

VOLUNTEER
SURVEY



2022



Food Train
supporting older people

Food Train volunteers generously give their time to help deliver our services across all areas, some in multiple roles. Our volunteers cover a broad range of tasks including driver, delivery helper, shopper, befriender, cook, handy person, office assistant. They truly are our 'flexible friends'.

In this last year...

Our volunteers have contributed 166,000 hours of their time freely, generously and with the desire to support older people in their own local community.

Our volunteers have cooked and shared 11,752 meals with our members.

Our volunteers have given 22,000 hours of companionship to our members across the country.

Our volunteers have picked, packed and delivered 62,872 orders to members who would otherwise struggle to access food.

Our volunteers across the country have supported fundraising activities and events helping to raise more than £28,493 by selling raffle tickets, running 100 clubs, hosting coffee mornings, tea parties, holding car-boot sales, pop up charity shops, Festivals, Christmas fayres, bag packing in supermarkets and rattling collection tins at promotional stalls.

In our 2022 Member Survey, Food Train members told us how they felt about our volunteers

23% said 'The volunteers make a positive impact on my health and wellbeing'

29% said 'I value the practical help and support given by the volunteers'

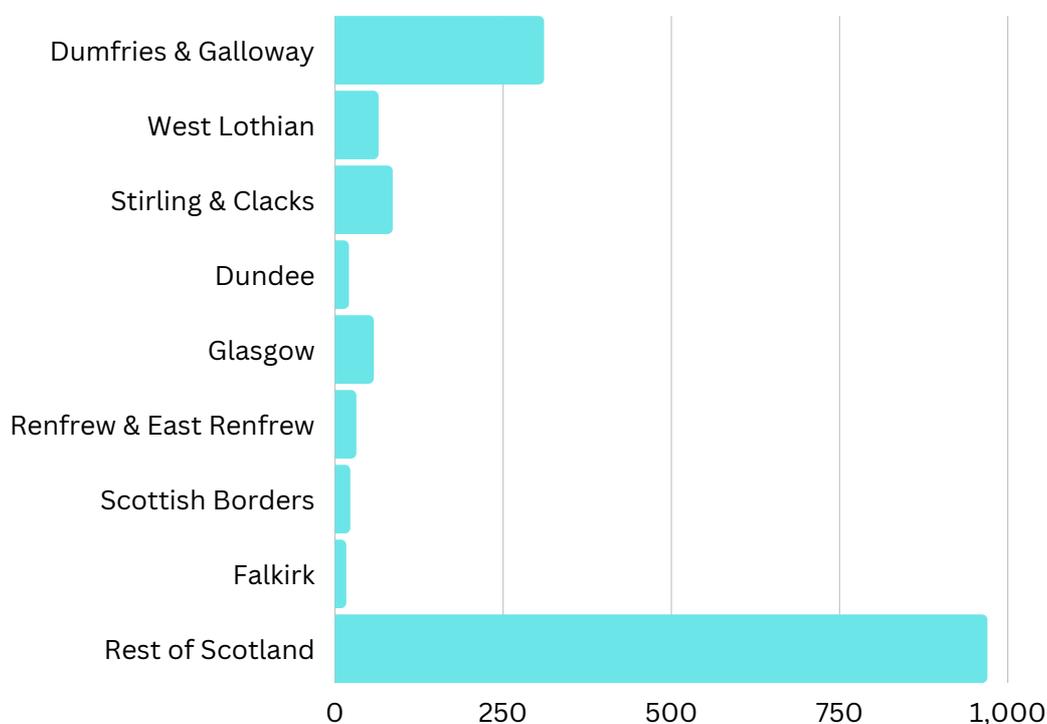
44% said 'I look forward to the volunteers and enjoy the added social contact'

Our network of volunteers support our members and provide the range of services they need to stay independent and live at home. Volunteering is vital to Food Train. Listening to the views of our volunteers and working to bring them the best possible volunteering experience is important to our Board of Trustees and staff. Our annual volunteer survey helps us to do that.

Our 2022 survey was completed by 263 volunteers, either online or in paper format, from across all services in all areas.

The results are on the pages that follow.

