

Trustees' Annual Report Dorchester FoodBank

1st Oct 2024 to 30th September 2025

Charity Name: Dorchester FoodBank

Charity Number: 1200552

Principal Office:

Dorchester FoodBank, The Dorford Centre, Bridport Road, Dorchester. DT1 1RR

We were registered as a **Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)** on 3rd October 2022.

Our objectives are:

The prevention or relief of poverty in Dorchester and surroundings by providing grants, items and services to individuals in need and/ or charities or other organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty.

Governance.

Our **governing body**, the Board of Trustees, consists of five people, Rosemary Hardwicke (Chair), John Burn (Secretary), Tracy Hughes (FoodBank Operations Manager), Stuart Dawson (Safeguarding Officer) and John Hilton (Treasurer). These five individuals have served throughout the year and also constitute the total membership of the charity. Board meetings are held at least every two months, depending on the need. We hold an annual meeting of supporters and collaborators at which the annual report and accounts are presented.

Accounting: as a charity with an income of less than £250,000 we operate with a simple receipts and payments accounting system and we have our annual accounts examined by an independent examiner, appointed by the board. The Charity has no capital assets, no endowments or investments and is totally dependent on grants and, more importantly, donations (in both cash and kind) for its income.

How the charity fulfilled its charitable purposes for public benefit

The trustees have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission in the following ways.

- We currently open three mornings a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) from 10.30am to 12.30pm for clients to collect their parcel(s).

- Many of our clients are in food poverty as a result of multiple issues, including low income and debt, poor mental and/or physical health, rent or housing problems, etc. We therefore “signpost” those clients to local organisations, such as Citizens Advice, Dorset Council, Christians Against Poverty (CAP), etc., who are best suited to provide support and advice with the underlying issues.

Brief summary of achievements during the year.

Our priorities for the year were: 2024-2025:

- 1) Continue to administer the food collection and distribution service as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- 2) Continue to work with partner organisations to help address food poverty.
- 3) Undertake initiatives designed to increase awareness of the services we provide.
- 4) Review our governance arrangements to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose.
- 5) Continue to review our volunteer arrangements.

Continue to administer the food collection and distribution service as efficiently and effectively as possible,

The table below shows the number of food parcels distributed, over the period October 2024 to September 2025, and also provides a breakdown of the type of client (i.e., single, couple, family).

Table 1. Numbers of food parcels distributed

	Oct23-Sep24	Oct24-Sep25	% change
Total number of referrals	1377	1492	+8.4
Total number of Single recipients receiving a parcel	639	680	+6.4
Total number of Couples/Small families receiving a parcel	300	310	+3.3
Total number of Families receiving a parcel	163	161	-1.2
Total number of parcels issued	1102	1151	+4.4
Total number of Adults & Children assisted	2130	2250	+5.6
Total number of clients that asked for toiletries	907	973	+7.3
Total number of clients that asked for household cleaning items	880	977	+11.0

Over the last year we have seen an increase in the number of referrals received (8%) to 1492 and an almost 6% increase (to 2250) in the number of individuals (adults and children)

accessing our service. During the period we distributed 1151 food parcels comprising of 161 family parcels; 310 small family/ couple parcels and 681 single person parcels. This constitutes a 4.4% increase in total parcels handed out, from the 1102 distributed in 2023-24. We believe that this increase may be due to the fact that clients continue to be impacted by the cost of living crisis.

Our re-estimated current value of our food parcels is shown in the table below.

Table 2. Cost of different size food parcels

Parcel size	Cost 2023-24	Cost 2024-2025	Number distributed 24/25	Total cost
single clients	£21.00	£24.00	680	£16,320
couple/small families	£32.00	£36.00	310	£11,160
family	£50.00	£57.00	161	£ 9177
			1151	£36,657

The cost of each parcel has increased by 14% from last year. And the total cost of the parcels distributed has risen from £31,658 last year to £36,657 this year, an increase of 15.8%, most of which is attributable to increases in food costs.

In addition to supplying clients with ambient food items (such as packet and tinned goods) we also provide a range of toiletries (such as shower gel, toothpaste, deodorant, sanitary products, etc.) and household cleaning items (such as laundry detergent, washing up liquid, kitchen cleaner, etc.). Most (85%) of our clients ask for toiletries and/or household cleaning items. Household Cleaning and Toiletries costs appear to have increased by nearly 16% so the value for 2024/25 year has been estimated at about £11.00 per parcel.

