

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

LEIGHTON LINSLADE HELPERS



Serving our community in the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other social or economic disadvantage

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LEIGHTON LINSLADE HELPERS

Charity Number: 1196332

Emergency Telephone No: 07543 540 997

Email: help@leightonlinsladehelpers.org.uk

Web: www.leightonlinsladehelpers.org.uk

Community Fridge
30 Waterborne Walk
Leighton Buzzard
Beds
LU7 1DH

OPENING HOURS

Monday - 1pm - 3:30pm

Tuesday - 11am - 3pm

Wednesday - 11am - 2pm

Thursday - 1pm - 3pm

Friday - 11am - 3pm

Saturday - 10am - 2pm

we're here to help

OUR SERVICE OFFER



Leighton Linslade Helpers is a collective of volunteers who formed during the Covid 19 lockdown period. We very quickly grew into a large charity of over 60 volunteers. We continue to provide a community food bank to our town and surrounding villages. As well as providing food parcels, we embarked on an exciting development of opening the first community fridge in our town in October 2021,

We continue to assist our local agencies, schools and our local authority and other foodbanks, with a range of requests including responding to emergencies across Bedfordshire in our own right and in collaboration with other groups and charities. We are now established in our new Community Fridge premises and will continue to support our community, agencies and our local authority.

OUR PEOPLE

During the period of 1 April 2023 to March 2024, we had at any one time 70-75 volunteers giving up their free time to volunteer in various roles within our organisation. We have a team of drivers, who collect the supermarket surplus for our Community Fridge. We also have a charity Van for larger collections and deliveries. We have a team who oversee the daily operations of sorting food and opening the fridge to the public.

Our volunteers come from a range of backgrounds, communities and with a range of abilities. We pride ourselves that we support and encourage volunteers with special needs. People volunteer with us for various reasons, including to: -

- Make a positive impact on their own and other people's lives
- Gain new skills and knowledge and build experience for employment
- Improve health, wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem
- Meet new people from a range of backgrounds and ages and make friends
- Get to know the local community and give something back
- Experience support and to feel part of a team

We are extremely grateful to have such a dedicated, knowledgeable and friendly team of volunteers.

We have a core management team of 4 full time people and are also supported by volunteers who manage the Web page, Press and PR, Social Media and Duke of Edinburgh Volunteers

OUR COMMITMENT

We have 1 emergency telephone number that is manned 7 days a week 7 hours a day by a duty officer. We can respond to emergency requests from BLRF within 1 hour and local requests within 2 hours. We also have a website where the public can make a self-referral through our online form, or they can call or email our help desk, which is also manned 7 days a week.

Officers and Trustees		
June Tobin	Secretary	
Sarah Cursons	Chair	Resigned Jan 2024
Adam Fahn	Chair	From Jan 2024
Andrew Cursons	Treasurer	
Karen Cursons	Tustee	
Steve Jones	Trustee	
Candys Hunter	Trustee	
Chris Lockett	Trustee	
Chris Richardson	Trustee	
Esther Baron	Trustee	
Ryan Battams	Trustee	
Avis Fowler	Trustee	

Independent Accountant

Simon Cyna

48 Gateshead Road

Borehamwood

WD6 4NQ

Bankers

Barclays

28 George Street

Luton

Beds

LU7 2AE



YEAR REPORT

The LL Helpers provides a much-needed service to our community and surrounding villages. We have had a successful year in which we have issued 1604 Food Parcels, plus 120 emergency parcels, providing individuals with at least 4430 meals. None of this could be achieved without the level of generosity from members of the public, organisations, and businesses who make regular donations, and of course grant funding from our local councils.



Our wonderful green environmental initiative of Leighton Buzzards first Community Fridge continues to thrive and 23250 people have visited averaging 447 people each week. We make 4320 Food collections from supermarkets giving approx. 141500kg of food collected per annum (average 2721kg per week). This equates to around 412500 equivalent meals per year (average 7933 meals per week). Every night and early mornings teams of volunteers visit all of the supermarkets and shops that are part of the scheme. They collect dry goods, fresh produce, meats, fish and dairy. This food is then taken back to the Fridge for quality sorting and freezing where necessary. Members of the public then access the Fridge 6 days a week at different times. We have a fair usage policy that allows you to visit twice a week and take one regular size shopping bag of food. So far its proving very popular with people queuing to get in. The super markets are also enjoying being part of the scheme as this helps their waste costs to reduce too.



A successful partnership with Amazon has allowed us to open a stall at Leighton Linlade's twice weekly market offering discounted good to the public the proceeds of which combined with can drives and Grant funding help with the running costs of the Charity.



