



Our first public newsletter (August 2021) to express our gratitude to those who have supported us

How and why it all started

When Covid hit Worthing a number of small groups set up response teams to deliver food and medicine to those who were isolating. It was soon apparent that not being able to afford food was also a major problem, so a food bank was set up in space provided by East Worthing Baptist Church. The local community provided volunteers and in no time at all we were delivering parcels right across Worthing, then providing children's lunches in school holidays and free school uniform for food bank clients. By June, we had registered as a charity called Les Alden Foundation, with Worthing Food Foundation and Worthing Uniform Centre as its major projects. We also passed on toys at Christmas, eggs at Easter.....



How you responded

We were overwhelmed by the generosity of individuals who rallied round, the community pulling together to protect each other. Local businesses also stepped up and we were grateful for grants from several sources. A list of groups and firms involved is at <https://lesaldenfoundation.org.uk/thank-you/> and it makes impressive reading.

Since we first opened our doors, we have provided 75,000 meals for 2450 people, 70% of whom were children, plus 1100 school lunches and uniform for over 200 families. Every week, around 20% of our clients move on, replaced by new arrivals. So far, we have never failed to respond to anyone who needed help, and this is due entirely to local people supporting their neighbours in times of need, so thank you all.

In an average week, we now deliver food to 80 households, feeding around 300 people. We also pass on any surplus to several temporary accommodation sites and from time to time we send food to a women's refuge. All this is done by 100 unpaid volunteers, so thanks to them as well. Many of our clients send in their thanks too

"I would also like to say thank you so much for your help over the last couple of months without you and your team I don't know what I would have done."

"Thank you again so much I never like asking for help."

And what of the future?

Well, we could be here for a while yet. Over 16,000 people are living with food insecurity in our town. Over half the people receiving income from social security are food insecure, with one in three classified as severely food insecure. So we shall continue to provide food where it is needed.

But it is not just a matter of handing over a bag of pies and apples. Anyone not sure of sufficient food is usually also suffering from stress and anxiety. In an early survey, we found 93% of our clients had previously missed meals. It is hard to plan ahead when you are hungry, even going without food to make sure the children have enough. So we try lift spirits as well.

The children's recipe club has been sending our recipe books and ingredients, so children and parents can cook together, not only providing healthy and tasty food but reinforcing family life with positive experience.

"Hi Just want to say thank you for the recipe and ingredients. We have just made the Cheese and Onion round and my daughter said it is the best thing she has ever eaten."

The children's arts competition also gave an outlet for positive experience – a cheap but effective way to lighten the mood in dark times.



Kind local agencies donated eggs at Easter and chocolate at Christmas and we try to make sure everybody has enough toiletries and sanitary products. Mental and physical health and equally important – you need fresh fruit, vegetables and something cheerful. Once people feel secure they can start to recover and plan ahead.

And once people can start to plan they can move back to being independent. To help this process, we worked in conjunction with One Stop Junction. A temporary secondment to advise our clients gained 15 people an average of £1,800 per household. We have now been granted funds from Adur and Worthing council to employ our own Outreach Worker. This is our only paid post and will enable someone with proper experience to make sure local people will ask for help at an early stage and then become independent asap.

We are also working with other local agencies and the local council to map local food insecurity, know who is in trouble where and work out the most effective way we can make a collective response. This may, or may not, involve a communal kitchen. We've come a long way since the first steps. And in October will be running a marathon too.

Protecting your privacy (GDPR)

We think it is important that people who supported us should know where their money went, so this newsletter was to inform and thank anyone whose details we had who had not specifically opted out of communication. If you prefer not to hear from us, just reply to this with Do No Contact and we will make sure your details are erased.

Thanks again for your help.