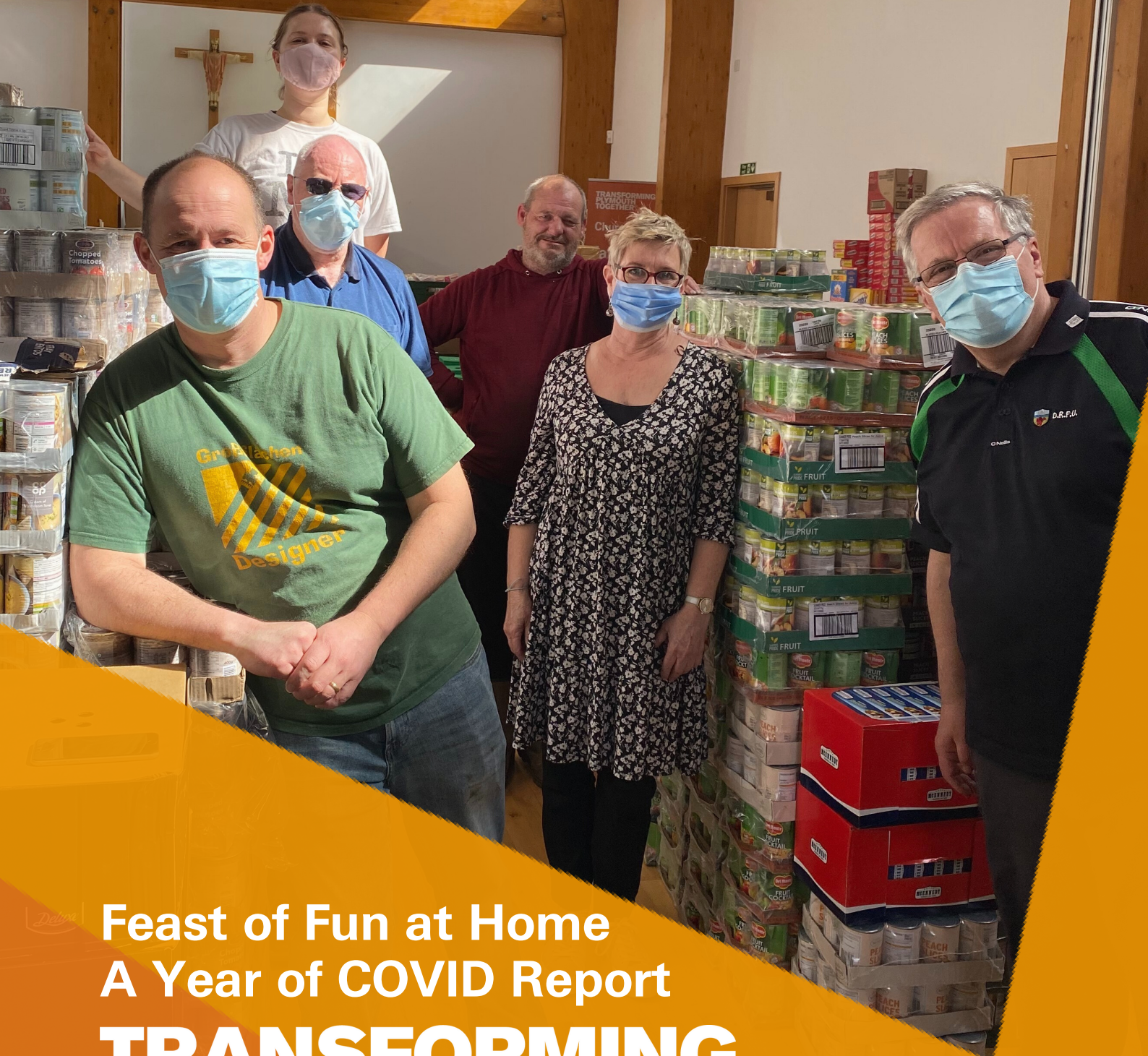


**FEAST
OF FUN**
at home



Feast of Fun at Home
A Year of COVID Report

**TRANSFORMING
PLYMOUTH
TOGETHER** ⊕

Poverty During COVID



The reality of 'poverty' is more than whether a parent can afford a holiday, a treat or not, but for many it's a matter of 'heating or eating' which in winter is a difficult choice to make for parents. In the summer, however delightful for some it may be, it's six weeks of having to entertain or to pay for activities or trips, as well as having to feed and to manage without access to support through schools. Christmas can also be an incredibly challenging time with pressures of gift giving to match others spending, attending numerous events and parties as well as providing an overabundance of good food during the holidays.

