Michael Roberts Charitable Trust

From crisis to stability – Here for Harlow

Impact Report 2024-26



















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Our vision is that everyone can belong and participate in their communities, knowing that they are significant, valued, included and wanted.

Our vision is that no one should go hungry, or without the means to bring up their children, heat their homes or live in dignity. Anyone in that position should know that they are supported by those around them until things are good again.

This vision comes from our belief that nobody is excluded, unwanted or overlooked by God, whose love is revealed in the life of Jesus.

Because we care...

Five years ago, we had a vision: to bring together our support for Harlow in one central venue.

We wanted that venue to be in the town centre: accessible by a single bus journey. It should make it quicker and easier for people to access help from our different projects. And it should bring other charities alongside us, making their support available to people coming to the Foodbank.

We also wanted to do more than respond to crisis. We wanted to help prevent crisis in the first place. And we wanted to engage with people affected by poverty, so that their experience would inform our work and become a source of support and hope for others.

In July 2024 things looked bad. We had to leave the former BHS premises and move back into St. Paul's Church. Our food stocks were stored away - we were like nomads looking for a promised land.

Then in October 2024, we were given that venue!

In fact, we opened not one but two venues in the Harvey Centre: our new Support Centre, alongside a permanent town-centre home for Maybury Open Door.

It felt wonderful – and a little scary too. You may know that sense of accomplishment when you've worked hard to make a new opportunity happen… and then suddenly realise just how much it's going to take to make it work!

I've learnt one 'magic word' for moments like that: "Help!"

And that leads to one of the most fulfilling things I can report this year. People of all kinds have stepped forward to join us in this new era: from decision-makers at the top of the council, to children in schools, to hundreds of people who may have little money to spare, but have given something equally precious: their time.

Together, we have become more effective than ever.

We are now bringing together crisis support, advice, help to make life more affordable, improved wellbeing and community power-building. It all adds up to our long-held dream: a central place of hope for the town, run by people who care.

I'll admit, sometimes we're messy. Some things take longer than we'd prefer. Sometimes we improvise things into shape. That comes with innovation.

But as you read this report and see the many different ways in which people's lives and communities have been changed, I like to think you will agree that we've done a good job of bringing together this orchestra of hope – and making sure its music reaches the people who most need to hear it.

Throughout this period, our work has taken place against the backdrop of a now-familiar phrase: "the cost-of-living crisis."

This report tells the story of our response to that pressure. This has involved many attempts to lessen its impact on those who have the least capacity to absorb it, while at the same time trying to build resilience for the future.

You may have been part of that in some way, if so, thank you!

For your donation of time, thought, money, skills and prayers – thanks for being part of the team!

I believe that every time we see a neighbour struggling and think, 'we can't just stand by and let that happen', we ignite a spark of hope. And when we come together and organise to do something to change it, that spark can grow into a fire.

And hopefully, together, we have now lit a beacon of hope in the heart of Harlow.

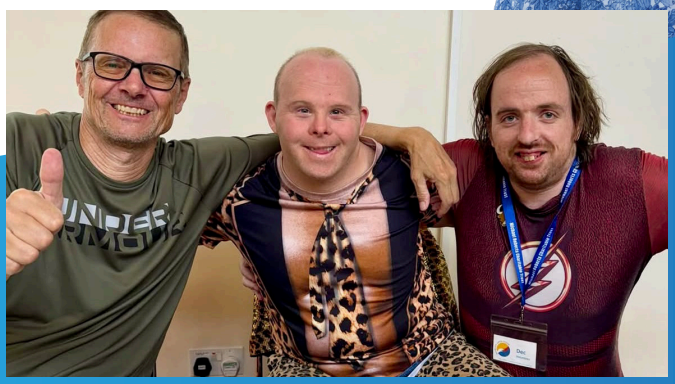
That has always been the dream.

I hope you enjoy seeing how your part in that dream has become a reality.

Andy Thornton
CEO MRCT









Our 5-Year vision becomes a reality in the Harvey Centre

An introduction to our new Support Centre

After our first year in the Support Centre, we took a fresh look at how people were using the space. We could see ways to make it more welcoming, more visible and, above all, easier for our different projects and partners to work together.

The **Bounty Club Social Supermarket** now has the most prominent position in the Centre, making it clear that it is open and available to everyone. Alongside affordable food and household essentials, it is also home to our **School Uniform Shop** and **Good Food programme**. These projects extend the Bounty Club beyond its original purpose of providing low-cost food. The Uniform Shop helps reduce the cost of raising a family, while the Good Food programme helps people explore affordable and nutritious ways of eating: adding other aspects of wellbeing to the financial savings. It offers food tastings and cookery classes to those interested. Soon we will add low-cost donated sports equipment to this with our new **Kit Shop**.

Harlow Foodbank Together with Trussell
Here for you

bump to five
Pick up here

Harlow School Uniform Shop Community
Buy here

Harlow Hive
Buzz here

Our **Foodbank** and **Bump to Five** project now sit alongside the **Advice Area**. Bringing these together is important because people rarely experience difficulties 'neatly', one at a time. Rather, someone visiting the Foodbank may also need financial advice, help with housing, or essential items for their children. Now we can identify those needs and respond much more quickly.