The success and growth of our organization, which is an independent charity and an independent foodbank, is largely down to the dedication of our wonderful teams of volunteers.



We are looking forward to the next year with continued growth and to meeting all challenges head on.

So it's a massive thank you to all who help Leighton Linlade Helpers and to be part of a wonderful asset to our community.



Treasurers Report (2023-24)

The year 2023-24 saw another year of significant growth for the charity. Unfortunately this was largely fuelled by a tough political environment in the country fuelled by international events which led to unexpected source of grant income. The year saw figures for inflation reaching higher than 10% fuelled mainly by gas and electricity price rises. These were as a result of problems with the supply of Russian gas caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the inevitable political fallout leading to supply restrictions and international price rises. Inevitably this caused hardships for lower income families and increased demand for our services. However the government did make available grant funding to help buffer the problems, this was fed out to the local communities via the local authorities. We were in receipt of some of this grant funding which we in turn passed on to the families seeking help with paying gas and electricity bills as well as the regular supply of food parcels.

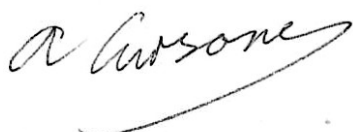
The community, now located centrally in the town centre continued to be well used. In fact it has a regular clientèle who are willing to queue up awaiting its opening to see what we have available. This provides a regular income stream which comes close to paying the rental on a monthly basis. We continued to use the Meadow Way Community centre for our foodbank operations which continued unabated throughout the year. As part of the cost of living funding from grants we were able to provide clothing vouchers over the Christmas period to those families we were actively helping.

On the utility front we completed payment of the arrears owing to EDF Energy upon our departure from Albion Chambers. We then encountered problems with water charges, due to an oversight we did not submit a final reading for Albion Chambers. Resolution of this took a number of months and was only concluded by submitting a formal complaint to the supplier. This actually resulted in them contacting us and working with us to resolve the problems rather than ignoring our attempts at contacting them. At the same time it transpired we hadn't signed up at our new premises, this proved to be a much simpler process. We are now up to date in our utility bills.

This year has seen us identify and bring into play a new funding stream. This is based around surplus/damaged stock from local Amazon warehouses. The goods are provided to us for resale into the domestic marketplace, as such we have taken up a stall in the local market on both Tuesdays and Saturdays. This has proved very popular and obviously helped to raise our profile somewhat. Handling the shipments is challenging and we have increased our use of Meadow Way in dealing with this. Due to the significant impact with the community centre being used for handling and storage it was decided to split the profits with the community centre charity.

Given the charities aim of helping in the local community it seems appropriate to call out the fact that over 10% of our income was returned to the community directly. A significant proportion of this was passing on funding for the 'cost of living crisis' from local and central government. The funding was through the provision of heating support, cost of living support, foodbank provisions and other initiatives. In addition, the value of the community fridge to the community is of course not directly measurable in a meaningful financial manner. However the rental costs of the building could be factored into the benefit to the community category along with a portion of the electricity costs.

In summary the group had a good year and has continued to deliver on its support to the community. Our third year has shown a healthy level of grant and donation based income with a significant increase on the previous year. This has enabled us to continue running the foodbank and community fridge whilst bringing a local Community Centre back into use. The Community Centre is handled as a separate charity but we have a synergistic relationship. We enter the 2024-25 year with sufficient in the bank to cover our liabilities (debts + restricted funds).



