



# Update August 2023

“Unlocking God’s purpose in you through meeting the needs of others”

In our March Update we reported that “numbers were creeping” and by the end of the month we had broken all records on numbers of food parcels delivered in one week. There were “43” Food Packs, plus 5 household packs! God is certainly keeping us on our toes as numbers fluctuate but also as we consider other ways to bless the families we are supporting through his generosity to us.

We have been busy in many other ways with our Thank You Tea, Open Day & extra opportunities with “Pets at Home”, “Kids in the Kitchen” collections & Deichmann gift cards, read on for more info:

*Karen Kendall – Project Lead*

**Referral Statistics:** We are still seeing the impact of the Energy Price/Cost of Living increase, as numbers this year are consistently 30% up on last year. In just the first 7 months of 2023 we have delivered 857 food parcels (of 3 days+) to 2,000+ individuals (last full financial year that was 3,086 individuals & 310 unique households supported) additionally in the last 4 months we have provided 78 “24hr Emergency bags” to Citizens Advice.

In the last 4 months Town Ward became top in terms of delivery numbers (we assume as more & more

residential properties are developed).

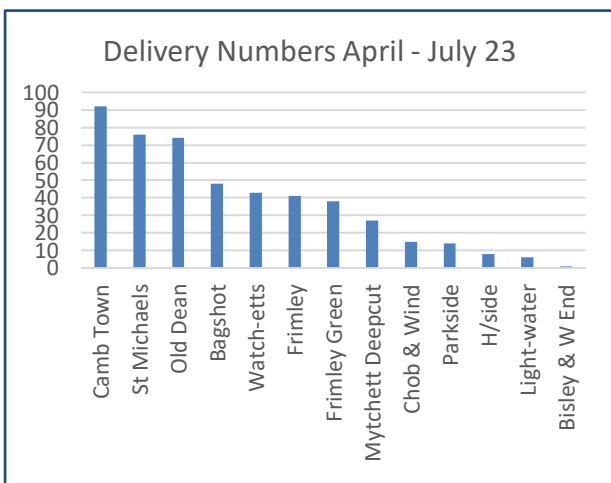
*See chart for more details.*

Citizens Advice continue to be our highest referrer.



**Time Givers update:** We continue to have a steady flow of new Time-givers, although if you know someone who is interested in joining us, we never say no to people visiting the warehouse to see what we do and to see if there is anything God is calling them to give in either time or skills.

Sadly (for us) we have said goodbye to 4 of our time-givers from Lakeside, as they have received the good news that they can now remain and work in the UK. We wish them well and bless them on their way.



## Spotlight: Aiden & Caroline Cooney (Delivery drivers)

**Aiden:** I first came across Besom whilst working as a volunteer at Citizens Advice (CA) Camberley and was impressed that such an organisation was working within the local community. I had retired a few years earlier and suspect that, like many, had lived a cocooned life not fully aware of the struggles people within my communal area of habitation lived under. CA certainly opened my eyes to reality.

A colleague at CA informed me that Besom were looking for drivers and not long after that I met Grace and the team at Besom. From my first day I always felt welcome and part of a very friendly team. All strong characters who make sure that help is provided to those in need.



At the time it was very humbling but hugely rewarding for me and to date provides me with a great sense of partaking in something that is practical and making an impact within the community we all live in.

**Caroline:** My husband Aidan introduced me to Besom when a driver vacancy arose in August '21. I had recently left full time employment to start my very belated 'gap year'. I was warmly welcomed by the friendly and efficient Monday crew and was inspired by the enthusiasm and commitment of everyone and the huge volume and assortment of donations in the warehouse expertly stored. Some deliveries are large and our lovely packers take care to ensure bags and boxes aren't too heavy for which my back is very grateful, especially when deliveries are to the third floor. Delivering to clients really opened my eyes to the extreme needs and challenging circumstances which families and single people continually face. Sadly, as we are all too acutely aware, demand is rising. Thankfully Besom helps in some small way to provide support where it is most needed, make lives easier and hopefully help people to bridge the gap until life turns a corner for the better.

