

Feeding Bradford and Keighley 6th AGM 30th Oct 2023 at The Storehouse, Bradford

1)Apologies: Franco Biancardo, Andrew Forsey, Clare Leighton, Jon Dolby and Laura Chambers (a little later)

Present: Juli Thompson (Inn Churches), Sabine Elert-Jones & Bernadette Gallagher (Worth Valley Foodbank), Andy Walsh (Sandale Trust), Chris Partington Worth Valley Methodist Church), Natasha Thomas (Keighley Parish/Good Food Keighley), Katie Smith(Bradford NHS Dietitian) Graham Walker (Bradford Met Foodbank) Ian Brewer (Bradford District Credit Union), Jane Lees (Community Works), Cathy Henwood (Feeding Bradford and Keighley/Inn Churches), Tony Bosworth (Friends of the Earth), Barbara Wells (Bingley Foodbank), Sue Parsons (Catholic Care/Wibsey market).

Welcome

Structure of afternoon outlined.

2 a) Activity Report

Feeding Bradford & Keighley is a partner of Feeding Britain, and a member of West Yorkshire Food Poverty Network sharing ideas and good practice across the country and feeding into the national food agenda.

Feeding Bradford & Keighley (FB&K) is a membership organisation with 144 food partners as of 20th of Oct 2023 all working to address food insecurity across the district. They share our vision of a Bradford and Keighley where everyone has access to affordable good food.

Since May 2022, Feeding Bradford and Keighley is hosted by Inn Churches, who employ its Coordinator Cathy Henwood.

Steering group: Feeding B&K has a steering group which meets at least quarterly and is made up of representatives from voluntary and statutory organisations including community food providers, Bradford Council, a local NHS nutritionist and food distribution organisations. These members were agreed at our 5th AGM this time last year.

Quarterly meetings: Feeding B&K runs 4 quarterly network meetings which are open to all interested in food poverty.

Regular newsletters We sent out ten newsletters and latest updates to over 400 recipients over the year, as well as other targeted emails, WhatsApp groups and social media posts.

Highlights of last 12 months

- The huge response from members and many non-members to continue contributing to feeding the people in our district with little let up since the pandemic, many of whom have seen big increases due to the current cost of living and poverty crisis.
 - Our ever-growing low-cost food market network providing a pathway from (or prevention of the need to access) foodbanks with increased choice and empowerment. And the growth of FoodSavers which provide a bridge between the food pantries and saving into a credit union. Congratulation to Inn Churches for the funding, enabling its wider roll out across the country.
 - The continued development of 'Find food in Bradford' Website (www.bradfordfoodbanks.org.uk) developed by Inn Churches which has become a well-used tool for the public and professionals.
 - A good start in developing the Share your Spare scheme getting spare allotment produce to low-cost pantries.

New Websites

Since moving to Inn Churches, we have developed a second website for Feeding Bradford and Keighley at www.feedingbradford.org.uk to complement the Find Food in Bradford website www.bradfordfoodbanks.co.uk. We are developing this with resources to support food aid organisations complementing the public facing 'find food' site.

Continued thanks to Ben Clymo of Inn Churches for all his skilled work on developing these sites.

Foodbanks and low-cost food markets and pantries during the cost of living and rise in poverty crisis

Inn Churches continue to purchase and distribute of additional council funded food to foodbanks and low-cost food markets and pantries. It always seems like this funding is ending as it is reliant on funding from central government, yet as the crisis continue it is extended again. Currently we have been told there will be money for this food until March 2024. Although Feeding B&K have no direct involvement in this process, we continue to support by keeping organisations updated and occasionally directing new organisations towards this source of funded food. Thanks to the Inn Churches storehouse team for their continued hard work getting food out to groups.

The council never used to fund foodbanks but the demand on food aid projects just keeps on rising. We continue to monitor food bank uses and most of our foodbanks say they are far busier than they have ever been before.

As a steering group we are keen to promote the low-cost market and pantry model and are encouraged by the great work that FoodSavers is doing pairing up food pantries with a Bradford Credit Union saving scheme who now have 18 Food Saver pantries and more in the pipeline.

Statistics show nationally that as many people now access food via a low-cost markets, social supermarkets, and pantries than via foodbanks.

