

**Impact report**  
**Grants distributed from Dorset Council / DEFRA funds**

**Summary**

Grant recipient	Project area	Grant	Expenditure	Theme	Number of beneficiaries	Number of volunteers	Project summary
Bus Stop Club	Ferndown, West Moors, Wimborne, Three Legged Cross & Verwood	1069	Staff costs, contribution to overheads, food and containers, delivery costs	Poverty and disadvantage	90	8	Christmas meals project for vulnerable and financially disadvantaged beneficiaries
Dorchester Poverty Action	Dorchester	5000	Purchase of 500 x £10 supermarket vouchers	Poverty and disadvantage	333	6	Provision of supermarket Gift cards for people with no money to buy food during the winter. Beneficiaries identified by relevant agencies
Friends of Bere Regis School	Bere Regis, Purbeck	770	Mainly food, plus packaging and volunteer expenses	Poverty and disadvantage	17	5	Provision of food parcels during the Christmas holidays for families experiencing hardship, with some cooking recipes and advice
Friends of Stour Connect	Sturminster Newton & surrounding villages (SP7 and DT10)	7000	Mainly food, plus volunteer expenses and contribution to overheads	Health, wellbeing and serious illness	28	9	To deliver hot meals during the winter to elderly and vulnerable local residents in poverty - referrals from relevant agencies
Friends of Swanage Primary School	Swanage, Purbeck	5000	Mainly food, plus food cartons and small contribution towards key staff	Poverty and disadvantage	100	0	To re-launch the hot meal delivery service in order to address the needs of vulnerable households in need of food support over the winter months
Open House	Shaftesbury	7500	Food	Poverty and disadvantage	3050	20	Existing foodbank needing support to meet increasing demand during the winter

Portland Foodbank	Portland	5000	Food	Poverty and disadvantage	100	30	Existing foodbank needing support to meet increasing demand during the winter
Ringwood Foodbank	Three Legged Cross, East Dorset	5019 (+281 from DCF)	Refrigerated vehicle expenses, fuel, volunteer expenses, high vis jackets and gazebo	Poverty and disadvantage	150	11	Partnership project with Fareshare to launch mobile community larder in Verwood using refrigerated vehicle in community spaces
Shaftesbury & District Carers Association	Shaftesbury	5000	Food	Mental health	200	20	Delivery of weekly hot meals and food parcels to vulnerable local people during the winter
St Edmunds Church Foodbank	Wyke Regis & Westhaven, Weymouth	500 (+1500 from DCF)	Food	Poverty and disadvantage	350	6	Supporting this new foodbank run by a local church to meet increased demand during the winter
St Francis Church	Littlemoor, Weymouth	1250	Fridge, electricity, cleaning, plus funds to work with DCA on organisational development	Poverty and disadvantage	60	6	Launching a community fridge to compliment existing Foodbank services
St Mary's Church Chickerell food bank	Chickerell, West Dorset	1250	Mainly food, plus funds to work with DCA on organisational development	Poverty and disadvantage	643	12	Development of a new foodbank in Chickerell, run by a local church
The Bus Shelter Dorset	Weymouth residents living in Swanage	5362	Mainly food, plus volunteer expenses	Homelessness	12	2	Providing food during the winter months to homeless beneficiaries usually supported and housed by the charity in Weymouth but currently in temporary hostel accommodation in Swanage
The Friendly Food Club	Weymouth, Portland, Dorchester, Bridport & Shaftesbury	4900	Staff & volunteer costs, food, packaging, printing, video production, overheads	Health, wellbeing and serious illness	34	4	Delivering weekly Cook boxes during the winter, including (free) ingredients and meal cards to help feed vulnerable residents and encourage families to cook together with Zoom tuition – focus on those with additional needs

The Friendly Food Club	Portland	5000	Staff costs, volunteer expenses, food, packaging, printing, video production, overheads	Poverty and disadvantage	80	6	Launch of Cook box project in Portland, delivering weekly Cook boxes during the winter, including (free) ingredients and meal cards to help feed vulnerable residents and encourage families to cook together with Zoom tuition
The Magdalen Environmental Trust	West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland	6530	Polytunnel (£3500), staff costs, machinery hire, timber, compost for sit preparation	Poverty and disadvantage	100	15	To fund the installation of a new heated polytunnel at the Farm, to enable the continuation of project delivering free food to Dorset foodbanks (Dorchester, Beaminster, Bridport and Weymouth)
Weymouth Area Development Trust	Weymouth	3850	Chipper, mower and polytunnel	Community support and development	35	40	Supporting the development of a local Farm addressing food insecurity in Weymouth, by creating free/low cost produce plus skills & learning
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>70,000 + 1781 DCF</b>			<b>5382</b>	<b>200</b>	

