

Harvest Reflection

As we step into the crisp autumn, many churches and schools will be celebrating Harvest - a time to give thanks to God for food, provision and blessings. For many, Harvest is the opportunity to share what we have with others, recognising that we are called to share with those who are in need - because when we share what we have, however small that may seem, a greater need can be met. The generosity we have received year on year around Harvest has been so heart-warming. Your kindness helps us to support local families and individuals who are facing difficult times. Thank you for turning the plenty in your cupboard into provision for your neighbour.



Tribute to Alan and Maureen Turner

We at Larne Foodbank are saddened to share the news of the passing of Alan and Maureen Turner. Alan and Maureen were such a key part of Larne Foodbank. They were instrumental members of a group of Craigyhill Methodists who, in 2012, met to discuss what they, as a group of Christians, could do to help local people who found themselves in poverty. After travelling to England to look at different models of help, they felt that God was leading them to start a Foodbank. So, in 2013, Alan took the lead. He set up the office, systems and procedures that we still use today. Alan became the face of Larne Foodbank as he reached out to all denominations in the area. He put us on a really good footing as a Foodbank run by the whole community for the whole community. He served faithfully on the Management Committee over the years. Humble in nature, with a



strong faith in God, Alan had great wisdom and a sharp eye for seeing and meeting people where they are and building them up. His contribution to Larne Foodbank, its staff, volunteers and the people we help will not be forgotten.

Alan and Maureen will be greatly missed. To their family, we extend our deepest sympathies and pray that they will know God's comfort and peace at this difficult time.

Preparations for Christmas are Underway.

You may think it's too early to talk about Christmas, but at Larne Foodbank we know all too well the challenges that come as seasons change. Colder days and darker evenings mean lights on all day, extra layers added, and electricity and food bills continue to rise despite budgeting, kids come home soaked because the raincoat was used to "fly" instead of keeping them dry, and although the smell of a warm stew is a welcomed aroma, the cost of tissues for runny noses and syrups for coughs is added on top. The season brings a welcome cosiness for some, but isolation and everyday challenges for others, all before the added financial pressure of Christmas itself.



That's why we've already started planning our Annual Christmas Hamper Appeal - to ease the burden when these pressures are at their peak, and to bless those who find themselves in a challenging position at what is pitched to us as the 'most wonderful time of the year'. It all starts now: reaching out to local schools and churches, making plans with our partners, updating our referrers, and rallying support from you, our local community, to help us ensure that we have enough for the Hampers and the anticipated increase in footfall through our own doors in the upcoming colder seasons.

Donations of Basic Food Items Needed



During the summer we had a significant drop in food donations, meaning we are critically low on some items. If you are able to help, we are in most need of;

- Long Life Milk
- Cartons of Pure Fruit Juice
- Packets of Rice
- Tinned Vegetables
- Tinned Meat



SCHOOL'S OUT PROGRAMME 2026

School's Out - Five years of plugging the gap to prevent holiday hunger

During July and August, Larne Foodbank ran our School's Out Holiday Hunger programme for the fifth year running. This programme was first established in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2022, with Stormont not sitting, there was no provision in place for families entitled to free school meals to receive the fortnightly allowance per child that they would normally have received during the eight-week summer break. Charities were left to help plug the gap - not just that year, but every year since, following the closure of the scheme in 2023.

60

School's Out parcels were distributed during July and August 2026,

146

This provided enough to feed 146 children

108

This is in addition to 108 standard parcels distributed during the same period.



For many families, the summer holidays mean a significant increase in the cost of feeding their children, at a time when household budgets are already stretched. For some, there is simply no option but to turn to a foodbank for support.

At Larne Foodbank, our School's Out programme allows families who are struggling to come to the foodbank once a fortnight to collect a food parcel specifically designed to help feed children throughout the holidays. Each parcel contains fresh essentials such as milk, bread, spread, cheese, ham and yoghurts, alongside summer staples including cereal, dilutable squash, soup,

beans, sweetcorn, tinned meat and fish, noodles, and biscuits as a wee treat. These are practical, child-friendly items, carefully chosen to help make the school holidays that little bit easier for families who are already stretched to their limit. One client used a feedback form to share that they were "So grateful, this really helps us out a lot" and another reported that the parcel contents were "great for the child's lunches".

This programme would not be possible without the incredible generosity of local people, charities, organisations, businesses and churches. Your donations have enabled Larne Foodbank to step in year after year, providing local families with the food they need when school meals are no longer available. For five years, our community has helped us to plug the gap. Larne Foodbank is committed to ensuring that no one in the Larne area needs to go to bed hungry. There is always a helping hand at Larne Foodbank - and we are so grateful to everyone who makes that possible.

795

Children have been fed through the Larne Foodbank School's Out Holiday Hunger Programme over the last five years

