

The Bridge (East Midlands)



"The social supermarket is going to be a great addition to the work we do, it will allow people experiencing poverty to shop at a much lower cost giving them extra money to either pay off debt or just to live more comfortably." Gemma Skevington, Food Poverty Development Officer

Intelligent Energy Charitable Trust first launched in January 2019 with the aim to make a positive impact on the local community it operates within. The Charitable Trust supports charitable and voluntary organisations, local to Intelligent Energy's headquarters in Loughborough, which support and aid amongst others; community groups, young people, sport and lifelong learning.

The Trust currently distributes £100,000 each year and several organisations have already benefited from funding awards, including The Bridge who were awarded £22,015 in 2019.

The Bridge (East Midlands) is a local charity that provides a range of support to homeless and vulnerably housed people across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. They offer specialist housing related advice, support and accommodation options to those in need, as well as food bank facilities.

At the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, Charnwood Food Poverty Group (CFPG), led by The Bridge, worked with Charnwood Community Action to create a food bank at John Storer House as an emergency response. To date, this food bank has sent out over 24,000 parcels to those in need within the Charnwood community.

Paul Snape, Deputy Chief Officer at The Bridge, said: *"As lead organisation for Charnwood Food Poverty Group, we are big champions of Your Store and have been instrumental in its development with John Storer Charnwood and our colleagues at the local authority. I am excited about this genuine partnership approach to tackling food poverty in the borough"*.

The £22,015 awarded by Intelligent Energy was used to part fund a Food Poverty Development Officer who is responsible for developing food provisions across the Borough, including supporting the development of the new social supermarket.

The Officer also supports other food banks in the locality to encourage a more joined up approach to tackling food poverty. The introduction of this role is estimated to benefit around 7,800 people annually through the work it does and the support it provides.

Gemma Skevington, Food Poverty Development Officer said: *"This donation has allowed me to focus not only on the immediate response, but to develop and put in place a new model of food provision to help people to no longer be dependent on food banks and give them an opportunity to step out of their crisis situation."*

Through the contributions by Intelligent Energy, The Bridge has been able to build on the partnership with Charnwood Borough Council to be able to facilitate new ways to tackle local food poverty. The store in Loughborough is a pilot scheme for a year and it is hoped it will become self-sustaining over time, through income from members shopping there, sponsorship and donations.

To find out more about Intelligent Energy's Charitable Trust and to download an application form visit: www.intelligent-energy.com/about-ie/charitable-trust or email charitable.trust@intelligent-energy.com