

# No Cupboard Empty

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FOOD INSECURITY IN BURGESS HILL

Cllr Robert Eggleston

# Our ambition is to eliminate food insecurity in Burgess Hill

## “No Cupboard Empty”

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- During the covid19 emergency Burgess Hill Town Council, charities and voluntary groups have responded well to the social issues that the crisis created. This included providing access to services and help; delivering emergency food supplies and producing a range of online support.
- BHTC responded promptly when food parcels became readily available; set up a £10k emergency fund which was doubled by Burgess Hill District Lions, supported the Foodbank’s move to new premises; raised additional funds to support community groups affected by covid19; and co-ordinated a summer hamper project which supported over 300 people in and around Burgess Hill.
- Covid19 has served to highlight the numbers of people who experience food insecurity on a long-term basis. Whilst the Burgess Hill Community Foodbank provides excellent crisis support it is not able to meet the needs of residents experiencing long term food insecurity on a regular basis.
- **No Cupboard Empty** is our response, setting out proposals for the creation of a community enterprise committed to the eradication of food insecurity in Burgess Hill.

### 2. THE SCALE OF THE CHALLENGE

- 10% (491) of pupils attending schools in Burgess Hill are eligible for free school meals (see Fig 1 below).

West Sussex Alternative Provision College	186	90
Manor Field Primary School	504	60
London Meed Community Primary School	392	27
The Gattons Infant School	270	34
Southway Junior School	352	35
Birchwood Grove Community Primary School	401	17
Sheddingdean Community Primary School	188	23
St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School, Burgess Hill	419	23
The Burgess Hill Academy	885	77
St Paul's Catholic College	1,128	34
Woodlands Mead	266	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>4991</b>	<b>491</b>
<b>Fig 1</b>		

- The Summer Hamper scheme which BHTC co-ordinated in June 2020 delivered food parcels to 70 families comprising of 179 adults and teenagers and 115 children. In addition, 19 young people supported by the YMCA received a bulk delivery of food. This project directly supported 313 people.

- The Burgess Hill Community Foodbank had 320 visits in 2019 supporting 181 direct beneficiaries and 803 people in total when household membership is included.
- The economic consequences of covid19 are beginning to be felt and there is likely to be an increase in the number of residents who rely on universal credit or who otherwise see their incomes fall, possibly significantly.
- In the light of the above statistics food insecurity is a real and long-term fact of life or risk for a segment of the Burgess Hill and nearby population .

### **3. NO CUPBOARD EMPTY**

- As a town council we already provide support to vulnerable residents in the town and have been engaged in this for the past decade at least. Other agencies also provide support.
- This policy not only reinforces that support but sets out an ambition of there being “No cupboard empty” in Burgess Hill. The aim is to eliminate food insecurity in Burgess Hill through the provision of a community based social enterprise.

### **4. “YOUR LOCAL PANTRY”**

- Your Local Pantry (<https://www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk>) was set up by Stockport Homes in 2013 and has developed in partnership with Church Action on Poverty, Fareshare and other charities/social enterprises. It operates mostly in the north west of England but is now actively promoting this model on a franchise basis to other parts of the UK. See the Franchise brochure for more details.
- Your Local Pantry differs from food banks because it is not dealing with crisis food provision but is a community food club that supports those on low incomes on a long-term basis. Members are shopping for food albeit at a highly discounted price.
- The scheme limits membership to 150 people and assumes that it only operates 1 day per week. To make this a scalable proposition and meet demand membership clubs can be opened on more than 1 day per week, but each is limited to 150 people.
- So if the Burgess Hill Community Cupboard operated six days per week it could support, 900 members. Should demand exceed 900 it would be possible to open additional community food clubs in other premises (indeed this might be a model that could be shared with other Town and Parish Councils in Mid Sussex). It is assumed, for the purposes of this paper, that a membership of 300 could be reached reasonably quickly based on the metrics of need that have been identified above.
- People, meeting the qualifying criteria, pay a weekly subscription to join and, in return, choose a minimum of 10 items each week worth around £15 at retail value. Food is divided into higher priced and value items with a general rule of thumb that the mix of 3:7.
- The recommended weekly subscription for Burgess Hill is £4.00. Effectively members get three times the value of food for their subscription. They exercise choice over the food they buy.

