

## **S2 Food Poverty Network- Newsletter No 18, January 2026**



Welcome to the eighteenth newsletter. I make updates every couple of months following our Trustees'/ Managers' meeting.

I begin by repeating a plea made in each newsletter:-

- If you are a regular donor, please send your contact email address to me. Please also indicate whether you would like a personal invitation to see Food Bank at work. My email address is: [jtrhull@outlook.com](mailto:jtrhull@outlook.com)

This plea has already solicited supportive, interesting replies. Several long-standing donors have taken up my invitation to visit Food Bank and Shop and see them in operation. I now send a personal e-copy of this Newsletter to some 40+ donors who have made contact.

The Food Bank financial year coincides with the calendar year. The trustees met in mid-January. We received and reviewed data for the whole year 2025. This Newsletter therefore covers five themes:-

- (a) These data now inform the bulk of this Newsletter. **See sections 1- 4.**
- (b) The trustees approved the budget for the next financial year of 2026. **See section 5.**
- (c) The trustees took decisions about staffing appointments. **See section 6.**
- (d) The Newsletter names for praise individuals and charitable trusts to which we owe thanks. **See section 7.**
- (e) Our collaboration with the Manor Parish Kitchen is hailed. **See section 8.**

### **1. Our rich data**

We keep very good, but simple, data. We use the data to monitor our impact.

#### **1a. Incoming food and items to Food Bank and Shop (kilograms)**

Food donations in the full (2025) year are 3.8 tonne less than 2024. Our income from financial donations, as in previous years, rose in December. Our income from grants rose in 2025. Rosie and Mick made shrewd decisions on food purchases. For instance, they bought Apple Juice, at half the price, to replace the offer of blackcurrant.

Here are the full year 2025 figures (kilogrammes), for food coming in:-.

	<b>Purchases</b>	<b>Fareshare</b>	<b>Donations</b>	<b>Total In</b>
<b>Jan</b>	<b>2069.80</b>	<b>1153.90</b>	<b>947.60</b>	<b>4171.30</b>
<b>Feb</b>	<b>2398.80</b>	<b>1274.00</b>	<b>1143.90</b>	<b>4816.70</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>2250.35</b>	<b>1183.45</b>	<b>870.90</b>	<b>4304.70</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>2681.20</b>	<b>1521.20</b>	<b>1717.00</b>	<b>5919.40</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>2999.60</b>	<b>1233.40</b>	<b>642.20</b>	<b>4875.80</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>2555.20</b>	<b>1077.10</b>	<b>705.98</b>	<b>4338.28</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>2858.20</b>	<b>1295.33</b>	<b>743.40</b>	<b>4897.07</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>2362.20</b>	<b>1130.20</b>	<b>525.64</b>	<b>4018.04</b>
<b>Sept</b>	<b>2892.60</b>	<b>1042.57</b>	<b>692.50</b>	<b>4627.67</b>
<b>Oct</b>	<b>2643.30</b>	<b>1335.56</b>	<b>1061.50</b>	<b>5040.36</b>
<b>Nov</b>	<b>3031.00</b>	<b>1161.89</b>	<b>836.50</b>	<b>5029.39</b>
<b>Dec</b>	<b>3545.90</b>	<b>820.77</b>	<b>1086.40</b>	<b>5453.07</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32288.49</b>	<b>14229.37</b>	<b>10974.12</b>	<b>57491.78</b>

### **1b. Numbers of people being fed**

The numbers below of children and adults “being fed” are calculated by the number of weeks a client comes to Food Bank or Shop and the number of people in their household. Thus a client with a family of 3 children coming for one week counts as 4 “people fed”.

So far this year we have fed:-

	<b>Foodbank</b>	<b>Community shop</b>	<b>Total Fed</b>
<b>Jan</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>787</b>
<b>Feb</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>753</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>674</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>750</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>649</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>638</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>796</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>589</b>

<b>Sept</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>622</b>
<b>Oct</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>793</b>
<b>Nov</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>712</b>
<b>Dec</b>	<b>211+227 (Xmas dinners)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>631</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2349</b>	<b>6272</b>	<b>8621</b>

In 2025 Food Bank fed 326 fewer people than 2024. The Community Shop fed 808 fewer. This makes a total of 1134 fewer. We think the drop in demand is partially explained by the opening of 3 other food banks in our area. The Arbourthorne (Trussell Trust) Food Bank now opens, like us, on Wednesday. We would have welcomed discussion with other providers prior to openings! It is proving hard to coordinate provision across S2.

## **2. Reviewing numbers of referrals**

	<b>Professional</b>	<b>Self-referrals</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Jan</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Feb</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Sept</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Oct</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Nov</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Dec</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>467</b>

Looking at referrals there is a clear continuity, in terms of main reasons cited for fuel poverty, from the 2024 pattern. Debt is still the main driver of food poverty. Failure to access the full range benefits is also significant.

Rosie explained to the meeting that a proportion of those referred by a third party (doctor, school, church etc) do not in fact turn up at Food Bank's door. This is despite her sending them an email of invitation. She is now phoning newly referred potential clients. This is working.