### Thanks to Dorset Community Foundation and Dorset Council / DEFRA

*“As a first time grant applicant this process has been be very simple and straightforward. The communication has been excellent and I have found the entire process very rewarding.”* Friends of Bere Regis School

*“The funding accessed from DCF over the last 12 months has made a huge impact to our charity and the work that we are able to do in our local, rural community. We have found the application process very straightforward and welcome the opportunity to feed back on the impact that the funding has had and will have long term. Thank you”* Open House

*We have been very grateful for the support you have offered throughout the pandemic. We would have continued our work but it would have been a struggle and we would not have been able to provide such a balanced and varied menu to our recipients.”* Portland Foodbank

*“Projects of this nature must be able to respond to the needs of the participants which can change within the project term and both the Friendly Food Club and the participants thank the Foundation for recognising this... Once again the support of the Community Foundation, has enabled the Friendly Food Club to reach some of Dorset most disadvantaged families and lonely residents providing a nourishing weekly meal.”* The Friendly Food Club

*Once again, you have supported our work, and we are profoundly grateful for it... because of your grant, we have already been able to secure significant further funds to put the polytunnel to its intended use, and we are hopeful of more additional funds, enabling us to grow and donate ever more food to Dorset families most in need. Thank you for your faith and investment in us.”* The Magdalen Environmental Trust

## Report and case studies submitted by the groups

### Bus Stop Club

- **Funded activities**

60 meals were cooked at our Centre and delivered to our most vulnerable clients during Christmas week, along with groceries and Christmas treats. In addition, we also gave fresh chickens and joints of meat along with meat and fresh and frozen veggies on Christmas Eve. We had a number of donated toys and treats that were also given out.

- **Outcomes**

Local families were able to have a really excellent Christmas meal together and also received treats and healthy food for the rest of the school holidays.

- **Case study / story of change**

1. Single dad with two girls - copes well on his limited budget but extra costs like Christmas are difficult. The grant ensured that they had the best Christmas possible during the pandemic. Grandad also shared Christmas Day with them. Provision was also made for the rest of the school holiday period. They continue to receive Friday deliveries of food.

2. Single Mum with two children had recently escaped domestic violence and were housed temporarily in our area with police protection. The grant ensured that they were supported and provided for throughout the Christmas period. I am happy to report they have now been offered permanent social housing in the area, so we will still be able to keep in touch with them and give support when necessary. Mum was so grateful.

3. A single lady with a diagnosis of MS last year benefitted from a hot meal and groceries delivered to her door, and fresh produce on Christmas Eve. It helped her to feel she was not forgotten, as she had been shielding for a long time. We continue to support her with weekly donations.

4. A couple in their 50's who live locally were very pleased to receive hot roast dinners, and extras for the Christmas period. They both have health issues and mental health challenges, which are not severe enough for disability benefits - we have many clients in this category. Their income is basic ESA which is just about enough to live on. We continue to support this couple long term.

5. A family of 5 in West Moors have been working with us for about a year to become debt free. They received Christmas food, meals, and presents for the children.

6. An elderly couple on the estate received hot meals and Christmas food / treats. The gentleman has dementia and his wife has heart problems. They were very grateful, and continue to receive support via our grocery deliveries on Fridays.

- **Sustainability**

We always do something at Christmas, but especially during the pandemic it was so appreciated, as the grant covered all our costs, and we reached more people than anticipated.



## Dorchester Poverty Action

- **Funded activities**

We purchased £5,000 worth of Coop gift vouchers and they have been distributed via 10 local helping agencies for the benefit of their clients currently in acute need. The only difference from our application was that we decided to buy £15 value on each card instead of £10.

- **Outcomes**

Direct financial help to clients of local helping agencies who are in acute financial need. For our organisation as a whole, it enhanced our status as a valuable local charity to all the workers at the 10 agencies involved.

- **Sustainability**

We normally manage to purchase about £3,000-worth of Gift cards in September when children return to school and families have greater expenses, and again £5,000 worth at Christmas. Sometimes this can come out of our own funds and sometimes by seeking grants. This additional purchase was a great benefit in this year of lockdown and reduced incomes.

## Friends of Bere Regis School

- **Funded activities**

Providing Christmas Food Boxes for the venerable children in our community. The grant enabled our organisation to provide much needed support over the festive period to 11 families with a total of 17 children.

- **Outcomes**

All of these families are registered with children who receive FSM. We were able to make a real difference to not only the children but the parents who benefitted with a weight being lifted. We ensured that the families had plenty of good quality food, fruit, vegetables, meats, eggs as well as some festive treats.

- **Case study / story of change**

*"The generosity and support that we have received throughout the covid situation has been humbling. The food hampers from FOBRS over Christmas meant that the basics were covered so we could buy the kids a few extra treats"*

*"I was overwhelmed by all the things in the hampers! It was amazing the quantity and quality of all the products and I am very thankful and grateful for it all."* (Single parent family with primary school age children and 1 pre-school – both primary age children attend school during closure, as part of the most venerable category. We were able to make Christmas just a little bit easier by ensuring they had plenty of food to eat across the two week holiday, and some of traditional Christmas treats.)

