



CHURCHES TOGETHER
in LOUTH & DISTRICT



CHURCHES TOGETHER LOUTH AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY LARDER

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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Food poverty can be defined as “the inability to afford, or have access to, food to make up a healthy diet” The causes of food poverty are complex and inter-related. Financial causes predominate, including low income and unemployment. Other important causes include poor access to affordable food and lack of budgeting or cooking skills. Wider social and economic determinants, such as welfare reforms, also play a vital role.

The consequences of food poverty have major health impacts throughout life, ranging from hunger, malnutrition and obesity to social consequences such as shame and social exclusion. Evidence shows that poor diet is related to 30% of life years lost in early death and disability. The severity of these consequences shows that failure to act

on food poverty will lead to escalating costs for individuals, employers, the NHS and government.

In 1995, Laura Garrett wrote a 768-page tome entitled *The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance*.

***The Coming Plague* offered a stark warning that the encroachment of humans into every nook and cranny of the natural world—combined with modern conveniences such as air travel—had placed humanity directly in the crosshairs of a catastrophic global pandemic. It was only a matter of time, she told us.**

The current situation

Where are we now?

In-work poverty is the problem of our times. Whether you look at the absolute or relative poverty measure, two thirds of children in poverty live in a working family.

- In the three years to 2016/17 the number of people living in poverty in working families has risen by over one million.
- Jobs that are low paid and insecure, offering only a dead-end and not a stepping stone to a better job, trap people in poverty. Five in every six people in low-paid work fail to escape low pay over 10 years.
- Barriers to increasing pay can be even greater for those with family responsibilities. Caring for children can limit the number of hours you can work and the distance you can travel for work. This is particularly acute when children are young, and just 7% of people think a mother should be expected to work full-time before her youngest child goes to school. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation Briefing on Child Poverty 2018)

Background

Louth Community Larder is an initiative developed by Louth and District Churches Together in 2013. It was developed in response to a need identified through the groups of Churches in Louth and based at the Trinity Centre on Eastgate. The rationale for locating the Community Larder at the Trinity Centre were

1. The building was staffed regularly
2. The Trinity Centre is located within one of the most deprived areas of Louth

Louth Community Larder is predominantly a last-resort, short-term measure, prompted by an 'acute income crisis' – something which had happened to completely stop or dramatically reduce the income of a household or family. Income crisis could be caused by sudden loss of earnings, change in family

Myths and Misconceptions of Food banks

Food banks entrench dependency.

We are an emergency service. Should people begin to become reliant on their services, steps are taken to help them address the root causes of their problems.

Food banks will serve anybody.

We will only provide food to people who have been referred by front-line professionals such as doctors and social workers, who have identified that they are in acute need.

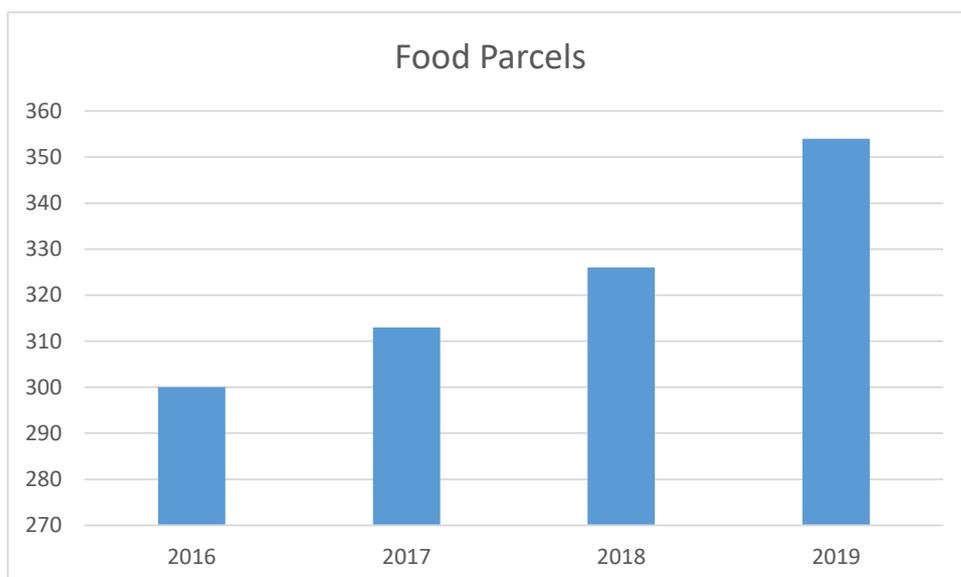
Food banks provide luxury food.

