



Press Release for Immediate Release – 19 January 2024

## His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset presents The King's Award for Voluntary Service to the West Somerset Food Cupboard

Today, Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024, Mr Mohammed Saddiq, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset, accompanied by Deputy Lieutenants Rear Admiral Ian Moncrieff CBE and Mr Chris Davies CBE, presented the King's Award for Voluntary Service to the West Somerset Food Cupboard team at the Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Alcombe.

The award was given to the West Somerset Food Cupboard, based in Minehead, on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 as part of The King's birthday celebrations. This is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE.

Food Cupboard volunteers along with volunteer Trustee, Jane Jones and volunteer Chair, Katrina Midgley were there to receive this prestigious award. Katrina commented, *"What an honour this is. The award recognises the commitment and hard work of the incredible team of over 50 volunteers we have at the West Somerset Food Cupboard. Their dedication enables us to operate in our local community, ensuring that nobody in West Somerset needs to go hungry. In the past year alone, we have distributed a total of 5560 bags of food."*

After presenting the award Lord-Lieutenant was able to talk to volunteers. He commented, *"Due to the cost-of-living crisis, there is a direct need. You are leagues ahead of many organisations in the UK. We will try to replicate the experience you have gained across other parts of Somerset."*

Councillor Mandy Chilcott said *"I was excited to attend today's presentation and meet the volunteers from across West Somerset. They work tirelessly alongside local agencies, charities and businesses to make sure food gets to people in need, and to ensure no surplus food goes to waste."*

The King's Award for Voluntary Service aims to recognise outstanding work by local volunteer groups to benefit their communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee and, following his accession, His Majesty, The King emphasised his desire to continue the Award.

The West Somerset Food Cupboard has been providing emergency food from the Parish Church of St. Michael the Archangel, Alcombe since 2007. The food is donated by local people, checked, and packed by volunteers, and distributed either by a local agency supporting someone through a particular challenge, or directly by a member of the team.

In addition, in May 2022, the Local Pantry was established. The Local Pantry is a membership scheme formed through a partnership agreement with supermarket surplus charity Fareshare South West and Somerset West and Taunton Council's Local Pantries initiative. The team of volunteers sort deliveries and stock the pantry, and welcome members every Tuesday, assisting with their weekly shop – all for £3.50 per member.

**ENDS**



## Notes to Editors

### About The King's Award for Voluntary Service

1. Lord-Lieutenants represent the Monarch in each of the UK's ceremonial counties.
2. This year there are 262 recipients of The King's Award for Voluntary Service from across the UK and Channel Islands.
3. More information on the recipients and the Award can be found at <https://kavs.dcms.gov.uk/>
4. Full details on how to nominate are available at <https://kavs.dcms.gov.uk/>
5. Nominations for the 2025 awards will open on the 1st June 2024.

### About The West Somerset Food Cupboard

#### Emergency Food Parcels

West Somerset is ranked as within the worst 20% for food affordability across England. West Somerset Food Cupboard has seen a year-on-year increase of 8% in the number of emergency food parcels it has distributed in 2023.

#### Local Pantry Scheme

In May 2022 the West Somerset Food Cupboard launched a Local Pantry in partnership with Somerset West and Taunton Council and Fareshare South West. The Local Pantry offers affordable access to fresh, chilled, frozen, and surplus food that would otherwise perish. The Local Pantry has 40 member households and holds a lengthy waiting list. In 2023 the Local Pantry distributed 4,000 bags of surplus food.

#### Donations

If you are interested in making a one-off or regular financial donation to the West Somerset Food Cupboard, please visit our website for more information and to find out how you can help.

[www.wsfoodcupboard.org.uk/donate/](http://www.wsfoodcupboard.org.uk/donate/)

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