

## 10 Years of Supporting the Levenmouth Community. By our Chair, Ian Wilson



*Volunteers, staff and trustees at a thanksgiving ceremony to mark 10 years of service to the Levenmouth community*

This year brings the 10th anniversary of Levenmouth Foodbank Community Support Project. Looking back over the 10 years it is interesting to see how the service has grown and developed. The initial vision for the service came from a small group of people who recognised that there was a need in the area for a place where people could find support to deal with the challenges of daily living.

While this group were carrying out the research into what such a service would look like they became aware of the Trussell Trust and the Foodbank concept. It was agreed that this model would provide a good opportunity to offer practical support to help people manage crisis situations by providing access to free food for a few weeks.

Very quickly it became clear that while the food was extremely useful, another major issue for many of the people we met was social isolation and access to information on how to identify longer term solutions to the challenges they faced. It was therefore agreed to expand the service to include a weekly community café through which we could offer this kind of support. We also developed the service by working closely with local primary schools to help children understand what food poverty is and how the foodbank helps people facing this issue.

During the last twelve months we have been able to access funding to help us explore, more fully, ways in which we can help people find longer term solutions to the challenges they face and reduce the need for them to rely on the Foodbank. As a result of this work we have employed a Financial Inclusion Worker who is available to offer advice on benefits and other financial support that people we meet at the Foodbank and Café are entitled to but may not be aware of.

For many of us involved in the Foodbank and Community Support service this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary leaves us with mixed feelings. We are frustrated that there is still a need for the Foodbank as people find it more of a challenge to make ends meet under the current economic climate. At the same time we are immensely proud of the work we have done over the ten years and the support we have been able to offer the people we have met.

None of the work we have been involved with over the last ten years would have been possible without the support of the staff, volunteers, trustees, individuals, local groups and businesses who have supported us during this time. I therefore want to use this 10th Anniversary to express my grateful thanks to all these people who have enabled us to continue providing much needed support to people in Levenmouth, even during the pandemic.

Hopefully the next 10 years will see us reach the point where people no longer need to access Foodbanks but have access to enough money to enable them to manage their own situations independently.



## Support from our local community

We would like to thank all of our generous donors without whose support we wouldn't be able to offer our crucial service to the many vulnerable households in our community. We have a local business that grows plants for sale and uses all of the proceeds to buy food for our foodbank. Several people have asked for food or cash donations to be made to the foodbank instead of receiving gifts for birthdays and wedding anniversaries. We have also benefited from a music concert and a sponsored hill walk. One young man even sold his toys to raise money to buy food for us. Thanks again to everyone who has helped us and we are always grateful to receive any donation, however large or small.

## New Thursday café has opened



Levenmouth Foodbank in partnership with Buckhaven Salvation Army have opened a new community café in the foodbank hall in Bowling Green Street, Methil on a Thursday from 12 noon until 2pm. Everyone in the community is welcome to attend the café for a hot lunch and pudding, all provided free of charge. The new café is called Café Connect, the same name as the long established and hugely popular Tuesday breakfast café. Doors opened at the Thursday café for the first time on 11 January 2024 and the café will be open every Thursday throughout the year at the same time of 12 noon. We hope to see many new customers alongside all of our regular Tuesday customers at the new café.

## From our manager Ruth

This year marks my fourth year since I joined the Levenmouth Foodbank team. At that time the building was locked down and we were serving food and chatting outside the door. It's been a privilege to be part of building the service back up, starting with face to face foodbank sessions, then re-opening the café and finally restarting the schools project this year. In this time we have shared successes and challenges together with our team and our friends and supporters in the community. One of the biggest challenges in the last year has been the cost of living crisis, which has pushed foodbank need higher and caused a significant drop in donations. One in every 5 households who use the foodbank every month have never accessed the service before. This is often due to the rising cost of essentials. People can no longer cope. I am hugely thankful for our committed supporters in the community, businesses, churches and referral partners whose creative and faithful support allows us to continue to provide this essential service to the people who need it. I am constantly overwhelmed with admiration and thanks for our volunteer team who give up so much of their time freely to make sure we have all the food we need, a hot kettle and a warm welcome to everyone who comes in. We truly couldn't do it without them. As we enter a new year with the challenges it brings, I have hope that with your support we will be able to continue to support those more in need in our community.