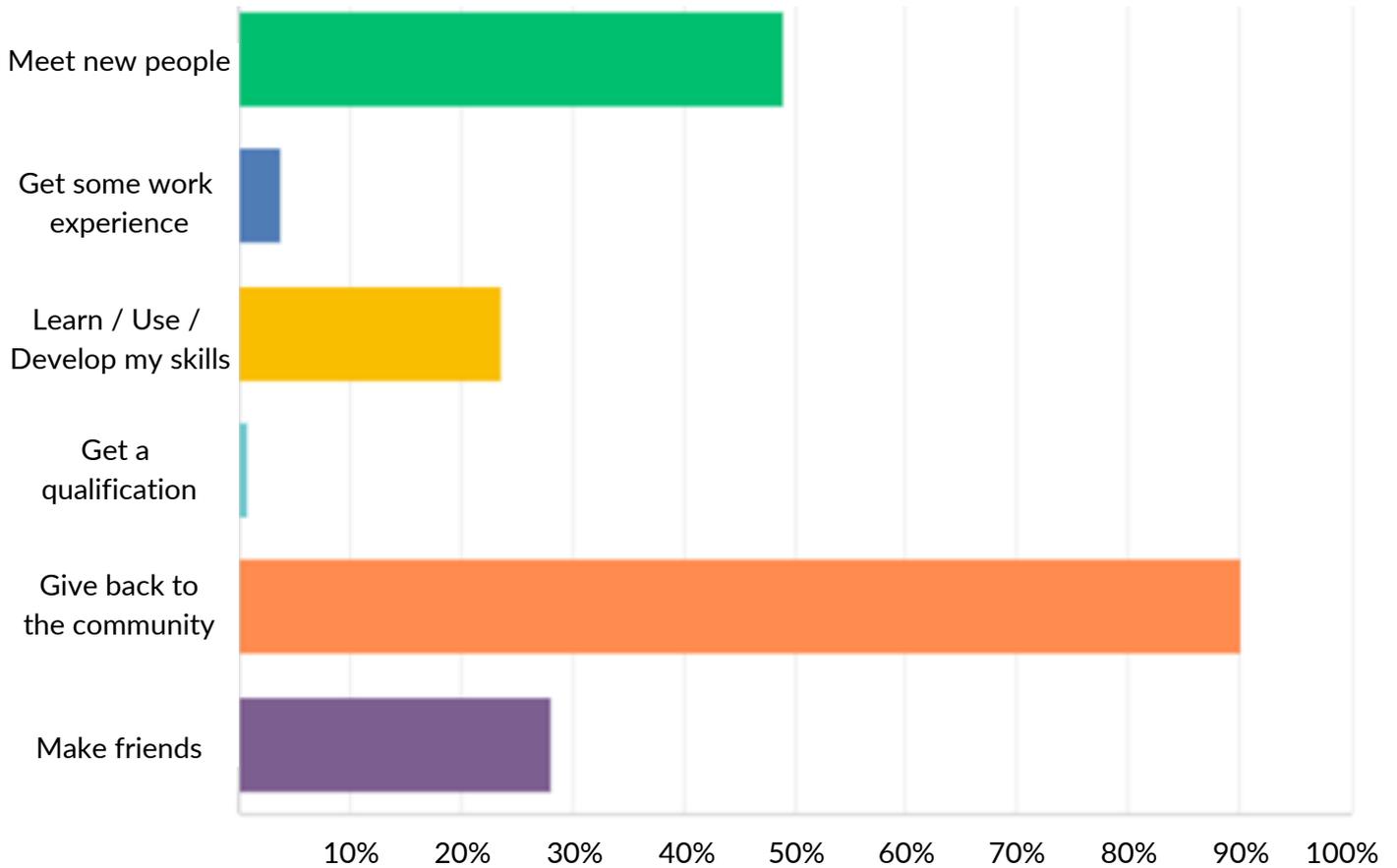
Where our volunteers are across Scotland...



Dumfries and Galloway	310
West Lothian	64
Stirling and Clackmannanshire	85
Dundee	20
Glasgow	57

Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire	31
Scottish Borders	22
Falkirk	16
Rest of Scotland	969

We were keen to find out what our volunteers hoped to gain when they first started their volunteer role...



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- A sense of being useful after retirement
- A sense of purpose
- Meeting like-minded people that want to also give a bit back
- Help someone enjoy home cooking where they may not readily have that chance and to offer companionship



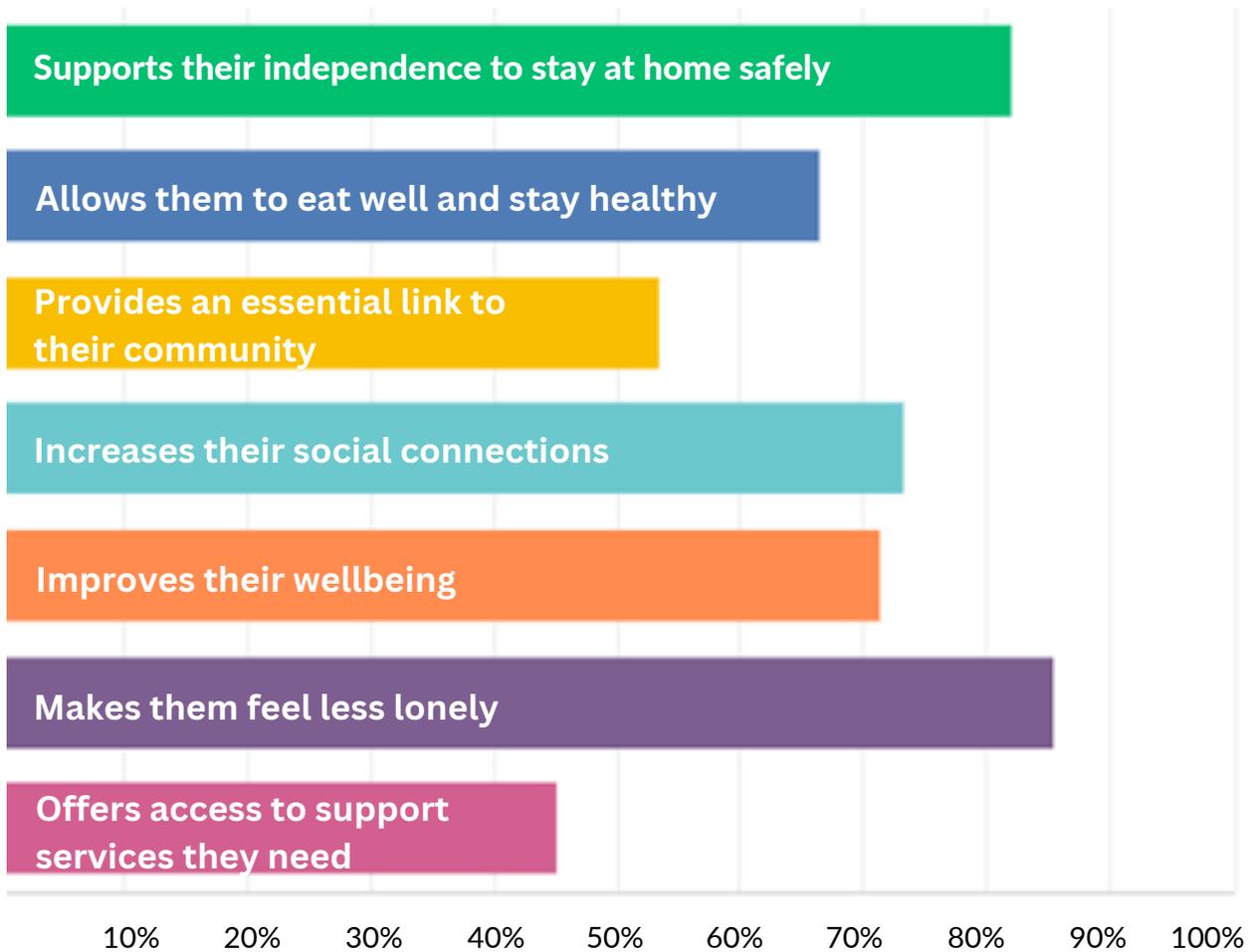
We wanted to know the personal impact our volunteers felt by volunteering with us...



