

S2 Food Poverty Network- Newsletter No 20, May 2026



Welcome to the twentieth 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

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.

This will be hard to write

Usually I enjoy writing this Newsletter. I am proud to tell you about the good, informed and ground-breaking work of our volunteers and leaders. I recall the gratitude of clients facing very real deprivations. It is rewarding to write. It is a positive act in a sometimes depressing world.

I must, however, in this edition, inform readers about the tragedy which unfolded at the Food Bank on 16th April. It concerns the accident to my lovely wife, Carol. She died eight days later in Northern General Hospital.

Carol became a volunteer at S2 Food Bank some 10 years ago. She has, for the last six years, been an interviewer of clients as they select the foods they wish to be packed in their parcels. Clients were at ease with Carol. They knew she wanted the best for them. Her fellow volunteers loved her friendship and laughter. To me it is, sadly, highly appropriate that she was actively helping others when tragedy struck.

As many of you will already know, Carol passed away as a result of complications after a hip-breaking fall whilst at the Food Bank. Admitted to hospital, she died 8 days later never regaining full consciousness. Throughout the eight days the family, working in shifts, never left her side. The wonderful hospital staff assured us: she was not in pain.

Her funeral took place in mid-May. Seventy plus people attended the service. That shows how widely she was loved. Food Bank volunteers in their blue fleece jackets formed a guard of honour as the coffin was carried in from the cortege. Lovely conversations of fond memory filled the Wake.

Beautifully my Carol went to her rest after helping others.



The Trustees met on May 18th. Their meeting was preceded by **the Annual General Meeting**. That meeting began with a minute's silence for Carol and a tribute from Geraldine Roberts, trustee and treasurer.

Following the required format the meeting received my Annual Report and the Financial Statements which had been submitted to our auditors (Voluntary Action, Rotherham). Auditors had approved the submitted documents. The meeting renewed the appointments of our 11 trustees and reappointed our auditors.

Let me now, in the established pattern, go on to explain the issues and data discussed in the May trustees' meeting.

The **bi-monthly Trustees' Meeting** received the first report by our new S2 Manager, **Katelyn McKeown**. We are impressed and grateful.

1a. Our rich data

We keep very good, but simple, data. We use the data to monitor our impact. Katelyn produced new, helpful, graphs on Donations and Purchases. She has begun analysis of Food Bank and Shop clients by ward of residence. She hopes to use this approach to "map the journey" of clients from Foodbank, through community shop, and into situation where they do not need our full support.

1b. People fed

Please remember what we mean by "people being fed". A mother with three children coming one week to Food bank or Shop counts as four people being fed.

Foodbank

2026	Households	Adults	Children	Total
Jan	97	121	93	214
Feb	105	124	74	198
March	115	148	108	256
April	92	109	75	184

Community Shop

2026	Households	Adults	Children	Total
Jan	227	311	190	501
Feb	236	336	201	537
March	300	205	150	335
April	316	407	271	678

1c. Concern about expenditures

The increasing cost of food has led to sustained and marked reduction in food donations. This resulted in April in a compensating increase in spending on purchased foodstuffs and an overspend of £1144.

The meeting, therefore, devoted significant time to discussion of **Strategies to increase income**. Katelyn will co-ordinate a group of staff and volunteers to identify ways to increase donations in cash and kind.

We shall renew applications to locally based charities.

1c. A note on the Community Kitchen

Here is a reminder of the way the, relatively new, Community Kitchen now operates. 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 April the Kitchen served 200 adults and 48 children.

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.

2. Addressing the underlying causes of food poverty in S2

2a. Pursuit of benefits

We have several fine volunteers who help clients access the range of benefits to which they should be entitled.

Our PIP (**Personal Independence Payments**) advisor has won three appeals since January, worth a total of around £30,000. He is working on a further 12 cases.

We help clients apply for the **Household Support Fund**. (This has now been changed to the **Crisis Resilience Fund**). We have helped 6 households apply since February. We suspect that criteria for access to CRF will be tighter. I shall keep you informed.

2b. Managing debts

We have 13 debt cases open. Some of these are nearing completion. We hope to achieve Debt Relief Orders.

3. Making our Voice Heard

Margaret Booth and Rosie have been invited to share expertise and understanding with officials from the Department for Work and Pensions. They stressed that clients

resorted to Food Banks because of insufficient income, unmanageable debt and not being on right benefits.

We await sight of the DWP's research report!!

JTRH, 22nd May 2026