



60 SECOND INTERVIEW WITH SEAN ROSS OF DOLLIS HILL

For Mutual Aid Food Willesden (MAFW)

A food hub offering emergency essential boxes locally during Covid-19



From left: Sean Ross with Danny of Ashford Place homeless charity and son, Reuben Ross, in the food hub

Q *Can you tell us about yourself?*

I am married with two teenage boys and love to cook. Inadvertently I ended up a teacher even though I swore I never would because my parents are teachers! I'm now a secondary social studies teacher with a strong lean towards social justice.

Q *How did you hear about Mutual Aid Food Willesden?*

I heard about it through a combination of friends and Facebook. I originally joined Dudden Hill Mutual Aid because that is where I previously lived and then moved over to Dollis Hill and then **volunteered for the food hub across Brent.**

Q *Have you noticed any changes as a result of Covid-19 lockdown?*

Covid-19 has **affected everybody's lives** but there is a perception that the need which is magnified right now is because of Covid-19 but actually I think that it is just part of a **systemic problem** which is being **highlighted in lockdown**. As we come out of this crisis, we must **stay connected** and create a **long-term solution** to these issues of **inequality**.

Q *Can you tell us how you're involved helping provide essential aid?*

Mutual Aid Food Willesden is working in **collaboration** with a number of **other food organisations and areas**. As I volunteer at the centre and deliver, it's **great to see various connections and partnerships** across the borough as this collaborative **network grows**.

Initially I helped with everything from the organisation and structure to cleaning toilets! Now I run the Tuesday shift at the food hub and cover other shifts and deliver food aid to wherever its needed when required.

Having lived most of my life in Brent and as a member of the food hub team, I try hard to provide a narrative of inclusivity.

Q *Are there any stories that you could share?*

Yesterday we had a call back from a parent who received an essential box that included some games and puzzles for the children. The mother called to say how grateful she was not only for the food but that we had **listened to the problems** she shared on the phone about occupying the kids and although the food was necessary, she also **felt heard**.

Q *How would you sum up the value of Mutual Aid Food Willesden?*

“ It's so amazing that in such a short space of time the **community has risen** to meet the need, to **work together** and **support one another**.

It is great that we are **meeting the need**, but it also **saddens me that the need is there**.



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