

# SR NEWS

WORKING TOGETHER IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL TO  
LOVING SERVICE OF THE WORLD.

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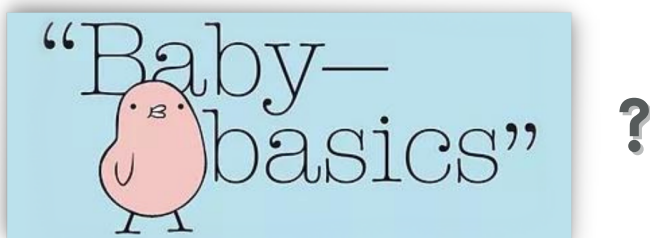
## Hope For All This Easter *by Kat Gibson and Emily Williams*

Happy Easter lovely people of Leicester Diocese! Traditionally, Easter is a season of rebirth and brings with it feelings of hopefulness. We see reminders of that all around us this time of year don't we? There's flowers coming up, longer days, warmer weather, tulips in the shops, we're able to meet with friends and family again - so much to be thankful for and hopeful about. In stark contrasts to that, our news channels and headlines are constantly reminding us that all is not well. There's war, deprivation, discrimination and crime, to name just a few. At a time when there's so many upsetting, scary and hurtful things going on it can feel overwhelming. Maybe you've had to stop reading the news or looking at the headlines to protect your mental health. That's ok. It's important that we are looking after ourselves as well as trying our best to serve our communities. Take a step back and be kind to yourselves when you're processing all the news and headlines. Then ask yourself; how can we help? How can we get involved and try to make a difference? What is it that my local community needs?

Hopefully this Issue of the SR News will help to answer some of those questions and will trigger helpful thoughts and ideas for you all.



## What is



Baby Basics Leicester is one of over 55 centres in the UK supporting vulnerable families with baby and toddler essentials and equipment they need. Currently the second busiest centre in the UK, we work with health professionals and other agencies to support those who are struggling to meet the financial and practical responsibilities of looking after a new baby or young child. Supporting refugees, victims of domestic abuse, teenage parents, those with mental health difficulties and families who can't make ends meet with finances.

So, what do we do? We prepare Moses basket starter kits for new babies as well as clothes, toys, books, buggies, highchairs, cots and bottle bundles. As well as this, we do clothes and toys up to 5 years of age which we have seen a huge increase in demand for during the last 2 years.



All independently run, I set up 4 1/2 years ago with Church of the Martyrs, where my husband had just started his Curacy. Over this time we have had many doors opened, from new volunteers, abundance of donations, financial support and much more. At times it was out of my comfort zone; a leap of faith, and it was a big learning curve from my day job as a primary school teacher. There is huge demand in Leicester and Leicestershire and we currently help over 55-60 families a month, sometimes those families needing a whole car load of essentials.

The pandemic has meant we have had to work in slightly different ways, as well as keep up with the ever increasing demand of our service. Last year we received a National Lottery Grant to pay for a new premise for 5 years. We have been waiting quite a while now to move into said premises and would value your prayers as we try to sit and wait patiently for the time to come.

Every few weeks we put wish lists of much needed items on our [Facebook page](#) and [website](#). We get an amazing response from our followers when seeking second hand items. For people who'd like to donate but don't have the items we also have an amazon wish. Our requirements change, depending on what we are short of so please do keep an eye on our page for the latest lists.

If you have any inquiries or donations, please check out our [Facebook Page](#) or [website](#) and get in touch. Once we move to a bigger premise we will also have room for more willing volunteers too to help carry on our growing work.



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# BSL - So What?

*"Thank you so much for all of your interest in learning BSL. I cannot believe the google search for learning sign-language has increased by 488% AMAZING 😊"*

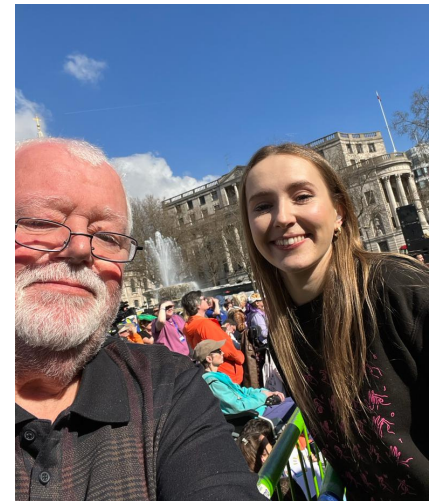
Source: Twitter



Image credit: BBC

Last year Rose Ayling-Ellis took part in BBC Strictly Come Dancing which raised a huge amount of awareness for the Deaf community and for BSL. This year has been a significant year for the Deaf community both locally and nationally across England, the BSL Act has been approved in parliament and is now working its way through the House of Lords and then once ratified will go back into Parliament and then on for royal assent.