- **Sustainability**

We are using the format that we developed using the grant funding over Christmas, and the connection with Tesco Blandford to continue to provide food boxes to the FSM families in Bere Regis, using the government funding through our school. We hope to be able to continue to provide this service in the forthcoming school holidays for as long as is needed to support our community.



## Friends of Stour Connect

- **Funded activities** *(including agreed extension to grant period until end of June 2021)*

The total amount spent on this project is £7656.91 of which £543.21 was equipment needed to deliver the increased volume of hot food and £415.20 in Volunteer mileage costs. The balance was spent on hot food. We have also invested in training volunteers (Food Hygiene), induction training and obtaining DBS checks plus. As we are now delivering 85/90 meals per week compared to 18/20 at this time last year, we have invested £625 in heating elements and new hot food carriers. This has enabled us to reduce volunteer costs by volunteers ending their rounds nearer their homes, rather than returning to Sturminster and then home. We have distributed £3400 worth of hot meals (end March 2021 figures) at no cost and our current meal commitment (regular orders) is just under £325.00 per week. Our weekly figures are for people who are unable to feed themselves for a variety of reasons, financial insecurity being one, whether it is winter or summer. Without a meal plan in place there would be greater pressures on Local Authority Social Care provisions. The majority of the grant has been used to deliver hot food to elderly and vulnerable residents across North Dorset, including providing meals for people who are homeless and living in a van.

- **Outcomes**

- We deliver to 3 carers in their late 80's/early 90's, so the meals provide a valuable break from cooking for their cared for person
- We deliver to 10 people who have memory issues or a diagnosis of dementia
- We deliver to 8 people who have mental health issues
- We deliver to 3 people with learning disabilities to assist them in maintaining independent living.
- We have delivered to at least 3 families where their financial hardship meant they had no food in the house
- We have delivered to 40 people who without the meals their independent living would be a concern, as they are unable/unsafe/financially unable in preparing meals for themselves. This would add pressure on care and support services, including residential care.
- For some people we are 'topping up' their food shopping by delivering meals and in some cases 'topping up' their membership food purchases from the Vale Pantry and Community Fridge initiatives suggesting that food poverty is a greater problem in North Dorset than was originally thought.

- **Case study / story of change**

'N' is homeless, living in van without running water/cooking facilities. Family breakdown. Transient as cannot stay in one area too long (moved on by police). Meals delivered 3/5 times per week. We are the only 'agency' engaged with him initially as liaised with Social Prescribing through us. Also provided him with food vouchers (not from this grant) and assisted with obtaining and delivering a mobile phone so he could stay in touch with housing and benefits.

'M' has a learning disability. He lived with and was reliant on his mum until she passed away over Xmas. His need highlighted to us in mid January by neighbours. Through our meal deliveries we have sustained his independent living and prevented the need for care and support services. We have assisted with creating an informal network assisting him with paperwork and benefits issues. Without meal deliveries he would need additional support from the Local Authority

'P' has COPD that severely affects his daily living skills. Lives on his own with limited care and support. Referred to us via local Pantry as unable to get sufficient food to sustain every week with their membership. No family. Reduced mobility and unable to stand for periods. Poor diet as unable to cook. Severe health condition and weight issues due to poor diet. Now eating healthier (his words) and weight reducing due to better diet.

- **Sustainability**

This project and this volume of food/customers is an ONGOING ISSUE for us and we have a very small amount of money left to continue this service. Without further funding our reserves will be needed to continue this service. These will not last long however and this will leave many people in severe food insecurity and place a much greater demand on NHS and Local Authority services

## Friends of Swanage Primary School

- **Funded activities**

To provide regular hot meals for the more venerable members of the Swanage community during the period of lockdown. The scheme provided support during lockdown for 26 families, mainly referred by local schools, and for 14 couples and 66 individuals (the majority elderly). In the final weeks of the scheme around 200 meal portions were being delivered three times a week.

- **Outcomes**

The Deputy Headteacher of Swanage Primary School described the scheme as having been a lifeline for some of their vulnerable families, in easing stress and financial burdens. For the elderly in particular, the scheme lessened the need to put themselves at risk by food shopping, whilst providing the benefit of nutritious meals. Feedback from recipients has confirmed that the scheme was very gratefully received.

- **Case study / story of change**

One recipient of the meals was looking after 3 bedridden relatives and an elderly mother whilst working 4 days a week; they described the provision of meals as having saved them from exhaustion. Another family wrote to say the meals had eased stress and worry when they were also coping with supporting their son undergoing experimental treatment for cancer during lockdown, for which they were fundraising in the same period. Another vulnerable couple in their 90s without local family support, and who were struggling to shop and cook their own meals, found the support invaluable whilst shielding.

