

Sefton Community Pantry

MISSION STATEMENT

Families are at the heart of everything we do. We strive to bring our community together, encouraging them to support one another during times of need. We are a tangible presence in our community.

Poverty is humiliating and for many parents options are restricted. They are trapped between being able to afford food to feed their children, keeping clean or paying the rent and keeping a roof over their head. This has a negative impact on mental wellbeing, employability and social interaction.

We believe that everyone should have access to food and be able to keep themselves clean. We offer practical, compassionate support and hopefully help to restore dignity in the lives of the families we help.

Annual Report 2021

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

Sefton Community Pantry was registered as a CIC in 2020.

The objectives and powers are established in our governance docs and constitution.

The organization is run by a board of trustees. Cllr David Robinson, John Finnigan, Michael Carragher and Lynne Higgins

Quarterly meetings of the board are held annually.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Our objective is to provide relief for people living in our community who are in financial hardship or distress by:-

- 1 Providing individuals in need with:-
 - a. Food
 - b. Household and hygiene products
 - c. New school uniforms
 - d. New bedding
 - e. New winter coats

- 2 Assisting other grass roots organisations by donation of our surplus to requirements goods.

- 3 Raising awareness that poverty is closer to home than we think, it is actually on our doorsteps but together we can help make a difference

- 4 Working alongside Family Liaison Officers (FLO's), head teachers and pastoral staff in schools and family centers to ensure that support gets straight to the heart of the issues.

Our project is powered by volunteers and grounded on compassion. We aim to tackle food and hygiene poverty by delivering food hampers and hygiene products to those of us who are in need. We believe that everyone has a right to be fed and be able to have access to basic hygiene products to maintain their dignity. For many who are living in poverty, hygiene products are the first things that are dropped from the shopping list. Families are having to choose if they buy soap powder or food, showering products or nappies, toothpaste or a pint of milk. We believe that everyone should enjoy a dignified life it is unjust that being clean has become a luxury.

Our project exists to give vulnerable families access to the basic essentials in life such as food and products to help keep us clean and hopefully restoring dignity. We hope to encourage compassion, tolerance and mutual respect in our community by fully involving our community in everything that we do. We all have times in our lives when we will need help and there will also be times when we are in a position to help others. By standing together we can make a difference in our community. Our volunteers have worked tirelessly, through unprecedented, very challenging times recently and our community have stepped up to the plate to support us.

We are helping to reduce food waste by our membership of Fareshare. Redistributing food that would have gone to landfill due to short dates or damaged packaging.

Our hope for the future remains that one day the community that we serve will no longer need our support as they will have access to affordable food. Until that time we will continue to engage with our community and work together to tackle the injustice of food and hygiene poverty, which children in our communities are enduring.

We also provide new school uniforms and winter coats as well as new beds and bedding to families who are in hardship and distress. Thanks to the financial support of Jamie Carragher's 23 Foundation we were able to fully furnish a home for a family who lost everything in a house fire.

We work with other grassroots organisations, such as Emmeaus, LHFC, L30 centre, Foodbank, Victory Outreach, St Joseph's Hospice, Merseyside Mission to Seamen and Taking Root Bootle, by donating some of our surplus supplies to them. We support local community composting by donating our waste cardboard which they can use to make compost. We also provided hygiene goods to Walton Neuro Intensive Care and Cairns ward for patients who often are air lifted from other regions and have nothing with them when they arrive. Foodbank and L30 support us with some of their surplus in return. Emmeaus and Victory Outreach have assisted us with logistics.

We very often receive items that our families would find difficult to make use of which we term funny beans. The likes of black lentils, borlotti beans, kidney beans and chick peas. We donate these to Taking Root Bootle who turn them in to delicious meals which we then distribute to vulnerable families in the community. They also provide the recipe for the families to be able to reproduce the healthy meal.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

2020 was our first full year of operation as a registered CIC and was a year of rapid growth and challenges.

We are so proud of our immediate response to covid and our networking with other organisations in such incredibly challenging times. I am personally amazed that we were able to “roll with the changes” and increase support to our vulnerable families as well as front line services which helped them stay afloat.

As our buildings were locked down this brought a suspension of our drop off points across the borough. Food rationing had a major impact on our services, we had difficulty obtaining enough food to meet the ever increasing demands.

Covid led to over 3 million extra universal credit claims and an already broken service struggled to process the claims from low earners, self employed, and those on zero hours. This led to appalling delays in families receiving payments. There was an increase of need amongst the working population.

We were able to evolve new strategies for our distribution mechanisms to cope with the impact of covid. My home had to become the main drop off and collection points for our supporters and those organizations that we support. My own neighbours stepped up to the plate and donated daily for our families. Our stock was held in 7 different storage locations which was an absolute nightmare as travel restrictions were in place but we prevailed.

We are deeply indebted to Kids Konnect who bought us nearly £9,000 worth of food for the hampers as well as Crosby Stuart and Bootle Bucks football teams who held regular doorstep collections on our behalf and then would drop them in to the boot of my car to quarantine. Once hampers were made up they were placed in the boot of my car for remote collection by schools staff and Sefton Impact. We relied heavily on the support and engagement of our local community. Sincere gratitude goes to the unstinting support of our local butchers ADM MEATS who acted as a drop off point right from the very beginning of lock down and indeed continues to do so. They have also assisted us to support a number of families throughout by giving them weekly access to fresh produce. We have achieved so much with such little expenditure because of the level of in kind donations. We are fortunate that lock down brought forth such compassion and good will.

