Food Train
supporting older people

Spring 2026

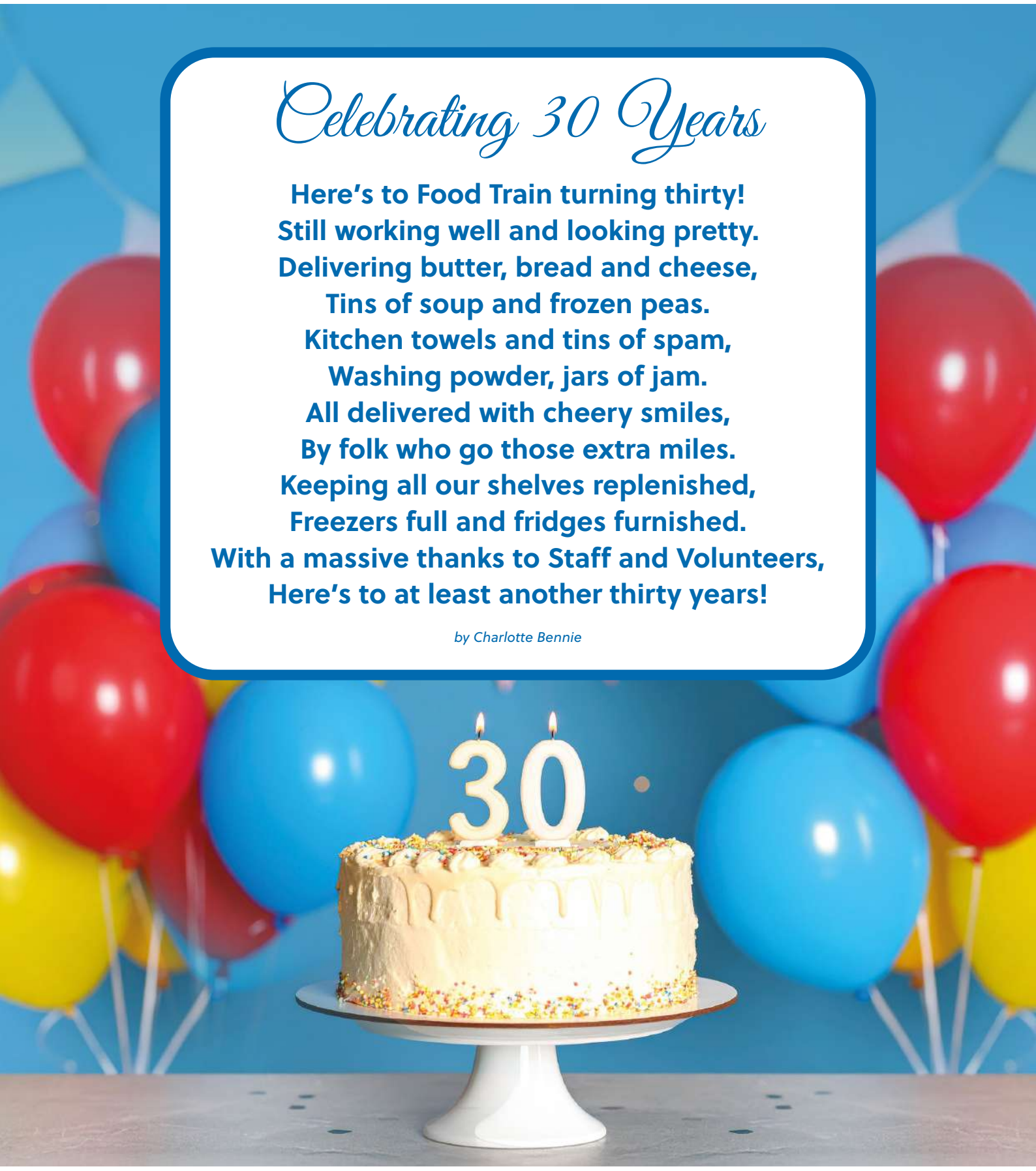
Staying In-Touch

Sharing News, Support and Community Updates

Celebrating 30 Years

Here's to Food Train turning thirty!
Still working well and looking pretty.
Delivering butter, bread and cheese,
Tins of soup and frozen peas.
Kitchen towels and tins of spam,
Washing powder, jars of jam.
All delivered with cheery smiles,
By folk who go those extra miles.
Keeping all our shelves replenished,
Freezers full and fridges furnished.
With a massive thanks to Staff and Volunteers,
Here's to at least another thirty years!

