

Welcome to Foodbytes, Spring 2025! The year ahead is looking as busy as ever so we thank you for your continued support! Read on for a look back at last year, and a look forward to the year ahead, including details on our 'More than Food' initiatives and new support from Morrisons.

Christmas Hamper Project brings joy to many.

The community in Basingstoke, Tadley and surrounding areas has once again shown their great generosity in supporting the Christmas Hamper Project. This year 900 hampers were distributed, reaching 1300 adults and 1000 children with Christmas treats as well as some food staples to make Christmas special.

We would like to say a HUGE thank you to Abigail and Debbie who do a great job behind the scenes making it all happen, along with everyone else who gets involved by packing, delivering, donating and organising.

*"It was lovely to receive some treats at this time of year and the hamper made Christmas **extra special.**"*

*"The hamper was so well made and was **brightly and cheerfully decorated** - adding to the Christmas spirit."*



*"I delivered a Christmas Hamper this morning and the recipient was **absolutely delighted.** She was genuinely grateful for the hamper and asked that I let everyone know what a difference it made and how much it was appreciated."*

*"We are so **thankful and surprised** with our Christmas hamper. All the food in there is things we were not able to buy for Christmas. The best thing was the chocolate log!"*



More than food

We are well aware that although providing food and other essentials can go a long way to help someone through a difficult time, it often is not enough to resolve the cause of their difficulties. We are therefore passionate about providing more than food, and do this in a variety of ways.

Family Drop-in Pilots

During January, we have been piloting two different family support drop-ins to offer parenting advice, guidance on childcare, and other helpful information for local families.

Healthy Families Drop-in

Suzanne from Barnardo's Hampshire Healthy Families visited our Popley centre and spoke to families about local resources to support them and their families as well as provide guidance and tips on topics such as brushing teeth and making the most of food left in the fridge.

The Healthy Families team work within Hampshire to offer helpful, free advice and guidance on childcare - from those early days to getting ready for school.

Citizen's Advice

We are pleased to be able to continue to offer all our clients access to Citizens Advice when they visit our centres. Each centre has an advisor available so that anyone collecting food can drop-in and discuss issues with benefits, debt, work as well as a range of other topics that clients may be facing. The advisors aim to provide clients with knowledge and confidence to overcome their difficulties and to move forward.

Citizens Advice Tadley visit one of our centres each week and from 1st April - 31st December 2024 were able to help foodbank clients receive a total of £109,743 in financial gains! The Basingstoke team have also supported clients to access benefits they are entitled to, access grants and write off debt.

Family Help SOS

The Family Help Hub have also offered 'SOS' sessions of support. Vicky has been in our Brighton Hill Centre available to talk to parents wanting to discuss issues relating to behaviour, eating, sleep, potty training, mental health/SEN and more.

More dates are planned for both of these drop-ins in the near future.

Energy Advice

As mentioned in our last issue, Rick, from LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership) has visited all our centres to offer help and information on how to save energy this winter.



Clients receiving food and speaking to volunteers at the Popley Centre

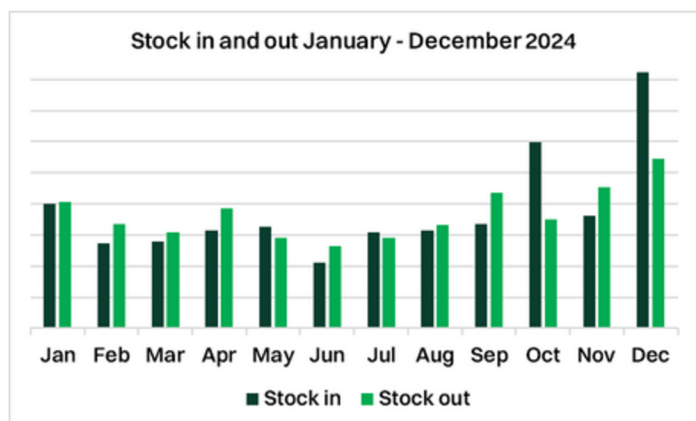
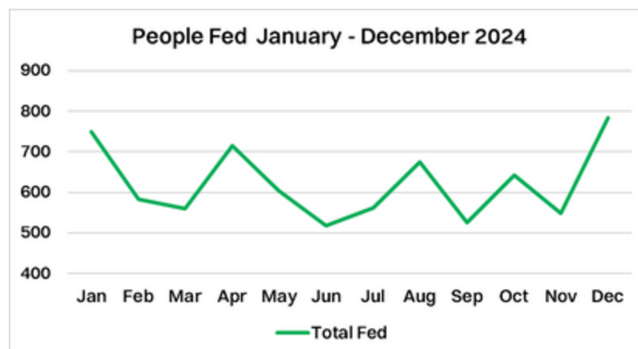
Looking back at 2024

The Statistics

Last year we provided a total of 3537 food parcels, which fed 7465 people in total who were at risk of hunger. Of these, 4547 were adults and 2918 were children.

Month to month, the total number of people we have supported with food parcels has varied from around 800 people a month to 500 people a month. The busiest months were January and December and the quietest was in June.

There was a cost of living payment of £299 made to those on certain benefits in February 2024 which coincides with a decrease in foodbank use in February and March.



It has been great that the stock in we have had is roughly the amount we have needed to give out. Harvest and Christmas (Oct and Dec) being a big help to provide stock 'in hand' for the rest of the year where we usually give out more than we receive.

Tesco food drive



As in previous years, we took part in the National Tesco Food Drive by being in the Tesco Chineham store from 28th November - 1st December last year. We focused on collecting Christmas Treats and were delighted that customers were able to donate 2169.76kg over the three days.

Jane, the Tesco Community Champion, has also been working with local community groups to promote the work of the foodbank, for example helping the 1st Bramley Guides shop for items we need.



1st Bramley Guides shopping for Basingstoke Foodbank

Morrisons Food Drive

We have just held our first food drive at Morrisons in 10 years and are pleased to say we hope to hold these on a more regular basis!

The Basingstoke Morrisons store supports many different charities with their regular food collections, however they offered us the chance to hold a food drive in store on 7th February. All donations made on the day were donated to Basingstoke Foodbank.

Volunteers were in store throughout the day handing out 'shopping lists' of our most needed items and telling customers more about us and the range of support we provide.

"I have really enjoyed it and spoken to lots of people" - in store volunteer.

Morrisons customers generously donated a total of 419.72kg of items we most need, which is equivalent to 999 meals! We also collected £85.50 in cash.



We would like to thank Naomi, Morrisons Community Champion, for supporting us to hold the event and are keen to continue to work with her and the Morrisons team again in future.

Watch this space for future Morrisons food drives!



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