Work with Meal Providers

We have continued to support meal providers this year within a changing and challenging environment. The groups are busier than ever with more groups reporting an increase in couples and families using their services.

We have been working with the HOP team, the council and a couple of providers who will need to relocate from the arches near Forster Square station towards the end of the year to try to ensure a smooth transition.

We keep an updated 'places people can get a free meal without a referral' on the Find Food in Bradford website at www.bradfordfoodbanks.org.uk. This includes an A4 sheet updated regularly to allow groups to print out the latest details. We also support groups via a Facebook page and WhatsApp group.

Work with Keighley

Several of the food aid providers in Keighley have sort our support in greater partnership working and integration. This started with work with partners to develop the Good Food Keighley social supermarket. Several of their foodbanks now use an integrated referral system and projects are working together to seek funding to integrate more activities such as benefits and debt advice, budgeting and cooking skills with their food aid projects. If this proves successful and adds value, we hope that the Household Support Fund and other locally controlled funding will adopt this model across the district to better enable families and individuals to get the support they need and hopefully reduce the need for longer term food aid support.

AGM and network meeting Oct 2023

Contact Feeding Bradford and Keighley via Cathy@feedingbradford.org.uk

Share your Spare

This is a new scheme we launched this spring having piloted a box in Cathy's local Northcliffe allotments in Shipley last autumn. Plot holders leave their spare produce in a box once a week which is then taken to a food pantry. We now have 3 sites collecting and another two hoping to start next spring.

NHS Healthy Start Champions Scheme

Last year we trained 30 NHS Healthy Start Champions, and we added 16 more this June. Participants have told us it really helps them feel confidence in talking about Healthy Start and helping people apply for it.

Bradford Council's Food Strategy, Anti-poverty Coordination group, VCS Leaders Network, and other groups.

Members of FB&K participated in the development of the council's food strategy now published <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/health/living-well/bradford-district-good-food-strategy>. We also take part in the Anti-poverty group. Cathy has also been actively engaged in other groups to raise awareness of and encourage engagement with our network and contribute the insights and concerns of the network to wider discussions.

Holiday Provision – The HAF (Healthy Activity and Food) programme

Bradford Council have been running the HAF programme for the last 3 years. Funding and reach are far wider than when we were actively engaged in the pilot stages of HAF. This Department of Education programme is targeted at those children on Free School Meals. We are aware that there are many families who are struggling but not eligible. This year we were able to increase participation for children not on free school meals at 4 of those HAF programmes with a small top up grant from Brakes via Feeding Britain.

Looking ahead

- **Covid 19 has not gone away, and still rumbles on in the background and though inflation and fuel prices have reduced; food prices continue to rise, and fuel is a lot more expensive than it was a couple of years ago. All which hits those on a low income and benefits the hardest. Many more working people are seeking the support of food aid providers for the first time. Price increases hits all of us too, and many food projects have experienced a reduction in donations.**
We will continue to work with you all to support your efforts, champion our sector and share information. Please keep us informed and in touch with what you are thinking and needing. We hear the frustration, exhaustion and sometimes anger that some of you express of being constantly relied upon as the state safety net is eroded. We need to keep going but keep campaigning and submitting evidence of the effects of low wages and low benefits on the lives of the people we support. Hence the discussion after this AGM
- **We run a small-scale fuel bank via a few of our smaller foodbanks.** We are happy to talk to other groups who might like to take part in this, it is a limited pot, so we have the challenge of getting it out to those who need it most but not letting it be a free for all and it all disappearing overnight.
- **Further developments of Share Your Spare** We have two more sites in the pipeline for next year but keep looking for more who would like to get on board. Bradford use to have an allotment forum but that does not exist anymore so any links into allotment groups would be gratefully exploited.
- **Collecting data Since March 2020.** We have been collecting foodbanks data, but there have been big changes – some new provision is now very much reduced as the covid funding is finished – does

this reflect an over inflated use of foodbanks while funding was there or their now being lots more unmet need. Time will tell.

- **Winter Warmth** We will be promoting the Warm Spaces program this winter on our www.bradfordfoodbanks.org.uk website

Have your say – what challenges should we be meeting? Arrange to talk to any of the steering group about your ideas, or you can email Cathy.