## Introducing The Harbour



Levenmouth Foodbank Community Support Project has introduced a new service which we hope will greatly benefit customers of our foodbank. **The Harbour** is a joint venture between our project and Citizens Advice & Rights Fife. It aims to provide financial advice to augment the short-term crisis support already being provided by our foodbank, and a number of our foodbank customers have already received help with a range of financial and benefits issues. The Harbour service is operated by Fraser Sneddon who is a highly trained expert in the benefits system and is able to assist individuals and households in overcoming the financial issues which may have caused them to seek emergency food support from the foodbank. Fraser is available for a chat at the foodbank sessions on a Monday and Friday, and at the community café on a Tuesday morning. He is also available by appointment outwith those times for longer consultations.



## Levenmouth Foodbank in the community



The newest addition to the staff at Levenmouth Foodbank is actually a very familiar face to many who have used the foodbank service over the years. Our former manager Stewart English has recently re-joined as Community Support Coordinator. One of Stewart's first tasks in his new post was to attend the formal opening of the expanded B&M store in Leven, as pictured above. B&M also generously donated a substantial shopping voucher to aid with stocking our warehouse. Stewart will be managing our schools project, where local primary schools are invited into the foodbank to participate in fun activities and find out more about how the foodbank operates and why the service is so crucial to many households in our community. If you would like Stewart to speak about our foodbank at your church or at your club or committee meeting, you can contact him by email at [stewart@levenmouth.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:stewart@levenmouth.foodbank.org.uk).

## WE'RE SIGNED UP TO THE FREE BANKTHEFOOD APP!

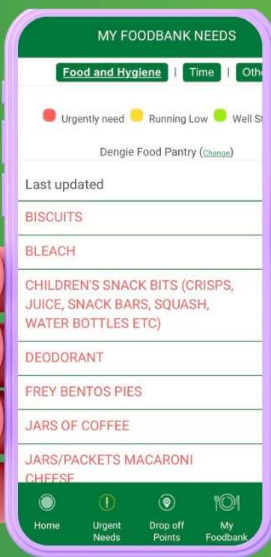
**Chris Leppard  
@ferretandbird says**

"For me it just makes more sense. Rather than throwing a few random items into my trolley, I can actually get what my Food Bank needs. It's a great idea - I hope more will use it."



**FIND OUT MORE!**

[WWW.BANKTHEFOOD.ORG](http://WWW.BANKTHEFOOD.ORG)



BankTheFood is a mobile phone app which helps our donors know about which food items we need most. Download the app and follow us and you'll get an alert with a reminder of our food needs when you shop locally in our partner stores. You can then choose exactly what you would like to donate and leave your donation in our food collection box at the end of your shopping trip. We will then be alerted via the app of your (anonymous) donation making it easier for us to track and locate items we really need.



It's time to

## GUARANTEE OUR ESSENTIALS

We're calling on the UK government to Guarantee our Essentials. The Trussell Trust, alongside the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, has launched a new campaign calling on the UK government to Guarantee our Essentials. We live in one of the wealthiest countries in the world, and yet people here in Levenmouth are going without the essentials we all need to get by.

Everyone's circumstances can change. Losing your job, needing to care for a sick family member, breaking up with your partner – these are things that can happen to any of us. That's why Universal Credit should offer support to anyone in need of help, but right now it's not providing enough to cover the cost of life's essentials, such as food, household bills and travel costs, with 90% of low-income households receiving Universal Credit going without.

We can't always deal with what life throws at us on our own, which is why we need to have a system in place that supports us all to afford the essentials while we recover from setbacks.

The UK government must make sure the basic rate of Universal Credit at least covers life's essentials and that support can never be pulled below that level. It's time for the UK government to guarantee our essentials. We're proud to support this campaign at Levenmouth Foodbank, as we see first-hand how low levels of social security affect people in our community. To understand more and join the campaign visit the web page at [www.trusselltrust.org/essentials](http://www.trusselltrust.org/essentials).

**JustGiving**

If you wish to make a one-off or regular donation to Levenmouth Foodbank, we have a donation page at

[www.justgiving.com/levenmouthfoodbank](http://www.justgiving.com/levenmouthfoodbank).