by Charlotte Bennie



Celebrating 30 Years

This year we were proud to celebrate our 30th anniversary, marking three decades of supporting our communities across Scotland, made possible by the dedication of our volunteers, staff, and members.

Across our branches, the celebrations brought people together in true Food Train spirit. Every branch did something different, but here are some of the highlights.

In Glasgow, our shopping volunteers had a day out as well as a tea party. The intrepid bunch headed off to sunny Pitlochry, where a fun time was had by all.

In Dundee, volunteers gathered with the Lord Provost, Bill Campbell, for a celebratory tea party at the branch. During the event, volunteer Ewan MacGowan was recognised for his five years of service and received the Lord Provost's pin, gifted to him to commemorate his dedication. Well done, Ewan!

Meanwhile, Newton Stewart celebrated with a combined friends trip and anniversary event at The Vibe, featuring stalls with plants, home baking, and knitted items. Volunteers provided hot drinks and cakes and The Brigend pantry provided some delicious lunch boxes for the group.

FRONT PAGE
One of our members, Charlotte Bennie, captured the spirit of our anniversary perfectly by writing a lovely poem for the occasion which is featured on this special 30th anniversary edition

Newton Stewart 30th Anniversary

Lord Provost, Bill Campbell

Food Train 30th, Stewartry

Ewan MacGowan

Shopping Volunteers Glasgow

As we look back on 30 wonderful years, we want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has been part of our journey.

THANK YOU!

Welcome to Staying in Touch

We're excited to share the revamp of our newsletter, now proudly named 'Staying in Touch'. After celebrating 30 incredible years of Food Train, it felt like the perfect time to refresh our look and feel and make it even easier to keep you connected with everything happening across our branches. In each issue, you'll find stories from our volunteers and members, highlights of our services, fundraising achievements, and all the ways we're working together to support older people in our communities.

Stories That Matter

Friendship on Every Plate

Dieter

Dieter joined Meal Makers to share food and company with someone living alone, believing there is ***"nothing more precious in life than sharing a meal with someone."*** He was matched with Peter, a retired airborne paratrooper, they both enjoy spending time together and swapping stories. Dieter finds Peter's army tales fascinating: ***"Every visit with Pete is memorable. He's lived a life most couldn't have dreamed of."***

Despite a visual impairment and other health conditions, Peter finds great joy in painting, a talent Dieter greatly admires. Peter's meals need to be balanced, and Dieter ensures they are both nutritious and enjoyable. ***"I try to be as adventurous as I can so that Pete's meals aren't bland, but still have the right nutritional value,"*** he says. Dieter has not yet attempted to make pies, which Peter loves, but they both enjoy eating Dieter's delicious beef curry!

The friendship they've built is just as important as the meals. ***"We have a common understanding and acceptance of one another,"*** says Dieter.
Thanks to Meal Makers, ***"on paper we are completely different, but in person we are one and the same."***

"We try to find humour in the smallest of things to bring peace to our lives."

David "The Voice", Volunteer and Hero

Sometimes, coincidence leads to memorable moments. When David Edwards was at the Annan office on the same day Rosie, Food Train's Chief Executive, visited for the first time, she met the volunteer who had created the *"Sponsor a Box"* initiative back in 2007.

David modestly explained he had designed the initiative because he felt he wasn't pulling his weight at coffee mornings. Sitting at his computer, he played with Food Train graphics and created a label for the boxes. As soon as it reached the then Chief Executive, the initiative was implemented, a simple idea with a lasting impact.

