

A REVIEW OF CHRISTMAS 2025

For the second year, Battle Abbey School generously hosted our Hamper Project. We are incredibly grateful for their continued hospitality and support.

Working with Health Visitors, Schools, Social Workers and other local agencies, we received more nominations than ever before across Hastings and Rother areas. Although we planned for 850 hampers, we delivered over 1,000.

This simply could not happen without our volunteers. From packing and lifting, to driving and solving last minute problems. Their dedication made the entire campaign possible.

We also thank our partner agencies, whose support ensured every hamper reached those who needed it most.

Supermarket collections once again proved invaluable, providing food and funding for an extra 53 hampers when demand exceeded expectations.

Preparations began well before packing week, with volunteers unloading deliveries, assembling boxes donated by Saica in Reading, and preparing the site. Even when part of our food order failed to arrive, extra collection runs and determined teamwork kept everything on track.

Alongside our regular volunteers, we were delighted to welcome teams from Balfour Beatty, Littlewood's Fencing, TriangleFire Systems the DWP, Ministry of Housing, together with Hailsham Young Farmers.

Donations from schools, churches, businesses and individuals further boosted our supplies.

Again, our thanks to K Drury & Sons for their invaluable support on delivering our hamper order.

Over five busy days volunteers packed and delivered hampers often using their own vehicles. Despite bad weather and late referrals, the week was full of teamwork and humour. Tesco and Morrisons also donated bags for life, helping us provide flexible food support where needed.

Each family hamper included carefully chosen gifts for each child. Thanks to charity funding, the More Radio Toy Appeal and generous public donations, we distributed over 1,000 toys, ensuring Christmas reached children as well as adults.

SANTA'S GROTTTO (20 DECEMBER)

Our volunteers built Santa's Grotto at His Place Community Church, whose warm welcome we greatly appreciate.

Children from families receiving our hampers enjoyed meeting Santa, festive treats, wrapped presents and our ever-popular lucky dip. Rosie the Pony returned too, delighting children with photos and cuddles.

The childrens' smiles reminded us why this event matters. For many children, it was their only chance to experience the magic of Christmas before the big day.

CHRISTMAS DAY AND BOXING DAY

Volunteers transformed His Place into a welcoming festive venue for our Christmas and Boxing Day celebrations.

Guests enjoyed hot meals, conversation, games, films and entertainment with music and dancing, alongside practical support including health advice, hairdressing, hand massage and eye care.

Our amazing volunteers, trustees and committee members, created a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere with light refreshments in addition to the sit down meal.

Meanwhile, our amazing chef Adam and his kitchen team served around 150 Christmas Day lunches and 100 Boxing Day meals using generous donations of fresh produce from local suppliers. Our thanks also to the students and staff of Hastings College Catering Department for their prep of the turkeys and bubble and squeak.

The success of Surviving Christmas is built on the dedication of our volunteers, trustees, partner agencies and supporters and we also need to thank FreshOnline for continuing to provide and maintain our website.

If you'd like to get involved this year please join us at our AGM in November 2026 (date to be confirmed), or register via our website to volunteer and help make Christmas brighter for local people who need us most.