Keep going Besom, it is so worthwhile.

**Training:** We put on a special training morning for “Special Dietary Requirements” so we are all better informed when it comes to Vegan, Diabetic, Gluten Free, Halal diets etc. as more and more referrals come with special dietary requests. We have had to increase the shelf space to accommodate this as well!



**Schools provision:** In our last update we reported that the school breakfast club had a coordinator & numbers are now much more regular & so the stock of breakfast provisions has run down. In preparation for the autumn term, **we welcome contributions again!**

**Past Events:**

**Time-givers Thank you Tea:** On the 25<sup>th</sup> April we gathered for our Time-givers tea at St Michaels church, 25 of us enjoyed a time of fellowship, getting to know some of our newer time givers plus tea/coffee and cakes of course. **Whether you came or not want you all to know how much we appreciate the time you give.**

**Pets at Home:** 9<sup>th</sup> June Collection. This year Blue Cross (a charity which supports pets) has been partnering “Pets at Home” stores with local food banks. We have been blessed to have been paired with the store in Bagshot. We collect donations (mainly dog food) each week and in June we were invited to have a stand there.



One of our Shift Leads Nicky Lynch took the lead and we had a very successful day raising awareness of what we do, which includes helping to feed the pets of our clients (as more and more of our clients struggle with this too) and also obtained further donations.

**Open Day:** on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 28 referrers and local councillors came to visit us & to find more about what we do! We had 4 trustees on site plus a handful of other time-givers giving tours, answering questions and serving refreshments, we are so grateful for their time. The ware-house was laid out with sample packs.



**“Kids in the Kitchen”** in Camberley Atrium are collecting for us!



Each Monday from 31st July to 21st August: (11am-4pm) the Project which was fully booked almost immediately it was

publicised, runs multiple sessions per day with groups of children & their parents, preparing meals that can be taken away & cooked at home, week one was Pizza, week two Mexican etc... These are the donations from week two:



**New initiative:** We are piloting a new scheme to help families with children in school years 1-6 & have recently bought (discounted) **£25 Deichmann Shoe gift cards** so that through the summer holiday, families receiving food parcels and who are needing to buy new school shoes get a bit of extra help. Families will also be getting extra food for their children.



## Upcoming events for your diary:

### Waitrose Bagshot trolley collection:

If any of you would like to help us out for an hour or so at Waitrose in Bagshot on the **15<sup>th</sup> September** then please let us know we could do with some more help! We will be there between 9am – 3pm doing a general collection.

**Harvest:** Please remember us as you prepare for Harvest and if you are collecting for us, **do let us know when your Harvest service will be**, if you need us to collect OR when you are likely to be dropping off donations to help us be prepared. We will be welcoming the usual ambient food BUT do remember we also regularly give out cleaning materials, toiletries and household packs – please see our website for more details:

[thebesomincamberley.com/what-we-do](http://thebesomincamberley.com/what-we-do)

&

[thebesomincamberley.com/shoppinglist](http://thebesomincamberley.com/shoppinglist)

**AGM:** Our AGM will be 10 - 11am on the **11<sup>th</sup> October** at Camberley Baptist Church on the Frimley Road, (plenty of parking in Sullivan Road on the opposite side of the Frimley Road). Please put this in your diaries, more info will follow nearer the date.

### Prayer Thanks & Needs:

1. Thank God for his abundant generosity & all those that give, be it in time, money, skills or “things”.
2. Pray especially for the Shift Leads who put in some considerable hours each week & Drivers who often do 2 or 3 runs to fit all the packs in their cars.
3. Pray for those referred to us, struggling financially & many who struggle with their mental health.
4. Pray for formation of a team to run the 2023 Christmas Hamper Project.
5. Pray for a balance of donated ambient food stocks

🔗 Thank you for reading this – please share it with your church/friends 🔗

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