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MEDIA RELEASE

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Push for food bank donations as school holidays approach

Local food banks are warning that supplies could run low during summer months, as families rely on their services during the school holidays, yet fewer donations come in.

Looking to address the issue, **Lincolnshire Co-op** is organising **11 food bank drive events** this summer, hosted at food stores in Lincoln, North Hykeham, Sutton Bridge, Morton Bourne, Collingham, Morton, Chapel St. Leonards, Billingham, Holton Le Clay and Kilton. *You can find dates, times and locations of the events in notes to editors.*

The society's **community team** can also work with local organisations such as schools, charities and businesses to run their own food bank drives. Contact the team via community@lincolnshire.coop or 01522 544 632.

Mary Leggett, Senior Community Co-ordinator at Lincolnshire Co-op, said: *"We have a team of community co-ordinators, who each cover a different geographical area, and build close*

relationships with their communities. This means we understand what is needed and how we can help.

“From these close relationships, we know that during autumn, food banks receive more donations, due to harvest festivals. Then, at Christmas, they will often see another influx, due to initiatives like our Secret Santa campaign.

“However, when summer comes around, these supplies have started to dwindle, but the need is still there, as many families need the support while children are off school.

“We’re encouraging our communities to get involved with our food bank drives, by bringing food essentials to the events or by contacting our community team to organise their own.”

Last year, local food banks saw the **equivalent of 3,500 meals** donated through summer food bank drives at nine Lincolnshire Co-op food stores.

Isabel Forrester, Volunteer at **Horncastle Community Larder**, said: *“Like many other food banks, we provide support for our communities when crisis situations arise. Many working families are budgeting week-by-week and when something unexpected occurs, it makes a huge difference to know that support is available.*

“The school holidays are a time when support through the education network and known professionals is harder to access, and so having another source of food support is vital.

“We need our communities to support us, so that we can support others. By working together, we can ensure that nobody in our communities goes hungry.”

Currently, Lincolnshire Co-op members, colleagues and customers are working together to raise vital funds for **42 local food banks**, through the society’s **Community Champions scheme**, which sees hundreds of thousands of pounds donated to local good causes each year.

Each time a member shops with their dividend card, a donation is made. Customers can donate change into collection boxes in the co-op’s outlets, and colleagues host fundraising events, such as raffles or bake sales.

In March, the scheme saw **£715** donated to **The King’s Church of England Primary Academy** in Newark, enabling the school to buy supplies for its own food and hygiene hub, which is available to students and their families during term time.

Headteacher, Sarah Clarke, said: *“We started our community food and hygiene hub due to safeguarding concerns, which often stemmed back to a simple lack of resource, and demonstrated an obvious need for the service.”*

“We wanted to do something that would support our families and create a provision that they could access without fear of judgement. It is open to everyone, which helps to remove the stigma around it.

“But most importantly, if a child comes in and is unwashed or hungry, we can make a discreet call to their parent or guardian and signpost to the service; ensuring supplies are reaching those who really need it.”

To get involved, bring food essentials to Lincolnshire Co-op’s food bank drives or donate a food item via the food bank collection points in any Lincolnshire Co-op food store. You can also contact the Community team on community@lincolnshire.coop or 01522 544 632 to help set up your own food bank drive.

Ends

**For more information contact:
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CONTACT DETAILS NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Notes to editors:

1. **Lincolnshire Co-op** is an independent co-operative society. Its purpose is to bring together ideas, energy and resources to make life better in communities. It has around 300,000 members and 2,900 local colleagues in Lincolnshire and the surrounding counties and an elected board of directors who oversee the business.
The society provides **valued services** and supports the **local economy** from outlets across its trading area including food stores, filling stations, post offices, travel branches, funeral homes, a florist, a crematorium and community libraries. It also cares for people’s **health and wellbeing** through its pharmacies and support for a network of wellbeing walks. Local good causes benefit through its Community Champions scheme and together, colleagues and members also look after the **local environment** through volunteering.

As well as its trading outlets, Lincolnshire Co-op owns properties, from flats and houses to commercial premises. The society brings land and buildings back into use to create attractive environments. With Lincolnshire Co-op as landlord, rents stay local and are invested in schemes that benefit the community.

2. Food bank drive events:

Wednesday 3rd June – Sutton Bridge Food Store, 10am to 4pm

Monday 15th June – Hykeham Green Food Store, North Hykeham, 10am to 4pm

Thursday 2nd July – Morton Bourne Food Store, 12pm to 6pm

Friday 3rd July – Collingham Food Store, 10am to 3pm

Monday 6th July – Morton Food Store, 10am to 3pm

Tuesday 7th July – Chapel St. Leonards Food Store, **time TBC**

Thursday 9th July – Billingham Food Store, 10am to 3pm

Friday 10th July – Carlton Centre Food Store, Lincoln, 10am to 4pm

Wednesday 15th July – Holton Le Clay Food Store, 10am to 4pm

Thursday 16th July – Kilton Food Store, 10:30am to 3:30pm

Wednesday 22nd July – Springfield Road Food Store, Grantham, 10am to 3pm