Our regular Advice Area partners include **Harlow Community Hub, Citizens Advice Harlow and Integration Support**. These offer access to local services, specialist financial casework and support for people newly arrived in Harlow and the UK. The NHS, Jobcentre, Harlow Council Housing and many other organisations also provide regular support.





The **Harlow Hive** has had a visible presence in the waiting area, creating opportunities for people to get involved, share their experiences and strengthen the voice of the community.

Upstairs, our warehouse space has enabled us to develop our newest project, the **Essex Affordable Food Hub**. Supported by Essex County Council, it allows us to buy and store food in bulk and supply Foodbanks and Social Supermarkets across Essex and beyond. The savings we achieve also benefit our own Bounty Club – now the largest social supermarket of its kind in the county.

Partnership makes it possible

It is hard to overstate how much partnership working has enabled the Centre to grow and flourish.

Harlow Council and the Harvey Centre provide our building at no rental cost. Essex County Council supports the development of Social Supermarkets across the county. Food suppliers, local organisations, sponsors, grant makers and our many delivery partners contribute in different ways.

This report will feature all of the above projects in more depth, but we are hugely grateful to those who have helped bring them together in the Harvey Centre.

How it all connects: from crisis to belonging

The way our Centre works reflects the five stages at the heart of our strategy:



Our **Foodbank** responds when people are in **crisis**, providing immediate help while creating opportunities to address the problems behind it.

The **Bounty Club Social Supermarket** helps people achieve greater **stability**, making everyday essentials more affordable: reducing the risk that an unexpected expense pushes a household into crisis. We also see it as a route from crisis to stability, offering a step up from the Foodbank as a regular source of lower cost essentials.

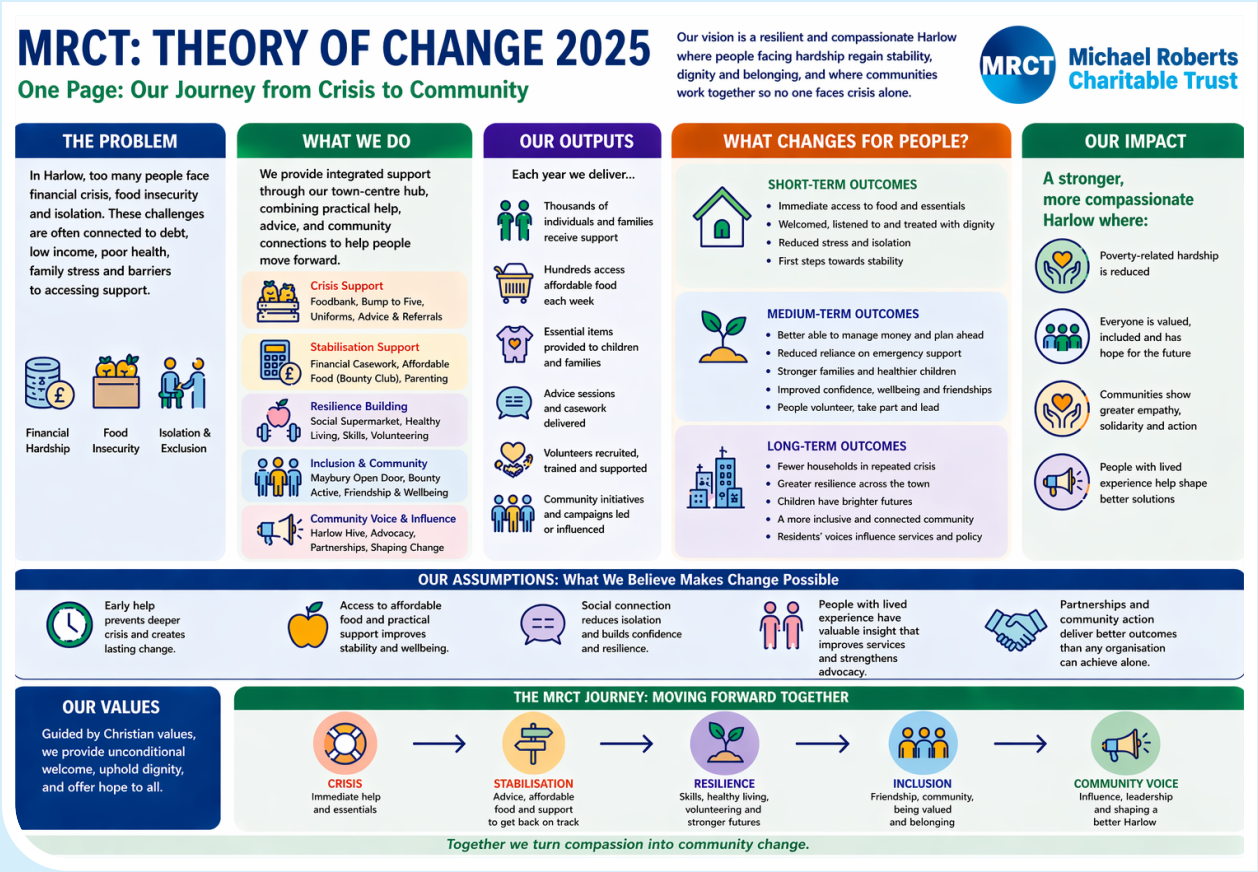
From there, we want to help people build **resilience** – financially, physically and emotionally. That means knowing where to source regular advice, developing skills and resourcefulness, improving health and wellbeing, and building supportive connections with other people and the wider community.