We rely on the kind donations of food from the community. Whilst some may choose to donate high-end products, the majority of food bank donations are non-perishable essentials.

circumstances or housing problems. However, often the immediate trigger for food bank use is linked to problems with benefits (including waiting for benefits to be paid, sanctions, problems with ESA or changes in circumstances) or missing or late income tax credits payments.

Many food bank users faced multiple challenges, including ill-health, relationship breakdown, mental health problems or substantial caring responsibilities. Some presented as homeless or were unable to work or had recently become unemployed and were waiting for the benefits to be paid. It has also become apparent that there is an increase in the number of families seeking help.

In Louth, demand for charitable emergency food provision has grown rapidly over the last five years. Of those receiving emergency food, approximately two thirds were adults and one third were children. People who were single, two parent families, single parent families and households with multiple adults all accessed emergency food provision. There was a strong positive correlation between the deprivation of a ward and the number of foodbank referrals. Typically, people accessing emergency food provision are of working age (98% were aged between 16 and 64)



There has been a steady increase in food parcel referrals since 2016 the reasons are not just about people being out of work but often many people come up against a short-term financial challenge that forces them to approach food banks. Once this crisis is over generally, they do not need any further assistance.

***P who lost her job at the beginning of the emergency stated that”
without the help of the food bank I would have not been able to cope”***

A 3-day food parcel from the Louth Community Larder typically consists of:

Tea/Coffee, milk, sugar, breakfast cereal, tinned meat, tinned vegetables, tinned fruit, biscuits, pasta/rice pasta sauce/curry sauce, beans, tinned tomatoes, tinned tuna

More than Just Food

As in previous years’ staff and volunteers at The Louth and District Community Larder provide an invaluable source of information and local knowledge to help those in crisis in order to help them through their current situation by signposting to organisations and agencies that are available. As well as sign posting and food, the Community Larder also provides personal hygiene items e.g.

- Toilet rolls
- Shampoo
- Shaving foam/cream & disposable razors
- Soap
- Shower gel
- Feminine hygiene products

The Larder continues to hold a number of other items that are available on request and have been generously donated by members of the local community these are:

- Curtains
- Bedding
- Towels
- Cutlery
- Crockery
- Pans

Some additional items have regularly been requested by organisations referring clients into the larder, unfortunately we have very limited storage space, however due to the generosity of local charities (Louisa Dickinson Fund) we have been able to source a number of:

- Cookers
- Washing machines
- Children's car seats
- Fridges/Freezers

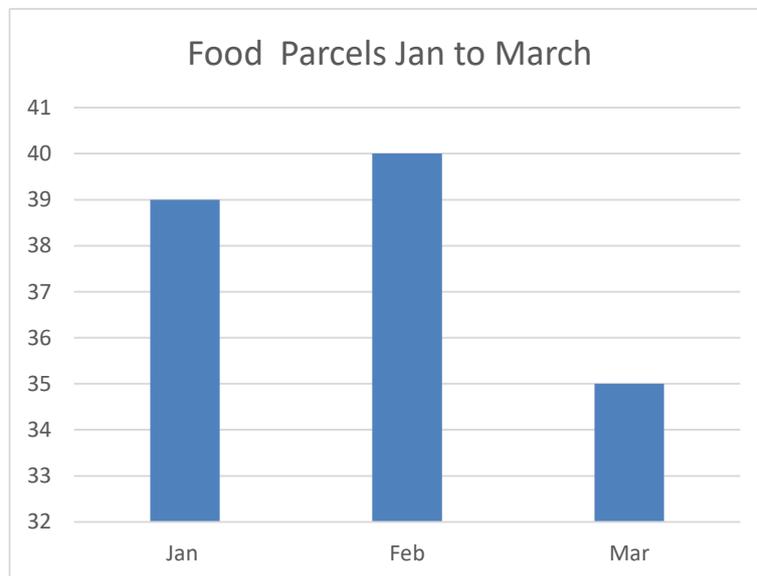
Homelessness remains a problem. We have engaged with a number of partners who also support homelessness to ensure we have a regular supply of items to help the homeless should they need support:

- Sleeping bags
- Tents
- Winter items (hats, glove etc.).

