



We are still here

As you might expect, the Olive Branch has seen many changes recently. A big rise in food parcels, new volunteers and even a temporary re-location.

Keeping people safe while keeping people fed

To protect our volunteers and guests we have changed the way we are operating. When we receive a referral for someone from an organisation like Citizen's Advice or Marsh Community Centre, their food parcel is delivered out to their door rather than them coming to collect it. We have also temporarily moved our operation to bigger premises to enable us to socially distance volunteers. We are very grateful to St Thomas' Church for loaning us their Church Centre for this. In many ways The Olive Branch is a very different operation for very different times. At heart though our aim and motivation remains the same; to follow Jesus by serving those in our community who are vulnerable and need our love and support.

277

AVERAGE FOOD
PARCELS GIVEN OUT
PER MONTH IN 2019

499

FOOD PARCELS GIVEN
OUT IN APRIL

147

BAGS OF FOOD
DONATED SO FAR VIA
STREET COLLECTIONS

Street Collections

Since lockdown, many of our regular donation points have been inaccessible to people. However, a band of wonderful individuals have taken it on themselves to set up 'pop up' collection points on their street and bring the food in to us. This has been a lifeline for our stock levels, so thank you and please keep it up.

New Volunteers

With many of our existing volunteers having to step back to self isolate, we have had to recruit a host of new packers and a team of drivers. Thank you and welcome to everyone who has come on board.

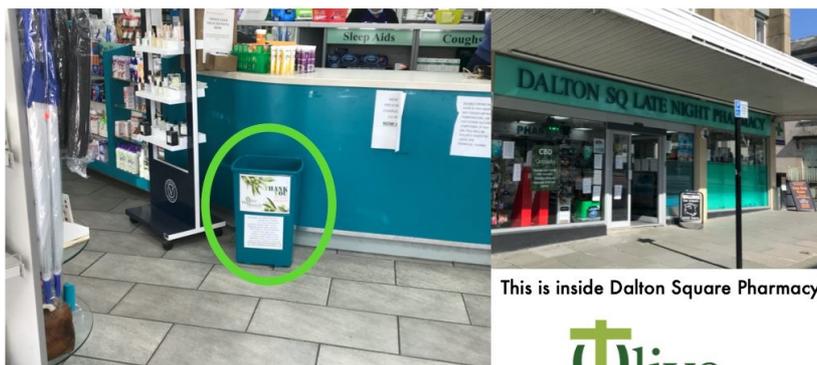
Partner Agencies

As ever, we have been working with our referral agencies to get help to those who need it most. During this crisis though we have also been in regular dialogue with the council and Morecambe Bay Food Bank to assemble a coordinated response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Current Collection Points

Items that are of most use to us currently include:

Tinned meat (chilli, curry, pies, steak, corned beef, ham etc), tinned fish, tinned vegetables (sweetcorn, peas, carrots, tomatoes), jars of sauce, cereal, tinned spaghetti, basmati rice, cooking oil, cake, flour (yes - we know it's like hens teeth at the moment) and toilet roll.



This is inside Dalton Square Pharmacy



This is the vicarage next to Scotforth St Pauls church on the A6

The Olive Branch
faith in action



There are collection points inside Boots and the Coop on Quernmore Rd.



This is outside St Tees Centre opposite the police station. This one will only be available 11am-3:30pm on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday.

There will also be one outside our Westbourne Rd premises at the times shown above.



Light in the Darkness

With so much fear, anxiety and suffering around it's easy to get bogged down in it all, but we are hearing good stories too.

- Some of the people who have donated food to us in this crisis have been people The Olive Branch helped in the past. They have told us how they have now got back on their feet and want to help others.
- One of our guests who had been 'sofa surfing' for a long time in fairly unsatisfactory arrangements told us recently how they have got their own place with a good landlord.
- One of our new volunteers told us how being involved with The Olive Branch, 'has changed my life', and says he wants to spend more time helping others instead of going back to living for himself once this crisis is over.