The JustGiving site can optionally apply Gift Aid which adds 25p to every £1 donated.



If you are shopping online at a host of suppliers such as Ebay and Argos, buying via Give as You Live at [www.giveasyoulive.com](http://www.giveasyoulive.com) automatically donates a small portion of your purchase to us.



### How to use the foodbank



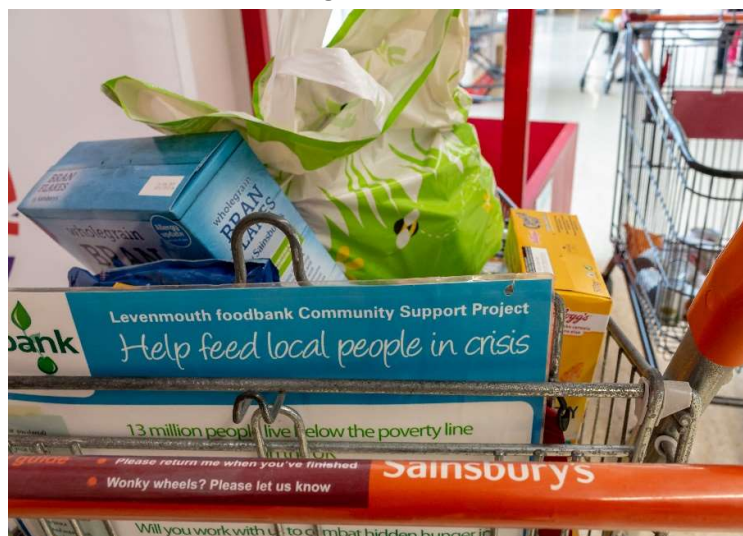
In order to receive food support from us, the first step is to get a referral from one of our many support agency partners operating in the Levenmouth area. If needed, we can put you in touch with a suitable support agency for your needs – contact us using the details at the foot of this page.

### Signposting – Help to find help



Due to the constraints on our service we can only offer limited short term support to those in crisis. However we endeavour to understand the underlying issues that cause people to seek support from our foodbank and to help “signpost” them to longer term support if it is needed.

### Donating to the foodbank



Foodbank donations can be made at our premises in Bowling Green Street in Methil between 9:30am and 2:30pm every Monday and Friday. Alternatively we have collection points throughout the area in Sainsbury's, Aldi and Lidl stores, Bank of Scotland and Nationwide bank branches in Leven, Methilhaven Co-op, Nisa (post office) in Leven and Fife Council office in Methil. Our newest collection points are at Spar in East Wemyss and Home Bargains and B&M in Leven. We welcome donations of the following products for our warehouse.

**Tinned soup, beans, spaghetti, macaroni and ravioli**

**Tinned meats** eg stew, mince, ham, corned beef

**Tinned vegetables** eg peas, sweetcorn, carrots, mixed veg

**Milk**, long life UHT

**Fruit juice**, long life (not refrigerated) and **diluting juice**

**Pot noodles and packs of noodles**

**Coffee**, small jars or packets preferred

**Tea bags**, various pack sizes

**Jam**, various flavours, and **marmalade**

**Packs of biscuits and Snacks** such as crisps, sweets, etc

**Rice, pasta and instant mash potato**

**Cooking sauce**, for pasta and curry

**Tinned fish**, tuna, salmon, sardines, etc

**Rice pudding, custard and sponge pudding**

**Sugar**, small bags

**Cereal and porridge**, various size packs

**Tinned fruit**

**Ketchup and condiments**

**Toiletries**, shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, toilet roll, etc

**Laundry and kitchen supplies**

**Baby supplies**, nappies, wipes, etc

**Dog and cat food**

**Seasonal items**, eg Christmas selection boxes, Easter eggs, etc

We also appreciate donations of **carrier bags** (“bag for life” type)



**Miss A M Pilkington  
Charitable Trust**

If you would like to help or support our foodbank in any way, please contact us:

Email: [info@levenmouth.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@levenmouth.foodbank.org.uk)  
Web: <https://levenmouth.foodbank.org.uk>  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/LevenmouthFoodbank](https://www.facebook.com/LevenmouthFoodbank)  
Twitter: @levenfoodbank  
Telephone: 01333 439202



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