Known among volunteers as ***"Welsh David who sings"***, David is originally from Wrexham and worked in joinery sales. He cared for his first wife through motor neuron disease, and after her passing, he moved to Dumfries to help with his second wife's B&B business until she sadly developed cancer. Following these personal losses, David settled in Lockerbie and began volunteering for Food Train.

David's story reminds us that all Food Train volunteers are heroes, bringing care, joy, and a little adventure to their communities.

Volunteering in a rural area meant snow wasn't unusual on David's delivery runs. One week, a Border Television reporter joined the team and David assumed they'd just observe. Instead, the reporter insisted on a short interview and even lay down in the snow for an action shot of the team arriving at a customer's house. David's embarrassment peaked when he appeared on the ***"Heroes of the Snow"*** feature alongside police, ambulance staff, and firefighters.

Update to our Privacy Policy

We've recently updated our GDPR statement and Privacy Policy to make it clearer how we use and protect your personal information.

In short, we use your details to fulfil donations and requests, and where appropriate to keep you informed about our work supporting older people to eat well, age well and live well at home. We may contact you by post or phone with updates, services and appeals we think will be of interest, unless you tell us not to. We'll only contact you by email or SMS if you've given us permission.

You're always in control of how we contact you and can opt out of any communication at any time.

You can view the full Privacy Policy at thefoodtrain.co.uk/privacy-policy or to update your preferences, please contact your local branch or **01387 270 800** or email everything@thefoodtrain.co.uk

Food Train News

Manifesto Asks

With the Scottish Parliament elections coming up in May 2026, we've issued a call to action for all political parties to put food security and dignity for older people at the top of their manifesto priorities - alongside measures to tackle loneliness and improve health and wellbeing.

Food Train is asking parties to pledge to:

ASK 1 Ringfence funding for community-based food access for older people

ASK 2 Enshrine the right to food for older people in Scots law

ASK 3 Launch a national malnutrition prevention and screening programme

ASK 4 Invest in volunteers and community-led support

ASK 5 Involve older people in food and health policy design

By committing to these five calls to action, political parties can take significant steps towards making a real difference in the lives of older people, allowing organisations like Food Train to continue and expand their vital work.

Our Year in Numbers

In 2025, we continued to deliver vital, people-first services that helped thousands of older people stay well, nourished, and connected. Every number represents a moment of support, care, or reassurance for someone who needed it most.

Service Impact Highlights

- 2,055 Older people supported
- 48,846 Grocery deliveries to members
- Provided advice and support through our Eat Well, Age Well, support line: 37
- Supported shopping trips: 197
- 526 Library deliveries made by volunteers
- 3,120 Home-cooked meals prepared and delivered through Meal Makers
- People received income maximisation and energy support: 408
- 1:1 befriending support made to reduce isolation: 2,686

Volunteer & Social Impact

- 152,348 Total volunteer hours contributed
- 21,631 of those hours specifically reduced social isolation
- New volunteers joined the Food Train family: 198
- Estimated volunteer contribution value: £1.5 million

Health & Nutrition

- 1,168 Individuals screened for malnutrition risk
- 247 People identified as at risk of malnutrition
- People trained in malnutrition awareness: 71
- Resources distributed: 132

Christmas 2025 Highlights
A Season of Care and Kindness

Food Train branches and services don't just work hard delivering food at Christmas our staff and volunteers go the extra mile to make it festive for the older people we support. Here's a look at some of the wonderful things that happened:

Spreading Festive Cheer

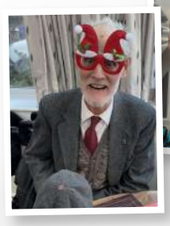
Volunteers worked tirelessly across our branches to ensure our older members had everything they needed for Christmas, delivering shopping along with friendly smiles and plenty of festive cheer. Mince pies, cuppas, and seasonal treats were shared and enjoyed by everyone.

