution centre.
- Continue to look for more suitable food storage facilities.
- Make the foodbank services more widely known especially in the health service and schools, particularly providing food in the school holidays to the families of those children who receive free school meals during term time.

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