On January 28th a small group of us went to Parliament square to join the British Deaf association and many others to hear the outcome on the BSL Act's second reading. The support in parliament was overwhelming. On March 18th, during British Sign Language week, which is also the date marking the Governments recognition of BSL in 2003 as a national minority language, the third reading of the act was read in Parliament. Thousands of Deaf People descended upon London – the gathering had to move from Parliament Square to Trafalgar Square to cater for the masses!! A huge screen was erected to watch the live debate. A coach from our Deaf Centre in Leicester went along to show support.



## What led to this moment?

In 1880 during the Milan conference, it was voted to ban Signed Languages, switching wholly towards the oral method of approach for teaching the Deaf across Europe and USA. Overnight Deaf teachers lost their jobs, and there was a rapid decline in Deaf professional's e.g. writers, artists and lawyers.

In 2010 During the 21st Congress in Canada, 'on the education of the Deaf, a formal apology was made by the board accepting the devastating ramifications of this ban and that it was an act of discrimination and violation of both human and constitutional rights of Deaf people.

## BSL - So What? Cont.

Since 1880 the education of many Deaf people has been affected. We witness the effects in our Deaf centre in Leicester, 12Frog Island, to this day. We provide BSL interpreters and letter translation services to assist the Deaf community with accessing information and dealing with correspondence, accessing online information and telephone calls. All of this remains inaccessible to them, because they are in written English. The Leicester Deaf Forum works hard to raise awareness and breakdown barriers for the local community.

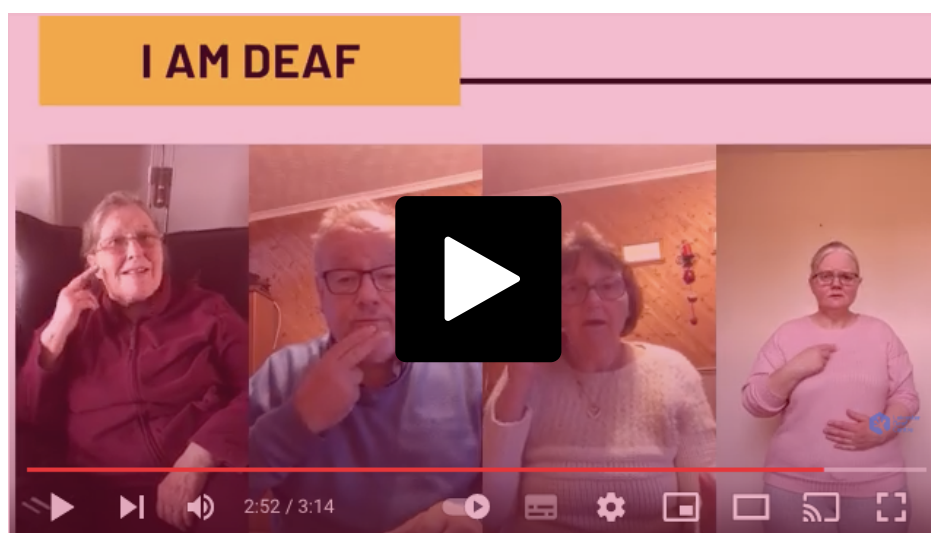
### What does this Act mean for those who communicate in 'BSL' ?

The BSL act will pave the way towards improving access and equality for many Deaf people. The Deaf community face many barriers in terms of access to information in their own language. The act will bring access into law. The current equalities act does not currently include BSL as part of the reasonable adjustments needed to be made. It is important to note that BSL and English are two very distinct languages. BSL is not a spoken language. It is a visual mode of communication with its own grammatical structure and syntax. Consisting of signs, facial expressions, body language, placement and role shift. It is visual and communication relies upon sight. Many Deaf people find reading English difficult; it is hard to learn English without access to the sounds of the language from birth. This makes websites and postal mail inaccessible.

