

A report on In The Bag, 2020–2022

Across several school holidays from summer 2020 to spring half-term 2022, following the start of the Covid-19 epidemic, Sussex Cricket Foundation (with support from Guerilla Cricket listeners) funded the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership in a much-needed and well-received In the Bag food-insecurity initiative. In total, over 3,800 recipe and ingredient bags have been provided to families experiencing food poverty in Brighton & Hove.

Two years of In The Bag: The Covid-19 crisis dramatically raised food insecurity in the UK, and this strain on families has continued. Before the pandemic, Brighton & Hove Food Partnership members were distributing around 400 food parcels a week, rising to over 3,000 in mid-2020 and remaining high in 2021 and into 2022. As of summer 2022, the Partnership supports just under 6,000 people with meals and food parcels through the member organisations of Brighton & Hove’s Emergency Food Network.

Sussex Cricket Foundation made the decision in May 2020 to prioritise the food-insecurity repercussions of Covid-19 in the county, developing two programmes: to establish the Tea4Two initiative (which encourages players and spectators at local cricket games to donate food for local food banks, in lieu of cricket tea) and to fund **In The Bag, enabling the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership to distribute healthy recipes and ingredients to families in deprived areas of the city.** The decision to focus on the school break was precipitated by Marcus Rashford’s national awareness-raising on ‘holiday hunger’, which is experienced by many families who rely on free school meals to feed their children.

In the Bag has now taken place five times with funding from SCF, from summer 2020 to spring 2022. The idea has proved so popular that it is now part of the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership’s core offer.

In 2020, In The Bag was supported with funds from national fundraising effort Together Through This Test. One of SCF’s trustees appeared on internet-radio cricket channel Guerilla Cricket to talk about the Foundation’s food-insecurity initiatives, and Guerilla Cricket generously offered to run a fundraising campaign to support In the Bag at to fund In The Bag for half-term/Easter 2021. This raised more than £3,500 through a JustGiving page. SCF is very grateful to Guerilla Cricket and its listeners for such strong support at such a difficult time for everyone. Funding was also provided directly by SCF for the final round of In The Bag in winter 2021/2.



In The Bag distributed over 3,800 SCF-funded bags.

Summer 2020 (six weeks):	1,247 bags
Half-term 2021 (two weeks):	435 bags
Easter 2021 (two weeks):	438 bags
Summer 2021 (four weeks):	678 bags
Winter 2021/2 (five weeks):	1,013 bags



Partners: All the In The Bag kits were put together by a team of 12 Brighton & Hove Food Partnership volunteers, with the bags distributed by volunteer drivers to projects with which the Partnership has a track record of working. These organisations have trusted relationships with the families to whom the bags were then passed on – during lockdown restrictions, deliveries were made directly to families’ homes. Each round of In the Bag (approximately 200 per week) took about a day to make.

Over the course of nearly two years, the Food Partnership worked with around 15 local organisations – food banks and schools – in several areas of the city (Beavendean, Hangleton, North Portslade, Moulsecoomb, Phoenix Estate, Whitehawk and Woodingdean) and with the Children’s Centre Food Bank (which offers a city-wide food bank service for families with children under five), Extratime (an after-school club for families with children with disabilities) and Hangleton Youth Club.

‘I just wanted to say a big “thank you” from us all at Moulsecoomb for the amazing Meals in a Bag! They are really popular’ – The Community Kitchen, Moulsecoomb

‘The kits improved my outlook on what we choose in the shops, changing our diet, not just for me but for the kids as well’ – In The Bag dad

*‘Our children love making them – they cook quite a bit and love the element of surprise’
– In The Bag parent*

What was In The Bag? Each bag contained recipe kits: the recipe itself and all the ingredients needed to make the recipe apart from salt/pepper and oil. The ingredients were ready-weighed-out for ease, but recipes included amounts so that the families can make them again if they wish. The Food Partnership aimed for healthier recipes that included vegetables and/or fruit. Based on its extensive experience of teaching cookery, the Food Partnership chose recipes that were easy to make, that are known to work, and provide options for children’s involvement. Recipes included coconut and lentil dahl, leek and potato soup, veggie chilli, roasted veg and tomato sauce pasta and Spanish omelette.



The Food Partnership put a link on its community cookery Facebook page and on Instagram on how to prepare a leek, because it knows from cookery groups that this is a vegetable that people can be unsure about how to prepare (although in spring they are very affordable). Demonstration videos of some of the recipes are also now online to help people and to remain as a resource for the future.

*‘Today a young person said he made the soup for his mum and brought in printouts on paper of what he made. He is camera-shy, so covered his face. He said that his mum was going to get a hand blender because she had one that broke but has not been able to replace it. She was really pleased with the stick hand-blender! Also a young person told me that she made the soup for her whole family (there are six of them!) – she is only 11 years old. I was amazed that the children had done this and it made me realise what a valued little bag it really is’
– Hangleton Youth Club leader*



Also In the Bag: Each week, as well as the recipes and ingredients, other information and activities for the families were sent out. These included Sussex Cricket Foundation's activity book for children (sent at half-term while schools were still closed for lockdown) and information about local Street Cricket opportunities. And other things were included In The Bag too: stress-balls and information about mental wellbeing, activity cards from the national Veg Power campaign, fridge thermometers during for Food Waste Action Week, and mini frisbees. Some of the budding cooks in one of the youth clubs were given stick hand-blenders so that they could carry on making soups at home.



'Thank you to Sussex Cricket Foundation, Guerilla Cricket and everyone who donated to In The Bag! Over the last two difficult years, this scheme provided food and also joy to families in need. The financial support and enthusiasm of the team at SCF was instrumental in getting this new initiative going. In The Bag is now a core part of our work and we continue to fundraise to deliver recipe kits to families in poverty'
– Vic Borrill, director, Brighton & Hove Food Partnership

'In The Bag illustrates the power of partnership working. With the support of Guerilla Cricket, the operational skills of the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership and the community links of SCF working together, we have been able to deliver this innovative programme in a speedy and effective way, providing much-needed help to hundreds of families at a time of critical need. There is much to learn from this and to be proud of' – Sir Rod Aldridge, immediate past president, Sussex Cricket

'In the Bag is such an important cause and Guerilla Cricket have been honoured to help. We've formed quite a connection with the SCF and Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, and most importantly it's ensured over a thousand food bags are delivered where they will make a real difference'
– Tony Bishop, Guerilla Cricket commentator and marketing lead



Sussex Cricket Foundation

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