**The Community Foodbank Skye and Lochalsh**

**Chair’s Report 2022/23**

The last year has been another busy one for the foodbank. The economic crisis has obviously affected many households and we have seen many new clients using our services. The main change has been the number of households who are requesting regular food parcels. Historically, food parcels were meant to be a one-off emergency option, but an increasing number of people are receiving parcels fortnightly or even weekly, as they simply cannot survive on their income. Whether that is from benefits or wages, these are simply are not keeping up with rising costs. Although we are very lucky to have a very generous community, we have had to increase the amount that we are spending on buying in stock for food parcels. This puts an added strain on our volunteers as we are having to arrange shopping trips or the collection of supermarket orders. We have an incredible team of volunteers but, as is the case with foodbanks across the UK, the current situation is putting more pressure on already stretched services.

At this point, I would like to say a massive than you to all our volunteers, who are so often going above and beyond. From those who collect donations from various points across our area, to the ones who unpack and sort the donations to make sure that all the items are safe for distribution, and the people who actually get those food parcels out there – whether through agencies or direct to or service users.

I would also like to thank the many statutory and voluntary organisations who work with us to ensure that food aid gets to those in need across our large geographical area-

CAB, LSHA, BSCC, Uig Community Trust, KLCT, PBCT, SLMHA, NHS, Women’s Aid, and the ones who I have undoubtedly forgotten to mention.

This brings me to our priorities for the next year.

We have been working with Jo Ford from SLCVO to ensure that the foodbank is operating within the relevant regulations, and within the terms of our governing document. We have a lot of work to do here, and it has to be a priority for us now. We have also lost a couple of Trustees in the last year, so we will be looking to recruit new Trustees, ideally people with appropriate experience who can help us to get all the right policies and procedures in place.

Finally, given the ongoing financial crisis and our difficulties in recruiting volunteers in the South of Skye, we have been discussing what the foodbank may look like in the future. A number of options have been considered, as we have to weigh the practicalities and pressures that any changes will put on our existing team, as well as ensuring that food aid will continue to be available to everyone who needs it across Skye and Lochalsh. We will be engaging with as many partners as possible in the coming months to work out how we can ensure that help gets to those in need in all our communities.