Assuming one household cleaning/toiletries pack per food parcel the total cost of the additional items is £12,661. This suggests that the total value of all the parcels, including cleaning and toiletries is £49,318 for this year. The Financial report (below) shows a spend of £18,965 this financial year, to complete the food parcels, indicating that physical donations of food/ household items have an estimated value of £30,353. However, this includes £1500 from the Howards Motor Group donation (see below) bringing the value of voluntary donations by individuals to £28,853, i.e. physical gifts constitute 58.5% of the parcel contents. Given the assumptions made in the estimates, the percentage contribution of the total food parcel costs from voluntary physical donations has remained about the same as last year (55%). However, since the total spend on food parcels has increased, the absolute value of physical donations has increased in line by about £5,500.

Continue to work with partner organisations to help address food poverty.

We continue to work closely with our partners on initiatives designed to improve the services we offer to clients. This has included providing financial support, jointly with Dorchester

Poverty Action, for the locally run CAP (Christians Against Poverty) money management courses, which can help clients resolve the problems that led them to seek the assistance of the Foodbank. We also supported CA Central Dorset financially, as their services continue to be an integral part of our support to clients by helping them get out of the financial problems which cause them to require food bank support.

In order to maximise the support we can provide to clients, we also work closely with Foodshare, which is based at the Family Church in Poundbury, and offers a slightly different, but complementary service. Foodshare parcels are made up of mostly fresh fruit and vegetables, bakery and eggs along with the occasional addition of a block of cheese, whereas, our parcels are mostly essential storable food items with a good shelf life. We both cover Dorchester and the surrounding areas, but, whereas, we provide one off parcels of enough food for several days through a collection service, Foodshare is able to deliver fresh food weekly, for up to 12 weeks. Where a family is unable to collect in person from the Dorchester Food Bank, Foodshare is often able to deliver on our behalf. We also make referrals to each other, where this will be of benefit to a family when they have been referred to only one of us. Hence people in our rural community are able to receive a more comprehensive parcel when emergency food is needed as Foodshare often deliver a Dorchester Food Bank parcel with the first of the Foodshare parcels, which, jointly last for a longer period. A perfect example of the two food banks working together was the sharing of the generous £3000 shopping spree at Bookers Cash and Carry at Weston Super Mare, donated by the Howards Motor Group.

Undertake initiatives designed to increase awareness of Dorchester FoodBank in the local community

We continue to promote our services through social media and local newspapers, and this has helped increase awareness of the services we provide. We have updated both our website and our leaflets and posters this year. We plan to raise our profile, and access to our improved website, in 2026 through a series of newspaper and magazine articles.

Review our governance arrangements to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose.

We have completed a thoroughgoing review of our business plan, policies and procedures in the last year with a view to reviewing them next in 2028. The updated Safeguarding Policy was circulated to volunteers and discussed at a Volunteers Tea in October 2025'

Review our volunteer arrangements, including development of succession planning arrangements

Our volunteers are our most valued resource. We regularly review our volunteer arrangements and, as part of this, have successfully recruited additional people to help increase our operations teams. In addition, and as part of our development of succession

planning arrangements, we drafted a job description and Person Specification for Board Members with a view to advertising for new board members.

Financial Report 2024-2025

Statement of Consolidated Assets, Income and Liabilities Expenditure

October 2024 to September 2025

	2024-2025 £		2023-2024 £	
Opening balance		57054.24		37,755.49
Income				
Grants (cash)	0.00		5,750.00	
donations	39,122.11		37,619.90	
Gift Aid repayments	2913.40		3,394.27	
Bank interest	328.57			
Gross income		42,364.08		46,764.17
Less expenditure				
Food	23,544.78		18,965.44	
Xmas vouchers	5,825.00		3,750.00	
Boots vouchers	1,000.00		1,780.00	
other-Admin & Consumables	2135.66		2,634.98	
Total operating expenses		32,505.44		27,130.42
Collaborating organisations		11,290.00		335.00
Total expenditure		43,795.44		27,465.42
Net income		(1,431.36)		19,315.58
Total final balance		55.622.88		57.054.24

Income and Expenditure

Assets	2024-2025 £			2023-2024 £		
		Barclays Bank current	CAF 60 day - Surebrook		Barclays Bank current	CAF 60 day - Surebrook
Opening balance		57,054.24	0.00		37,755.49	
Net income	(1,431.36)			19,315.58		
Bank transfer	(30,000.00)		30,000.00	0.00		
		(31,431.36)				
Closing balances		25,622.88	30,000.00		57,054.24	0.00

Accounts – Analytical Review

We are very grateful to our donors who have supported us so generously with both money and gifts of canned and packeted foodstuffs and cleaning and hygiene products throughout the year.