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- When I sit down on Sunday night to make my meal for myself and the elderly community member I cook for, I am completely mindful and full of purpose. Making a meal and sharing it with my diner is incredibly rewarding.
- The care I see expressed by the team inspires me to try to be a little less self-centred.
- It exposes me to the problems that others have in their life that I would not necessarily come across as part of my everyday life.
- I am no longer employed, and I live on my own. Being involved in a volunteering team four mornings a week benefits my personal overall health and well-being enormously.

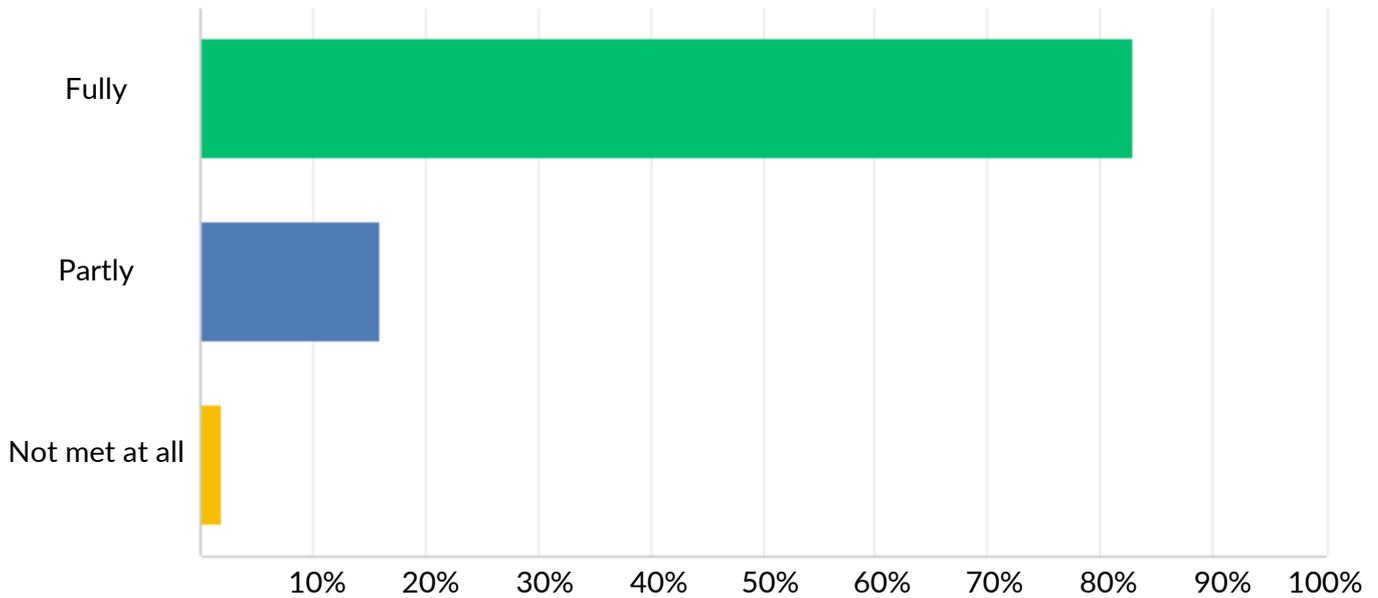
We asked our volunteers about the impact they feel their volunteering work has on our members...



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- Helps them to feel valued. Because Food Train staff and volunteers are so helpful and supportive, members feel comfortable to ask for all manner of help and advice that they might have no one else to ask.
- For the member of the community I'm giving meals to, I think the social connection and company I give is more valued than the meal itself. It's equally rewarding for me spending time with someone I wouldn't otherwise connect with in my community.
- Allows users to retain independence over their own food choices and meal times, which is critical to their wellbeing.
- It also gives peace of mind to their family that they are being looked after

We asked our volunteers to tell us if their expectations had been met by volunteering at Food Train...