The final stage is **belonging**: knowing that are included, valued and that you have something to contribute.

For 28 years the **Maybury Open Door** project has demonstrated how important this can be. People do not always come to us because of financial hardship. Sometimes the challenge is isolation – having nowhere to meet others, make friendships or feel part of something.

Ultimately, that is what we want the Support Centre to offer: **not simply help when things go wrong, but a pathway towards greater stability, resilience and belonging.**

We have summarised this in a single chart here with apologies for the tiny writing to squeeze it all in!



Neighbours Helping Neighbours

Paying tribute to our MRCT Volunteers!

One of the founding principles of our charity is that everyone has a part to play in building a strong community.

So we prefer not to think of some people as givers and others as receivers. Rather, we all find value in both giving and receiving – and in doing so, we build solidarity.

Still, our work comes to life because so many people take the initiative to offer what they can: their time, energy, vehicles, storage, conversation, prayer, skills, persistence and much more.

People of all backgrounds and abilities contribute – collecting, sorting, packing, selling, cooking, welcoming, fundraising, delivering, advocating and simply joining in with those who visit us.

That participation helps us to lessen the impact of poverty, make crisis less likely, build greater resilience within households and reduce loneliness.



And it is a real team effort. Over the last two years, nearly 150 volunteers have joined us for one or more days a week, bringing our work to life.

In 2025, our Maybury Open Door project won the Harlow Town Centre Award for Charity Project of the Year – an award that could never have come our way without the extraordinary dedication of the volunteers who make the drop-in happen.

With every passing month over the last two years, it feels as though we have been able to bring a little more to Harlow – another service, another welcome, another helping hand, another way for neighbours to support neighbours.

None of it could have happened without so many people being willing to step forward and play their part.

To every one of you – thank you!



















Partnerships in action

Local businesses, churches and organisations working with us.

Our thanks go out all the generous partners who make our practical work possible: vans, waste services, storage, food surplus, shop space, professional advice, funding and publicity – so many people play their part in our service for the town!

We would like to thank these valuable partners who volunteered their time to support our work:

- GSK Harlow
- 4Wall Entertainmwent
- HSBC Bank
- Metro Bank
- Land Sheriffs
- Pearsons
- Simply Washrooms
- Clarins
- Dunelm
- Essex CC Business Team
- ASDA
- Stansted Airport Services
- Best Food Logistics
- Harlow Park Run
- Tesco
- Coca Cola Enterprises
- TSM Void Energy Service
- Novo Lounge
- Harlow Synagogue

369,000 kg of food

That's nearly 15 articulated lorry loads



169,000 kg donated by local people
(7 lorry loads)

200,000+ kg rescued from going to waste
(8 lorry loads)

Together, local donations and daily food pickups provided **369 tonnes** of food for local redistribution.

Illustrative equivalent based on approx. 25 tonnes per articulated lorry.









Maybury Open Door





A place to belong, contribute and flourish

Maybury has continued to show what a community of welcome can bring to people of all types. Across the town-centre venue and in Harefield Church, the drop-in has remained a safe place where over 100 people per week can eat together, talk, join in, get practical help and be known by name.

Maybury Open Door has created an open community that is busy and full of life: quizzes, crafts, praise, chair Pilates, line dancing, African drumming, music, games, children visiting to sing, trips to the theatre, cinema, bowling, Canalability barge cruises and the Christmas pantomime... the list goes on. These are not simply activities to fill a timetable. They are ways of helping people maintain confidence, build friendships, try new experiences and feel that Harlow still has a place for them.

One of the strongest themes is participation.

"Fantastic day on the river with all my Maybury friends and crew. Thanks to Maybury staff and Canalability for an amazing day."





Maybury visitors are not treated as passive recipients of help. Many contribute by setting up, packing away, folding napkins, helping with lunch, supporting activities, raising small amounts of money, welcoming others or becoming volunteers. The Centre has repeatedly shown how people find confidence through being useful and trusted.

The pastoral and practical support is equally important. Staff and volunteers have helped people with forms, phone calls, appointments, housing worries, digital access, family stress, health issues and loneliness. Some stories are too personal for a public review, but together they show why Maybury matters: it is a place where people are noticed before they fall through the gaps.

Maybury Open Door team were voted the Community & Voluntary Sectory Project of the Year in the Town Centre Awards 2024/25.

Congratulations to them!!



Maybury Migrates across the Harvey Centre... and the Bounty Active Centre is born

Over the past two years, we created a thriving town-centre home for Maybury Open Door on Level Two of the Harvey Centre. Through shared meals, activities, celebrations and everyday companionship, the space soon became our own.

Sadly, in November 2025 we were given notice that the shop would be taken over as a town centre venue for the NHS. We had to move out!

Thankfully the Harvey Centre provided us a new option – and now we have a combined bigger venue that offers three spaces for activities – one a softer floor area for activities which can include physical exertion, another for learning cookery (shared with the Bounty Good Food project), and a third a relaxing socialising area with pool table.

This new centre is shared as a resource with "Bounty Active" – a facility for Bounty Club members that offers nutritious cookery classes, keep fit activities, and will become a place for Bounty members to instigate new activities.

Ideas for this were recorded from a Bounty members' focus group – and are represented on the art-chart below. Rainbow Services Harlow are partners in the centre and run their own events here too.