### What can I do?


There are a few ways you can get involved and can support the Deaf community:

- Educate yourself on what it's like to be Deaf.
- Are there changes or additions you can make at your church that would help your services or midweek groups to be more accessible?
- Keep up with updates and ways you can get involved on the [Leicester Deaf Centre Facebook](#).
- Watch the below video made by Leicester Deaf Centre - "I am Deaf"



# How Can We Respond to The Rise in Cost of Living?


The UK is entering a “cost-of-living crisis”. Energy prices are rising, uncertainty in Europe has sent fuel prices skyrocketing, national insurance is going up, food prices have quadrupled in the last 10 years and “two and a half million citizens were forced by an array of desperate circumstances to use food banks in the last year”.


 The Guardian

**Jump in UK wages fails to keep pace with cost of living**

Britain's cost of living crisis moved into its fourth consecutive month in February despite a jump in wages and a fall in unemployment to...

2 hours ago




 The Guardian

**Cost of living crisis: UK benefits plunge to lowest value in 50 years**

Scheduled 3.1% rise in state pension and benefits fails to keep up with 8% hike in prices of essentials and energy.

1 day ago



 Sky News

**Cost of living crisis: More people are worried about their finances than about catching COVID-19**

The changes reflect concerns about the rise in the cost of living, while the lifting of COVID restrictions in England has affected how...

1 hour ago



None of this is news to us. Every single person has noticed the increase in cost of living. There's no escaping it. What might be news to us is that there are a few different ways that we and our churches can help! There are wonderful local food banks in most areas who support those in need of urgent food supplies. However, many are still ashamed to seek help and there are those who have only just started to secretly struggle or can't access a food bank. How can we help them?

Community Fridges are now a normal feature of many communities. They aim to reduce food waste and encourage social & skill sharing spaces all around the country. The Hub Bub Organisation now claim to have 250 fridges operating around the UK and have an ongoing partnership with The Co-op, who provide grant funding that covers initial set up costs. This is a great project for community engagement. It helps further a churches ecological goals and can be a tool for missional outreach. The Fridge must be registered with your local council and food hygiene standards must be officially reported and maintained. Often it involves a good rota of volunteers, and even a hired member of staff to operate this kind of project, but it can be adapted to suit your context. You can find out more about setting up a Community Fridge [here](#).

# How Can We Respond to The Rise in Cost of Living? Cont.

An alternative to this idea is to set up a Social Supermarket. One local example of this is [The Leicester Community Shop](#) whose aim is “to provide people in Leicester with low-cost food and household essentials while reducing food waste in our community.” This project works on a membership basis, a nominal £5 per year, which gives members access to fresh and high quality products but for low cost. You can get more details [here](#).



A simplified idea, which can also address both issues explained above, is a Community Pantry. This can be a basic freestanding shelving unit within your church building, or an alternative accessible location in your parish, which hosts tinned and long-lasting items donated from the community. It can also be a place where extra items from local gardens or allotments can be brought to give away in the appropriate season, or local sellers can donate items as a generous gift (for example, in my community; farmers eggs, or fresh milk). It's an affordable and maintainable project which is open to everyone but can provide assistance to those who haven't yet accessed other support. It can also serve as a way to reduce food waste and show the church's commitment to serving their community in practical ways. The Community Pantry is also a signposting tool, displaying other useful services that people can access, such as food waste reduction apps like [Olio](#) or [To Good To Go](#), or local debt counselling projects and, of course, food banks.



Just this month the diocese saw the joint ecumenical launch of two new food pantries in two Leicester city churches, one Anglican and one operated by a Moravian congregation in a Methodist church hall. Archdeacon Richard and Moravian Bishop Joachim visited both food pantries, at All Saints Belgrave and Wesley Hall Methodist church, and prayed for the two projects as they opened their doors for the first time.

Alison Adams, speaking to BBC East Midlands News, commented on the expanding need for these initiatives due to the rising cost of living: "There is a whole group of people out there now who probably can't make ends meet, but who could previously have made ends meet, wondering where their next meal is coming from."

Please do have a think about how you or your church could respond to this crisis. There are plenty of helpful links above to help you get started.

# Leicester's Concert for Ukraine

The response to the Ukraine refugee crisis has been overwhelming. So many of you within the diocese have shown practical or financial support to those in need. Coming up is another great way to get involved, have some fun and support the cause.

On Saturday 8th May at De Montfort Hall from 2pm there will be a concert for Ukraine with 100% of ticket sales being donated to the [DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal](#). The concert features a vibrant celebration of Ukrainian Dance and Music, Local Personalities, Curve Theatre, Leicester Cathedral Choir, Musicians, Gospel Choir, Massed Choir, Singers and more to be announced soon... Do find out more and book tickets [here](#).



**Keep a look out for  
our next issue  
coming out in June!**