- At £4.00 per week the Burgess Hill Community Cupboard generates £600.00 per week (£30,000 per annum – based on 50 weeks and 150 members, double that at 300 members).
- One of the main suppliers of food is the national food distribution charity, **FareShare**. It was established by homeless charity Crisis and has been in existence for 25 years and has one of its regional centres in Brighton.
- See the FareShare pack for more details on this charity.
- Critical to establishing a community enterprise in Burgess Hill is having the necessary organisational structure ‘ready-to-go’ and access to a core food supply.
- Confirmation has been received from:
  - (i) Your Local Pantry that it will grant a franchise to a local Burgess Hill community food scheme; and
  - (ii) FareShare would be a core food supplier.

These provide a short cut to the establishment of the Burgess Hill Community Cupboard.

- The cost of purchasing a ‘Your Local Pantry’ Franchise is **£2000.00** and then **£500.00** annually thereafter. In return for the franchise fee there is training, marketing and a bespoke volunteer, operations, and stock management system (enabling automated processes and comprehensive reporting). The provision of these are crucial for the delivery of this project. The MOU from Your Local Pantry sets out details of the support it gives to new franchisees.
- FareShare redistributes surplus stock from supermarkets and food manufacturers to other charities and community groups. All the food it provides is within the ‘use by’ or ‘best before’ dates but the content of the food supplied can vary from week to week depending on the supplies it receives from supermarkets, wholesalers and manufacturers.
- Food is not supplied free by FareShare and figure 2 sets out the Annual fees that are paid depending on the quantity of food received. There are no other costs in addition to this fee (unless additional weekly deliveries are requested).

Quantity of food received per year	Weekly delivery Annual Fee	Weekly Collection Annual Fee
Very small (1-2 tonnes)	£400	£300
Small (2-4 tonnes)	£750	£600
Medium (4-8 tonnes)	£1250	£900
Large (8-16 tonnes)	£2250	£1600

**Fig 2**

£150.00 for each additional weekly order

- First year costs for the franchise fee and core food supply from FareShare (assuming large tonnage) would be **£4,250.00 (£85 per week)**. The core food supply is supplemented by making other purchases and donations from other sources.

- The community cupboard is, however, not simply a shop. It is also a place where members can access advice, participate in workshops, and have opportunities to volunteer and even run the operation. It is as much a social space as it is a shopping space
- The Burgess Hill Community Foodbank is aware of this proposed initiative. It is not the purpose of the Burgess Hill Community Cupboard to compete with the Foodbank. The activities should complement each other as the Foodbank only provides emergency support (which support is valuable and welcome).
- As the Community Cupboard operates as a shop it will also be selling frozen and chilled foods in addition to ambient foods. To accommodate this, chiller cabinets and freezers will be required.

## **5. PREMISES**

- As part of the Trading Places programme it was identified that one of the potential tenants of the William Hill Interiors unit (Unit 25 – 29 The Martlets) could be a community social enterprise. Approximately 1000 sq. ft of space could be made available to deliver the Community Cupboard. This unit is being offered on favourable terms meaning there will be low premises costs in the early stages of the project. At a future date it may be necessary to move the Community Cupboard to separate premises. Some fitting out will be required.

## **6. EMPLOYED STAFF**

- The Community Cupboard would be managed by paid staff and volunteers. Paid staff can co-ordinate stock selection and valuation and co-ordinate volunteers. Key skills are experience in a food retail environment, finance, HR and people management.

## **7. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

- The Burgess Hill Community Cupboard is intended to be a social 'not-for-profit' enterprise with any surpluses re-invested for the benefit of its members. This can either be via the creation of a charity (CIO) or a Community Interest Company (CIC) or as a company limited by guarantee. There are clear advantages in setting up a charity (e.g. eligibility for gift-aid on donations and 80% automatic relief on business rates) but it normally takes a minimum of three months to establish the charity. A CIC can be set up within three weeks and a company limited by guarantee within a day.
- The medium-term intention is for the Burgess Hill Community Cupboard to be operated by the community with limited oversight from Burgess Hill Town Council and to run as an independent organisation by the community. However, in the initial stages, the town council will be prime movers in putting the organisation together and especially its outreach work in building the team that can be released to run the Community Cupboard.