Harlow Foodbank
Together with Trussell

Harlow Foodbank







Emergency help, advice and a route away from crisis

The Foodbank has remained a lifeline for people whose cupboards and bank accounts have reached empty. In 2024 we fulfilled more than 100 vouchers each week, with volunteers greeting people, registering visitors, packing food, maintaining stock and offering a listening ear.

As the cost-of-living crisis progressed Harlow Foodbank observed a trend that has been common around the country. The number of people needing help rose slowly, and then began to fall.

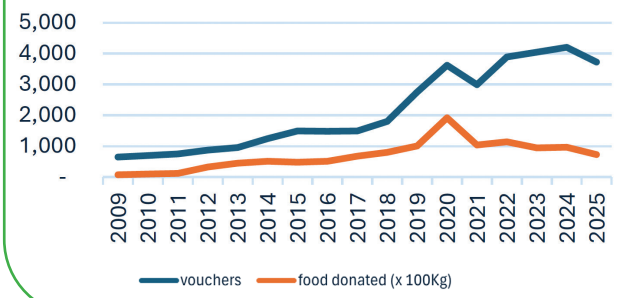
"I arrived in Harlow fleeing domestic abuse... they gave me food, plus everything I needed to set up a new home when I got one."

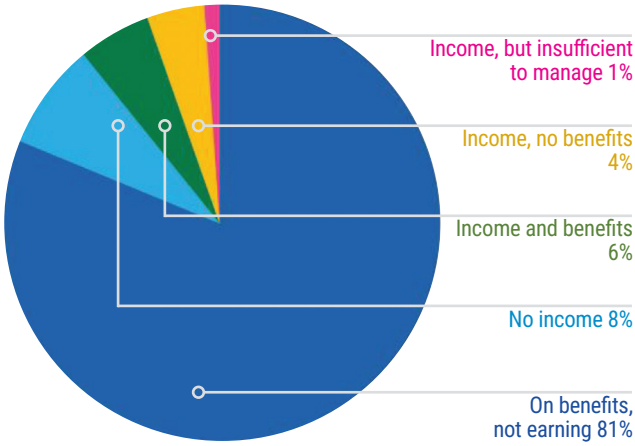
However, in the same period donations of food through supermarkets and other special events went down. In our Foodbank donations were at 2019 levels, but food being given out was twice that. Like nearly all food banks around the country we needed to buy in food to provide food parcels for those in crisis.

Thankfully in Harlow we are blessed to have many regular donors who have given money rather than food. This helps greatly. We were also helped with a very generous gift from a Harlow based project "A Meal on Me" which was closing down and transferred funds to help us feed the town.

We are glad to say that the demand for Foodbank parcels in Harlow appears to have dropped more than the national average (further details below). This is gratifying as historically we have closely tracked national figures. Though we can't prove it, we believe that this is at least partly due to the 'Bounty Club Factor' – where people in hardship have found help with costs before crisis or have got out of that position sooner through finding affordable food at hand.

Vouchers fulfilled vs food donated







Advisory Services

The Foodbank has also become a doorway to wider support. In the MRCT Support Centre, visitors can easily connect with Citizens Advice, Integration Support, employability provision, Harlow Hive and other services. We have also worked with Harlow Council to bring housing support into the Centre, recognising how often housing difficulties lie behind food poverty.

Crucially, this is not simply about making referrals. We consider what help someone needs now; helping to address the underlying issues, and offering practical or emotional support to help them take the next step. In this way, our relief and advisory services form part of the same journey: meeting immediate need, helping people stabilise their circumstances, and supporting them to build greater resilience and independence.

Over the past two years, our specialist financial caseworker has supported around 500 people accessing our Foodbank and other services, providing expert help with benefits, debt and other financial difficulties. Between April 2024 and March 2026, the service identified more than £859,000 in financial gains and other financial outcomes for clients – equivalent to around £1,700 for every person accessing the service.



"171 of the 500 clients were considered unlikely to need ongoing food support following intervention."

Alongside increasing household income, the service helped clients manage more than £157,000 of debt, including almost £48,000 of debt written off altogether. This demonstrates why advice is such an important part of our approach to relief. Emergency food meets an immediate need; specialist casework can then help address some of the financial pressures behind that need, enabling people to move from crisis towards greater stability and resilience.

Trussell and the national landscape

During April 2024–March 2026, we joined in Trussell's work to tackle the causes of poverty alongside supporting emergency food provision. Its **Guarantee Our Essentials** campaign, developed with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, pressed for Universal Credit to cover basic living costs, while wider campaigning called for reduced benefit deductions, removal of the two-child limit and protection of disability support. Research, public campaigns and meetings with MPs brought evidence from food banks, and the voices of people experiencing hardship—into national policy discussions. Harlow's support from Trussell paid for our debt and income advice and campaigning work. Together, these initiatives reflect its ambition to help people achieve lasting financial stability and ultimately end the need for food banks.



Regular Foodbank volunteers and Harlow Hive members arrive at Westminster for the Guarantee Our Essentials day

Between calendar years 2024 and 2025, emergency food parcel provision in Harlow fell by 18.6%, compared with reductions of 11.7% nationally and 10.8% across Essex. Numbers in Harlow fell a further 15.6 % in 25-26 though national and county-wide figures are not yet available.

