Exmouth Community Larder : November 2018

Six years ago the Exmouth Community Larder was started. The Salvation Army making their hall available and donations from the Littleham Harvest Festival got it going. About 50 people came to an initial meeting; some who volunteered then are still with us!

The way the team has evolved has been both exciting and satisfying, slowly settling into a routine way of working. Newcomers may comment on some things we do rather well - behind those is often a previous disaster from which we learnt!

Six years ago I offered to take on the role of "manager", which I was assured would need maybe half a day a week, perhaps two half days. Hey-Ho. After six years it is time for the team to move on, so I am resigning the role of "manager", and will limit anything I am asked to do to two half days maximum!

We started as part of Christians Together in Exmouth. and it has been increasingly clear that The Lord is a key part of the team. My qualifications are in Maths and Physics, not Theology, but the number of instances in which we have "got lucky" far exceeds the statistics of good luck, convincing me that The Lord does watch what is going on. I believe all prayers are answered, but maybe 95% of the answers are "you were given, arms, legs and brain - get on and sort it". On the other hand, some things we should have prayed about just worked out well even though we didn't see the problem coming!

The main Blessing that we have is a group of volunteers, some church based, many not, who have made The Larder what it is, so that the role of manager is not really needed, except maybe to carry the can or toss a coin in difficult situations.

Rev Simon Atkinson, of Brixington Community Church, has joined the Larder Leadership Team and taken the role of chairman. Simon was chair of CTE when The Larder started, so it runs full circle.

Working with the team has been an immensely satisfying period of my life, and as I enter my 80th year I look forward to playing a continued part while watching others running things, maybe differently. For instance, we maintain a website, whereas other foodbanks use Facebook. Maybe the Benefit system will change and agencies will change but people in need are still people in need. Without getting religious, the Bible gives us stories of 2,000 years ago which resonate today.

And meanwhile The Larder still needs someone to write the monthly bulletins, so I may continue to be around for a bit!!

Anthony Bernard
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www.exmouthlarder.co.uk