Emergency Gas and Electricity

The Community Larder continues to be able to offer emergency gas and electricity payments. The payments are up to £10 for gas and £10 for electricity these are subject to a referral to the Larder and are available for those in most need. Only one payment per year is available in most cases however the staff at the Centre can use their judgement on a case-by-case basis should it be required

As with all originations 2020 looked like any other year. We saw a steady increase in food parcel allocations in January to March this is prodomantly because of family's finances becoming stretched due to additional Christmas spending. Additionally, it was noticed that there was an increase of gas and electricity support which we put down to some colder days in January and February.



From January to March 114 food parcels were given out

March 23rd - Onwards

The Centre closed on the 23rd March for all activity apart from the Community Larder. The Community Larder became part of the Pastoral Care Network set up by the Team Parish of Louth to deliver:

- Regular telephone contact with parishioners
- Deliveries of prescriptions in partnership with the Lincolnshire Coop Pharmacy
- Food and other items for deliveries to those who were shielding
 - Pet food
 - Hygiene packs
- Emergency Gas and electricity support

In previous years, a typical food parcel would be sufficient for 3 days however in March this was increased to 4 days' worth of food (in reality it would have been more), also the emergency gas and electricity payments were increased to £20 each. To enable increased access to food and other provision, all restrictions (three food parcels per year and 1 emergency gas and electricity) and the referral processes were suspended for the duration of the lockdown and potentially beyond.

It was also clear that in order to keep up with both the demand of donations and issuing food parcels more volunteers would be needed. Also, additional volunteers were needed to deliver the prescriptions and any food parcels for people who were shielding or isolating due to health reasons.



Visit by the Mayor of Louth with volunteers during lockdown

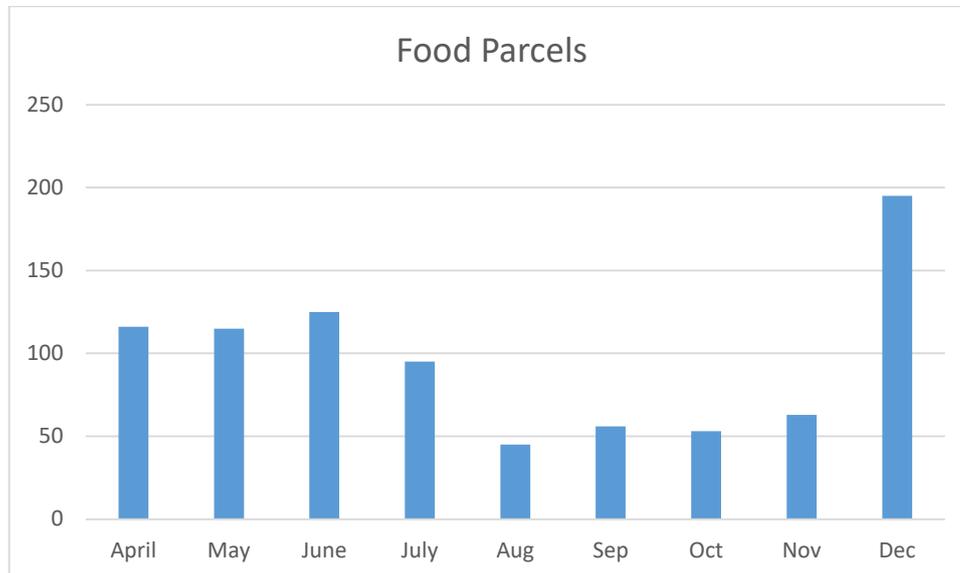
As the Centre was closed, the Community Larder was relocated from its previous home (small cupboard at the end of the main hall) into the hall, this would ensure the safety of volunteers and staff and allow increased capacity and for increased social distancing.