- **Sustainability**

To continue the project food costs would need to be funded. Given this is unlikely the meals have now stopped, however the community links and goodwill the project has created will last for a long time. A great project to allow the PTAs of local schools to come together to provide a valuable service to vulnerable and elderly residents, helped cement the place of schools at the heart of the community.

## Open House

- **Funded activities**

Some funding was used to restock our emergency food aid store with staple items. These are made up into packs to give out to clients visiting our community drop in service. A proportion was also used to construct purpose built cupboards/storage space to house this food. The largest part of the grant was used to fund our community fridge project - called Open fridge. With your funding we have been able to purchase a container, fridge, freezer, signage and other smaller items which will enable us to launch this exciting project in the next 6 weeks.

- **Outcomes**

The community fridge will initially be open 3 days a week from 9am - 5pm for anyone in the community to access food, but we are hoping to extend this in the future. This project will have an impact on the whole community of Shaftesbury in the following ways; easy access to fresh and staple foods for those in need, mitigating food waste, connecting people and businesses, and building a resilient community. Statistics show that 13% of the population are in social housing and around 10% are receiving benefits of some kind, and we would therefore conservatively estimate that Open Fridge will benefit around 30 - 50 people each week (this includes those accessing food and volunteers giving their time).



- **Case study / story of change**

Client C has been struggling financially due to high rent and facing eviction because of arrears. Over the last 6 months Open House has been able to support C with food for herself and her 4 children, as well as give housing support and benefits advice. C has been a regular visitor to our drop in service as there is nowhere else within 20 miles of Shaftesbury to access the support that we are able to give. Client G lives on a travellers site just outside the town. Our drop in service has become a lifeline for her to access support, advice and food during the pandemic. We have seen her grow in confidence and self esteem as she has grown to trust our team of volunteers and accept the support that we can offer.

- **Sustainability**

The ongoing running costs of this project will be relatively small and can be covered by the charities existing regular donors and from future funding applications from other sources.



## **Portland Foodbank**

- **Funded activities**

The additional funds allowed us to provide fresh foods to those in need, In particular, fresh vegetables and fruit, eggs, butter, cheese, bacon and ham. Rather than relying on donated food which is dried or tinned. We were also able to supply vegetarian, vegan and 'free from' foods for specialist requirements. We anticipate that challenging times will continue as many of our most vulnerable residents will not have jobs to return to. This area suffers multiple deprivation.

- **Outcomes**

Being able to provide fresh food was extremely beneficial as we were able to ensure a much more balanced diet, especially helpful to families and elderly recipients. With our delivery service we were able to provide food delivery on a regular basis ensuring that they were not in need. Over Christmas I spoke to every recipient on our food bank list and provided each family with a Christmas dinner, appropriate to their needs, family size etc, including Christmas crackers, chocolates and small gifts. Some recipients were in tears at the generosity of those donors.

- **Case study / story of change**

A number of recipients were in self isolation, with no local family or support network. We have a middle aged lady with no family, who suffered domestic abuse and had been rehoused away from her home area, She was then recovering from cancer and unable to leave her home. She is vegetarian, with a number of allergies and special food needs. We were able to give her support, not just in food but emotional and provide her with books etc. over the entire pandemic period. I personally spoke to her by phone and with texts, each week.

- **Sustainability**

The food bank was established over six years ago and will continue to run. I have no doubt of its sustainability. We are currently establishing a stand alone trust for the food bank registered with the charity commission with independent bank account etc. Covid restrictions have hampered this a little but it is progressing. Because Dorset Community Foundation have been so generous as have the Portland Town Council, the Court Leet and our residents we are looking at a special project through the summer months. This will ensure that children in need receive food across the holiday and we hope to provide help with school uniforms for the new school year.

## Ringwood Foodbank

- **Funded activities**

The Food Larder has been set up every Monday since 18th January between 9.30am and 11am at All Saints Church, 3 Legged Cross.

- **Outcomes**

40 families have signed up for membership of the larder and have used it on one or more occasions. They and their families, we estimate, amount to approximately 150 people who have been able to access cheap food.

- **Case study / story of change**

*"Thank you for making me so welcome to the Three Legged Cross Food Share today. Lovely people and some wonderful food goodies."*

*"This is our 5th time so it's working for us."*

*" Really good. Anything we don't use we can pass on to friends."*

*" Yes, we eat it all even though there are some things we've never tried before."*

- **Sustainability**

The grant will fund the project for a year and thereafter the larder will be financed by membership payments.

## Shaftesbury & District Carers Association

- **Funded activities**

Our cookery workshop team cooked regular weekly hot meals and delivered them to vulnerable and isolating people in the community and provided many ad hoc food parcels during the weeks for those with mental health issues.

