



ANNUAL  
REPORT



2023



**Food Train**  
supporting older people



SHOPPING



AT HOME



FRIENDS



LIBRARY



MEAL MAKERS



EAT WELL AGE WELL



CONNECTS

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Food Train Trustees would like to give their sincerest thanks to all our volunteers, friends, funders, supporters, and staff. The collaborative efforts of the Food Train family, continue to provide vital support to older people around Scotland.



Mahdi Hasan (Chair)



## Chair's Report

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, each year has been different. My 2021 report was dominated by Food Train responding to the height of the pandemic, and 2022 reported how Food Train managed sustained higher service demand but resources and volunteers reverting to pre-pandemic levels. This year I report another change in the operating and economic environment made more severe by the cost-of-living crisis and lesser volunteering time available as people coped with their own struggles.

While this affected all parts of Food Train, the most visible manifestation was the short notice withdrawal of financial support by Glasgow City Council. This threatened the closure of one of our largest branches, supporting over 300 older people. We have taken short term measures and found financial support from The National Lottery Community Fund and public donors to keep the branch open but need to secure sustainable funding to replace Glasgow City Council's withdrawal of support.

In times of such challenge, Food Train, once again, relied on the dedication and capability of our staff, its outstanding leadership, and the generosity and relentless support of our fantastic volunteers. The Board of Trustees, speaking also on behalf of our membership, applaud and appreciate such performance and the continuity of an enviable record of 100% fulfilment of services to members throughout the year.

Many, such as the Scottish Government, Health & Social Care Partnerships, grant funders, individuals and corporate donors, remain supportive and provide financial resources helping Food Train deliver its objectives. We are grateful for this. Yet we also recognise the impact on them of the cost-of-living crisis, the increasing demand on them and constraint on their finances. The emerging outcome is a challenge to keep the care and support for older people in sharp focus and a priority in the face of competing demands.

We provided support and services such as Meal Makers, Friends, Library and At Home in addition to the Shopping service which remains the mainstay of operations in all regions. Food Train Connects sustained its initial expansion and continues to grow but inevitably at a slower rate given the challenges and constraints placed by limited funding.

Our balance sheet and operations, while lower, remain financially healthy. However, we must acknowledge this has been possible by some extraordinary and innovative responses by the staff and leadership. Examples of these are downwards movement of staff time, a relentless focus on efficient operating costs, reduction in office use and selling lesser used assets. While these help us respond to our effects of the cost-of-living crisis and the pressure on funding, its sustainability will be examined in context of still delivering the Food Train Business Plan objectives.

Our Eat Well Age Well project, spanning 5 years, has delivered, and more, its objectives. Activities for malnutrition screening, training and awareness raising are firmly embedded into Food Train's national program of work. I'd like to thank all the Eat Well Age Well team (past and present) who contributed to the huge success of this work, culminating in the forthcoming National Framework for Malnutrition.

At the 2022 AGM we celebrated the opening of Food Train's own premises in the shape of a building in Dumfries. Over the last 12 months, the building has established itself as a warm and welcoming social, dining and information space for older people in the area. The additional offices have been rented out to provide an income stream.

We maintained and updated our operating and governance processes, including work in our Information Technology systems. A more visible aspect of this has been the regular training and refresher online module for existing and new volunteers. Governance systems are only as good as the people who operate them and an important aspect to report is the continued relationship of confidence and trust that has been the hallmark of the Food Train Board and the executive leadership, the staff in general and the many volunteers across all regions.

My fellow Trustees join me in extending a warm appreciation to our volunteers and staff that form the backbone of and reason for our being able to report another successful, albeit challenging, year. We acknowledge the appreciation expressed by our members as this is a source of encouragement for us to continue with even greater enthusiasm.

**Mahdi Hasan**  
**Chair of the Board of Directors/Trustees**

## Support and Services for Members



**3600+ older people supported throughout the year.**

**1,004 older people came to Food Train for help (either calling us direct or being referred to us by someone).**

**61,567 grocery shopping orders were picked, packed and delivered around the country, equating to £2,646,450 of food and grocery items.**

**Within those grocery deliveries, our teams supported older people in ways that best suited their needs or location:**



**1,838 deliveries were made by volunteers supporting a Food Train member in their local neighbourhood.**

**357 deliveries were made via individual volunteers supporting a Food Train member doing online shopping.**



**Volunteers gave 29,000 hours of befriending time, which included 1,600 home visits, 110 group outings and 2,200 telephone calls.**

**18,678 home cooked fresh nutritious meals were provided by our volunteer cooks.**



**846 At Home household support jobs were completed by our handy helpful volunteers.**

In West Lothian, our Eat Well Buddy volunteers made 268 visits to members to improve their nutritional intake and wellbeing.



