



Helping Whittlesey Community Pantry – December 2023 Update **Figures are taken from opening until 16th November.**

Project Summary

Food waste is a big contributor to climate change, with significant resources used to grow, process, pack, and transport food. 6.4 million tonnes of edible food are wasted annually in the UK by retailers, manufacturers, caterers, restaurants and in people's homes. (WRAP). The latest annual report on UK surplus food showed approximately 170,000 tonnes of surplus food was received by UK redistribution organisations in 2022, equating to just over 400 million meals with a value of more than £590 million.

This project minimises food waste by receiving and re-distributing surplus food (primarily from retailers and producers) to the local community of Whittlesey and the surrounding villages.

Key Facts and Results

- Opened in September 2023.
- 2.71 tonnes of surplus food re-distributed during this period.
- 12.3 tonnes of carbon saved.
- An estimated total of 810 users since opening
- An average of 90 pantry users per week
- Collections from 7 shops, including surplus from Thorney food bank on a Saturday.
- Only food not taken by food banks or other initiatives is collected.
- Two planned open sessions per week plus pop-up sessions when required.
- 18 open sessions plus six pop-up sessions in total since opening.
- 20 volunteers.
- Two chest freezers, one fridge and one fridge freezer.

- Six volunteers with food hygiene level 2 certificate.
- 5-star food hygiene rating.
- Available to collect food from companies seven days a week.
- All packaging waste from the activities is recycled.
- 1,100 followers on the Community Pantry Facebook page

Benefiting The Environment and the Community

The pantry saved 2.71 tonnes of food in the first two months of opening, and this is expected to increase in 2024. This equates to 12.3 tonnes of carbon saved. The project also educates residents on the key environmental issue of food waste.

Information relating to food waste impacts and social support and well-being is also held in the pantry from Fenland District Council and third-party groups. The local community is keen to do its bit for the environment, and this project provides an easy, visible way to get involved. It attracts a diverse range of people and creates positive interaction on social media through the sharing of recipe ideas and more general community support. 20 volunteers help with running the pantry and collecting food, including 15 regular volunteers.

This activity only collects and redistributes food that the shops do not sell and that local food banks do not access or require. However, we also take surplus from food banks that would otherwise be wasted when requested. All surplus food is redistributed.

The packaging waste is recycled, and the returnable shop crates used for collections are reused and returned. The strength of the volunteer network and the willingness of local shops to support this environmental project in its first four months has been beyond expectations and given the pantry and those organisations associated with it a very positive environmental and community project that can continue and grow.

Governance & Status

During 2023, Helping Whittlesey formalised its activities with the implementation committee, developed a constitution document and opened a bank account. In addition, it has become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission.

The recognised objective of the charity is to advance the protection and preservation of the environment through promoting sustainable waste management, but not exclusively by redistributing surplus food and household item waste that would otherwise go to landfill.

Those on the Helping Whittlesey Committee have expertise including waste and resource efficiency projects, local community support and knowledge, health and social well-being, finance, education, communications, grant applications and charitable organisation management.

The committee members include the Chair, who was the co-founder of the original Helping Whittlesey Facebook group, plus representatives from Whittlesey Town Council, Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, PPS Recovery Systems and the NHS, who are very supportive of this opportunity.

Grants and Funding Applications to the end of December 2023

The following proposals were submitted, and grant funds were received to set up and open the community pantry.

- Peoples Postcode Lottery - £2,500
- Fenland District Council Community Pantry Support Funds via PECT - £7,000
- Glassmoor Local Environment Fund – The proposal was rejected as being outside of the fund scope.
- Whittlesey Round Table – donation – £250
- Donations from Pantry users – approximated £150 per month. (£600 Sept – Dec 2023)

Several additional funding pots have been identified, and proposals will be submitted during December 2023 and January 2024 to continue and scale up the charitable activities around food and non-food waste minimisation projects in line with the charitable objectives.

Quotes Taken from Launch Press Release

Chair of Helping Whittlesey Anna Foster said, 'We are dedicated to positively impacting our local environment and society. In the first three-week trial alone, we rescued and re-distributed over three-quarters of a tonne of food that would have otherwise gone to waste. The pantry is open to everyone in the local community, and perfectly usable food will be available. All the food is free, and a voluntary donation can help with running costs. All the surplus food we have collected has been taken, which proves the potential. Furthermore, this is just phase 1 of the plan, with more exciting developments.

Nik Johnson, Mayor of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, who is supportive of the Helping Whittlesey activities, stated that 'Food waste is recognised as a key environmental issue nationally said "It is great to see this new local initiative that will rescue perfectly good surplus food from going in the bin, and get it re-distributed into the local community. I wish Helping Whittlesey and the growing network of food waste prevention initiatives across Cambridgeshire every success".

The Story So Far

After discussions with Cambs County Council, Jenner Healthcare and Fenland District Council in Spring 2023, we realised that we shared the same vision and ideas for a Whittlesey community pantry and community fridge project, which was proven to work in other Fenland towns and other areas.

With a venue found at the Falcon Hotel, grants were received from Fenland District Council through the Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) and the Peoples Postcode Lottery and a donation from the Whittlesey Round Table. With the community's support in donating

paint, racking, flooring, and so much more and people being generous with their time prepping the unit, we had a usable space that opened in September 2023.

Many local companies provided support as the pantry was being developed, including;

- * Colin & Michelle at The Falcon Hotel provided the unit and utilities at charitable rates.
- * Arnold Laver donated paint.
- * Luke Robinson provided PVA glue.
- * PPS Independent Consultants supplied the office furniture, other fittings and scales, plus managed the charity and grant funding application processes.
- * Representatives from Whittlesey Town Council, Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council provided their time and advice.
- * Philip Cumberland supplied, delivered, and assembled the racking
- * Kellyvision supplied discounted fridge & freezers.
- * SH property maintenance provided the electric works, lights & PAT testing.
- * GDH Landscaping & Property Development cleaned and prepared the unit, including painting, floor levelling, and panelling.
- * Mark Fountain assisted with the panelling.
- * Mark Cross for refurbishing the doors.
- * Peterborough Flooring supplied the flooring, and Paul Presland laid the flooring.

After our launch, we gained press coverage in several local papers and magazines and have been on BBC Cambridge radio and the local station More Muzic Radio.

Additional activities.

- Every week (bar the first Thursday of the month), we provide Colin from the Falcon with food to cook a meal that the GoodCompany Day Services can reheat for their service users.
- We provided Coates Primary School with ample fruit, pastries, doughnuts, and chocolate rolls to use at their Christmas fete to raise money for their Fun for Funds group.
- We provided party food for Whittlesey Christian Church, a children's glow party.
- We will provide party food for the Whittlesey Phoenix youth group's Christmas party.
- We will provide Colin with food to cook a Christmas lunch for our residents on their own, and we are providing a hamper as part of the Christmas appeal.
- We have a Christmas tree display at the St. Mary's church in Whittlesey to help spread the word on what we are about.