- **Outcomes**

This provided a lifeline for some of the most vulnerable and lonely people in our local community. Many people with mental health issues would have deteriorated significantly without this intervention.

- **Case study / story of change**

A lady living in supported housing who had no one to do her shopping and would not have seen anyone during lockdown and certainly would not have fed herself properly. We kept an eye on her and made sure she had her weekly hot meal plus boxed cold provisions and a cheery conversation (at safe distance).

A disabled gentleman in similar circumstances to the above. He told us we had become his lifeline. These two cases represent the experience we had with so many people who were in despair at the situation they found themselves in during the pandemic.

- **Sustainability**

We have identified a need that goes beyond the pandemic and will continue to provide this support. We have gained the backing of 3 local supermarkets who will supply us with their surplus food that we can use to help as many people as we can.

## St Edmunds Church Foodbank

- **Funded activities**

The primary activity was provision of food and household essentials to people in the Wyke/Westhaven area of Weymouth who were in financial difficulties due to the effects of Covid-19. The funds enabled the purchase of these food and household items and, therefore, were used entirely in support of our primary activity.

- **Outcomes**

Since receipt of the grant a weekly average of 34 people have benefitted from the foodbank. The foodbank has provided an essential lifeline to each of these local people affected by Covid-19, enabling them to continue to be able to feed themselves and their families during a difficult period both locally and nationally.

- **Case study / story of change**

1. A lady who asked for the foodbank's help in the form of food and household essentials, returned in later weeks to make small donations of her own.
2. A lady who has been a foodbank regular for some weeks explained how the bags of food she takes away enable her not just to feed her family of 5 (3 adults and 2 grandchildren) but also to be able to cook for them the kind of home-made recipes that she would otherwise have been unable even to consider.
3. A couple (one furloughed, the other with mental health issues) who have recently moved into the area but, with no cash and no transport of their own, found themselves unable to obtain any food for themselves elsewhere. St Edmunds foodbank enabled them to bridge the gap in their resources until work restarts.
4. A man who lives on his own. He is in work but, after suddenly being presented with unexpected bills that have to be paid, found himself with only £3 left in his pocket. Again, the foodbank enabled him to provide for himself while he awaited his next pay packet.

- **Sustainability**

For the remaining life of the foodbank (the current intention is for it to cease with effect from 13th May 2021) its supplies of food and household essentials will be paid for from donations made by church members. Although these donations will be ceasing shortly, sufficient funds from this source are held for this period.

## St Francis Church *(including agreed extension to grant period until end of June 2021)*

- **Funded activities**

We have used the fridge to hold fresh produce to aid more healthy nutrition for those using the food bank. The fridge was also used to support The Friendly Food Club, with whom we were partnering with in providing Cook Boxes that needed to be stored overnight.

- **Outcomes**

The difference will continue long after this period as fresh produce has enabled those attending food bank to get more nutritious food than before. This will continue when the community fridge is open more days a week in the future.

- **Case study / story of change**

A homeless gentleman was so pleased to get butter to put on his bread. A family with small children appreciated fresh fruit to complement food bank supplies.

- **Sustainability**

Thank you for an extension for spending the remaining money from the grant. It was much appreciated. Within the budget we accounted for a year's worth of cleaning products, PPE & electricity. The contents of the fridge is via donations so that part is sustainable. Morrisons has already been a great support to us.



## St Mary's Church Chickerell food bank *(including agreed extension to grant period until end of May 2021)*

- **Funded activities**

Supplied food parcels to those in need in Chickerell weekly mainly delivered to keep all safe. Some parcels delivered as emergency to people who had to isolate and were unable to get delivery slots.

- **Outcomes**

Delivering was a privilege; you could physically see the weight lift off people's shoulders and see the joy on the children's faces. There was also a positive impact to the volunteers as we were able to meet safely and provide a service when for some they would have had no contact at all. The grant also enabled us to provide Christmas and Easter treats, and to provide safe delivery where required. It also helped with our setup costs including food storage & ID badges.

- **Case study / story of change**

From a family of 5: "Our cupboards have never been so full, thank you so much for taking away the stress of where our next meal was coming from"

- **Sustainability**

We have been fortunate to have a good response with donations from the local community and the intention is for the project to continue while there is a need.

## The Bus Shelter Dorset

- **Funded activities**

We have been able to provide food for our guests for the duration of this grant. This has included our weekly shops, milk deliveries and takeaways on special occasions. £500 was returned to the fund in January 2021 as our location changed and transport costs for food delivery to Swanage was no longer required.

*(Note: this was redistributed as a grant to St Edmunds Church Foodbank)*

- **Outcomes**

The importance of being able to provide good quality food to our guests is very much part of what we do and try to achieve in meeting one of their main basic needs so this grant has been so important to use in order to continue to deliver our service to guests during the pandemic.