Over the last few years the usage of food banks has steadily gone up. Some of the top reasons for using the foodbanks has included low income, benefit delays and benefit changes amongst others. This indicates that those who use the foodbanks are still employed (through part-time, zero hour or seasonal work) but with wages that may not be enough to feed their families. There has also been considerable perceived stigma attached with asking for help. However, the response to the pandemic has shown that there is no judgement if help is needed and that issues resulting from the pandemic can affect anyone.

23
CHURCHES

158
EVENTS

4328
PARCELS

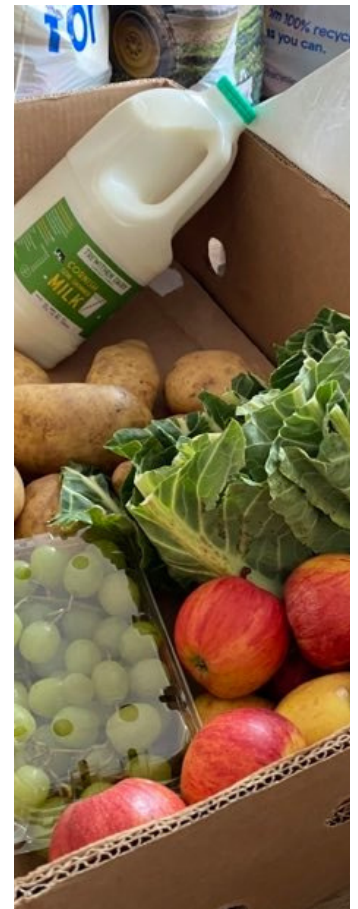
88,202
MEALS

Responding to the crisis

After the growth and success of the Feast of Fun project in previous years, Transforming Plymouth Together worked with St Pancras Church early into lockdown to reformat the project to fit within the national restrictions. Using their model of connecting with families and the logistical elements of delivery to use this for Feast of Fun. It was renamed 'Feast of Fun at Home'.

A number of the churches were already familiar with the Feast of Fun projects and were keen to respond to the growing need early on in lockdown. However with the rising awareness of pressing needs across the city and increasingly availability of volunteers, many wanted to respond and with the new model of Feast of Fun at Home, it was fairly simple to add new churches to the project throughout the year.

Working with food action organisations such as Provide Devon, Fareshare, Love Your Neighbour to source funding and resources (of both food and activities) that were able to be collected and coordinated between the churches. TPT also partnered with other on a number of other projects including Unify Plymouth and Families Right 2 Healthy Food which were combined to overlap with Feast of Fun.

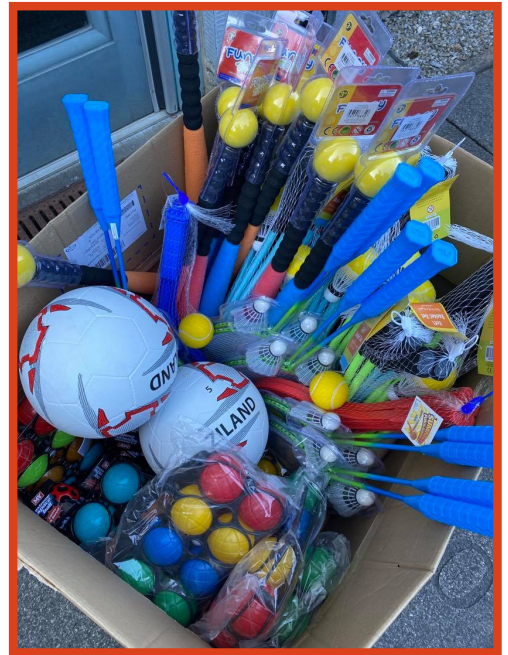


Feast of Fun at Home

A church response to COVID holiday hunger in Plymouth

After running Feast of Fun at Home for 14 months (March 2020 to June 2021), TPT was working with 23 churches who worked as individual churches or collective groups, as well as supporting a number of other groups and charities to offer food, activities as well as regular points of contact for the families through all the holidays as well as other points of need when required. Whilst delivery of as many parcels as possible was important, the priority for TPT was to offer a holistic support that included food, but also games and activities as well as being a regular point of contact to be a listening ear, a friendly familiar face and to be able to signpost where required. It wasn't about the quantity of parcels distributed but the quality of the relationships built over the duration of the project. The churches were encouraged to think about how they would go beyond just being a foodbank but a place to build relationships

The parcels had a range of items from soup, pasta, tinned veg, meat and fish as well as sweet treats and plenty of fresh items to ensure that all the food groups were provided. As well as the food, craft bags, sports games, seasonal activities such as Christingle kits and activity books for Easter were included in the parcels throughout the year.