Jane Lees thanked Cathy for all her continued hard work on FBK.

b) Financial Report – Juli gave a verbal report, saying there was approximately 12 months funding remaining but a written report will follow

Natasha noted that attention needed to be given to the financial sustainability of FB&K, Juli said it would be.

3) Election of Steering group

Katie Smith is stepping down after 6 years on the steering group – Cathy thanked her.

Notes were given on all candidates and those present introduced themselves. The steering group was unanimously re-elected.

The steering group is now:

Ian Brewer (Bradford Credit Union), John Dolby (Bradford Council, Partnership and Engagement officer), Cathy Henwood (Feeding Bradford and Keighley/Inn Churches,) Jane Lees (Community Works), Clare Leighton (Parish of Gillingham, Heaton and Manningham/2 FoodSavers pantries), Rev Natasha Thomas (Keighley Parash/Good Food Keighley), Juli Thompson (Inn Churches) and Graham Walker (Metropolitan Foodbank)

4) Close of formal AGM

Network meeting

How Political should we be?

Andrew Forsey (CEO of Feeding Britain) gave his apologies as he was unwell. He sent the following notes.

Given the level of destitution in Bradford and across the country, we are inevitably going to draw attention to the causes and symptoms of that human suffering across the district, as well as what we think should be done about it.

- The key question is how do we do so in a way that is likely to gain change?

- First, can we equip Bradford's MPs with a regular briefing on the situation with which we are dealing, along with suggested questions, debates, and backbench bills for them to present on our behalf? National reforms on HAF and school uniform costs began with similar campaigns from Feeding Britain partnerships in Merseyside.

- Second, are there new causes or symptoms of destitution that we can bring to the attention of local, regional, or even national media?

AGM and network meeting Oct 2023

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- Third, what workable reforms can we propose to the local authority and/or regional mayor?

Relevant National Campaigns

Tony Bosworth Friends of the Earth FOE (also a volunteer at Bradford Central Foodbank)

United for Warm Homes Campaign (for more information please visit <https://unitedforwarmhomes.uk/>)

- Continued Support for those most in need

The cost of living remains high and millions of us are struggling with energy bills that have almost doubled, despite the government's price freeze, while oil and gas companies stack up eye-watering profits.

Some of us are being harder hit than others. No one should have to choose between heating their home or putting food on the table. More emergency support, targeted at those most at risk, is urgently needed to keep people warm through winter.

The package announced in the Autumn Statement is welcome but does not go far enough to protect those most at risk. This includes the 40% of people living in poverty who do not receive means-tested benefits and are therefore unable to benefit from the extra £900 of much-needed support.

- Emergency Insulation to create warm homes

The UK has some of the least energy-efficient homes in Europe, some of which are in old buildings with little insulation, draughts, and single-glazed windows. It can cost £1,368 a year more to heat a poorly-insulated home than a well-insulated one.

We are calling for the government to fund a street-by-street insulation programme to help avoid energy wastage and slash bills.

The government wants to fund insulation in 2025, but this solution needs to start now.

We have found the coldest neighbourhoods across England and Wales, areas with homes that are poorly insulated which mean above-average fuel bills to heat them, in places where most people are living on low incomes. We think these are the best places to start street-by-street insulation to create warmer homes now and into the future. The move from gas to electricity

- Move to renewable energy

The UK has immense potential to generate clean energy onshore and offshore from wind, solar and tides. Homegrown renewable energy is the cheapest form of energy, far cheaper than gas, and onshore wind and solar farms are the fastest to build.

Soaring gas prices are fuelling the cost of living and climate crisis. Gas is the UK's main source of heating, used in around 80% of properties. And the price of our electricity is tied to the price of gas, even when it comes from cheaper renewable sources.

We need to move away from heating our homes with gas to heating with electricity. And we need to change our energy system so consumers can benefit from the lower costs of renewable electricity. This is the solution for long-term cheaper and greener energy.

Energy crisis hotspots

Micro level 2,000 people neighbourhoods

Household income below average but the energy bill above average

Bradford has the second highest in England and Wales, over half all the neighbourhoods east west south wards and in Keighley. Only Birmingham has more areas but they are a bigger authority.

Keighley came out as the coldest areas in Bradford by these measures.

