

News

Donation puts wind in food bank's sails

Lymington firm gives £10k towards Forest charity's relocation

BY ROZ WATERS

A LYMINGTON sailmaking company has donated £10,000 towards the cost of relocating the town's New Forest Basics Bank to a larger building.

Pete Sanders, founder of Sanders Sails in Bath Road, made the generous gesture as the £230,000 project nears completion.

The food bank, which supports families and individuals living in Lymington, Pennington, New Milton, Ashley and the wider New Forest, is run entirely by volunteers. It typically hands out between 35 and 45 food parcels each week which are delivered by a team of volunteer drivers from local churches.

However, the charity has now outgrown its headquarters at the back of the United Reformed Church just off the High Street, and is set to relocate to a new purpose-built premises behind Our Lady of Mercy & St Joseph Roman Catholic Church.

Designed to accommodate all stock and provide more help for those in need, the new building is set to open on 31st March. It will feature new computerised systems, air conditioning and a private office area.

Mr Sanders said: "When we heard about the work of the Basics Bank we were unaware of the requirements for this in Lymington and we were delighted to be able to do something to help."

"We have always supported the Crisis at Christmas homeless appeal so it's wonderful to be able to do something in our own community to help those who are in such desperate need."

Basics Bank volunteer Trina Hart said: "We have people who



Pete Sanders and his son Christopher with Oliver Stanley (left) and David da Cunha (right)

arrive in a very distressed state and currently there is nowhere we can take them privately for a chat. Having a quiet space will make a huge difference."

Chairman Oliver Stanley added: "The demand for our service is increasing year on year and it is vital - we are open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and we must be prepared to close on a Friday and reopen the following Tuesday in our new premises without a break. Once you have a break the wheels really start falling off the bus."

"We normally help individuals and families for periods of up to six weeks. The demand for our services has increased 25% annually over the last three years

and we currently help 2,500 individuals in the region."

Basics Bank trustee David da Cunha, who has led the new building campaign, added: "The introduction and rollout of Universal Credit has been awful. The Treasury imagine that people have six weeks of savings in reserve - in reality they don't even have six days."

"It makes your heart break when you visit families with children and they don't know where their next meal is coming from."

Food and provisions are donated via collection points in local supermarkets, as well as by churches, schools and voluntary groups.

Mr Stanley said: "Currently we have a good supply of stock from the harvest festivals and Christmas collections, and we just have to supplement this with weekly purchases of perishable items such as bread."

"But often we find the school holidays are a time of great need, and at that time of year in July and August we don't have the food coming in so we have to purchase additional items. We typically spend around £30,000 a year buying supplies to top up what is donated."

The Basics Bank works alongside local referral agencies, including New Forest Citizen's Advice, CAP, DWP, social services and health services as

well as dispatching weekly food parcels to those who otherwise would go without.

A typical parcel from the food bank includes enough to provide family meals for a week, normally containing tinned goods, sauces, dried pasta, rice and noodles, tea, coffee, biscuits, UHT milk, toiletries, loo rolls, cleaning materials, bread and other essentials.

At Christmas time the charity also delivers a further 400 hampers to struggling local families. These contain items like festive crackers, cakes, biscuits and other treats that recipients may not otherwise be able to afford.

Mrs Hart said: "There will always be people who turn up at our door in desperate need but without a form or anything - but we always make sure we give them something."

"For some people who are homeless it is no good handing them lots of tinned food if they have no way of cooking it. An idea for the future is providing vouchers so they can have a hot meal - something like fish and chips in the evening."

Mr Stanley added: "The support we receive from the community is always incredible. We are so thankful to all our supporters - both businesses and individuals - who help us to deliver this vital service."

For more information about New Forest Basics Bank, to donate or to volunteer, visit www.basicsbank.org.uk

Adventure and treasure await in lectures

GLOBETROTTING adventures and automotive treasures are at the heart of the new programme of spring lectures at the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu.

In Austin Adventures on Saturday 15th February, enthusiasts can immerse themselves in the world of the 'baby' Austin cars, as George Mooney talks about his journeys. Since George and his wife Joy bought an Austin Seven as daily transport in 1962, the couple have travelled the world in a selection of these diminutive pre-war classics.

The pinnacle of their five decades of travels was driving across South America in 2005, followed by a journey across America on the legendary Route 66.

Then, back by popular demand, is Steph Jeavons Returns on Saturday 21st March, as the author, journalist and motorcycle adventurer talks about leading the first-ever all-female riding group from Kathmandu to Mount Everest Base Camp (pictured below).

The audience will hear how 'Girls on Top' was an incredible journey filled with highs and lows, as the bikers battled with extreme weather conditions, injuries and altitude sickness, before reaching their destination. This evening includes exclusive access to the National Motor Museum from 6pm.

The Petroliana Experience on Saturday 18th April offers a guide through the world of vintage petrol pumps, period garage equipment, advertising artwork and other sought-after collectables from the golden age of motoring.

Alan Chandler has a collection of almost 4,000 items and has travelled the world in search of illusive petroliana of



yesteryear, as well as writing four books as an expert on the subject.

All the talks start at 7.30pm in the Lecture Theatre of the National Motor Museum's Collections Centre. Tickets are £10 (or £7.50 for Friends of the National Motor Museum Trust) available from Theresa Browning at friends@beaulieu.co.uk or 01590 614792.

All profits help support the trust. For more information about membership see www.nationalmotormuseum.org.uk/the_friends

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