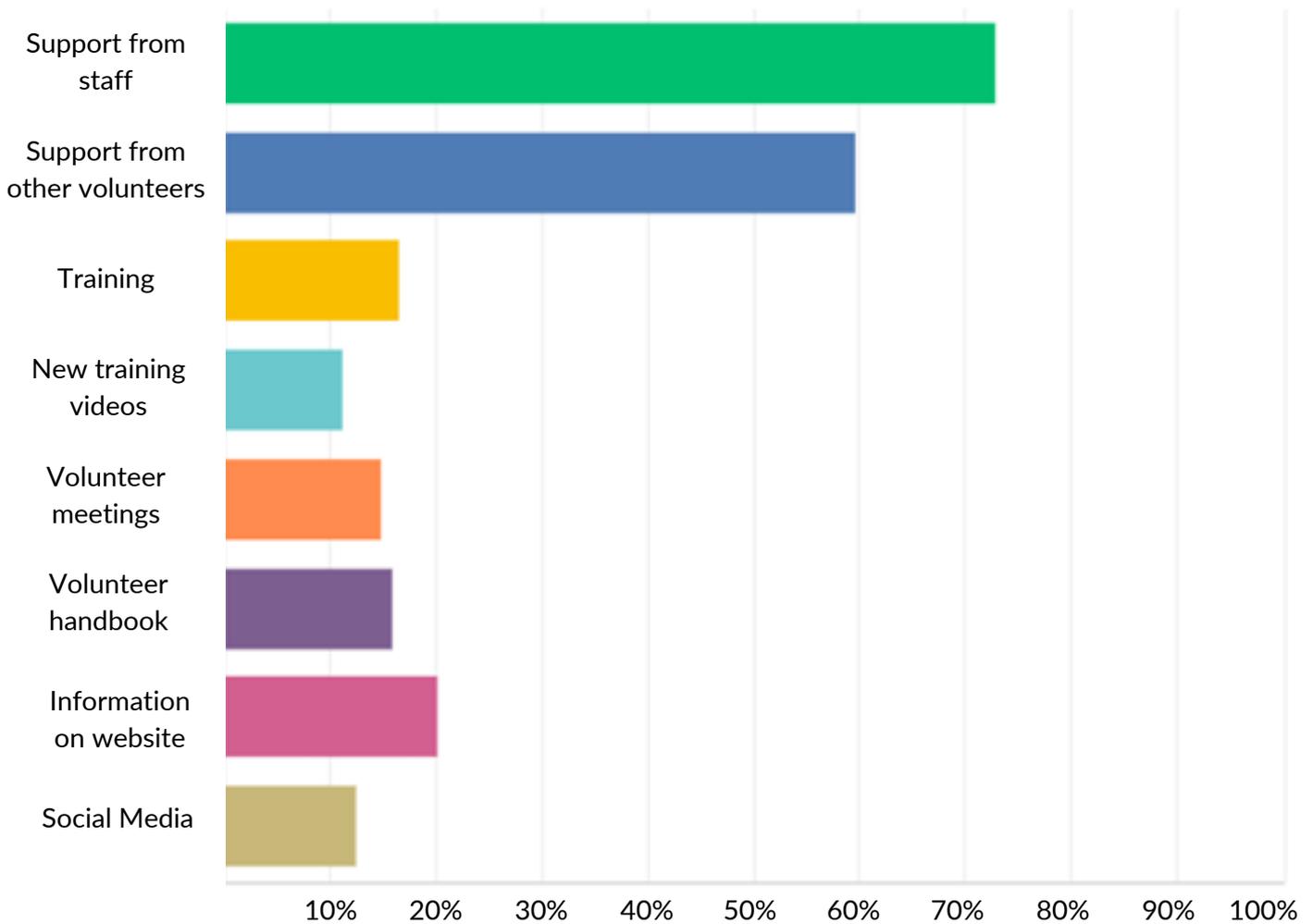
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- One of the most fulfilling voluntary services I have been involved with. Thoroughly enjoy doing something so worthwhile.
- I have flourished as an individual because of working with a supportive, hard-working and committed team which I have made me feel proud to be part of this organisation.

Volunteers enjoying a Christmas Lunch



Our volunteers told us about the support they have found most useful from Food Train...



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- During my time I have been in a supportive environment and received proper training in my role and this has been a highly valuable experience for me. Especially made to feel truly regarded and have developed my skills in communication, teamwork and being respectful to everyone.
- As a long-term volunteer, I have on a number of occasions enjoyed additional support from our full-time staff and also greatly benefited from the annual training days where we learned additional skills.

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We asked our volunteers to tell us what other support they feel would be beneficial for them...

- More individual regular contact via phone / email / face to face and friendly check ins with how they are doing
- More information on protocols, for example scenarios such as members giving gifts, or the correct procedure to report if they concerned for a members well-being
- More regular information about what branches are doing locally
- Group social activities and meeting other volunteers
- More information how to support members with dietary needs
- The return of regular volunteer meetings since postponement due to Covid19
- Regular updates if a members circumstances have changed or are no longer using the service
- Ability to view rotas and submit shift swaps
- More information on signposting members to other support
- More feedback from members and how they feel about the volunteers and service
- In person manual handling training