Knitting This Christmas

Our Newton Stewart and Stirling branches were busy spreading festive cheer with the help of our talented knitters. At the South Machars Community Centre Christmas market they sold hand-made knitted and crocheted items donated during this year's Knitathon, while in Stirling, two local knitting groups and our volunteers generously contributed blankets, hats, scarves and Christmas treats which were warmly received by our members and friends.

Christmas Celebrations in Stewartry

Stewartry enjoyed a festive Christmas Party at Arden House Hotel, Kirkcudbright, with bingo, pass the parcel, a raffle, and a special visit from Santa. Thanks to Kate at Castle Douglas Tesco for donating raffle prizes and biscuits, and Galloway Community Transport for providing the minibus.



Celebrating Our Volunteers

Finally, we want to say a huge thank you to our volunteers. Their dedication, hard work, and festive spirit made a real difference to over 2055 members this year. Whether delivering shopping, knitting gifts, sharing meals or simply sharing a friendly hello, our volunteers truly are amazing, we couldn't do it without you!

Health & Wellbeing

In 2025, one in five Food Train members were at risk of becoming malnourished. Do you know what to look out for?

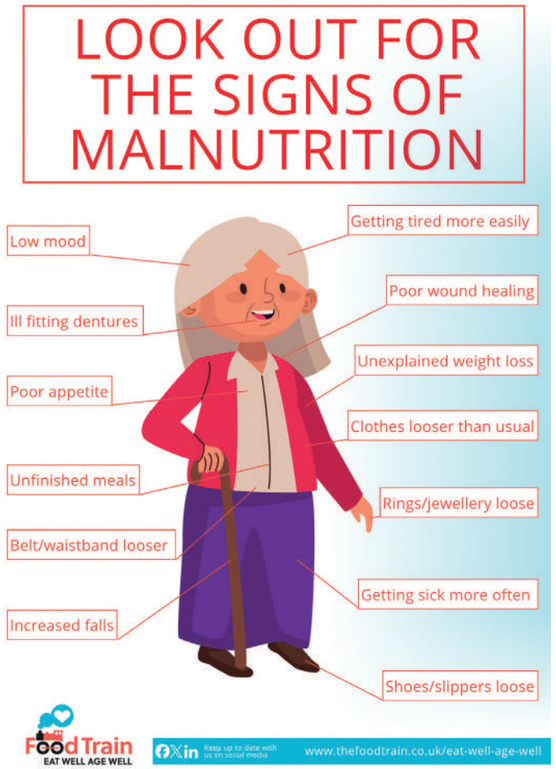
Malnutrition happens when we do not eat enough to meet our nutritional needs and being malnourished can make it more likely for us to become ill or it can make it more difficult to do the things we want to do.

Malnutrition can affect everyone, but older people are more likely to be at risk of becoming malnourished and it can often go undetected because many people are not aware of the signs.

We've created this poster to help you look out for the signs in yourself or your friends and family.

If you are concerned about malnutrition or your diet you can phone Food Train's dietitian for a friendly chat and to get some help and advice.

Call 0131 447 8151 (Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 9am-4pm)



Member Updates

Avoiding scams information guide

Disturbingly, there has been a flurry of phishing text messages and phone calls targeting vulnerable customers. Age UK offer an information guide which outlines different ways to protect yourself from scams, such as:

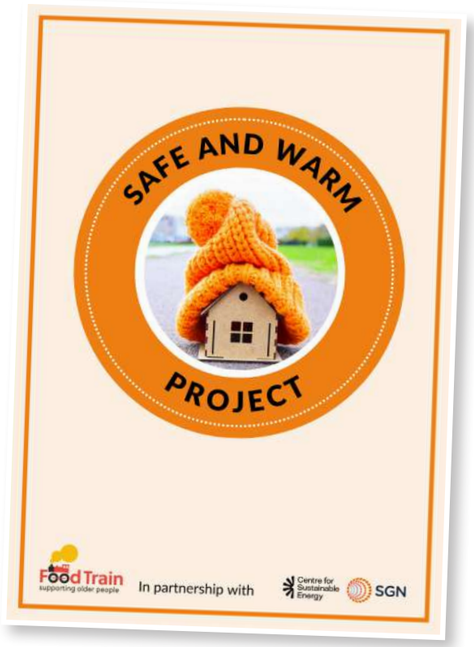
- what a scam is
- the different types of scams
- ways to avoid being scammed
- what to do if you've been scammed
- useful contact information.