Harlow therefore experienced a substantially greater reduction in emergency foodbank use than the wider national and county trends. This is encouraging in the context of MRCT's approach of combining emergency relief with affordable food and practical advice to help households move towards greater stability.

Bounty Club





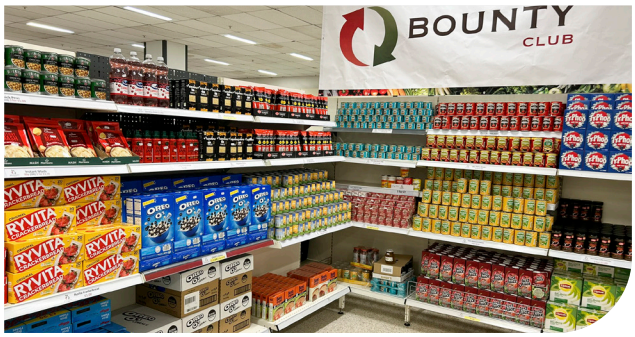


Low-cost food, dignity, choice and a growing community hub

The Bounty Club started as an experimental response to rising food costs and is now one of MRCT's most significant pieces of prevention work. It gives people a way to stretch tight budgets before their household reaches emergency crisis. In contrast to the Foodbank, it provides low-cost goods that we have been given as clear-out surplus stock or bought in bulk. This offers product choice, a community spirit, additional support and advice - all alongside a weekly shop.

> *"The Bounty Club is becoming the buffer zone between low income and crisis."*

Since 2024 the shop has opened weekdays between 10am and 2pm under the capable management of Patrick Coppeard. In late 2025, new manager Nish Ejvet along with Sally and Vicky and volunteers built on that success, extending the opening hours to 3pm, with sales and customer numbers steadily rising. We now have over





Bounty Club members' answers to what they like about our shop.

4,000 members and 3,000+ monthly transactions: showing the difference made by the move into the Harvey Centre.

The public profile of the work has grown too. The project was featured on Anglia TV in December 2025, with the facility and team coming across strongly. This all helped local people to find us and discover that Bounty Club is not simply a shop. It is a visible sign that Harlow cares about food insecurity, turning social concern into practical daily help.

All our initiatives have the same overall aim – to shield low-income families from rising costs and enable them to live life to the full, with resilience and hope in a community that cares.

BOUNTY community SUPERMARKET

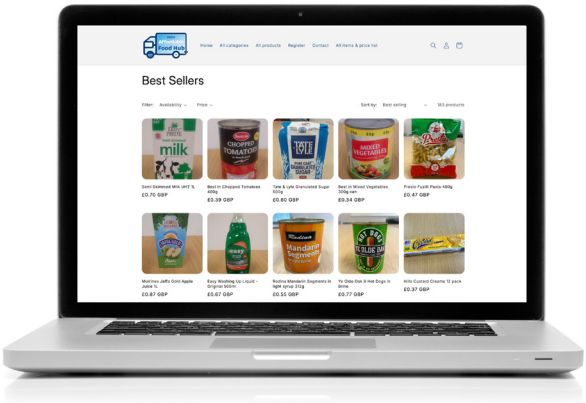
MRCT

Essex Affordable Food Hub





In August 2025 we began a new contract with Essex County Council to deliver a facility that can help social supermarkets like the Bounty Club proliferate across Essex.



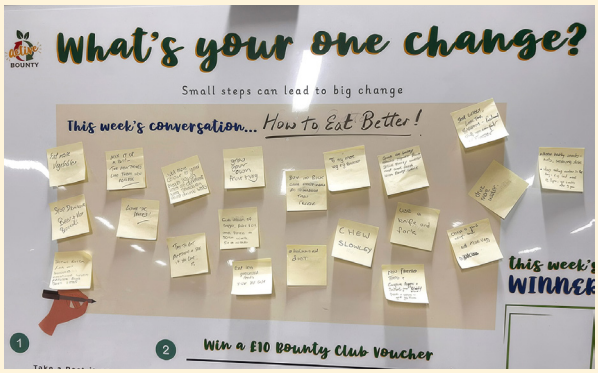
We agreed to use the large storage area above the Bounty Supermarket (formerly for Sainsbury and Wilko stock) to host low-cost bulk-bought food and make it available to other food projects. We could see the value of this to both Harlow and Essex. By buying larger quantities of food everyone could benefit from reduced costs.

This project has now grown to support 35 other Essex based groups with low-cost foods. Most are Foodbanks and Community Supermarkets. It operates as a charity-to-charity delivery service with bulk food available from an online store at www.afordable-food-hub.org.uk. Our fifth, and largest van now makes deliveries across Essex, north London and Hertfordshire.

The Good Food Project - the role of nutrition in resilience

Bounty has also become a platform for wider health and community work. Bounty Active and the Good Food programme are developing practical ways for people to eat well, cook well, be active and build confidence. Terry's cooking demonstrations, tasting sessions and conversations about food have brought real energy to the Centre. The Good Food programme report records 2,172 interactions across sampling sessions, showing how food can open conversations about health, cost, skills and community.





During 2025 -26 three new groups attended 12 cooking lessons each, developing an understanding of how food affects our mood; how to choose nutritionally beneficial ingredients, and how to enjoy cooking meals from fresh products, not just packets.

The results have been stunning with participants left enthusiastic to share new skills, recipes and meals with other Bounty members. They are now becoming peer-influencers across the membership and the programme will commence into year 2 with the support of Essex County Council's Public Health Department.