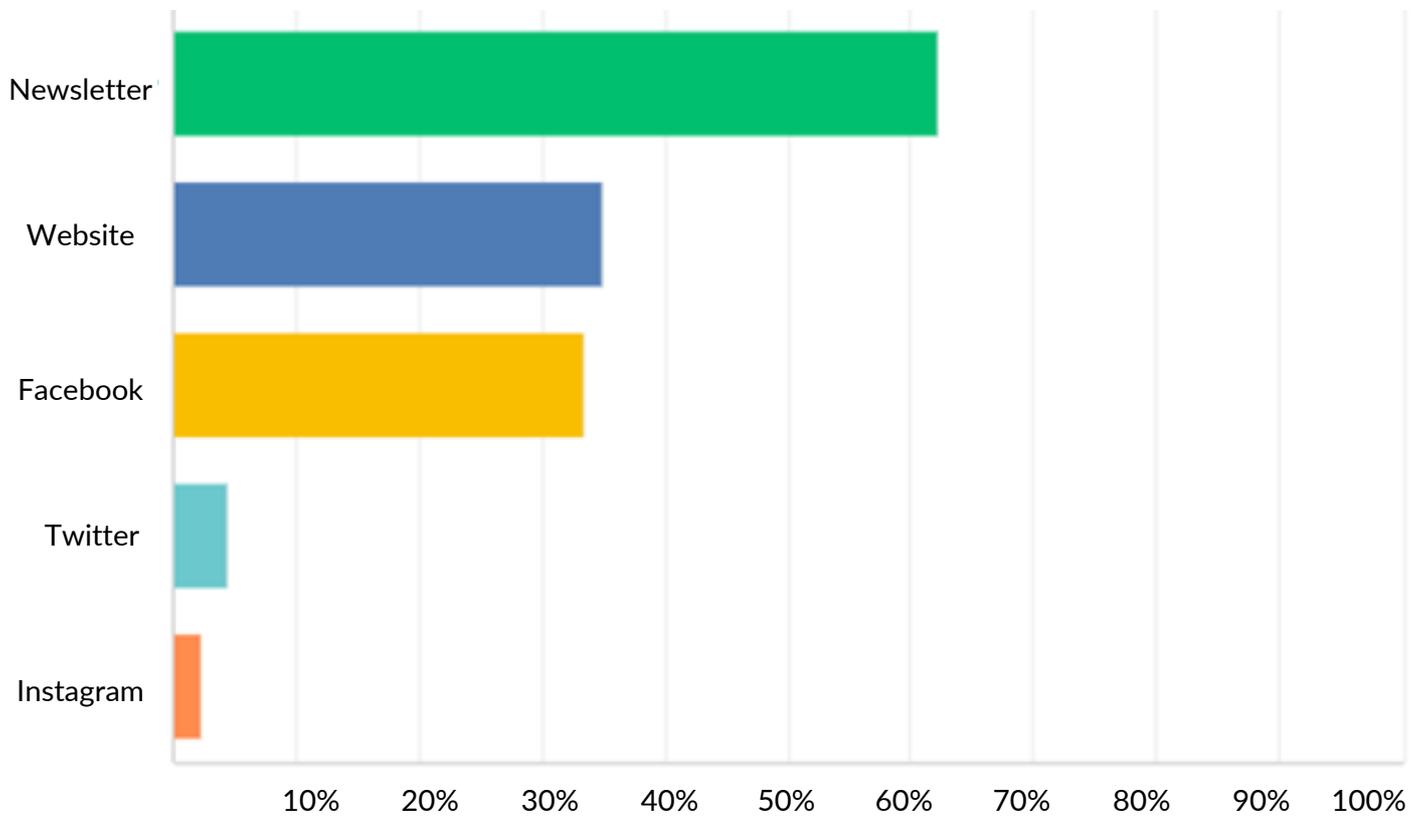
Information

Updates

Members Support



Our volunteers told us their opinion on what news source is most helpful for them to keep up to date with Food Train...



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Other comments included that Facebook Groups and WhatsApp group chats were helpful.