- Whilst it takes longer to establish a CIO it has distinct advantages. As a charity it can register for and recover gift-aid on donations. It can also apply for a range of grants to the public sector and grant making bodies. Charities automatically qualify for 80% Business Rates relief and can apply for a further 20% discretionary relief. It also does not become liable for corporation tax. However, it cannot recover VAT.
- A CIO has its own governing constitution and is regulated by the Charity Commission. It is independent of the Town Council with a board of trustees and its own management structure.

## **8. SUPPORT FROM YOUR LOCAL PANTRY**

- The Franchisor, Your Local Pantry, will support BHTC and the CIO to set-up and run the franchise (see MOU) and provides:
  - access to Pantry online membership software;
  - access to the Pantry Operations Manual – a comprehensive manual giving step-by-step instructions and guidance in setting up and running a Pantry;
  - access to the Pantry procedures and templates – documents relating to day-to-day Pantry operations and performance management;
  - set up and development support of 3 days from a dedicated Development Officer, including help with site appraisals, contacts and initial set up;
  - additional phone / email support, advice and guidance from the Development Officer; and
  - the opportunity to visit an existing Pantry.
- The development implementation plan can take up to six months and during this period the membership, volunteer and management base can be built.

## **9. INCOME & EXPENDITURE**

- The CIO is intended to be self-financing and membership subscriptions will cover the operational costs. However, it is not precluded from seeking grant support and donations. The figures below are indicative.
- Core income comes from the member subscriptions. A fully subscribed Community Cupboard day (150 members) generates £600.00 per week. Assume a membership of 300 which is built up over 10 months noting that the membership scheme can be launched before operations physically commence.
- Initially expenditure is borne by the Towns Council which will comprise of a £10k grant in respect of the Franchise Fee (Note £2,000 in year one and £500 in subsequent years. Subsequent years to be borne by the CIO); capital equipment (chillers & freezers est. £5000); and the annual fee to FareShare (£2,250 – securing 16 tonnes of food) plus £750 towards marketing/promotion.
- Note that the CIO will be occupying part of the Trading Spaces unit which is being fitted out under the Trading Spaces project. The intention is that some of the cost of that fit-out will be recovered by way of rent from the tenants (including the CIO)

		Weekly	Annual (50 weeks)
90 Members	Income	£360.00	£18,000.00
150 Members	Income	£600.00	£30,000.00
200 Members	Income	£800.00	£40,000.00

No allowance has been made for grants and donations from other bodies or the benefit of gift-aid.

The main first year costs are rent on the Trading Spaces unit and staff wages (it is not anticipated that staff will be employed full-time and that there will be a volunteer base to support the CIO). Even at 90 members in a full year (which is expected to be very much at the bottom end of expectations) the CIO can meet its rent and wages obligations.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Burgess Hill Town Council recognises that there are single people and families in the town who are food vulnerable and **resolves to:**

- (i) implement a community-based food outlet to tackle the problem of food insecurity located in the William Hill Interiors unit.
- (ii) form a Charitable Incorporated Organisation called the Burgess Hill Community Cupboard CIO;
- (iii) appoint 4 councillors as the interim trustees of the CIO with support from 2 officers (with the additional objective of appointing trustees from the community such that there is a majority of community representatives on the CIO board).
- (iv) authorise the Council (or the CIO if it is registered) to enter into a Franchise Agreement with Your Local Pantry and a food supply agreement with FareShare.
- (v) make a grant of £10,000 to the CIO to fund its start-up costs including payment of the franchise fee; annual fee to FareShare; purchase of capital items;
- (vi) enter into a lease with the CIO on a unit within Trading Spaces on terms which reflect the charitable nature of this operation.
- (vii) Instruct officers to:-
  - (a) promote the CIO with community organisations and individuals in the town;
  - (b) build a volunteer and management base so that the CIO can be transferred to community control as the expertise of its staff and volunteers grows;
  - (c) prepare the necessary operational and governance structure to support the implementation of this policy.

12<sup>th</sup> July 2020

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