This guide can give you peace of mind and help you feel more confident. It also lists lots of useful organisations, so you know who to turn to if things go wrong.

If you'd like a copy of the guide, you can call 0800 678 1602 or email orders@ageuk.co.uk – please include your full postal address

SGN

Safe & Warm Project – Supporting You at Home



At Food Train, supporting our members is always at the heart of what we do. We know many people are worried about rising living costs, especially heating, energy bills, and putting food on the table. Staying safe and warm at home is particularly important as we get older.

To help, we've launched the Safe & Warm Project in partnership with **SGN (Scottish Gas Networks)** and the **Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)**.
The project offers practical help, clear information, and reassurance during challenging times.

The Safe & Warm Project can help you with:

- Reducing energy and food costs, including tips for using energy efficiently
- Maximising income through benefits, grants, and entitlements
- Accessing crisis support in financial difficulties or emergencies
- Staying safe at home, with guidance on heating, energy safety, and wellbeing

We've produced an easy-to-read booklet covering all these topics, which you can read at your own pace. If you would like a copy, please let your local branch know.

Specsavers

At Food Train, we believe strong communities are built on care and connection. That's why we're proud to partner with Specsavers Home Visits, a service that shares our commitment to supporting people at home.

Specsavers Home Visits provides eye and hearing care at home for older people, disabled individuals, and those who are housebound or struggle to access services. Their experienced team offers routine eye tests, eye health checks, hearing tests, and private hearing aids, helping to spot health concerns early and support quality of life.

Home visits are available Monday to Friday, 9am – 5.30pm, across Lanarkshire, Edinburgh, Lothian, the Scottish Borders, and Dumfries and Galloway.

To book a visit, patients or carers can call **01698 757660** or visit **specsavers.co.uk/homevisits**. Eligible optical patients can self-refer, and no GP referral is needed for audiology.

Together, Food Train and Specsavers are working to ensure everyone can access the care they need at home.

Fundraising and Donations – Thank You for Your Support!

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has supported Food Train. Thanks to your generosity we've raised vital funds to keep our services running. Here are some of the highlights from across our branches:

Stewartry

A huge thank you to the Caravan & Motorhome Club Scottish Division for raising £490 for Food Train.
Our Regional Manager, Kirsty McCracken, received the cheque from Jean Gilmour, Chair of the Scottish Division, and Iain McQueen, Chair of D&G CAMC (and a longstanding Stewartry volunteer) at their national rally in May at Park Farm Dumfries.

We also send congratulations and thanks to the group of young people who represented Stewartry Food Train in the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) Awards Final at Castle Douglas High School, winning a cheque for £3,000! All five teams gave excellent presentations about the charities they were representing, but this team's dedication and creativity really shone through.

Newton Stewart

We would like to say a special thank you to recently departed volunteers, David and Lesley Miller, who held an Open Garden at their home, Fernlea, in Newton Stewart in August. With the sunshine out and the flowers in full bloom, over £300 was raised, and a lovely day was had by all who attended.

Glasgow

A special thank you to our volunteer Mary Jo and the American Women's Club of Central Scotland, who have been fundraising for the Glasgow branch throughout the year. This included completing the Kiltwalk (over 20 miles) on our behalf. Your incredible efforts and donation are truly appreciated!

Stirling

Team Stirling's fundraising calendar was packed with activity in 2025, including a Quiz Night & Raffle in February, bag-packing in April, the Edinburgh Kilt Walk in September, sponsorship through BOXtober in October, a Race Night, and more bag-packing in November. Together, they raised an incredible £15,254. This success was made possible thanks to our amazing volunteers, generous local businesses, and supportive members.

