
CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

Annual Christmas appeals are familiar to us all. Practically every charity runs them and Andover foodbank is no different. Since the foodbank started in 2006, it has been creative and imaginative in its pursuit of helping families and single people in crisis, especially at Christmas. My apologies for mentioning Christmas a bit early but planning for this year has already started. Some Wallops residents involve the whole family in helping the foodbank at Christmas, so here are some details of the ways in which you can help. This year it will be running the, now famous, shoebox appeal and also the Christmas hampers which are given out to people in need. The pandemic has meant that more people than ever will need a little extra support.

Shoeboxes are special for the children who receive them, as otherwise they may receive nothing. The idea is simple – wrap a shoebox in Christmas paper, then fill it with small and new items suitable for the child of your choice. All ages are catered for, from babies to teenagers and both boys and girls. To help you, there are some ideas on the foodbank website, including a label which can be printed off and attached to the box. Please take the box to the foodbank by the end of the first week in November, or contact the foodbank to arrange collection. At the beginning of December, the boxes are distributed to schools and social workers who have identified children and families who may need them. Over 1000 shoe box gifts were given out last Christmas – a massive increase on previous years.

Christmas food hampers are also a special Christmas treat for people in crisis. These contain the types of Christmas goodies that most of us take for granted: Christmas pudding, mince pies, crackers, selection box, savoury crackers and other food not usually supplied such as jam, cake, tinned ham, biscuits and much more. Again, there is a list on the foodbank website: www.andover.foodbank.org.uk

Many people help by completing the 12 Days of Christmas challenge and collect hamper items weekly by following the lists suggested opposite. It helps to spread the cost for donors too!

All donations are much appreciated by the recipients, many of whom are overwhelmed by the generosity of others. Children are always thrilled with their box, as they are usually aware of the family circumstances and what it means for them. Helpers work right up the last minute, making sure all children, families and single people have a little something extra at Christmas.

Chris Haverson