It became clear in the first 2 weeks of April that the activity in the larder would increase due to the Pandemic. Due to the centre having to close on the 23rd we could only offer food collections between 9am to 10am Monday to Friday, the hour was

usually hectic. Alongside food distribution hygiene packs, pet food and emergency gas and electricity were also available.

Being open only for an hour a day also proved challenging for donations, as all donations needed to be dropped off at the centre during our opening times.

T who had a letter to isolate due to ill health “I would have loved to have volunteered but my health and that of my partner has made it impossible we need to wait for this to be over”



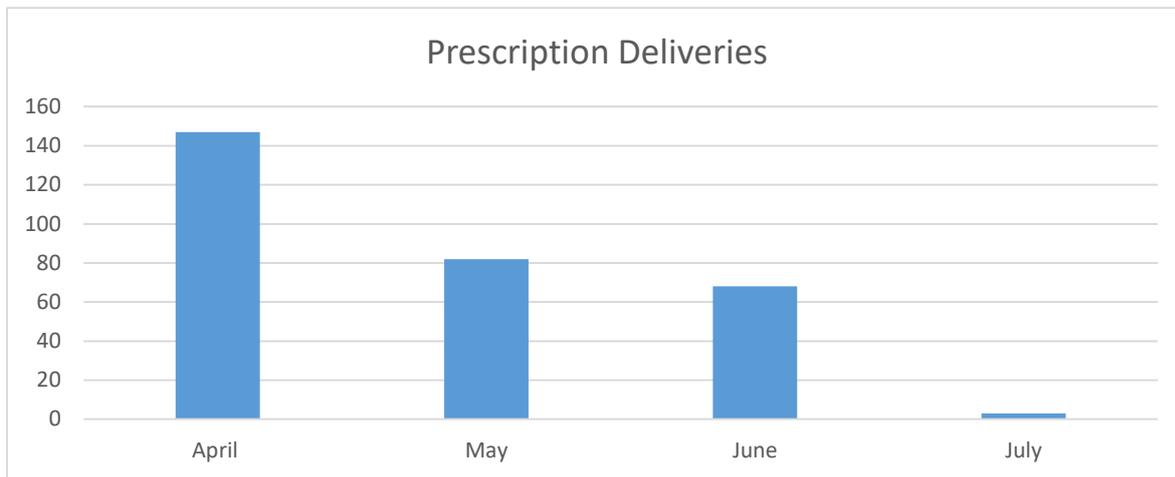
From March to December 1468 food parcels were given out

To calculate the number of meals given out is 1468 (food parcels) multiplied by 4 (days' worth of food) multiplied by 3 (meals per day) which equates to 35,460 meals provided from March to December

Prescription Deliveries

A new service that was provided during the initial lock down was deliveries of prescriptions for people that were shielding. The service was initially to support the customers of the Lincolnshire Coop pharmacy, however later during lock down delivery support for Boots pharmacy was also provided.

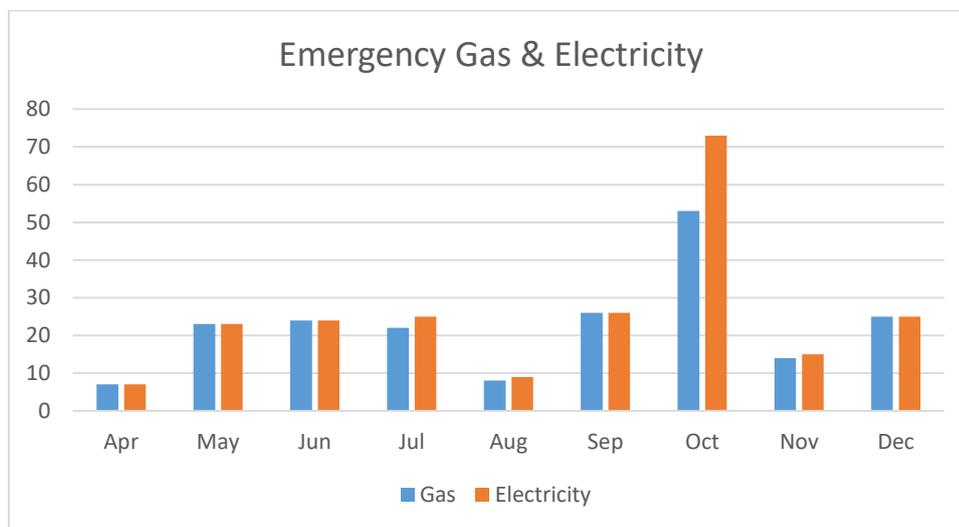
The take up of deliveries was high in the initial months but as people began to get themselves organised and realised that they could collect for themselves the take up numbers reduced quite dramatically. Prescription deliveries ended when shielding ended on the 31st July 2020.