National Fundraising Highlights

This year, we've been amazed by the generosity and creativity of our supporters! Thanks to everyone who took part in our Knit-A-Thon and BOXtober fundraisers, we've raised vital funds to help older people eat well, age well, and live well at home.

30th Anniversary Knit-A-Thon

As part of Food Train's 30th Anniversary, we held a year-long Knit-A-Thon from July 2024 – June 2025. Beginners and experienced knitters knitted scarves, hats, gloves, and more either on their own, with a friend, or in groups.

Thanks to everyone's efforts, over £8,500 was raised! All knitted items were either gifted to our older members or sold to raise additional funds.

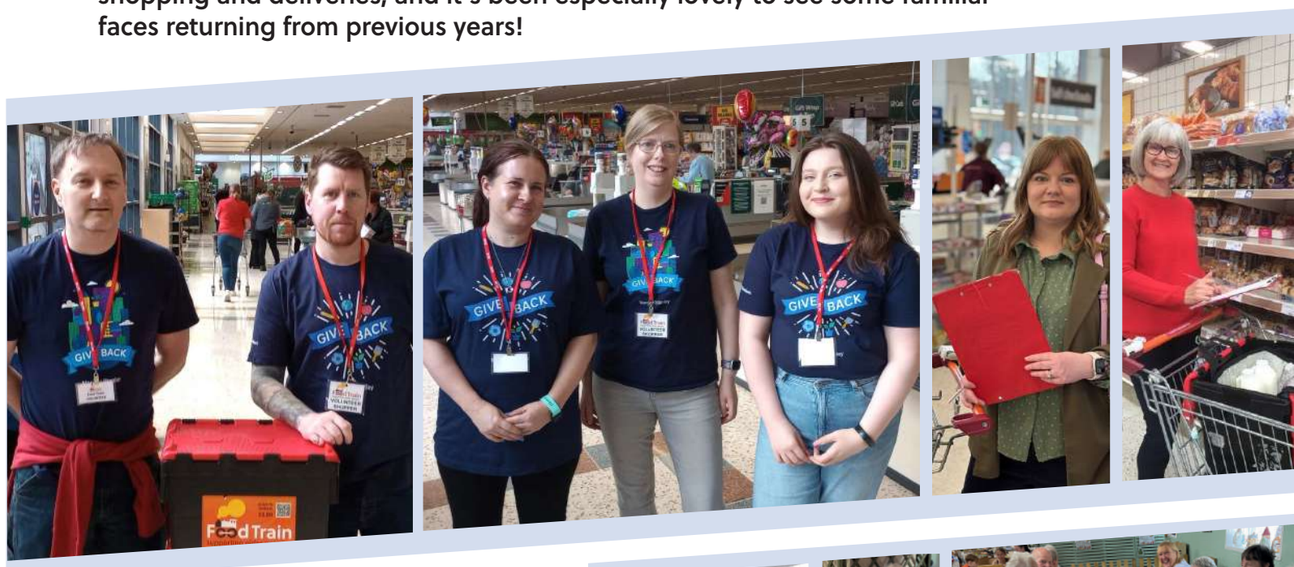
#BOXtober 2025

Our #BOXtober campaign ran throughout October 2025, inviting people to sponsor grocery delivery boxes for just £10 each. Each box carries essential groceries to older people who would otherwise struggle to shop for themselves, bringing not only food but also comfort and a friendly check-in.

Thanks to everyone who took part, over £7,500 was raised, helping older people stay independent, connected, and supported across Scotland.

A Big Thank You to Our Corporate Volunteers!

Food Train would like to extend a huge thank you to all the corporate volunteers who have joined us across several of our branches this year. We've been fortunate to welcome staff from Chubb, Morgan Stanley, Nationwide, Hierarchy Business Solutions, M&G, Virgin Money and Barclays. Volunteers had the chance to meet many of our members while assisting with shopping and deliveries, and it's been especially lovely to see some familiar faces returning from previous years!