Andrew Cursons – Treasurer Leighton Linslade Helpers

Accounts 2023-2024

Income and Expenditure As at 31 March 2024

	2021-23	2023-24
Income		
General donations	£19,933.36	£27,917.54
Credit/Debit card	£5,101.80	£16,089.24
Small cash donations	£14,861.28	£10,785.14
Cheque donations	£3,002.80	£652.00
Online donations	£5,857.52	£2,243.29
Sale of goods	£2,531.27	£46,142.10
Regular giving	£2,425.00	£2,680.00
Uncategorized (21/22)	£12,189.42	
	£65,902.45	£106,509.31
Events Income	£2,086.51	£633.15
Gift Aid		£3,377.10
Can drives	£1,370.39	£700.46
Grants/Corporate income	£39,310.84	£58,833.09
Food parcel sponsorship	£4,593.21	£2,708.68
Miscellaneous	£529.40	£15.68
Grants for vehicle purchase	£4,000.00	
Vehicle Loan (note 2)	£10,100.00	
Room Rental	£400.00	
Total Income	£128,292.80	£172,777.47
Expenditure		
Check-in-chat	£228.36	£1,360.19
Foodbank provisions	£4,187.53	£8,846.02
Client direct support	£1,614.21	£2,669.07
Heating support	£1,635.00	£3,272.21
Cost of living support	£2,160.00	£7,620.62
	£9,825.10	£23,768.11
General Expenditure	£4,506.08	£12,112.46
Moving expenses	£5,151.73	
Community Events	£484.70	£84.33
Warm Space initiative	£2,312.00	£2,663.97
Community Fridge	£4,076.41	£1,605.34
Amazon Expenses/profit share		£16,247.84
Payroll		£7,939.56
Utility Expenditure	£9,627.35	£5,543.09
Rental Expenditure	£17,729.44	£13,409.86
Vehicle Purchase	£15,240.00	
Vehicle running costs	£5,956.89	£3,187.15
Liability Insurance	£788.92	£395.23
Sundries	£209.68	£739.07
Reimbursements	£1,697.32	£951.01
Publicity	£1,509.15	£1,882.29
Loan repayments (Vehicle)	£3,156.58	£2,705.64
Building Maintenance	£543.05	£882.27
Total Expenditure	£82,814.40	£94,117.22

I and E balances

Excess of income over expenditure	£45,478.40	£78,660.25
Balance brought forward previous year	£2,514.26	£47,992.66
Balance carried forward	£47,992.66	£126,652.91
Actual balance c/f	£47,992.66	£126,652.91
Difference (note 3)	£0.00	£0.00

Assets and Liabilities

As at 31 March 2023

	2021-23	2023-24
Assets		
Cash at Bank	£47,331.24	£121,964.99
Cash in hand	£372.69	£2,232.60
Paypal pending	£271.02	£222.04
SumUp pending	£17.71	£2,233.28
	£47,992.66	£126,652.91
Capital Assets (Vehicle)	£15,240.00	£11,240.00
Less depreciation	-£4,000.00	-£4,000.00
Capital assets (Fridges)	£3,400.00	£3,400.00
Less depreciation		-£850.00
Total Assets	£62,632.66	£136,442.91
Liabilities		
Outstanding Loan on vehicle	£6,875.05	£4,375.09
Electricity Bill (see note 4)	£2,479.93	
Restricted Funds		
Food parcel sponsorship	£655.68	£0.00
Meal in a box	£5,500.00	£5,500.00
MW Community Fridge	£688.00	£688.00
Community Fridge	£2,160.37	£555.03
Cost of living support		£8,466.22
Utility bill support		£6,078.79
Restricted funds	£9,004.05	£21,288.04
Total Liabilities	£18,359.03	£25,663.13
Excess Assets over Liabilities	£44,273.63	£110,779.78

Note 1: The previous years figures cover October 2021 to March 2023 as per the first reporting period required by the Charities Commission.

Note 2: During the period 2021-23 the van the charity had been using became unusable. Due to the newness of the charity it was not possible to obtain a commercial vehicle loan. One of the group members offered a 4 year loan at an interest rate of 4% (approximately half the figure of a commercial loan at the time). This was accepted by the trustees. A suitable vehicle was located and purchased.

Note 3: Difference between value based on current assets and the start position modified by the excess of income over expenditure.

Note 4: The Electricity Bill for the initial supplier at Albion Chambers was paid off when a valid bill was received. The figure outstanding was due to a payment plan being instigated for our closing bill.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Leighton Linslade Helpers

On accounts for the year
ended

31 March 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1196332

Set out on pages

1-4

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 / 03 / 2024.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

25 October 2024

Name:

Simon Cyna

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

Address:

48 Gateshead Road

Borehamwood

WD6 4NQ

In Conclusion

We have come so far in the last 4 years and none of us who volunteer with the Leighton Linslade Helpers ever envisaged how big we would grow and how diverse the services we provide would get. More importantly we didn't know how much our community would need us to help them face new challenges after Covid, We have also found that we are sign posting people more and more to services and organisations for help and support. It's not just about food anymore.

Day after day and week after week, our volunteers turn up and give their time, energy and support to ensure that the wheels of our organisation keep turning.

The same can be said of those that donate to us regularly and through one off events. We are often surprised when another organisation turns up with a large cheque as they had chosen to support our work. All of which is gratefully received and put to good work.

Then there are our service users. They are so humbled by our support and very grateful too. We receive wonderful messages via cards, emails, text messages and sometimes a baked cake or two made with ingredients from the Community Fridge of course!

Thank you to everyone involved.