- **Case study / story of change**

One of our guests has recently made some positive changes/choices to his lifestyle and gaining weight, eating healthily and working out is very much part of his plans, which we have been able to support him to make great headway on. The results are already positive in terms of his weight gain, mental health and sleep patterns. During the time another of our guests has been with us he has gone from being a shy, under confident young lad to a young man who can hold a good conversation, make eye contact and stand up for himself in a group who are always teasing one another!! A huge change which will have a positive impact on the rest of his life.

- **Sustainability**

We will continue to fundraise and apply for grants to support us with food as it is a vital for our service to deliver in order for us to meet the needs of our guests.

## The Friendly Food Club – grant 1

- **Funded activities**

The Friendly Food Club delivered cooking demonstrations with 18 residents from Weymouth, Portland Dorchester and Shaftesbury. We originally intended to target specifically although not exclusively people with additional needs in the Weymouth & Portland area, in partnership with local agencies who indicated they had clients who would take part. In the event none of the agencies were able to provide clients with additional needs to take part. In view of the short deadline, we recruited people with additional needs we have worked with in the past in other parts of Dorset and were able to engage clients in Dorchester, Weymouth, Bridport and Shaftesbury.

The Zoom sessions and cookery workshops were challenging with participants, including some with a wide range of additional needs, confidence and skills and we had to adapt our delivery plan constantly to meet the different needs. Without the support of agency support staff we had to rely on our tutors giving one to one support in some sessions, whilst the other delivered the demonstration and across a wider geographical area than anticipated. Although the sessions took much longer to organise and deliver without the support of the dedicated agencies, once we got going, the sessions were an outstanding success being able to include people with additional needs within the general group.

- **Outcomes**

For the primary target group, those with recognised additional needs, the inclusion within the overall group had an obvious impact on confidence and self esteem as their biggest problem was lack of social interaction. Developing and practising basic cookery skills within the overall group was boost to confidence whilst embedding and consolidating useful life skills. The other participants were able to understand more the challenges of the participants with additional needs. Whilst this is probably the most challenging the Friendly Food Club has delivered, the positive impact on the individuals we engaged is life changing.

- **Case study / story of change**

G, is a single man in his 40's with very low esteem and a number of health and social interaction issues. He joined a Friendly Food Club Cookery workshop in 2019 then worked with us as a volunteer on other projects, building his confidence to a stage where he was able to deliver simple demonstrations to the rest of the group. Unfortunately the 'lock down' has destroyed his confidence to a level where he stayed in his flat almost 24/7. After much persuasion he joined a Zoom cookery session, adamant that he would only watch. By the second session he was helping the tutor, talking to the other participants, and generally getting back to his old self. He now sits outside his flat, blogging on social media, does his own shopping and can't wait for the next Cookery Zoom.

M, a mother, herself with literacy problems and with 4 children under 10 with behavioural problems

*"Thank so much, the cooking on the laptop has been the only time kids have done something together without fighting, they felt the Zoom was a 'safe' place. E and F even made their breakfast yesterday, it was only porridge and I we had a go at the foody word searches you gave us."*

- **Sustainability**

Whilst the need is certainly there and the impact obvious for the prime target group, there is currently no funding available.



**The Face of** *the* **Friendly Food Club**  
**Tyler Dean Shane Wellman**

Tyler is 10 years of age and is from Littlemoor, Weymouth. He attends Bincombe Valley Primary school.

*What his parents say:*  
"We are so proud of how far he has come over the years, especially this last year considering how hard it has been for him and us all with this pandemic. Tyler enjoys food and always has very much. He has a very broad palate and is always up for trying new foods. We feel that joining The Friendly Food Club and receiving a weekly Cookbox was just the boost this young man needed to build up his confidence even more in the kitchen."

**On The Friendly Food Club:**  
"The Friendly food club has been so amazing and we feel what they do for Tyler and other kids is absolutely incredible. I as a very proud mum just truly want to thank you guys again for this amazing opportunity you have given Tyler."

## The Friendly Food Club – grant 2

- **Funded activities**

The Friendly Food Club made up and delivered free COOKBOXES containing ingredients, recipe cards, educational activities for the kids and a link to a YouTube 'how to do it' video, to 29 families with an average of 2 children, on Portland during February and March. 197 family COOKBOXES were delivered to the Portland Food Bank plus 14 demonstration COOKBOXES as samples showing what the COOKBOXES contained each week. Volunteers from CAP and the Food Bank delivered half the COOKBOXES whilst the others were collected by the families as they visited the Food Bank. An unexpected bonus, as many of these families were introduced to what the Food Bank has to offer for the first time. There is evidence that the COOKBOXES were more widely distributed by people from the church who supplemented the COOKBOXES from Food bank stocks and delivered to other families who didn't want to be identified.

