

WYRE

Issue 1

Community Spotlight



With...

Marie Westwood

At ..

Cleveleys Community Church Food Bank



Marie with volunteers Andrew & Ian

What is the core mission of your organisation?

To help the community. I want to support local people who live near the church.

How many years have you been serving our community?

About 3 years. Before that, I worked at Cleveleys Nursing Home. A back injury and receiving my pension were reasons for leaving and focusing on volunteering at the church.

What does a typical day look like for you/your team or colleagues?

The food bank runs on Thursdays. We open for 10am but we are usually on site for 9.30am. Shopping for food is usually done in advance. On the day, we'll prepare bags that are collected by local schools.

What drives your personal passion for this work?

I just love doing it. I spent 45 years in the care sector in the Midlands before I moved up here.

Which specific achievement are you most proud of?

I think we are well organised. Most importantly, we have a friendly atmosphere. We aim for every contact with food bank users to be uplifting – we don't want anyone to feel unsupported or embarrassed.

In what ways has Wyre Council supported your journey (if at all)?

We received Household Support Fund and now the Crisis Resilience Fund.

The community engagement officer, Adam, joins us every fortnight. He's helped refer residents for crisis payments, Wyre Council Housing support, and support from other charities. He's helped engage with asylum seekers.

What is the biggest challenge your group faces right now?

We had some concerns about funding but that has steadied now. In the past it felt like we were only just keeping our heads above water. Fundraising was hard; we used to do table-top sales but some days the Income received would not match the time and effort to put it all together.

Is there an upcoming project or event you want to highlight?

We are looking at ways to develop support using the Crisis Resilience Fund. We would like to offer more support with other organisations such as Citizens Advice for example.

How can local residents support this specific initiative?

Food donations or monetary donations are very much appreciated, but rare. We understand how challenging life is for the local community.

What is the best way for people to contact you or get involved?

Please contact the church. The church always welcomes new members to the congregation on a Sunday!