More than just items for babies and young children

Bump to Five continues to offer practical help for families under financial pressure. We support with clothes, cots, pushchairs, nappies, stair gates and other essentials, but also provide a listening ear, reassurance and a simple way to ask for help without feeling inadequate. Through moving to the town centre we have been able to offer a safe place for families to talk about their situation and signpost to other agencies for additional support.

Between April 2024 and March 2026, Bump to Five received 2,039 referrals, supporting around 1,140 different families. Almost 3,000 children were supported across those referrals, generating requests for more than 8,000 essential items. Demand remained remarkably consistent across the two years, averaging 85 referrals every month.

Low income was identified as the reason for 84% of referrals, but many families faced overlapping challenges including temporary accommodation, domestic abuse, asylum, restricted access to public funds and homelessness. More than half of referrals came directly from families themselves, while 44% came through a wide network of health, social care, family support, community and specialist agencies.

The pattern of requests tells its own story: the greatest demand was not for luxuries, but for the everyday essentials for raising children - clothes, nappies, wipes, shoes, formula, coats and toiletries.



Project leader Fernanda looks elated after receiving a donation of 6 double buggies from the Harlow Pirates walking football team

The project has continued to adapt in dialogue with those it supports. The team expanded with Vicky providing administration; creating a welcoming waiting area and play space, and working closely with the shop and uniform team. 15 volunteers are regularly involved across Bump to Five and the Uniform Shop, with later volunteers including people who had first come as Bump to Five families.

Alongside donations of pre-loved items support for the project remains strong. When donations of stair gates couldn't keep up with the waiting list we bought 40 gates to clear the list.

> *"Since you opened Bump to Five my job is easier and I am able to help more families because of your hard work."*
>
> *Referring Professional*



Bump to Five parenting support

In 2026 we instigated a new level of support for parents who regularly come to Bump to Five for essential items. Many have built up a level of trust with our team that can be more difficult with statutory services.

Based in our Bounty Active Centre – we offer play and parenting support to those who need it. Around 12 households now attend enjoying its informal atmosphere and practical guidance on parenting through early-life stages.





School Uniform Shop

Reducing waste, supporting families

The School Uniform Exchange has grown naturally out of Bump to Five: offering the same commitment to good-quality pre-loved items, family dignity and practical savings. But this project has focused on the costs that come when children start nursery, school or move through year groups.

The outlet is now firmly established in the MRCT Support Centre, opening week-days as an area within the Bounty Supermarket and selling school uniform alongside surplus Bump to Five stock between 10 am and 3pm. It also responds to seasonal needs, including swimming costumes and swim nappies, plus a Christmas Jumper swap for those school Christmas lunches. A toy sale also preceded Christmas 2025, the team turned an overflow of toy donations at Bump to Five (we don't take toys but people still leave them at our door!) into pre-loved toy sales, selling around 450 toys across two sales: helping to keep costs down and stocking fillers up.





"Uniforms for All - reducing waste, supporting families."

Teaming up with schools

A newer development is the Uniforms for All campaign. Harlow Hive and Bump to Five worked together to encourage schools to donate spare uniform rather than throw it away, or to redistribute it directly to families who need it. Stewards became the first school to sign up to the pledge, and the campaign gives the Exchange a wider purpose: not only meeting need, but changing habits around waste and affordability across the town.

This project is also a reminder that poverty often shows up in ordinary moments: a child needing the right jumper, shoes, PE kit or swimming item. Helping with those costs can reduce stress at home and help children feel included at school.

Harlow Hive





Listening, organising and helping local voices be heard

In 2024 the Harlow Hive added a new strand to MRCT's work: not just responding to poverty, but listening to people affected by it and helping them to speak to the systems around them. Through gathering stories and concerns, through meetings and community events, those insights have been turned into practical local action.

One of the first projects of the new Harlow Hive team was to devise a way to publicise the various support and advice services in and around Harlow. This was turned into "the Communitree" – a visual representation of support services which links straight through to more details on the Hive's web page. The image has been printed onto various sizes of poster for display and found its way onto a huge banner for public events.

Housing has been one of the clearest themes emerging from public consultations. In particular residents in permitted development accommodation raised issues about living conditions and confusion over rights. The Hive members submitted Freedom of Information requests to councils and made links with housing campaigners and journalists. Some of the detail is too sensitive for a public review, but the public story is clear: people living with poor housing need routes to be heard, supported and taken seriously.



Transport, access and local services also appear repeatedly. We discovered that a bus users group had not met since 2019, despite transport coming up often in conversations. Later, a new early shuttle service to Stansted Airport was announced; this issue first emerged in partnership conversations through Harlow Poverty Alliance, because transport can make the difference between employment being accessible by public transport, or impossible.



Harlow Hive has also strengthened the links between MRCT projects. It supported the Uniforms for All campaign with Bump to Five, brought insights into food conversations and the Good Food programme, helped connect the MRCT centre with council communities and wellbeing staff, and contributed to securing a housing officer at the Centre. It also supported the Foodbank's lobby of our MP. On that day Emma gave comedian and Trussell supporter Nish Kumar a copy of our Harlow Foodbank children's book "When Sam Tried to Close the Foodbank". One of the happiest moments for her in the campaign!

