

# Connecting Rural Communities since 1924



**Beverley Parker**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



**“We believe that no-one should be unfairly disadvantaged because they live in a rural area.”**

- Distance/sparsity
- Lack of transport
- Loss of community amenities & services
- Ageing demographic
- Social isolation & loneliness
- Community polarization
- “dormitory” villages



# Supporting communities



Practical Fundraising



# The impact of rural isolation

- Nearly 1 in 5 adults in Derbyshire is retired/not working
- Nearly 1 in 5 have health conditions that limit their daily life
- Around 1 in 10 are unpaid carers
- Local services have disappeared so a car is essential
- Limited local employment so everyone commutes
- No social “hub” anymore
- Many find it difficult to get out and about

# Cost of living crisis deeper in rural areas

- Heating oil up by 400% on top of 54% increase in electricity
- Average house prices 50% higher than urban areas
- Limited low cost rental properties in private sector
- Poor access to cheap food esp fruit & veg
- 49% increase in food bank usage since pandemic
- Applications for free school meals increased by >600%
- Cost of commuting limits employment options
- Relatively low wage economy
- Limited public transport

# Feeding Derbyshire



- Set up by DCC Public Health in 2015 with £500K investment fund
- Test & develop different interventions to tackle food insecurity
  - Food bank forum
  - Surplus food distribution hub & subscriptions
  - Community Cafes & mobile food truck
  - Breakfast Clubs
- Handed over to RAD in 2017
- SLA in place for strategic leadership development of partnership and new initiatives



# Achievements



- Provided food and activities to >25,000 disadvantaged children in the school holidays
- Supported community cafes to pivot into ready meal production  
Cooked over 180,000 ready meals
- Set up 4 pilot community pantries providing affordable food for over 720 families & 4 more in pipeline
- Supported Feeding Derbyshire network members to meet increased demand for food banks and advice signposting

## "THANK YOU"



"The hot meal delivery has been thoroughly enjoyed by the children who look forward to the delivery all day. They want everyone to know how much they appreciate it."

"This is only time in the week I eat a hot meal"

"I enjoyed Monday's lunch. Most meals last me 2 days which is great. I am looking forward to the next menu. The meals are lovely and much appreciated."



# What next for increasing resilience?

- Connecting people through community facilities and hubs (halls, pubs, shops, transport)
- Working with community groups to establish more pantries and affordable food projects
- Digital inclusion – helping people to connect, stay safe and learn new skills
- Working with school holiday providers to increase food skills, nutritional standards and healthy eating
- Supporting civil society to develop local solutions eg community energy schemes







**Rural Action**  
DERBYSHIRE

*Thank You*