

## Challenge Poverty 2023

This was Devizes and District Foodbank's third event as part of Challenge Poverty Week, with a panel made up of our MP, the Deputy Leader of Wiltshire Council, CEO of Wiltshire Citizens Advice, and the Project Manager and Community Organiser of the food bank.

Speakers discussed the actions taking place regionally and nationally to mitigate poverty and the rising need for food banks across the UK. They also recognised the drivers of poverty such as insufficient social security, a lack of affordable housing, and local issues such as the impact of school and childcare costs for families.

It was great to hear questions from the audience around the Trussell Trust's campaign ensuring Universal Credit covers the cost of the essentials for the 6.1 million people receiving this benefit, and the link between destitution and a lack of affordable housing. We'd encourage you to sign the Trussell Trust's petition on Universal Credit [here](#), and thanks to all who attended!



*Picture by Bob Naylor, WaterMarx Media*

*“Our vision is for a UK without the need for food banks...”*

## Meet the Trustee

### **Bridget Selwyn**

Bridget started her training as a social worker by working in London at various jobs. She went on to Queen's College, Dundee, to do Social Administration. She then got a job in Child Care working for the school care system in the Inner London Education Authority. After 5 years, she had married, and they went to Zambia where Jasper worked as a teacher. During their 4 years there she also taught and ran a Nutrition group, using secondary school pupils to explain to villagers the importance of a balanced diet, and supplying food to depots at local primary schools.

After Zambia they went to Lesotho, where they lived in Maseru, the capital, and Bridget ran a playgroup for young children with a friend. Then they moved to the university town of Roma, and she was able to do a degree in Humanities.

They returned to England where she went to Southampton University to do a postgraduate diploma in Social Work. From 1981 to 2001 Bridget worked for Wiltshire Council as a social worker. After 10 years of work she took further training as an Approved Social Worker specializing in Mental Health.

Bridget retired in 2002 and has helped the Fairtrade Group and volunteered for Age UK.

## Community Organiser

So much progress has been made this quarter in addressing local drivers of destitution and food bank need. The community have been owning and running campaigns on school uniform affordability, so families don't experience hardship due to school-related costs, and gaining access to energy bill support for people living on houseboats, so they aren't forced to choose between 'heating and eating'.

A win for August was a scheme for some Boaters to access the £600 support they were promised, after lobbying by the local Boater community, and support from MP Danny Kruger. We're still working towards getting all boaters this support, especially vulnerable households. Wiltshire Council launched an Affordable Schools strategy in September, responding to the campaign news coverage, and lobbying from families struggling to make ends meet. Wiltshire Council also agreed to the recommendation to fund housing associations to support their tenants on low incomes.

## Thank you for your support!

Thank you so much for all your support. We really appreciate everything you continue to do, enabling us to make the greatest possible difference to people experiencing hardship in the SN8, SN9 and SN10 areas.

Over the last couple of months we have been receiving harvest donations from churches and school in our area. Everyone has been so generous and a whopping **3181kg** was received in September and October just from the Harvest Appeal alone.

We are so grateful for every single tin and packet that was donated. This will enable us to continue to provide emergency food to people in crisis in the Devizes, Marlborough and Pewsey areas.

The Trussell Trust are continuing to call on the UK government for an 'Essentials Guarantee' to make sure that the basic rate of Universal Credit is at least enough to afford the essentials we all need, such as food, household bills and travel costs.

If you would like to find out more and take part, please visit [www.trusselltrust.org/essentials](http://www.trusselltrust.org/essentials)

### Contact us

Please phone us on 07807 973605 and leave a message if we are not available to answer. Alternatively drop us an email – our email address is given below.

**Stocks levels are good due to the Harvest Appeal. We are now collecting for our Christmas Hampers and would appreciate the following by the 8th December if possible please:**

Tins/boxes of biscuits  
Boxes of chocolates  
Christmas puddings (preferably alcohol free)  
Pringles crisps - both large and small tubes  
Small boxes of crackers  
Boxes of savoury biscuits

We also need:  
Men's deodorant  
Ladies' deodorant  
Soap

*We will also accept mince pies (alcohol free) but they must have a **best before date of January 2024***

We want to see a future where food banks aren't needed  
and we know that together, we can make that happen

### Devizes and District Foodbank

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