Feedback from Churches

This is actually building relationships with the adults in a way I never got to do whilst policing a bouncy castle or supervising small folk with glue and scissors, and having the contact in place from previous years must surely count as a bit of a modern miracle.

One family spoke of how they literally had nothing left in cupboards until they came to the feast of fun and the parent had gone without eating. Another spoke of how they had been worried about the choice between bills and food shopping and that feast of fun provision meant they were able to stock their cupboards and then afford to pay what needed to be paid. We were able to provide drinks and cake at collection outside and socially distanced but it meant that we were able to talk to families and build relationships.

A single mother was able to share a very personal story to us in an open way, this must have been difficult for her but she found that our group of volunteers were the right people to talk to.

Feedback From Families

I just want to say a massive thank you. I've tried so hard to stay afloat and reaching out was the hardest thing I've ever done. Seeing the smiles you put on my children's face I will be forever grateful. I've been unable to buy pumpkins and luxuries like biscuits etc. so my children were thrilled - never forget how amazing you all are.

You are saving people like me at these hard times.

The Hampers are absolutely amazing – thank you so much Thank you for the hampers – so much appreciated Thank you for the hampers – we are finding it more of a struggle than we ever have before especially as we are looking after 2 extra children

I'm always grateful for the food package. The fresh veggies are so good as we peel and chop as a family and we all get to eat the same thing at the same time. I know how much my children like it when I'm eating with them. I have only been able to do with your help. I never thought how someone could make such joy to my family. Thank you for making my children feel special and loved. It brings so much joy knowing people care so much and It's mad that you're texting really helps me to keep going thank you all. Please I know everyone tells you all thank you for me that don't seem enough it has been so lonely and your texts just make me feel I have got a friend to talk to. I will never forget all the help you all have shown me and my children xxx

What's Next?

With still so much uncertainty about what the next coming months' regulations may be, many churches are unsure as to what exactly they will or will not be able to do during the summer holidays. Churches are easing into activities that were run prior to lockdown but it is unlikely that events will look identical to past Feasts of Fun. Current conversations with churches indicate that many would like to do a hybrid model that offers something on site (a meal or refreshments, activities and fun), the chance to converse and connect but will also possibly offer something to take away such as a smaller parcel for anyone who needs it). This may prove more manageable to start the summer and TPT is still able to offer a provision of food that can be used for parcels or to serve.

Other ideas have included:

- Café style set up (with craft etc) - cake, biscuits, food and drinks
- Food parcels with a focus on fresh items
- Community larder or pantries
- Additional vouchers for food banks
- Signposting to other services (Kid's Matter, COVID Cash Recovery, Kintsugi Hope)

Most of the churches have reported that the project had positively impacted their community and helped them to make sustainable relationships with many families who they may not have connected with if it wasn't for Feast of Fun at Home. Many heard stories from families who would severely struggle had the parcels not been made available. The purpose was not just to give families the chance to survive but to thrive despite all the challenges that the pandemic set before the nation.





A huge thank you and well done to all the churches involved :

- Derriford United Reform Church
- Devonport Baptist Church
- Hooe Baptist Church Plymouth
- Hope Baptist Church
- New Life Fellowship Plymouth
- Plymouth Christian Centre
- Plymstock United Reform Church
- Plymstock Chapel
- Plymstock St Marys
- St Aubyn's Church
- St Boniface Church of England
- St Budeaux Baptist Church
- St Budeaux Parish Church
- St Budeaux Methodist
- St Edward's Church
- St Francis of Assisi
- St Jude's Church
- St Mark's Church
- St Michael's & St Barnabas
- St Pancras Church
- St Peter and The Holy Apostle
- Stoke Damerel Parish Church
- The Rock Community

Thank you to our supporters and funders, those who have helped move food, spread the word of the project or pray for us. We couldn't do it without you!

This document is a summary of the 'Feast of Fun at Home - A Year of COVID' report which alongside further information on the project can be found at transformingplymouthtogether.org.uk/initiatives/feast-of-fun

 **TransformingPlymouthTogether**
 **@plymtogether**

transformingplymouthtogether.org.uk

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