

St Ives Community Fund – Annual General Meeting 2019

On April 1st 2019 the St Ives Community Fund held its Annual General Meeting in St Ives library and the guest speaker was Chris Wallis who runs the local Foodbank. Those who attended commented afterwards that they were very impressed with his work, if also downhearted at the need for such a service.

Chris explained that the Foodbank had been set up at St John-in-the-Fields in 2012 and had moved to Chy An Gweal a couple of years later from where it still operated. Those in need of assistance were referred to them by a mixture of organisations including the health service, Citizens' Advice and the Housing Association, and they currently help about seven families a week. Volunteers at the Foodbank had noticed that demand was increasing all the time, but especially in wintertime and on the introduction of Universal Credit. He said that the nature of donations meant that there was no shortage of pasta, baked beans and soup, and that they would appreciate dried fruit, nuts and tinned meat and fish. A large part of their income is spent on fresh produce. Collection points include St Ives Guildhall and Tescos and they would welcome any additional collection sites. At christmas time they provided about forty food hampers.

As well as food, Chris and his team of four volunteers provide a social meeting point for pensioners; and also they supply advice. For example, three of their current clients lost their homes and they were able to help them with re-location. Future plans include the possibility of a holiday lunch club for children, and closer ties with supermarkets.

The work of the Foodbank fits in well with the St Ives Community Fund which aims to meet the basic needs of those struggling to get by. As such, the trustees of the Fund have agreed to donate half of the proceeds of this year's popular Secret Gardens event to the Foodbank. This takes place on the weekend of June 15th and 16th.

The meeting ended with a round-up of the year's activities of the St Ives Community Fund. Grants had been paid out this year to help a family who fled domestic violence; towards the funeral costs of someone's father at a difficult time for her; for a child to get to school by taxi; and for a family's travel expenses when a child was ill in a Bristol hospital. The trustees organised a well-attended dinner in St Ives Guildhall on Christmas Day, and half of last year's proceeds raised through Secret Gardens were donated to St Ives scouts.

St Ives Community Fund has been chosen by the local Co-op as one of three local projects to which customers can choose to donate each time they make a purchase. This continues until November 2019 and the trustees are very grateful to the Co-op for choosing the Fund and also to local shoppers for their support.