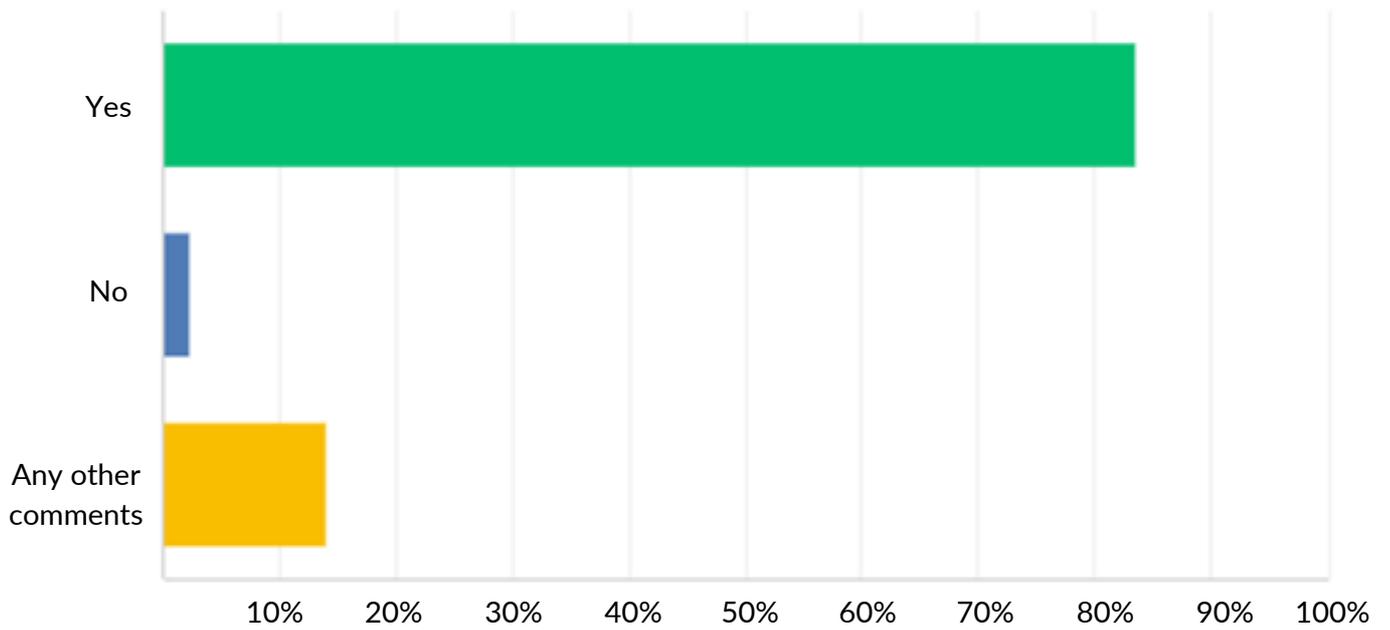


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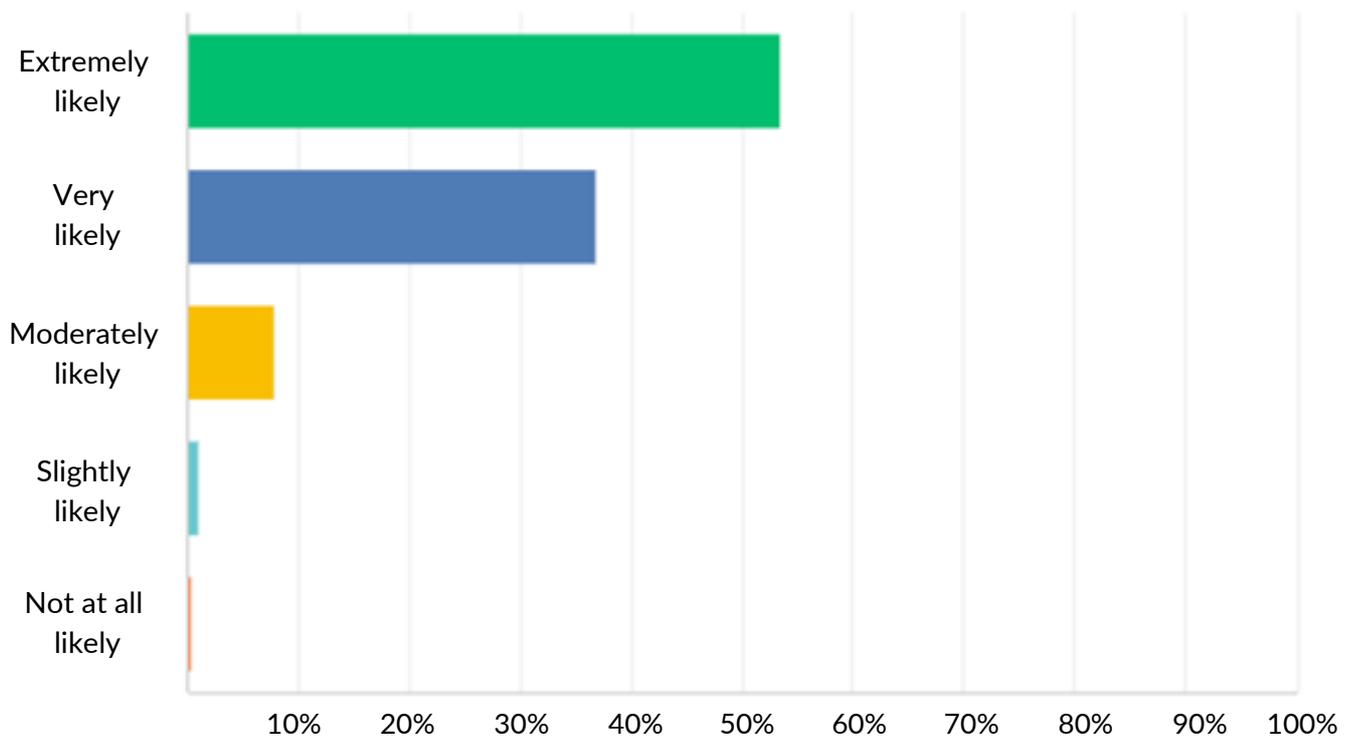


Others found face to face verbal communication the best way to keep up to date with Food Train news and updates.

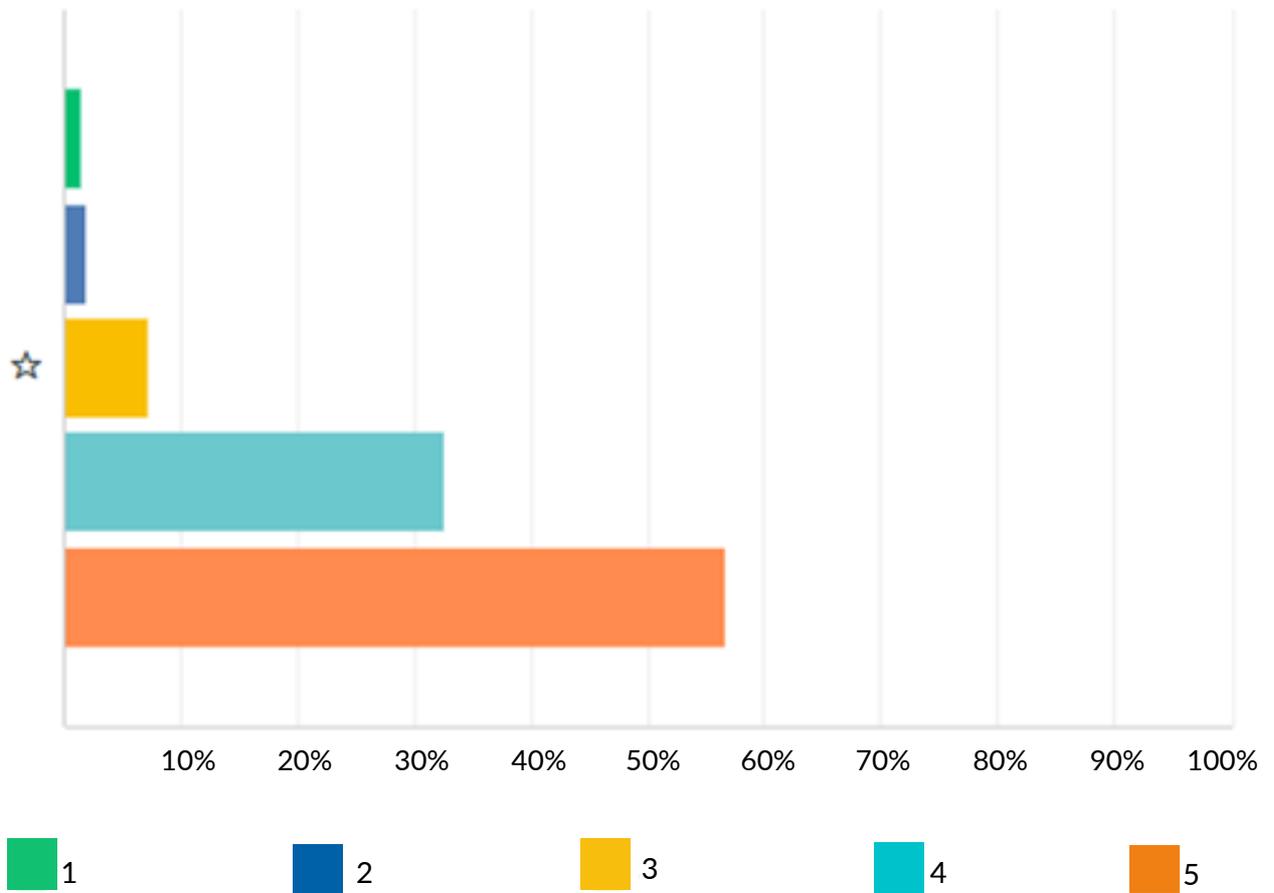
We wanted to know if our volunteers felt valued...



