

How to help those in need in your community to have a happy Christmas

Organisations across Bath and North East Somerset helping people who are struggling to make ends meet are sharing details about the best way to donate and volunteer this Christmas for anyone who wishes to spread some festive cheer.

Bath & North East Somerset Council has worked with food banks, food pantries and other volunteer groups to compile a list of what is needed and when to help residents wanting to brighten up Christmas for others.

Councillor Dine Romero, cabinet member for Children and Young People, Communities and Culture, said: “We are fortunate to have a generous community in Bath and North East Somerset, but sometimes people wishing to donate or volunteer are unsure about the best way to help. The volunteer organisations do a fantastic job of distributing the items that people have kindly donated, but in previous years there has been an excess of certain items that unfortunately end up not being used as much as the kind donors intended. That’s why we’ve compiled this list to help anyone who wants to support people struggling to put food on the table to have a happy Christmas.

“If you are in a position to donate, have a look at what is needed locally to you. Not all of the support needed is food – you might be able to help with driving or even lead a Christmas singalong! Thank you to everyone who helps to bring the festive spirit to those in need this Christmas.”

Claire Henwood from Oasis Pantry said “We are grateful to everyone who donates and offers help at this time of year. It lets people know they are considered and cared for and makes such a difference. We want to make the most of all donations and support so letting the public know how best to help us will make for a happier Christmas people coming to our pantries”

Last year Oasis had this feedback from a family “Wanted to thank you so much for the food and presents from Oasis. Really, really helped. Thanks so much. I pretended the Elves left the Activity Bag on the doorstep for them on Christmas Eve.. BIG Excitement!! Thanks so much to all you very kind people”

Donations and support are welcomed by the organisations as follows:

Project	Support needed	Support not needed	Extra info and contact details
Bath Open Christmas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keyboard player and singers to lead some festive music. - Technical support with internet/Podio database so project can move to online volunteer applications - Cash donations are welcomed in preference to gifted items, in order to buy the goods required to make 400+ lunches. 		Roger Barnard: volunteers@bathopenchristmas.com
FOOD Clubs in Children's Centres for families with school age children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteers always required, especially anyone who has an interest in supporting families in need and an interest in food. Driving advantageous - Bulk food items preferred to individual donations - Toiletries - Sanitary products - Cooking equipment 		The FOOD Clubs at Keynsham Civic Centre and Radstock Library will continue to run weekly throughout the festive period, except the week between Christmas and New Year. Jed Parsons BrightStartCC@bathnes.gov.uk Pete Godden Pete.godden@family-action.org.uk
Somerset Valley Foodbank https://somer valley.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food donations at other times of the year except Christmas - Cash donations welcomed - Any Christmas items received will be distributed or go to someone who makes Christmas hampers for Radstock Children's Centre. 	Please do not donate for Christmas this year to avoid an excess of mince pies and Christmas puddings. Please consider other charities if you wish to donate these items.	Paul Woodward: info@somervalley.foodbank.org.uk
Action Pantry		No donations, money or volunteers needed at present	Christmas plans not yet firmed up but do get in touch if you'd like to find out how you can support.

Project	Support needed	Support not needed	Extra info and contact details
			Fiona Wakeley actionpantry@mercyinaction.org.uk
Weston Welcome Café And Food Club		No donations, money or volunteers needed at present	Christmas Party on Monday 20 Dec at noon at Weston Hub. All welcome. No need to book. Closed on 27 December and 3 January. Peter Heywood: peter@heywood.co
OASIS	Volunteers are always welcomed! We would prefer cash donations of any amount this year in order to buy specific Christmas food items, and a small gift for each pantry member. Donations can be made through our Just Giving site, linked here: https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/giveagift2021		We will be closed in Southdown on Monday 27 th December. Monday 3 rd January is currently tbc. The city centre pantry will be open each week as normal. Claire Henwood pantry@oasisbath.org
FoodCycle Bath	All meals are free but donations will be accepted from any guests who wish to contribute.		Offering a free Christmas Dinner at 7:30 on Wednesday 15th December at Nexus Methodist Church in Bath (enter the church hall via the side entrance on the footpath). The final free community meal in 2021 will be at 7:30 on Wednesday 22nd December at Nexus. Weekly community dining in 2022 begins at 7:30 on Wednesday 5th January at Nexus. John Taylor bath@foodcycle.org.uk

People can also find the information on the council's [Live Well Bathnes](#) website.