Food Train Friends

Our members have thoroughly enjoyed a wide range of outings throughout 2025. Along the way, we've celebrated birthdays, Easter, summer outings, Halloween, and lots of things in between, before rounding off the year with our much-loved Christmas parties.

None of this would be possible without the support of our fantastic volunteers, who generously give their time to ensure members have great days out. If you'd like to join our Friends outings, please contact your nearest Food Train branch that offers the service.

West Lothian:	**01506 413013**
Annan:	**01461 207778**
Falkirk:	**01324 374144**
Dumfries:	**01387 270800**
Stewartry:	**01556 288427**
Newton Stewart:	**01671 401346**
Stranraer:	**01776 704831**

Welcome to our 2025 Food Train Newbies

Hello from our new Fundraising Manager

Hello everyone, my name's Jayne and I'm really pleased to introduce myself as Food Train's first ever Fundraising Manager. I joined the team in October and have had such a warm welcome from members, volunteers and staff. Thanks to everyone who's helped settle me in.

I live on the south side of Glasgow, and as part of my induction I spent time out with the Glasgow branch, joining volunteers on their deliveries. This was a wonderful way to learn more about Food Train's services and, most importantly, what they mean to the people who use them. I was struck by how dedicated and caring our volunteers are, and I really enjoyed meeting and chatting with members along the way.

Over the coming weeks, months and years, I'll be working closely with the rest of the Food Train team to help bring in funding from a range of different sources. Like many charities, we know that funding is becoming more challenging, and we need to work harder than ever to make sure our vital services can continue.

I'll be focusing on developing support from individuals, organisations and grant-giving bodies. If you'd ever like to have a chat about fundraising, or if you'd like to be added to our supporters' newsletter when it launches, please don't hesitate to get in touch. You can contact me at jayne.forbes@thefoodtrain.co.uk or simply let your local branch or a volunteer know.

I'm really looking forward to getting to know more of you over time and supporting Food Train's important work.

Branch Newbies

Karen Lypka
Operational Assistant
DUMFRIES

Tom Lamb
Development Officer
PERTH & KINROSS

Holly Glass
Service Administrator & Coordinator
SCOTTISH BORDERS

Aileas Pringle
Development Officer
MEAL MAKERS

Mhairi Smith
Operational Assistant
FALKIRK

Anne-Marie Methven
Service Administrator & Coordinator
FALKIRK

Tony Kelly
Operational Assistant
GLASGOW

Carla Gomes
Regional Manager
BORDERS

Abi George
Service Administrator & Coordinator
NEWTON STEWART & MEAL MAKERS

Food Train
supporting older people

Branch Contacts

Keep up to date with us on social media
www.thefoodtrain.co.uk

Dumfries, Nithsdale	T: 01387 270800	E: dumfries@thefoodtrain.co.uk
Stewartry	T: 01556 288427	E: stewartry@thefoodtrain.co.uk
Annandale & Eskdale	T: 01461 207778	E: annan@thefoodtrain.co.uk
Newton Stewart	T: 01671 401346	E: newtonstewart@thefoodtrain.co.uk
Stranraer	T: 01776 704831	E: stranraer@thefoodtrain.co.uk
Dundee	T: 01382 810944	E: dundee@thefoodtrain.co.uk
Falkirk	T: 01324 374144	E: falkirk@thefoodtrain.co.uk
Glasgow	T: 0141 4231 722	E: glasgow@thefoodtrain.co.uk
Scottish Borders	T: 01896 751750	E: scotborders@thefoodtrain.co.uk
Stirling & Clackmannanshire	T: 01786 450536	E: stirling@thefoodtrain.co.uk
West Lothian	T: 01506 413013	E: westlothian@thefoodtrain.co.uk
Meal Makers, Scotland Wide	T: 0141 551 8118	E mealmakers@thefoodtrain.co.uk