> *"The work is moving from simply handing out help to helping people shape the systems that affect their lives."*



Our Staff Team and Trustees


Adam


Alison


Andy T


Andy W


Barbara


Chris


Clair


Emma


Fernanda


Jacqueline


James


Karolina


Liz


Louise


Marc


Moira


Natalie


Nish


Sally


Terry


Trevor


Vicki A


Vicky F


Vicky G

All post-holders correct are at the time of publishing this report – Sept 2026. We would also like to thank staff and trustees who have contributed in the past two years – but have not featured them here to avoid confusion.

Current staff team - 2026

Head Office & Store House

Andy Thornton—Chief Executive, Company Secretary
Vicky Fafalios—Chief Operating Officer / Deputy CEO
Alison Keir—Operations Manager
Natalie Tedman—Store House Coordinator
Andy Walker—Finance Manager

Harlow Foodbank

James Griggs—Foodbank & Site Facilities Manager
Barbara Clark—Financial Caseworker (via Citizens' Advice)

Bounty Club

Nish Ejvet—Bounty Club Manager
Sally Clark—Supervisor and Social Coordinator
Vicky Green—Supervisor and Social Coordinator
Emma Hewett—Sales Assistant
Trevor Stanesby—Bounty Fresh Food and Mobile Coordinator
Terry Stephen—Good Food Programme Manager

Maybury Open Door

Karolina Sadowska—Community Services Manager
Adam Jackson—Assistant Community Worker
Jacqueline Durkan—Support and Outreach Officer (MOD & Bto5)
Clair Forway— Assistant Community Worker
Moira Luff—Community Worker (Bank)
Liz Bellworthy- Community Worker (Bank)

Bump to Five

Fernanda Champness—Manager—Bump to Five
Vicki Andrews—Bump to Five Administrator (+ MOD Bank)

Essex Affordable Food Hub

Marc Edmans—Food Hub Manager
Chris Redman—Data and Sales Coordinator
Louise Smart—Warehouse Coordinator and Driver
Simon Terrey—Food Hub Adviser

Trustees


Jeanette Ehlers (Chair)


Teresa Knott (co-founder)

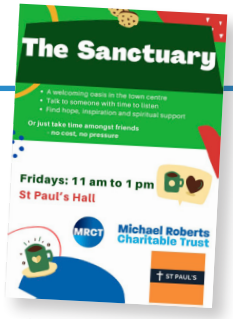

Gary Pattimore


James Briant


Ayub Khan


Jokey Poyntz

Our Partners on the Ground



Trussell Trust

Harlow Foodbank is proud to be affiliated with Trussell Trust. Its nationwide network of more than 1,300 food banks provides emergency food and practical support, while campaigning to end the need for food banks in the UK.

Feeding Britain

Feeding Britain supports 105 regional and local anti-hunger partnerships, involving more than 700 frontline organisations. It helps charities like ours develop innovative projects that prevent severe or long-term food insecurity.

The Harlow Community Hub

A partnership between Rainbow Services, MRCT and Citizens Advice, the Hub supports people facing crisis and provides information about community activities, volunteering, social opportunities and health screening.

Integration Support

This Harlow charity helps vulnerable migrants and refugees overcome barriers and integrate successfully. Its regular assistance to Foodbank and Bounty Club users has become an immensely valuable part of our work.

St Paul's & Harefield Churches

Our longest-standing and most faithful church partners in Harlow. For more than 20 years, they have provided premises for Maybury Open Door. St Paul's now hosts 'the Sancturary' - a weekly drop in offering a listening ear and spiritual support.

Salvation Army Harlow

We are equally grateful for our partnership with the Salvation Army, which operates a parallel Wednesday Foodbank service alongside our St Paul's venue. Together, we reach more people across Harlow and serve different parts of the community.

The Harvey Centre and Harlow Council

By providing free town-centre premises, the Harvey Centre and Harlow Council have transformed how we deliver our services. We are now easier to find across two sites offering ten times more space than in previous years.

Essex Community Food Project

Initiated by Essex County Council's Public Health Department, this supports the development of an affordable food network across the county.

Our project partners

Our work is strengthened by exceptional partnerships and donations built through many years of community relationships. Together, they give us the capacity to respond to people across Harlow and the surrounding area. We are deeply grateful to all our partners, listed here under the projects they most often support.

Our social supermarket offers fresh and packaged food at affordable prices from its town-centre shop and mobile service. It also hosts a members' café and advice services.

Brakes provides surplus and short-dated fresh food and meat for distribution through the Bounty Club and Foodbank.

Bidfood donates surplus and short-dated food and drinks, which we redistribute through schools, local agencies and services supporting disadvantaged people.

UK Salads weekly donations of fresh salad items have helped thousands of Foodbank and Bounty Club customers this year.

High Trees Packers longstanding generosity provides the Foodbank with a regular supply of fresh potatoes.

Co-op and **Nisa's** local distribution centre regularly donates surplus food, providing a valuable boost to our supplies.

Farmfoods Harlow helps us place bulk orders and regularly adds extra donations for our customers.

SOP International imports Asian foods and regularly donates surplus products, widening the range available to our customers.

London Stansted Airport passes surplus items to us for distribution through the Bounty Club and Foodbank.

Valley Grown Salads generously donates freshly grown produce for Bounty Club members.

Guy and Wright generously donates freshly grown produce for Bounty Club members.