### **3. Patterns of Food Bank and Food Shop**

Currently Food Shop helps 72 households. Clients coming into Food Bank each week in December averaged 24 (households).

### **4. Monitoring our attempts to address causes of food poverty**

- **Debt Advice:**

Our team of debt mentors has now completed 27 DROs in 2025. These are Debt Relief Orders which, after due process and by agreement, write off most debts and allow a fresh start. The 27 DROs wrote off debts of £225,354.

8 more DROs are in process.

We know how easy and tempting, when finances are stretched, it is to get into debt. You will have seen, pre-Christmas, lots of BNPL (Buy Now Pay Later) notices on TV adverts for Christmas purchases. Klarna and VeryPay are two involved companies. Borrowers pay "no interest" for a period (e.g. 3 months). If on that given date they do not repay, they are subject to major fines which increase the debt total.

Rosie made an interesting point. Three quarters of our indebted clients are female. That statistic suggests to me that BNPL is very tempting.

- **Benefit Access**

Our specialist in **Personal Independence Payments**, is currently working on 22 cases. 6 cases have been to tribunal of which 5 have been won. These 5 cases will lead to c.£15k in arrears and payments to the clients.

Two volunteers specialize in **Household Support Fund**. Those eligible must apply twice per year. Here are the results for 2025:-

Jan - Income for clients is £365  
Feb – income for clients is £860  
March–income for clients is £540  
April – income to clients is £170  
May income to clients is £120  
June income for clients £324  
July income for clients £124  
August income for clients £175  
September income for clients £320  
October income for clients £170  
November and December- nil.

## **5. Budget 2026**

The trustees monitor at every meeting actual against planned expenditure. This is made straightforward by the presentation at each trustee meeting of actual vs planned expenditures in sub-sections on: Income, Food, Staffing, Food bank Accommodation, Shop Accommodation, Debt/CMA and Other.

We had set a deficit budget for 2025 meaning that we would deplete our reserves by some £21,000. Our Income, however, was increased by the successful pursuit of grants and the fact that financial donations remained relatively healthy. This, coupled with carefully managed expenditure on the food budget meant we finished 2025 with a surplus of £24,000.

We do not want to “sit on” excessive resources. We therefore set a deficit budget for 2026 of £34,500. We are ineligible in financial year 2026 for most further grants. The deficit budget will allow us both to fund the working and upkeep of the Food Shop and to maintain the levels of food offer in both Bank and Shop.

## **6. Staffing**

In my last Newsletter I explained the imminent retirement of Karen Kinsella, our Administrator and Rosie, our Coordinator. I reported that we had made two new appointments and promised to keep readers informed of induction progress. I am very sorry to report that both appointees failed to complete their induction/probationary period.

In responding to this situation the trustees have:-

- a. gratefully accepted Rosie’s offer to stay in post a little longer until the two new appointees are settled,
- b. reflected carefully on our selection and induction approach of the two previous appointees to learn lessons,
- c. appointed a very promising candidate in a re-run of the Administrator appointment process who will join us in early February,
- d. planned the repeat process to appoint a new Network Manager (a changed job title from Coordinator) with interviews in early March.

## **7. People to thank**

### **a. Local Charities**

It was the receipt of grants for financial year 2025 which made such financial difference. In the four cases hailed below, we were advised that we should not apply again until 2027. In each case, and quite rightly, they asked for feedback to show the positive impact of their generosity. I have sent

Newsletters to help these good people follow our impact and have now duly completed their requested feedback for:-

- **Sheffield Town Trust,**
- **Sheffield Church Burgesses,**
- **Graves Trust,**
- **Freshgate Trust.**

#### **b. Frankie and Teddy's Wishes**

Scott Cain, brought up locally and now a family man, founded this charity. It is worth a look on Facebook. He collected lots of food donations before Christmas plus Christmas gifts (like advent calendars).

#### **c. M and P Frank**

M and P Frank are roofing contractors based in Hackenthorpe. We had a leakage through the Shop roof. Mick was given estimates by roofers, who all recommended a full new roof close to £1k. Mick contacted M and P Frank. They did not think a new roof at all necessary. They fixed the problem for £250.

#### **d. Women's Institute on Ecclesall Road (WIER)**

WIER names a local charity annually for its members to support. Twice we have been fortunate to be their chosen charity. They have gone beyond this pattern encouraging members to bring donations to S2 to their monthly meetings for several years now. This is generous and terrific when our donations-in-kind are dropping.

The bags of donations always contain well chosen items from our list of requested foods. Their donations before Christmas 2024 were excellent.

### **8. Manor Parish Kitchen**

The kitchen is led by one of our trustees, Sarah Short. It recycles and uses any food stuffs left over and close to sell-by from Food Bank or Shop. It now provides free food and tea/coffee to waiting Wednesday Food Shop clients. It opens in the church on Thursdays providing good meals for which locals pay what they wish.

S2 Food Poverty Network makes a small contribution to the Kitchen's costs. In December the Kitchen served 182 Thursday meals.

This is really good. Clients meet new people as they sit and chat. Thursday diners may be single people who are somewhat isolated. Here they meet and talk.

JTRH, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025