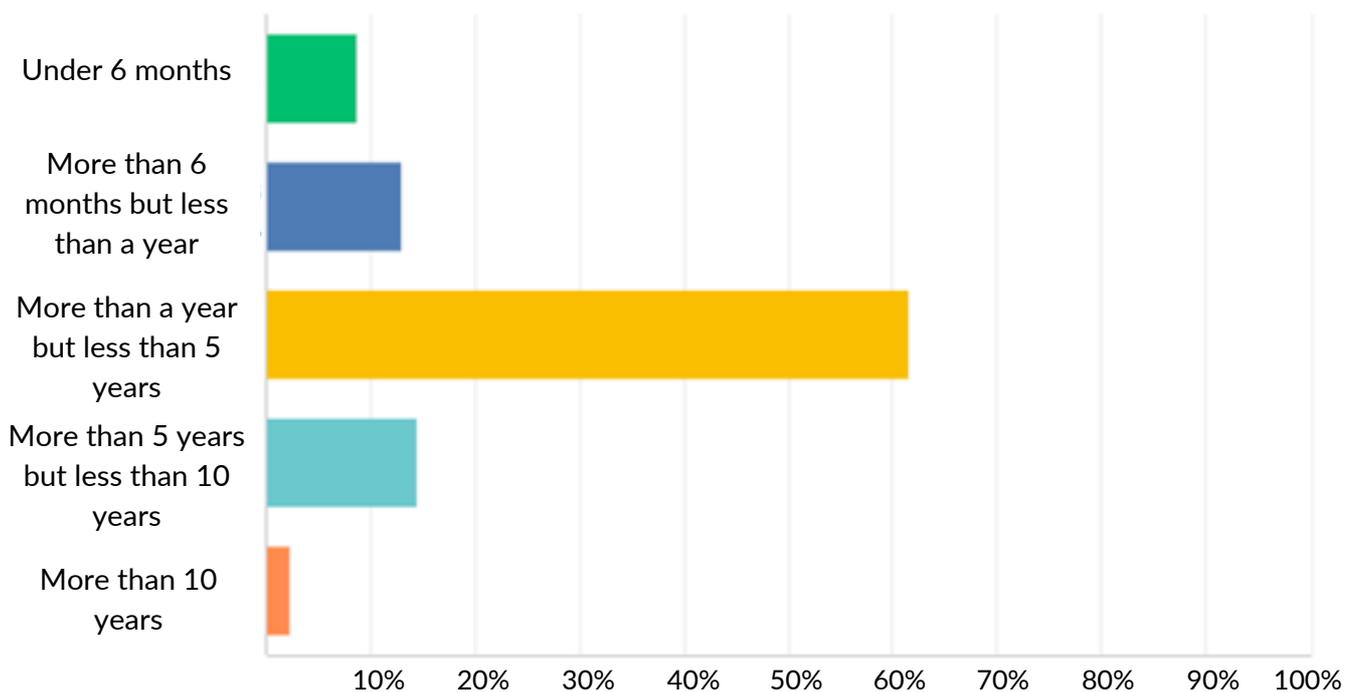
We were interested to find out if our volunteers would recommend volunteering with us to family and friends...



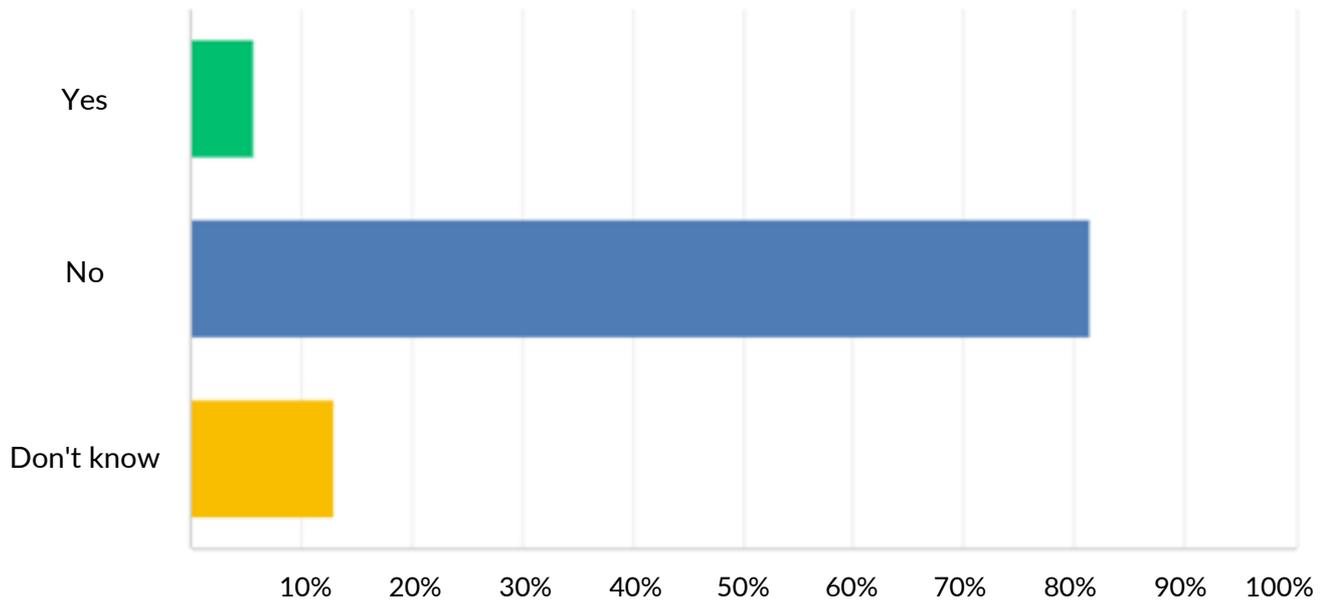
On a scale of 1 to 5, we asked our volunteers to rate how satisfied they are with Food Train...