Emergency Gas and Electricity

These payments were initially instigated as an emergency measure to help individuals and families with a one-off payment of £10 for gas and £10 electricity. Usually on average 35 individuals and/or families receive emergency payments throughout any one year. These payments were increased to £20 each. Looking at the statistics it is considered that the 2nd lockdown in November caused concern amongst the Larder users which resulted in a rush on this method of support in the short term.

J who has been accessing the food larder said "I would like to thank everyone at the Foodbank who is helping us out at the moment you all are doing so much"



Hygiene Packs

Previously hygiene items were given out when requested and usually only the items that were requested were given out with food. In March, the decision was taken to put a standard hygiene pack together appropriate for both men and women. A low-level costing exercise was carried out and the average price of a hygiene pack came to £9 in value. Up to the 31st December 2020, 450 hygiene packs have been given out.

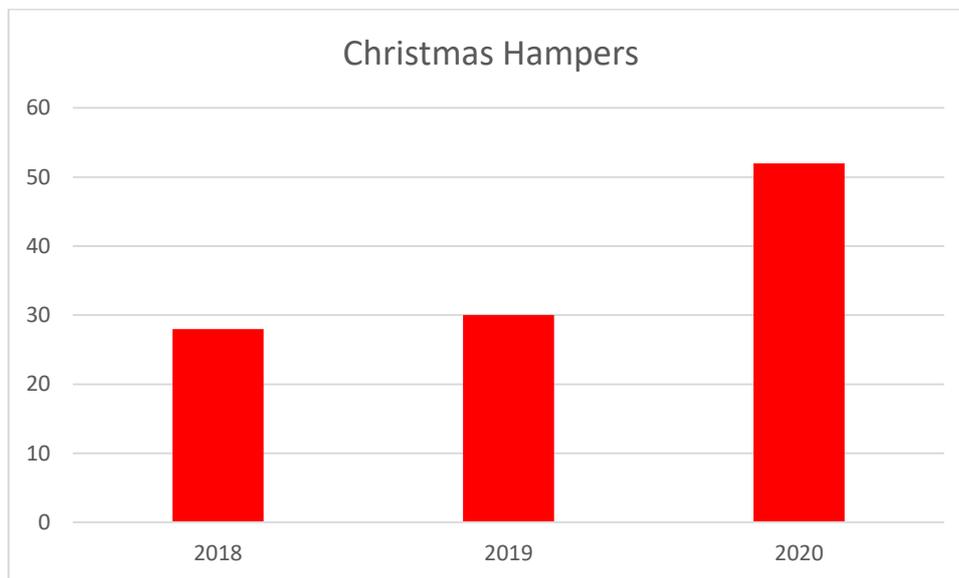
Pet Food

Prior to March pet food has never been part of the community larder range, mainly as it has never been donated and it was considered an additional cost born by the limited resources of the Community Larder. It was again decided in March to give out pet food on request therefore donations for pet food were requested the rationale for providing pet food was often that people would choose to feed their pets before feeding themselves.

Christmas 2020

As with previous years it was decided, to offer Christmas hampers to those in most need. Again, as with previous years, to receive a hamper, individuals/families needed a referral from an agency providing support. This is an important consideration as the limited resources available would be under additional pressures this year due to the pandemic. Usually at this time of year 25 – 30 hampers are available to help relieve some of the financial pressures on families/individuals that occurs at Christmas. Again, it is difficult to compare year on year due to the pandemic, but it is a good example of the pressure that has been placed on families/individuals.





