



newsletter

Feb 2021

The Year the World Stood Still...

The sun may be glimmering after the dark night of the Coronavirus - but we want to let you know what MRCT has been doing - and just how grateful we are to the people who have supported us in Harlow and beyond.

Some of our work has kept going with a skeleton staff. Some had to go into lockdown, but all of it is coming out the other side with fresh energy and commitment.

Here are a few snippets of a tough year where faith, hope and love have been the hallmarks of our work. They have driven the people of Harlow and surrounding areas to support us like never before and for that we say

THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH!!

In March 2020 the lockdown caused Maybury to close its doors for the first time in 20 years. As a lifeline for some 150 who treasure its warm and inclusive social support, so many realised just how much Maybury means to them.

Come October we were ready to go again within COVID restrictions - this time as the 'Maybury Support Group' - running for a shorter time with more structure, helping members work through the impacts of the being isolated for so long.

We were just getting going again before, *crunch...* Lockdown 2!

Now, thanks to a grant from the DCMS COVID Fund and Harlow Health Centres Trust we are ready again - giving tailored support to

build confidence and optimism as we come out to the 'new normal'.

The team have kept in good contact with our regulars! We are so proud of them and can't wait to see the Maybury Doors open again.



Harlow foodbank

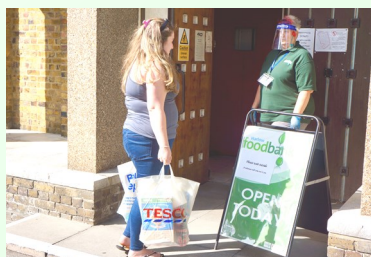
It will come as no surprise that the Foodbank has been operating throughout COVID. We have never known a time like it. We received and gave out almost twice as much as any previous year (*see overleaf*).

As well as fulfilling food vouchers from agencies around the town, we joined forces with other charities to ensure that our supply of non-perishable food added to those giving out end-of-life fresh food from supermarkets.

The team, in the absence of a CEO until September, were just incredible. Determined that no one should go without, they rose to the challenge with huge generosity - the spirit of MRCT!

That generosity was seen across all of Harlow and Stortford. The donations to supermarket baskets have been immense, the financial donations awesome, and the doors have always been open at the Foodbank no matter what the virus did!

Thanks to everyone! To our Store House volunteers who kept on despite the risks, and to the Salvation Army and St Paul's teams who made sure that food parcels were always ready for anyone in need in the town. We are Harlow UNITED!



The Bounty Club also suspended operations in April. After redistributing 20,000Kg of fresh food a year from our suppliers, they and those we supported had to lock their doors.



By September Trevor was back on the road, supplementing the Foodbank's offer of non-perishable food as well as helping other agencies with fresh food for those in need.

We continue to be grateful to Brakes and Bidfood in Harlow - the main suppliers of food we rescue from landfill.



Harlow Poverty Alliance

The financial forecast for the nation is currently not good. MRCT has helped instigate this new partnership across the town.

The Alliance brings together most of the agencies who support those in poverty, from charities and community groups to the statutory bodies such as the Council and Job Centre.

Together we will look how best to support those facing financial troubles in the fallout from COVID.

The Michael Roberts Charitable Trust (MRCT) Unit 8 Housham Hall Farm, Harlow Rd, Matching Tye, Harlow CM17 0PB Tel: 01279 724515

Reg. Charity 1065006 Company No. 343933 e:enquiries@mrct.org.uk www.mrct.org.uk

7,133

individuals fed through 3,039 packages

173%

more food given this year than last

2,926

children getting 4 days' food portions

10,210Kg

fresh food redistributed to Harlow schools & charities

24,000+

meals given to Harlow Permitted Developments

26,780Kg

to other charities for their people (69,000 meals)

£41,607

from 431 local individual givers

200+

children & 100+ Mum's Christmas presents

138,000Kg

non-perishable food given out (331,613 meals)

76

voucher referral partner agencies

20 schools

now holding food boxes ready for family support

518,000

Facebook views



13,000 short-life eggs from Poundland. All 13,000 were redistributed to be used in Harlow the following day!



130+ Christmas presents here for Harlow kids thanks to SES Group. +100 for Foodbank Mums, thanks to Land Sherrifs.



Our noisiest food donation! Harlow Outlaws ride in on a cold Saturday a.m. Two food-filled cars not shown here. Thanks!

Outstanding campaigner 13 year old Adiyat Kabir raised £300 from Harlow Mosque + £250 from his Dad's kind boss.



This has been a tough year for so many. Our heart goes out to those who have seen COVID take a loved one from life too soon.

We have witnessed heart-ache and hope. Never have so many people expressed support for their neighbours as in these dark times. There is not space here to thank everyone by name.

In practical ways and with unre-served generosity Harlow and the

surrounding areas have enabled us to share that love.

We will continue support the town.

We will work to tackle poverty and exclusion and to support those affected by it.

And... a new project on its way: a Baby-help Bank, providing struggling families with much needed items for babies & young children.

Watch this space!

Please keep supporting us in any way you can. Share. Give. Pray...

www.mrct.org.uk/get-involved

Harlow Foodbank partners with Bishops Stortford Foodbank and is an associate of the Trussell Trust

