

## FOODBANK RUN



WHEN Sarah Donaghy's daughter Katie was stillborn in 2022, she was overwhelmed by the support from her local church.

Worshippers from Holy Rood Church in Stubbington made sure she was looked after and cooked meals for her family every day for two weeks. It inspired her to launch a project that is now feeding thousands of needy families across the country.

For three years, her local running club had selected one date each February when they brought donations for their local Foodbank on their training run. In 2018, 2019 and 2020, runners from Fareham Running Club brought piles of food to Holy Rood Church for Fareham Foodbank.

The Covid pandemic meant this couldn't happen in 2021. But in January 2022, Sarah's baby Katie was tragically stillborn. The loving response from her church prompted her to expand their Foodbank Run idea across the country. In 2023, more than 500 running groups took part and more than 336,000 meals provided.

It's due to happen again in February 2024, when even more joggers from across the country will carry donations for local Foodbanks on a winter training run. For mum-of-four Sarah, who also teaches at St John the Baptist C of E Primary in Waltham Chase, the project has become bigger than she ever imagined.

"It has gained such momentum," she said. "It started in 2018 when the running club secretary James suggested we ask runners to bring Foodbank donations on their training run. We were at Holy Rood waiting for people to arrive that night, expecting a couple of bag-fulls, and they just kept coming – 70 runners each carrying dozens of tins and packets of food. It just blew our mind.

"We did it again in the next two years in Fareham, and then Covid stopped us. When I was pregnant in 2022, I remember not being sure whether we could do it. Then Katie was stillborn, and we came home from hospital feeling very low.

"I remember Ethel from church knocking on the door with a meal and saying they'd organised people to bring us meals each day for the next two weeks. The fact that we received help and food when we needed it restored my faith, and made me think we should help others. So two weeks after giving birth we organised another Foodbank run, this time to Waypoint Church. It was the biggest response yet.

"A week later, at Katie's funeral, I remember telling our children the Bible story of Joseph. He had some low points, but ended up feeding a nation. We decided to needed to go nationwide and get other running groups involved, to help feed our nation. It was a real God moment, as I could visualise people who needed food being given it."

A running clothing company set up a website and Sarah spread the word to other running groups. Thousands of people took part last year, each running to a place that would collect for their local Foodbank. More than 77,000kg of donations were made. The idea won the National Running Show's best charity initiative of the year award.

Any runner can get involved. You can log onto the website at [www.runr.co.uk](http://www.runr.co.uk) and click on 'Foodbank run'. You can then see full instructions, register to take part and discover local groups getting involved via an interactive map.

This year's Foodbank Run in Fareham happens on February 27. Most of the runs around the country are scheduled for February, as this month is traditionally a low-point for Foodbank donations, which tend to peak at Harvest and Christmas.

The Fareham Foodbank, based at Waypoint Church in Titchfield Common, is one of those run by the Trussell Trust that our Bishop's Lent Appeal is raising money for. You can discover more about how to contribute via [www.portsmouth.anglican.org/lentappeal](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/lentappeal).

## The story behind the award-winning Food Bank Run movement

Members of Fareham Running Club making a delivery to Waypoint Church in

Locks Heath (*Image: Sarah Donaghy*)

[https://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/24091047.story-behind-award-winning-food-bank-run-movement/?fbclid=IwAR1xqEK-KOB7DThOgUV3svaO7H\\_NBCdLZZ6eY5AUEWyR\\_fhOnNMR8gIGKUY\\_aem\\_AegOJ2y-rktfSOn1u2uocmv4-xTg8ZoFv2f7QW9v3\\_eA95S6uxLI00oHRUIGj8S3yLo](https://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/24091047.story-behind-award-winning-food-bank-run-movement/?fbclid=IwAR1xqEK-KOB7DThOgUV3svaO7H_NBCdLZZ6eY5AUEWyR_fhOnNMR8gIGKUY_aem_AegOJ2y-rktfSOn1u2uocmv4-xTg8ZoFv2f7QW9v3_eA95S6uxLI00oHRUIGj8S3yLo)