- **Outcomes**

Portland has been disproportionately disadvantaged during the pandemic by job losses for families already experiencing food poverty. The COOKBOX project based at the portland Foodbank delivered not only a free meal for residents suffering hardship through Food Poverty but developed cooking skills, an appreciation of new nutritious foods, encouraged families to cook together and communicate to their peers through social media. This helps families to become more resilient to the inevitable increase in food prices by improving cookery and food management. COOKBOXES help to develop an appreciation of food and ingredients and show how easy it is to make nutritious meals from basic ingredients. COOKBOXES also are instrumental in bringing families together to work, cook and eat with each other and encourage communication with other families with similar issues. Posting pictures of the results of their culinary efforts on social media built confidence in the children and encouraged the forming of new friendships.

- **Case study / story of change**

A report from CAP and the Portland Food Bank:

The response from Portland families was very positive. Two CAP clients joined the scheme; a family with three children and the other was a single man with learning difficulties. The majority of the clients came via the foodbank facebook page. These clients enjoyed working with their children and were keen to continue each week; they also told their friends and some of those signed up as well. We also had some church families who signed up and one of those families gave their boxes away for the first two weeks and we added the extra families to the list as we went.

*"The boxes came at the right time for us as my husband lost his job. He's really got into it and cooks with kids all the time now, brilliant as I can't stand cooking!"*

*"My kids have never grilled fruit before, wouldn't even go near a banana but can't stop them now, bananas, apples, even tried some strawberries from the Food Bank. Please come back as soon as you have more funding."*

*"The sweetcorn fishcakes have gone down a treat. And our friends really appreciate the bag too so thank you 😊"*

*"Here are the pictures of our cookery box today... Choc-chip and banana cup-cakes"*

*"After adding the milk and putting it on the heat, we got the fruit ready for skewers which Annabelle enjoyed a lot more than stirring."*

*"Amey wouldn't eat any fruit until she tried grilling her bananas, she's tried fresh Strawberries from the Food Bank for the first time so something has worked."*

*"We managed to hide the Tuna in the sweet corn cakes and they were all eaten!"*

*"This has been a brilliant project for Portland that has enabled many families to have fun cooking together. Thank you to all the team"*

- **Sustainability**

Whilst we do not have funding to carry on the Project on Portland, we are involved with Dorset Council in the HAF project which may provide funds for FSM families, although nothing until the Summer holidays.

## The Magdalen Environmental Trust

- **Funded activities**

We have commissioned a new heated polytunnel on Magdalen Farm, which we will use to grow food, enabling us to carry on donating to food banks in Dorset at least throughout the rest of this year. Your funding has allowed us to commission a new polytunnel, heated sustainably from our existing biomass boiler, plus some raised beds. You will be pleased to hear that on the back of your investment, we have already secured funds to donate 500kg of vegetables to Dorset's food banks this year, and we are very hopeful of funds for a further 2 tonnes of donated produce from the National Lottery Communities Fund. Accordingly, the figures below about beneficiaries are informed estimates of those who will benefit this year. Also triggered by your grant, we have been able to raise further funds to make the polytunnel accessible to wheelchair users and others with impaired mobility, by installing an 'ecogrid' floor and access track.

- **Outcomes**

The difference to beneficiaries includes improved physical health through access to healthy fresh produce for people not able to afford to eat properly, and improved mental health, especially for parents and carers who have been able to provide balanced diets for their children despite losing employment. In some cases, it is possible that the project will have prevented serious illness or death due to malnutrition. The new polytunnel means we will be able to keep donating food to local families who cannot feed themselves, while also feeding the service users who will return to us from May 17<sup>th</sup>; our usual range of vulnerable families, families with disabled children, young carers, trafficked children etc. Without your investment, we would not be able to maintain our donations to local food banks due to the demand placed on our produce and growing spaces by the resumption of our normal pre-pandemic operations. There will be a knock-on benefit to service users visiting our site as they will water and weed the polytunnel, and harvest some of the produce ready for boxing-up and distribution to food banks. Many of our service users are vulnerable with poor mental health, so being able to contribute to feeding others will be a beneficial experience.

- **Case study / story of change**

Feedback from Cupboard Love foodbank in Bridport: Magdalen Farm have been very generous over the past challenging year and have certainly helped the Cupboard Love Food Bank provide healthy, nutritious 3-day emergency food parcels. As you can imagine, demand has gone up and we are finding many more families coming to us during lockdown when for a variety of reasons, parents have found themselves out of work or slipping through the net of government support. Magdalen have supplied us with a range of amazingly fresh fruit and vegetables as well as eggs. The fact that you deliver to us on Food Bank day is a real bonus as we would struggle to spare volunteers to come and collect from you.

