



***Hello and welcome to our first Newsletter.***

It is now 8 months since we separated from Plymouth Foodbank and became North Plymouth Foodbank in our own right under Trussell Trust. After a lot of hard work we had our first Quality Assurance Visit from our Trussell Trust Area Manager in December and she was very pleased with the results.

Christmas proved very busy and it became very apparent that we needed more storage and packing space.

In February we secured an Asda small grant which was spent on converting a little used back room into a packing area/"pantry" thus allowing more than one volunteer to work on packing food parcels. At the beginning of March all was in place.

Then along came COVID-19 and all changed. We closed for 2 weeks at the beginning of April to give us time to implement safe working practices in accordance with Government Guidelines and we became a "drive thru" foodbank. As many of our volunteers were in the "at risk" category they had to be stood down. The "drive thru" system meant that we were able to operate with minimum staff numbers in order to maintain safe working practices and social distancing and also continue to support those in need.

Of 45 of our referrers 19 (8 of them being schools) signed up to our E-referral system which meant they could still support clients even though they were unable to meet them face to face.



**A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS**

We have to say a big thank you to our volunteers. Since lock-down we have been operating on site with 3 or 4 volunteers (the maximum number to stay safe) and they have done a wonderful job keeping our clients fed and dealing with stock in and out.

This is not to forget those who had to stand down because of age or health reasons. Some have been supporting from home, others have kept up morale by staying in touch through social media, sending in funny stories and videos. Everyone is doing a great job.

Also our Manager, Hilary has kept in touch with all our volunteers using email, WhatsApp and other social media in order to keep them "in the loop" and to let them know they are not forgotten.



A sample donation



One of our wonderful British Gas drivers.

During lock-down British Gas employees volunteered to deliver food stocks to us which were donated by Tesco throughout the Trussell Trust Foodbank Network.

This has proved essential in keeping up our stock levels as we had to ask people not to bring donations directly onto the site. Despite this, the general public and our regular supporters have been donating through our permanent collection points in Asda and Tesco(Roborough) and the staff at both stores have been extremely helpful in facilitating the easy collection of these goods.

In addition to British Gas delivering to us, members of North Plymouth Community Church have been assisting with collecting from the Supermarkets. A big thank you to all involved.

## OTHER NEWS

Early in June our “Cabin” had a facelift. All the outside has been cleaned and freshly painted and is looking very pristine. You may need dark glasses when you next visit!

Also one of our volunteer’s cleared all the undergrowth from around the area. It looks great.

### NETWORKING

We are continuing to network with our referral and other agencies in order to provide that “more than just food” aspect of our service. This means we can signpost clients and help them access support for their other needs. This will be especially important as lock-down eases and the true cost of COVID-19 is known.

### DONATIONS

We have been well supported with food and money donations from individuals and local businesses. This has meant we have been able to maintain safe stock levels overall and continue to help those in crisis. We thank God for his provision at this time.

### THE FUTURE

Who knows at this stage what the true cost of COVID-19 has been. Rest assured, North Plymouth Foodbank will be here to support those in need for as long as necessary. Although we look forward to a future where Foodbanks are not required, the need does not appear to be going away any time soon.



A view of our new “pantry” area

## Opening Hours: Tue and Thu, 1000-1200

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