Donations

As the Louth Community Larder is a small independent food bank it is totally reliant on community donations (either in food or money). The foodbank receives no donations from major supermarkets (apart from the Lincolnshire Coop), any donations through drop boxes in supermarket foyers are from the local community members making purchases choosing to donate to the Community Larder. These donations are collected by volunteers when they are available here at the centre.

Clearly as the number of food parcels given out increased then the level of donations needed to increase to meet the demand. With this in mind a major advertisement campaign was carried out through social media with the view of maintaining stocks for the larder.

The response to the appeal was overwhelming, the larder received a steady flow of both food and money throughout the first lockdown and through until December. It is difficult to thank anyone or any organisation for their generosity as the list would be long to say the least, but the following local organisations should be recognised for their support in 2020 in no particular order:

Louth Rotary Club
 Kidgate Primary Academy
 Louth Academy
 Louth Hospital Sports and Social Club
 Louth United Charities
 East Lindsey District Council
 Louth Hockey Club
 DS Smith
 Parkers Motor Services LTD
 Drury Precision Engineering
 St Marys Church – Fotherby
 Louth Wholefoods Coop
 The Old Maltings Antique Centre
 Churches Together Louth and District
 For the Love of Scrubs – Louth Group

Louth Inner Wheel
 St Michaels Primary School
 Howdens Timber
 Eastgate Union Church
 Louth Town Council
 The Louisa Dickinson Fund
 Louth Old Boys
 Platform Housing
 Louth & District Lions
 St James DCC - Louth
 The Wood Shed
 St Martins Welton le Wold
 Louth Stroke Group
 Halifax - Louth

Whilst the above local organisations made generous donations many other donations in both food and money have been generously made towards the Community Larder, it would be impossible to thank everyone individually for their generosity however it is important to acknowledge and to thank everyone who supported the community larder through 2020 and into 2021. Without the generosity of the community of Louth and its surrounding villages the level of assistance provided throughout this emergency to so many would not have been possible.

Louth Community Larder Food Bank

April 16th 2020 Update... Donations of

**Tinned Meat
(ie corned beef)
Rice Pudding &
UHT Milk**

would be appreciated



Thank you
to everyone
who has given
so generously

Please bring donated items to the Trinity Centre, Eastgate, Louth LN11 8DJ
from **Monday – Friday 9am - 10am.**
www.teamparishoflouth.org.uk
Tel: 01507 605803

Staffing and Operation

Usually, the staff at the Trinity Centre manage the day-to-day operations of the Community Larder undertaking. Any food ordering, completion of referral forms and handing out leaflets. However, during the pandemic, a great deal of reliance fell onto the volunteers to provide much of the day-to-day work from maintaining stock to giving out food at the door during opening times. There was an amazing response from local people wanting to volunteer but due to social distancing rules it was necessary to restrict the number of people who could be in the centre at any one time

Therefore, this is an opportunity to thank those who volunteered to both work in the centre and to those who also delivered food and prescriptions. It is also important to note that volunteers were prepared to put themselves at risk to help and support others who were considered to be at increased risk from the virus. We would like to thank the following again in no particular order:

Adele Lee	Linda Warren	Fred Popoff	Maria Vincent
Wendy Moore	David Ford	Deb Scrafton	Blue Maplethorpe
Sue Barker	Andrew West	Jayne Pegg	Amanda Coxall
Barbara Hubbard Marks		Jennifer Hibbard Marks	

Future considerations

This is difficult to predict however one thing for sure is that the Louth and District Churches Together Community Larder will remain under even greater pressure well into 2021 due to the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic. It is also anticipated that when the current Furlough programme ends many will be out of work through loss of their jobs or ill health. Like everyone there are concerns about the future so The Louth Community Larder through its volunteers and the Staff at Trinity Centre are eagerly anticipating an end to the current crisis (whenever this maybe).

References:

Professor Tim Lang characterises the detrimental impact of food poverty: “*Food poverty is worse diet, worse access, worse health, higher percentage of income on food and less choice from a restricted range of foods. Above all food poverty is about less or almost no consumption of fruit and vegetables.*’

Renowned expert Professor Elizabeth Dowler adds that people should be able to access food in a socially acceptable way, defining food insecurity as ‘*The inability to consume an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so.*’