In West Lothian, our library volunteers made 441 deliveries of library books.

In Falkirk, 1426 hospital discharges were facilitated through the Home from Hospital partnership



## Eat Well Age Well

We continue our work as the leading voice in Scotland promoting eating well for older people. Funded by Scottish Government and People's Postcode Lottery, our small team of two (Jen and Tilly) work across Scotland with the public, private and third sector to improve food security for older people, reduce malnutrition risk and prevalence and promote eating well in later life.

### Feedback from our Training



I am now recognising things that might not be so obvious in suffering from malnutrition.



Knowledgeable trainer highlighted the hidden problems around undereating.

### Some of the achievements over the last year include:

- 1,069 older people screened using community malnutrition screening tools
- 21% found to be at risk, receiving food first advice or onward referral
- 18 calls to our Free Malnutrition Help Line given advice and support
- Provided malnutrition awareness training to 501 people
- Completed a research project in Scottish Borders Council area to test and evaluate community screening for malnutrition in older people.



## Tilly Talks



Tilly is Food Train's Policy and Parliamentary Engagement Manager, her job is to share our members' stories, experiences and views, towards influencing important changes for Scotland becoming a great place to live as we get older. Tilly meets a diverse range of interesting people and organisations who want to learn about Food Train and want to work together to ensure that everyone can eat well, age well and live well.

### Where has Tilly shared our members' voice in the past 6 months?

Every year the British Library in London run a series of events called - 'Food Talks' and this year one of those events included discussing how our food experience changes as we age. Tilly was invited to share the stories and experiences of Food Train members. The event, stories and discussion were also shared in the Financial Times.



Colin Smyth - MSP for the South of Scotland recently launched a proposal to establish a Commissioner for Older People in the Scottish Parliament. Currently in Scottish Parliament there is a Commissioner for Children and Young People who is independent of the parliament and government and represents their views. In Wales there is a similar role to represent people over 65 and we believe Scotland should have the same.

We hosted Colin Smyth MSP at our Head Office in Dumfries where local members had the opportunity to talk to Colin, learn more about this proposal and share their opinions. We have publicly supported this call and Tilly was interviewed on BBC Radio Dumfries and Galloway after the event. Food Train will be submitting a response to the Scottish Parliament officially supporting this work.



As we have all felt, and seen, the prices of everything have been increasing, including food. We have continued to work to show how these increasing prices are affecting you and the difficult decisions everyone is having to make when considering what food to buy each week. This ran as a headline story on STV News at 6 and Tilly wrote an opinion piece for The Herald newspaper.

## Feedback from Members

Understanding the needs of our members, and providing the right support at the time and point of need, is a core part of how we operate. Listening to feedback from members plays a key role in how our Charity learns and grows. Each year we ask our members for their thoughts on the role Food Train has in their life.



### **Members Feedback Survey - Summer 2023**

- 86% live alone, 79% are aged over 75 and 40% are aged over 85.
- 60% of members have no alternative to Food Train services.
- 95% gave Food Train services either a 4 or 5 star rating.
- 92% say they look forward to the social aspect of our volunteers' contact and it has a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.
- Poor mobility is the number one reason people use Food Train services.
- Members say with help from Food Train they are eating more and better, are less at risk of falling, are living more confidently and independently, have more companionship and feel less alone.



## Cost of Living Survey Summer 2023

This year, we also asked our members to share their thoughts on the cost-of living crisis and how it might be affecting them now and in the winter ahead. Their unique perspectives have been shared at every opportunity in the hope of prompting change.

- 20% of members are buying less food
- 36% are cutting back on non-essential items
- 47% of members are using appliances less to save money e.g. TV, cooker
- 44% are heating their homes less



## Our Volunteers

We count ourselves lucky that so many wonderful, kind, talented and compassionate people come forward to volunteer with Food Train each year. Their lives outside of volunteering are varied and span all corners of Scotland. They are united by the warmth and care they show for our members. Some volunteer for a few weeks during holidays or work breaks and some volunteer regularly each week for many years. Together, they form the unwavering support Food Train has been able to provide to older people for over 28 years, and we cannot thank them enough for all they do.

160,000

Hours of volunteering,  
to the value of £1.92  
million.

493

New volunteers joined  
Food Train.

475

Volunteers trained.

Every year our member survey is filled with lovely feedback about the impact Food Train volunteers have, here are a few quotes that sum up how our members feel.

“

As I can't go out or have transport I find this service invaluable as they can get anything at all.

“

I was finding doing shopping a real struggle and don't always have someone to help. I don't think I could manage if I didn't have Food Train.

“

Volunteers are patient and helpful in taking my order and delivering it. Cheerful and chatty. Always welcome!