Feedback from the Next food bank in Weymouth: *“Receiving the food from Magdalen Farm has been a great help to us. We are currently feeding over 300 people a week, so ensuring we have enough food is a constant struggle, but the donation from you made a massive difference. Our members have been really appreciative, it's great to be able to offer them good quality, nutritious food! There is definitely a continued need for these kinds of donations. The number of people who use our service is still growing, as times are really tough for a lot of people right now, so we would really benefit from donations in the future.”*

- **Sustainability**

We have secured £10,000 for food production beyond the end of the project, and we do not believe we would have secured these funds had it not been for your investment. We have applications worth £35k for more food donations being considered by funders who have supported our work in the past. If one or more of these were to be successful, we will now be able to replicate (more or less) the donations we made in 2020, while also reopening for our usual beneficiaries.

## **Weymouth Area Development Trust** *(including agreed extension to grant period until end of June 2021)*

- **Funded activities**

The grant enabled us to purchase a number of key-items of capital equipment to help us prepare the land. A chipper machine, trailer, polytunnel and ride-on mower. Whilst the pandemic lock downs have definitely affected our ability to move forward, we have had some amazing support from volunteers throughout who have planted trees, removed old barbed wire and rubbish to make the site safe for the community. The trailer and the mower enabled us to cover the 10.34-hectare site with relative ease. Cutting back hedgerows and fields to establish new community growing spaces and starting off the community food growing programme. The old silage bags that are split and dotted around the land have been reused to cover and build new topsoil on our community grow spaces. The mower and chipper will enable us to reduce waste converting it into reusable biomass, eliminating the need to remove garden waste from site, reducing road miles and our carbon footprint. Harvests will be collected, returned to a food store and sorted into VegBoxes for the local community, linking with local food networks. The community food growing programme has begun with six vulnerable adults referred through Dorset Council Adult Services now working as co-workers in the Food Fields, and the community grow spaces are being worked by clients of the Bus Shelter, Lantern Trust, Dorset Mind and other charities.

- **Outcomes**

For some volunteers this was their only 'out of the house' experience during Lockdown 3. Before end of March 21 only 35+ beneficiaries had been able to be involved however, after that deadline the project expanded to double that size, plus the co-workers and the community groups using the grow spaces and woodland. Paths have been created on the slopes of the hill at an accessible angle and covered with woodchip to enable easy access. An orchard has been planted. A Forest School for preschoolers now have a safe entrance into the woodland (Trees and Seas) and meet regularly. The 'homeless' clients supported by the Shelter Bus, and the Lantern Trust have worked on the 'grow spaces'. People from Darwin House supported lodgings cleared an area for the polytunnel, now called Darwin Corner. Because of the improved accessibility the first early summer Open Day post Lockdown attracted over 100 residents to attend with wildlife walks and history tours, and food growing demonstrations and we now have over sixty people signed up to be volunteers and Friends of Tumbledown.

There are four regular volunteer events being established during the summer; Fridays and Sundays on food growing and land care, Thursdays on archaeological surveys and Wednesdays dry stone walling; all sessions led by volunteers. Local schools are now using the land for nature walks. The Friends of Tumbledown volunteers will be offered the chance to undertake 'skills certificates' in order to continue work on the land, and are looking to create their own legal entity. A great example of community empowerment.

- **Case study / story of change**

From AL: I have been working at Tumbledown Farm since March 2021 and work with young adults with learning difficulties. As well as the skills learned from working on the land, the young people in my care also benefit from the social aspect of meeting new people and making new friendships. As an example, RT has had some life challenges and was finding it difficult to find a group or programme to which he could feel he belonged. Due to his challenges, he had been refused placements on several programmes and was desperate to find activities to become involved in within the community. Having now been in his third week at Tumbledown Farm, RT has shown himself to be a hard-working young man and is enjoying learning new skills such as fence building, painting, woodwork and planting. He often comments on how grateful he is that Tumbledown Farm has given him the opportunity to belong and to feel valued. He has made several new friends already and enjoys meeting the variety of people who attend the farm regularly. He is happy in his work and now has an opportunity to add new skills and experiences to his CV. He is keen to find employment and believes that the opportunity Tumbledown Farm has finally given him will help him to do this by showing potential employers that he is able and willing to contribute to our community. Until he came to Tumbledown Farm, RT felt unwanted by society. He now feels valued and has a new energy and positivity about him. He feels that he belongs and is making a difference and really helping others. I believe it has given him a reason to get up in the morning and a motivation to join his friends and work towards finding employment.

- **Sustainability**

Weymouth Town Council, who own the site, have decided to give full council support to fund the project and take a lead in the future, including demolition of current condemned buildings and rebuilding of the farm buildings to provide proper infrastructure going forward. They have taken on our Project Office as an employee and also employed a maintenance officer, with plans to employ a Grower next season. The public footpaths are being repaired and permissive footpaths confirmed and extended. WADT continues to work with the Town Council on the project, and are delighted that Tumbledown Farm has now been given a sustainable and expanded future as a community greenspace, providing not only recovery spaces but community engagement in all areas and ages.

