

Free Hot Meals Initiative and Christmas Present Scheme for Folkestone's Vulnerable & Disadvantaged Children and their Families

Further to the success of Folkestone Town Councils coordination of a scheme, spearheaded by the Town Mayor to provide free packed lunches to vulnerable and disadvantaged local School Children during October half term, at its Community Services Committee meeting, Members resolved to allocate funding to provide Free Hot Meals to eligible children and their families over the Christmas period.

Local schools were asked to identify numbers of pupils and families most in need to ensure anonymity of recipients, facilitating delivery of this project in a sensitive and discreet manner.

A comprehensive strategy was developed which enabled more than 80 vulnerable families to be reached across Folkestone, with a total of 3,680 meal vouchers allocated and distributed for hot meals to be received over 10 days leading up to and after Christmas from three outdoor sites, Three Hills Sports Park, Turner Free School and St Eanswythes School.

Folkestone Town Council worked in partnership with the Three Hills Community Hub with food prepared, cooked and placed in containers at Three Hills Sports Park following strict food health and hygiene standards and food preparation guidelines whilst also observing all Covid-19 regulations and guidelines in respect of providing this service.

This projects success was achieved largely due to partnership working, through effective community collaboration and from the generosity of sponsors, being, SAGA colleagues, The Roger DeHaan Charitable Trust, Asda, Morrisons, Sainsburys and Tesco with The Fire and Rescue Service also supporting the scheme in distributing meals at St Eanswythes School.

Supported by Town Councillors Ward Grant funding, we were also able to purchase and give out approx. 140 Christmas gifts to the most in need and deserving children in the town.