Using rounded figures for simplicity, our total income from donations increased slightly (4%) by £1,502 from £37,600 last year to £39,122. We received no cash grants this financial year and gift aid repayments were £481 (14%) less. The latter loss was almost offset by bank interest (see later) of £329. As a result, excluding the grant income last year, our total income, showed a small increase of £1,350, i.e. non grant income was quite stable.

Total expenditure on food bank costs increased by 19.8% (£5375), mainly as a result of a 17% (£4579) increase in spend on food, hygiene products and cleaning materials and a £1245 (22.5%) increase in vouchers. In order to give our clients some personal control over creating their own Christmas. £5,725 worth of supermarket vouchers were distributed to our clients (one £30 voucher per person) in the weeks running up to Christmas. These vouchers were greatly appreciated, as it gave the opportunity for some of the families to buy small Christmas presents for their children. Without these vouchers, some of the children would have had nothing. This year £1000 was also spent on Boots vouchers (which are used, mainly, for formula milk and/ or nappies, as we don't have the space to store a wide range of these products). This was similar to the amount spent last year.

Total admin, consumables and small equipment costs reduced by £499 {19%}. Admin costs (mainly website support and mobile phone costs) amounted to £953 this year with consumables and small equipment purchases (plastic bags for repackaging sugar, etc., strong plastic bags to hold food parcels, stationery, extra support items to enable rough sleepers to access food bank parcels, advertising leaflets and banner and temporary storage for a large food donation (see later)) amounted to £1,182.

Because income fell by about £4,400 and expenditure rose by about £4300 in 2024-2025 compared to the previous year, disposable income for the year fell by £9,675 but was still more than sufficient to our needs.

We regularly receive donations of food items, personal hygiene products and cleaning products from, mainly anonymous people and organisations. This year these donations have been very valuable to us and have made up (very approximately) 62% of the content of all food parcels (see above). In December, the Howards Motor Group very generously offered several Foodbanks within their trading area, including Dorchester, a £3000 shopping spree at Bookers Cash and Carry at Weston Super Mare. We decided to share our good fortune with Dorchester Food Share and together we hired a large van to enable us to transport the result of our "big shop". Because our own storage facilities at DBC are restricted, we needed to pay

for a small storage unit locally for a 3 month period to allow us easy access to the donated items. However, the cost of this was easily offset by the generosity of the £1,500 donation in kind.

We distributed two rounds of SPAR Vouchers in March and May/June 2025, which could be redeemed for food items at the local SPAR store. We declined a third offer in July as we felt it may encourage dependence and had already led to disputes between clients and volunteer staff. Should SPAR offer a further round of vouchers, we will review our participation. We plan to issue vouchers only occasionally, such as at Christmas and Easter.

As a food bank, we do not just try to put on a sticking plaster to the problem of food poverty by giving food, we make every effort to get clients to seek advice to improve their financial circumstances. In this we are very reliant on Citizens Advice (CA) However, CA are undergoing severe financial pressures, so the trustees decided to transfer £5,000 to CA to try and ensure their continued support.


We do not have facilities to collect and store fresh food, so we work closely with Dorchester Food Share (see above) and we gave £1000 to them to help keep their services running.

Jointly with Dorchester Poverty Action, we try to encourage clients to attend CAP (Christians against Poverty) courses on money management by giving grocery vouchers to attendees. This has continued to be very successful for a relatively small outlay of our money (£290).

The trustees are also trying to increase uptake of the food bank facilities and we know that FB does not manage to attract many older clients, although we know food poverty is significant in this demographic. To this end we approached Age UK WS&N Dorset and gave them £5,000 to jointly try and develop more use by the older generation, where need is observed. This development is being assessed to see how it might be improved.

As a registered charity we have been advised by the Charity Commission that we should hold a sum, equivalent to approximately half our annual running costs, as a reserve The idea is that, in the case of severe financial problems, this money would be available to buy time to develop a financial plan to correct the situation, or, in the worst case scenario, close the facility in a controlled way. To this end the trustees have decided to transfer £30,000 to a deposit account (which pays interest).

To conclude, we have, once again, been blessed with financial and physical donations to meet our needs this year and, again, we sincerely thank all our donors and volunteers, without whom we couldn't exist.



Chair: Rosemary Hardwicke

Date: 20.12.25

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Dorchester FoodBank

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Dorchester FoodBank (the FoodBank) for the year ended 30 September 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the FoodBank 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 FoodBank's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the FoodBank as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Signed:



Name (PRINT):

DAVID R LEISH

Address: redacted

Date: 13 January 2023