Agro Fruit and Veg generously donates fresh produce for Bounty Club members.

Sainsburys London depot also gives us access to split packages allowing us to sort them for redistribution.

Working with frontline professionals, Harlow Foodbank distributes publicly donated food to referred households. We are affiliated with Trussell Trust's national network.

St Paul's Church hosted our Foodbank five days a week during summer 2024 and now hosts our weekly Sanctuary drop-in, remaining ever-faithful partners to us.

Salvation Army Harlow The Salvation Army operates our Wednesday Foodbank service, contributing its staff, premises and resources as a valued delivery partner.

Tesco enables us to collect food donated across its Harlow stores and adds a further 20% financial contribution to in-store donations, supporting our running costs.

Sainsbury's provides a permanent collection point through which its customers donate food throughout the year.

Asda at the Water Gardens hosts and manages a busy customer donation point, replacing collection containers whenever they become full.

Greenways Eggs provides fresh eggs every fortnight, complementing the non-perishable food distributed to Foodbank referrals.

Twice a week **Mayfield Farm Bakery** bags its surplus bread and cakes for distribution through the Foodbank.

Waitrose in Bishop's Stortford helps gather customer donations for Bishop's Stortford Foodbank.

Our drop-in service offers activities, outings, refreshments and social support three days a week, providing a welcoming place to relax and belong.

The Harvey Centre has given Maybury Open Door a welcoming new town-centre home and continues to provide exceptional practical support.

For more than 20 years, **Harefield Church** has provided premises and faithful support for Maybury Open Door.

The Store House accommodates our offices and provides extensive two-storey storage for donated food and other essential items.

Our close partnership with **Bishop's Stortford Foodbank** allows both foodbanks to share ideas and resources and work effectively across neighbouring towns.

Bump to Five collects pre-loved essentials for children aged from birth to five and provides them to families unable to afford them.

HTS provided vital overflow storage when our Store House became full. Until October 2024 their continued flexibility gave Bump to Five space to store children's items and expand its service.

Rainbow Services provides essential support to Harlow's charities and agencies. They are close partners in the Community Hub and the Bounty Active venue.

Phoenix Resource Centre sends suitable items that cannot be distributed locally to children in under-resourced African communities, helping ensure nothing goes to waste.

SES Group provides a generous Christmas party for hundreds of Harlow children who might otherwise receive no present.

Founded in 1998 by Teresa and Gary Knott, MRCT is the parent charity behind these projects and responds flexibly to needs across Harlow and the surrounding area.

Lawsons has sponsored our vans, renovated the Store House, created office space and donated 72 steel girders to strengthen its first floor. It has also provided a van and forklift and continues to service the forklift. This family business has quietly transformed our capacity to serve Harlow.

We are deeply grateful to **Harlow Council** and the **Mulberry Trust** for helping to meet the costs of running the Store House plus many other aspects of our work.

THANK YOU!

Acknowledgements







Alongside the many others inside this report – we would also like to thank even more who have helped deliver our work over the past 2 years.

Donors and delivery partners:

Bishops Stortford Foodbank
Barclays
Beauty Banks
Bestway Wholesale
Bidfood Harlow
Bluepig Creative
Brakes, Harlow
Bristol Street Motors
Burnt Mill Academy
Cammas Hall Farm
Church and School Partners who collect for the Foodbank
Clarins
Coca-Cola Enterprises Edmonton
Country Food Trust
Create Identitee
DA Jones
Dhamecha Wholesale
Dorringtons
Farmfoods Harlow
Food & Community Trust Sheffield
Foodteam LTD
Fox Foods LTD
Front-line referring professionals and organisations
Gateway Freedom Church
Goodnus
Greenways Eggs
GSK
Guy & Wright
Harlow Auto Services
Harlow College
Harlow Guides, Scouts & Rangers
Harlow Pet Foodbank
Heart 4 Harlow
Land Sherrifs
LIDL Harlow
Lok'nStore / Shurgard
Martin Mathew & Co LTD
Mayfield Farm Bakery
Metro Bank
NISA Harlow
Olympic Foods
Passmores Academy
Pearsons
Pets at Home/Blue Cross
PlaneSaver
Robert Halfon and Chris Vince MPs
Rodect Pest Control
Rough Creed
Sainsbury's Rye Park
Sainsbury's Waltham Point
Simply Washrooms
SOP International
Stansted Airport Services
Stuart & Kathryn Tinney
Synthomer
Sysco Hemel
Teva UK
TSM Void Energy
U3A
UK Health Agency
Volunteer Essex
YourHarlow

THANK YOU!

Funders:

A Meal On Me With Love
Active Essex
Church Langley Church
Church of the Holy Innocents, High Beach
Essex Association of Local Councils
Essex Community Food Network
Essex Community Foundation
Essex County Council Public Health
Harlow Activities Trust
Harlow Baptist Church
Harlow Council
Harlow Health Centres Trust
High Beach Church, Epping Forest
Mulberry Trust / CJM Charitable Trust
Rotary Club, Harlow Tye
St Mary's Churchgate Street
Stansted Airport Passengers Trust
The Community Fund
The Poor's Trust
The Postcode Places Trust
Trussell Trust Foodbank Network

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MRCT Michael Roberts Charitable Trust

COMMUNITY FUND
POSTCODE PLACES TRUST
We are a Living Wage Employer

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Registered Company No: 3439299