## 2023 News Round Up

### Glasgow Branch Funding

We were heartbroken to learn in January 2023 that Glasgow City Council were stopping funding the branch after 10 years of supporting us. When the news broke, an amazing outpouring of support and kindness meant we hit the headlines for several weeks, and gathered together enough donations to stay open in the short term. This gave us time to secure much needed funding from The National Lottery Community Fund for this year. It was a stressful time for our older members, volunteers and staff in Glasgow and needless to say, we're already working on long term funding options. The biggest of thanks to everyone who supported our #SaveGlasgowFoodTrain campaign. ❤️



### Community Hub Dumfries

After taking the bold step to buy a building in Dumfries, our local staff are now settled in and the building is thriving. Local charity HomeStart are renting space on our first floor and a range of local groups are using the social space for regular meetings. As well as having plenty of visitors and volunteers popping in, we're delighted to host a regular knitting group (Tuesday afternoon), gentle activity class (Wednesday afternoon) and our newest addition is a weekly pop-up café (Thursday lunchtime) serving home made soup and tasty rolls made in our kitchen by cook Lisa. As well as the weekly pop-up café, Lisa (and her willing band of volunteers), deliver soup and rolls to Dumfries members along with their regular weekly shopping.





## New Minibus

West Lothian were delighted to receive a grant from Queensberry House Trust which helped pay for their new bus. Members on the Friends service have been enjoying additional outings to the shops, crafting events, quizzes, exercise classes, and lunches to name but a few.



Getting out the house is lovely! I really enjoy the socialising and chatting to others and the volunteers are ever so helpful.  
(Friends member)

## Two New Electric Vans

Thanks to successful funding from the Plugged-In-Communities Grant Fund (via the Energy Saving Trust), we secured enough for two more brand new electric Vauxhall Vivaro vans. This takes our total number of electric vans to 11, meaning a quarter of our fleet is now cleaner and greener. The two newest vans are in Dumfries & Galloway having replaced much older diesel vans.



Morgan Stanley

Edrington UK

ScS Sofa

## Corporate Volunteers

For several years Food Train have been welcoming corporate volunteers to work alongside our existing volunteers for a day to experience firsthand the services that we offer to our older members. This is an excellent way for corporate employees to engage with their local communities and it is brilliant for the branches to get extra pairs of hands, particularly during the summer when our regular volunteers like to enjoy a well-earned holiday. This year has been another exceptional year and we have seen the likes of Morgan Stanley, Chubb, Edrington UK and ScS Sofa staff volunteer across several Food Train branches, these include Glasgow, Renfrewshire, Falkirk and West Lothian.

## Financial Overview (April 2022 to March 2023)

Food Train's main sources of income are voluntary donations, service charges paid by members and public sector contracts. Grants from National Lottery Community Fund and Players of the People's Postcode Lottery provided additional funds, along with many small grants from a variety of local and national funders. During the year many individuals, groups and businesses generously donated funds and other types of help and support throughout the year. Volunteer and staff fundraising during the year also contributes to income.

Thank you to everyone for their kind and generous support throughout the year.

	2023	2022
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>2,151,930</b>	2,353,585
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2,453,112</b>	2,426,578
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(301,182)</b>	(73,993)
<b>Designated Reserve</b>	<b>500,487</b>	505,036
<b>Restricted Reserve</b>	<b>133,660</b>	185,198
<b>General Reserve</b>	<b>514,041</b>	759,136
<b>Total Members Funds</b>	<b>1,148,188</b>	1,449,370
<b>Income Analysis</b>		
<b>Grant Income</b>	<b>819,967</b>	793,952
<b>Earned Income</b>	<b>1,147,354</b>	1,099,041
<b>Donations &amp; Fundraising</b>	<b>184,609</b>	459,592
<b>Expenditure Analysis</b>		
<b>People Costs</b>	<b>1,753,220</b>	1,683,578
<b>Vehicle Costs</b>	<b>255,801</b>	271,400
<b>Premises Costs</b>	<b>144,473</b>	123,648
<b>Running Costs</b>	<b>284,544</b>	322,186
<b>Governance Costs</b>	<b>15,074</b>	26,766

## Looking Forward to 2024

The year ahead will bring changes for Food Train with a new Chief Executive, as outgoing CEO Michelle Carruthers moves on to pastures new following 21+ years at the helm.

While we continue to focus on the services that matter to our members with food and friendship on the main menu, other work will include:

- Securing funding for our Glasgow branch that is both longer-term and more secure
- Seeking funding to continue electrifying our vehicle fleet and putting in charging points
- Improving the use of our head office community hub for local older people
- Supporting the launch of the new Scottish Government Framework for Malnutrition by providing support with screening and training around the country.





**SHOPPING**



**AT HOME**



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**MEAL MAKERS**



**EAT WELL AGE WELL**



**CONNECTS**

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