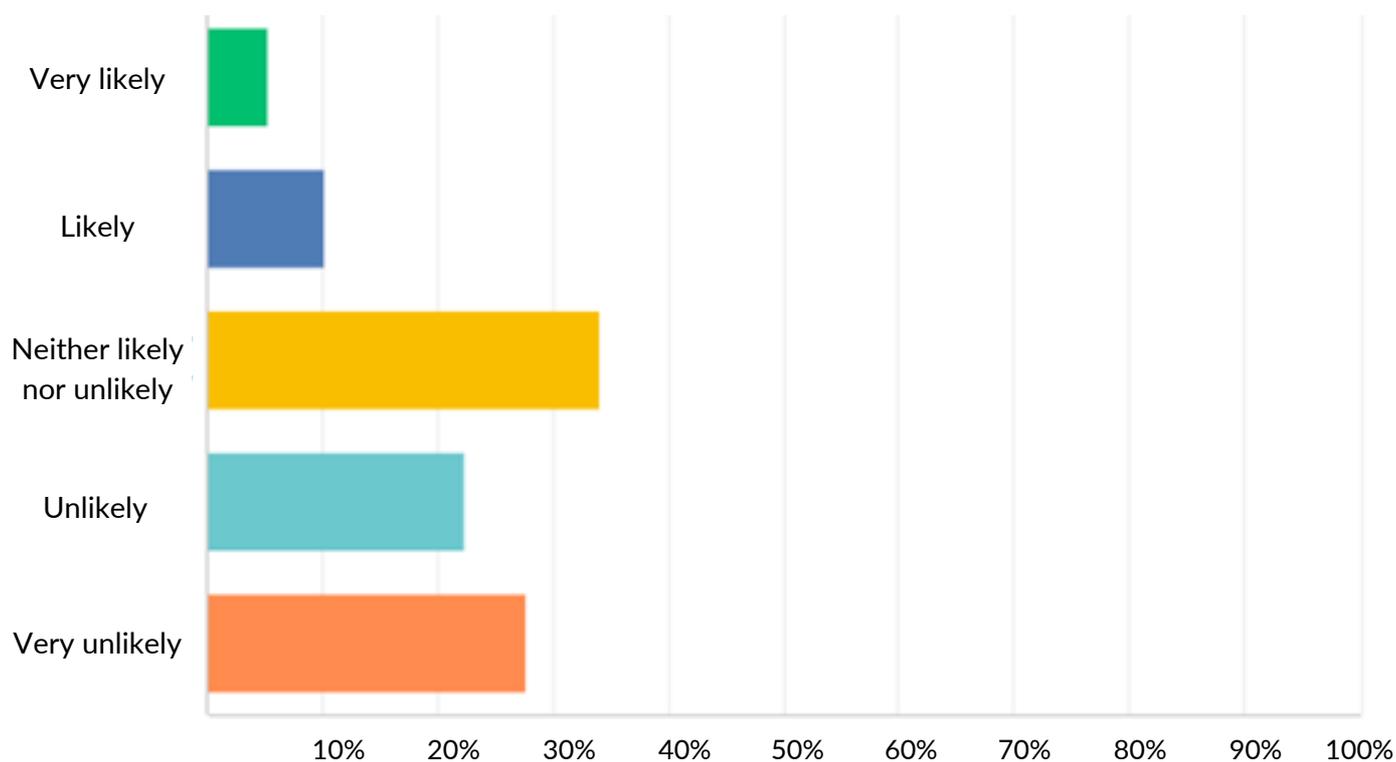
We wanted to know how long our volunteers have been with us...



With the current cost of living crisis, we were keen to find out if this would impact their ability to volunteer...



We were also interested to find out if the Covid-19 pandemic had affected how they feel about volunteering



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- I am more aware of those in the community that need the support of charities and volunteers such as Food Train.
- It has made me more mindful of others, the impact we can have on one another, and the importance of connectedness for everyone.
- The service is more in demand due to COVID but there is the ever present danger of contracting the virus or passing it on to our vulnerable members.
- It made me realise how important outreach and support in the community are, especially for the vulnerable and lonely.
- The lockdown made me think of elderly people and the impact it would have in them, e.g. loneliness, depression, mental health etc.



Become a VOLUNTEER

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To help with volunteer recruitment, we asked our volunteers for their suggestions on how to attract new people to Food Train...

- Utilising the media; articles in newspapers using case studies, radio adverts, flyers on public transport
- Distributing flyers and posters in local areas
- Raising Food Train's profile within other organisations, workplaces, healthcare settings, schools, college & universities
- By encouraging volunteers to promote more word of mouth
- Recruitment days in large public spaces, e.g. shopping centre
- Open days within branches
- Stalls at local events and fayres
- Social Media and encouraging volunteers to share posts
- 'Bring a friend to volunteer' day





We asked our volunteers for their views on how we can improve their volunteering experience with us

Volunteers said they wanted :

- Better and more regular communication
- Reinstating regular volunteer meetings
- More regular information on what is happening across Food Train
- More social events and group activities
- Improvements to technology
- More recruitment of volunteers and advertising Food Train services
- Increase rate of fuel expenses

We are listening...

- Local teams are getting regular volunteer meetings fully reinstated, where information can be shared, support and training can be provided and the meetings can provide socialising time too.
- The newsletter is being revamped to include more news from around Food Train, we hope the new look will be helpful to everyone.
- We have a new system for social media, meaning regular charity wide news posts are placed on all sites by national staff, with local news updates posted by local teams as and when they happen.
- As not all volunteers are online or use mobile phones, we are always trying to find the best way to help all volunteers get the right news in the right way. We'll continue to work on improving communication and local managers are looking at all the suggestions from the survey.
- We've recently changed all our volunteer induction training to online. Any volunteer not online can come into any of our offices and use computers there to access this training. Over 300 volunteers have completed the training and information videos and the feedback is really positive.
- We're having a big push around the whole country to recruit more volunteers, using TV, radio, press, social media, attending events, leafleting and any other way we can think of. So far 2022 has been the most challenging time for volunteer recruitment in our history and is reflected in other charities right across Scotland. We'll keep trying, you have our word.
- HMRC set the rate for fuel expenses that we pay. It means our funders only give us funds to cover that rate. We encourage volunteers to claim their travel expenses back and anyone not currently claiming who wishes to claim should contact us.