Volunteers' meeting 4 December 2017

Present:

Pauline Wilson, Liz Evans ( BH) , Mike Haddaway, Barbara Phillips, Lindsey Kelley, Charlie Bell, Dave Groves, Linda Ion, Ali Thomas, James Harrison, Helen Stafford, Vanessa, Simon Thompson, Susan Barber, Katy Anderson, Emma Bullard

**Update from Katy:**

1. New stores are coming on board - the small Sainsbury’s, Lidl, some Co-ops and Aldi for Christmas.
2. The food poverty situation in Shrewsbury is getting worse due to benefit changes, and will continue to get worse. The Food Bank supported 125 people last week - more than ever. The Trussell Trust say that introduction of Universal Credit has increased food bank use by more than 40%. This is due to the 5+ week delay in benefit and the increased risk of eviction.
3. We will hear this week whether we have been successful in bidding for funding to build a Food Poverty Alliance and action plan for Shropshire. If successful this will be paid work for Ali Thomas, Emily Fay and Katy Anderson. This will make it clear what needs to be done - and will help our Food Hub target its food effectively.
4. We now have a volunteers' section on the Food Hub website -just click on the button on the top right of the home page <https://www.shrewsburyfoodhub.org.uk/> and log in with **food hub 2018 remember to put in the spaces!**

Please have a look, our latest updates will now be there – so no more lengthy emails from us

:-) along with our standard information such as the volunteer agreement and food safety essential guide.

The weekly rota will continue to be sent out by email on a Friday or Saturday.

1. Christmas collections and deliveries

School holidays are 16 Dec – 2 January inclusive and many of our groups are closed over this period.

As there will be so much food available we plan to run **every day -** apart from Saturdays, and Christmas Day and New Year's Day – subject to volunteers being available, and groups able to take the food. We are getting a good response so far; things are changing quickly and there may well be last-minute additions.

We **also plan to collect chill-chain food** on all the Sundays in December - there will be so much, especially on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Much of this will be put in freezers at the depot for distribution in the New Year.

**Please let us know your availability if you haven't yet done so**. *All the details on the volunteers page!*

1. Travel expenses

You give so much of your time that it’s very important that if you need to reclaim expenses, you do. To help reduce the pressure on fundraising, this year if you don't need to claim fuel expenses, we'd like to ask you to claim them and then donate them back with Gift Aid.

The meeting agreed that this was a good idea. The details are being checked with our accountant and we’ll be back to you with the plan.

**Depot operations and rota - Emma**

Feedback from small groups:

Best things about the depot and the new systems:

* The depot: having everything in one place: light, warm (!) comfortable. Storage
* The division of labour – different roles, good teamwork
* Having a bigger team – more sociable
* Having some groups collecting from us – helps us and it's nice to meet them
* Food log forms: easier than previous system of emails

Worst things/ things we'd like to change

* unexpected "donations" especially large amounts of non-food – need to make sure enough people are on the team to deal with these occasions
* situation re bags and trays. Bags are easier to lift and fit in car; but they don't seem to come back :-( trays more likely to be returned and you can see what's in them
* Need to manage the use of freezer space
* Store cupboard food on shelves at rear – need reassurance that it doesn't "sit there" for weeks, just long enough to be allocated and sent out
* Would be nice if each group had an allotted space so their tray was always in the same place and easy to find. Not enough table space for this yet
* town centre traffic around 9am

And finally

If you weren't at the meeting please let Emma know if you

* don't yet know where we collect from M&S and Tesco in the town centre (doesn't apply to those who do 8.45 starts) and are happy to learn.
* haven't yet had an explanation of the Food Safety presentation – this needs to be done in person with Emma, Katy or Ali.

After which some of us went to the Alb on Smithfield Road where they were very welcoming and discussed plastic/compostable straws with us!

Thank you to everyone. We have had many lovely messages from our groups such as

*"Thank you, wonderful Food Hub gang. We really appreciate all that you do!*

*" It is a fantastic service that we have come to rely on. The food which we receive is distributed to our pupils via Breakfast Club, After School Club, breaktime snacks, cookery classes and school dinners"*

THANK YOU!

Emma