Action they are taking

Pressure on MP's

Bradford and Keighley local groups taking action

Lobby at National Level. Labour already moving in the right direction

Metro Mayor Election

They want this as local schemes not with the council employing people necessarily but with council in charge of directing the schemes where most needed first employing local firms. This should be free to those who would struggle to afford to pay.

This addresses the root causes of high bills by making homes more energy efficient.

FOE also want to see support for homes to move to cleaner greener electricity to heat their homes.

3 main points

- Continue to support households most in need with their energy bills
- Locally run home insulation programme to make homes more energy efficient starting with free installation for low income households in the worst affected areas but rolling out the programme to cover all our housing stock
- Support to enable households to convert to heating converting from gas to efficient electrical methods

Guarantee our essentials – Trussell Trust Unfortunately Laura was unable to attend due to illness. Details of the Guarantee our essentials campaign can be found at <https://action.trusselltrust.org/guarantee-our-essentials>

In the last financial year, food banks in our network (Trussell Trust) have seen the highest ever level of need, distributing close to 3 million (2,986,203) emergency food parcels — including more than a million to children. This is the most parcels the network has ever distributed in a single year.

Our social security system should support anyone in need of help, but more and more people are finding it impossible to make ends meet because Universal Credit is falling short, and it's pushing people to food banks.

Around 90% of low-income households receiving Universal Credit are going without at least one essential like food, a warm home or toiletries.

They are seeking legislation which sets a independent way of ensuring that benefits income will always meet at least the basic minimum to allow people to by their essentials.

Round table discussion

- a. What are the drivers of poverty, and the government policy issues we should be focusing on to reduce this in our district?

AGM and network meeting Oct 2023

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- b. How do we need to challenge all parties to create policies that reduce poverty in our district?
How do we inform decision makers locally and nationally?
- c. How do we keep social justice issues in people's minds as they are deciding how to vote?

Typed up flip charts.

- a) What are the drivers of poverty, and the government policy issues we should be focusing on to reduce this in our district?

Local Policy – City of Culture – Providing Hope

Housing – Private landlords Social landlords – people are stuck in properties with no heating living in squalor

Lack of investment

Government policy – invest in people

Low income and lack of opportunities

Lack of confidence / skill in budgeting / cooking

Internet access for all

Simple insulation policy

Auto enrolment for free school meals

Mental health is a big issue – declining levels of support and services

Warm spaces do provide company and hope for some

Low levels of benefits

Zero hours contracts

Cooking skills not taught in schools – more interested in marketing and food technology.

School uniform banks

We know that more money in peoples pockets dopes work – foodbanks and markets see drop of when extra payments – cost of living, £20 uplift in UC happened but it soon returns to being busy afterwards

Loan Sharks

- b. How do we need to challenge all parties to create policies that reduce poverty in our district?
How do we inform decision makers locally and nationally?

MP surgeries

Use local and national media more frequently

Challenge inaction of local councillors

Challenge politicians and councillors to volunteer at a foodbank for a session

Keep at it drive message home

Gather the facts – constituency level data

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How can we use the City of Culture (Tony can give contact of Jenny Harris)

Data for each area committee

Welcome to Bradford letter to new chief executive of BMDC and offer of fact finding tour

Simple clear stories to illustrate the facts

Agree set of demands

Not just people on benefits but working people too

Lets stop blaming "others"

What are we going to do – straight forward options / solutions

Create videos / WhatsApp to inform MP – bombard them regularly

c. How do we keep social justice in people's mind as they are deciding how to vote?

Your vote counts! You can have an impact. Encourage people to vote – you have a voice. Make sure people are registered and have ID

Social justice is about the economy, people having enough money.

Scale of the problem in Bradford (fuel poverty, food poverty etc. No politician can ignore this. Get the facts and stories out there – and via local media

Find the right people in the media and build relationships with them

Find key social media places

Cascade the message via churches etc – unusual suspects

Give people simple things to do

Get the messages out to the Asian origin community

Visit councillor surgeries, and get the politicians to us

Public challenge to every Parliamentary candidates to volunteer for a day in a foodbank and talk to clients

Bring MPs/ councillors into regular forum to hear stories – to understand the community

Encourage aspiration rather than sound bites

d. Case studies and check facts we should be sharing.

About housing Natasha Keighley Parish

A targeted response (emergency food) Graham BMFB