We have received practical and financial support from so many individuals in our community many of whom do not wish their names to be mentioned, as well as the following organizations who share our values. A team from SMB Interiors donated one of their days off to paint the main hall in St Matthews for us and Linear Projects donated building materials to help with the refurb. We also had incredibly support from Merseyside Fire and Rescue who were there at the drop of a hat to assist with the building as well as the move from various bases, they also delivered hampers and toys across the borough on our behalf. We could not have accomplished everything that we did without the boys and girls in Blue, we will forever be in their debt. HMP Liverpool Governors and staff also assisted with delivering hampers and moving stock as well as fundraising and having a food donation station on our behalf.

We also partnered with Fareshare, giving us access to larger numbers of food items although they were not always items that our families could make use of. However this enabled us to support other struggling organisations with those items.

Our support from Tesco through foodcloud initially diminished as there was less surplus available due to people panic buying everything in sight. However, our local Morrisons stepped up to the plate and have given us incredible weekly donations. Much of it is fresh, chilled items with plenty of treats for the children.

I am proud not only of our response to covid which helped ease the pressures on some of the worst affected people in our communities. But also of our commitment to work with other anti poverty and food waste prevention groups. Not only to support vulnerable families but to raise awareness of poverty and food waste in our communities. We would hope that we encourage public conversation so that collectively we can be a voice for change.

Sefton Community Pantry remains active whilst adhering to government guidelines. We are not open to the general public and schools who collect hampers for their families from us, do so by appointment and do not enter the building.

During the pandemic we have provided Nearly 4,000 hampers to vulnerable families.

We have prevented perfectly good food from going to land fill

We distributed over 150 tons of food and hygiene products. Which would have cost in the region of £200,000 if we had to purchase it all. We could not have managed this without the help and support from our community.

VISION AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Our vision for the future remains that one day the people we serve will no longer need our support. That all families will have access to affordable food and be able to buy basic hygiene items to restore their pride and dignity. Until that time we will continue to engage with our community, working together to tackle the injustice of food and hygiene poverty that children in our communities are suffering.

In 2021 we will endeavor to open up our Dress to Impress, Prom Prince and Princesses project in the shop in Bootle strand which has been donated by Sefton MBC. We have asked Ikea if they would champion this project and help us set the shop up. This will give young vulnerable people the opportunity to access free smart wear to enable them to feel presentable at interviews etc.

We will continue to refurbish St Matthews so that it can benefit the wider community.

We urgently need a van as the cars are getting destroyed with the weight we are moving. This will give us more scope to assist families with items of furniture etc.

We are hoping to set up hygiene donation stations in local salons once restrictions are lifted and they are allowed to trade again. This will help us increase hygiene support significantly as well as reduce our costs.

We are hoping to set up a free book service to under 5's in our community, delivering a new free book to them each month. Numbers will be limited initially but we hope that other organisations will follow our lead as they have done in the past.

We need a greater social media presence and would hope to find a volunteer who would take that on board for us as our current volunteer set are not tech savvy at all.

Once the Community Pantry Café re opens for business on the Cambridge Road site, we will continue to provide free hot meals twice weekly as well as providing free end of day bakery items provided by Tesco through the food cloud. Although we are not sure if we will still be able to operate the community fridge and freezer due to covid restrictions and will take advice on this.

We do need to set up a data base which will improve our recording and measuring the impact that Sefton Community Pantry has. We absolutely need to recruit more volunteers who have a wide skills base to enable us to continue to respond to the growing demands placed on our organization.

PARTNERSHIPS

Our project relies heavily on the support and engagement of our local community. I am overwhelmed that we have achieved so much with so little expenditure because of "in kind" donations. We received in the region of £9,000 worth of food that was purchased for us by Kids Konnect, a charity that we support. If we had to purchase every item of food then our project would not be sustainable without significant funding. We are fortunate that lock down brought forth such compassion and good will which increased community giving. This enabled us to rise to the challenges that lay ahead. We are incredibly grateful to all who supported us and look forward to building on our relationships with our supporters as well as forging new partnerships. We continue to work with the schools across the borough to support those most vulnerable children in our community. We are grateful for the special relationships with several schools who not only receive support from us but also support us by collecting food on our behalf.

We are proud that the following organisations have partnered with us to support vulnerable families in our community. It shows that they share our commitment to aid some of the most disadvantaged children in our society.

23 Foundation	Kids Konnect	HMP Liverpool	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
Boultings	Offshore Painting	Bosus Engineering	Cargills EFC
Crosby Stuart	Bootle Bucks	Morrisons	Tesco Emmeaus
Liverpool Homeless Football Club	No More Knives	Car and Commercial	

J Lawson Events Bauer Radio Steve Morgan Foundation Serco

Community Foundation for Merseyside

We are hoping to forge links with Laing O'Rourke to enlist their support with the refurbishments to our new base at St Matthews.

STAFFING

Sefton Community Pantry have no paid staff. We are powered entirely by volunteers.

No trustees are remunerated.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Income

Expenditure

We aim to generate funding that will help us build a sustainable operational structure that will enable us to respond to the likely increased needs of our community.