

WEST END FINAL Evening Standard



THANK YOU LONDON

» OUR FOOD FOR LONDON APPEAL HITS **£10 MILLION** AND DELIVERS **20 MILLION** MEALS

Dear London

TODAY our Food for London Now appeal surpassed its target of raising £10 million to feed London's poorest.

Nine months ago, when the UK first entered a historic lockdown to tackle a novel threat, we set ourselves a challenge. The situation was grave: the economy was flatlining, community organisations saw their funding slashed and many could not leave their homes or access essentials. We

are a commuter paper and we felt the pain of the pandemic almost as acutely as many others. So we resolved to do what we could to help Londoners who needed it at this difficult time; and give people the tools to help each other.

We have worked with The Felix Project, the country's largest food redistribution charity, to supply hospitals, schools, and frontline charities such as With Compassion. Through the generosity of readers, we were able to turbocharge the operations of The Felix Project: in February it distributed

20,000 meals per day; now it does 100,000 per day. Our journalists have travelled the length and breadth of the city, shining a light on the people and organisations doing their bit to help local communities. We have also told the stories of those who have suffered the most from Covid-19.

As I wrote in March, the Evening Standard is Britain's foremost campaigning newspaper. We don't only report on the facts; we try to make a difference. In the spirit of that, this victory is also the first step towards opening a social kitchen for London, as a

lasting commitment to tackling hunger in our capital.

But for now, this letter is for all those who worked on the campaign, for all the volunteers who gave their time to help others and for all the supporters who donated their resources. There is only one thing left to say: thank you, London.

Evgeny Lebedev
Proprietor

As queues for food grew, so did



FOOD for LONDON NOW
Evening Standard appeal

Helping vulnerable youngsters not to worry about their next meal during the nightmare of Covid is your legacy

**David Cohen
and Oliver Poole**

NINE months ago, when we launched Food For London Now from a standing start 72 hours after lockdown, we did it because we feared food poverty would soar as vulnerable families came under pressure. We partnered with The

Felix Project, London's biggest surplus food distributor, and were the first British newspaper out of the blocks with a campaign.

Initially we thought raising £3 million to support Felix would be enough, but as the hunger crisis deepened, we set the bold goal of raising £10 million and founding central

London's largest community "dark kitchen". It was a hugely ambitious ask and we risked being embarrassed by falling short, but last week's revelations in the Standard that the university-educated middle classes now comprise 10 per cent of the food-bank queue exemplifies just how bad things have become.

We had high hopes that this Government would step in to match-fund our efforts, but Felix got a risible £150,000. It was barely enough to cover two weeks of operating costs, yet nothing more was forthcoming, despite heavy criticism in the House of Lords that the Government was not doing enough and advice from the National Food Strategy — commissioned by ministers and delivered by Leon founder Henry Dimbleby — that charities like Felix were excellent value for money.

Nevertheless, with food bank queues swelling, donations poured in, including — remarkably — more than £1 million from ordinary members of the public. We secured large corporate and philanthropic backers, including £250,000 or more from each of Ocado, Morgan Stanley, Barclays, Citi, the Garfield Weston Foundation, Lansdowne Partners and the Evening Standard's Dispossessed Fund.

Stars turned out in force to energise our effort, with Olivia Colman, Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Jack Whitehall, Melissa

YOU CAN STILL MAKE DONATIONS

Our appeal can still take donations. Throughout December, together with our sister title The Independent, we will be delivering food directly to 1,000 Londoners a day through our partner **With Compassion**. Please donate here to help ensure no Londoner goes hungry this Christmas.

HOW TO GIVE

Scan the QR code or use the link below:

gfme.co/foodforlondon



Hemsley, Spurs footballer Moussa Sissoko and rapper KSI all going out on the road to volunteer for Felix. The Duchess of Sussex gave her backing by Zoom.

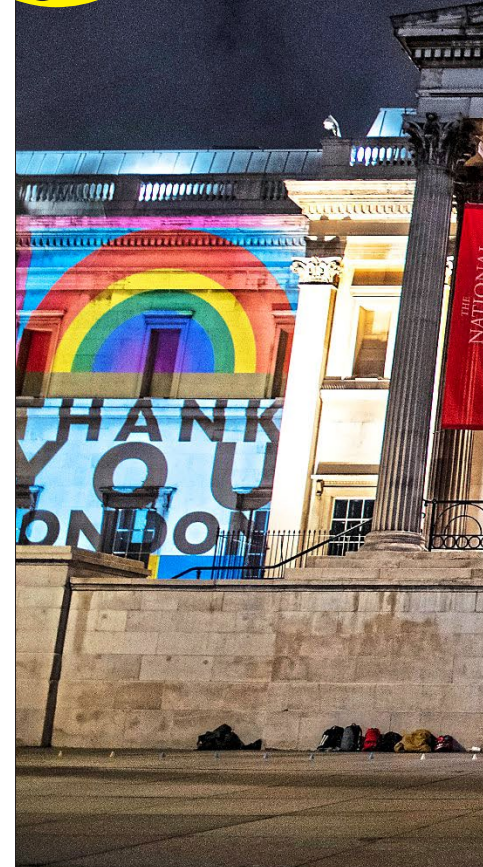
We activated the giants of the art world. Damien Hirst and Sir Peter Blake made new art works that were sold on our behalf, raising over £1.7 million. Sir Antony Gormley, Ai Weiwei, Tracey Emin, Anish Kapoor, Yinka Shonibare and Bridget Riley donated or auctioned pieces for our campaign.

The steady supply of funding enabled Felix to scale up in a remarkable — almost military-like — way, quadrupling deliveries to a massive 40 tonnes a day. Six days a week for the past nine months, Felix's 25 green vans have fanned out across London, ferrying food parcels to food banks and charities supporting struggling families — as well as the homeless, refugees, domestic abuse shelters, elderly shielded people and people with mental health problems.

Felix has supplied an astounding 20 million meals to 600 charities and

STARS BACK OUR APPEAL

standard.co.uk/ffln



SOME of London's most iconic landmarks have been lit up with symbols of gratitude and solidarity to thank the public for supporting our campaign to fight food poverty.

St Paul's Cathedral, the National Gallery and Piccadilly Circus all played host to breathtaking artworks that captured the spirit of our Food For London Now appeal, which has handed out 20 million meals and raised £10 million since March.

As dawn reached over Piccadilly Circus, its world famous advertising screens were taken over by a



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schools since lockdown. That is an incredible effort that you, our readers, can be proud of. It boggles the mind to imagine how much worse things would have been for hard-up Londoners without your support.

Helping vulnerable Londoners not to worry where their next meal was coming from is part of our — and your — pandemic legacy.

And now, with the planned opening of the community dark kitchen in the New Year, an initiative to employ 15 chefs and kitchen staff to cook and deliver 1.5 million meals to Londoners in need every year, we have created a permanent resource that will assuage hunger in the capital long after Covid.

your generosity. We're grateful



"Strength and solidarity":
Piccadilly Circus and the National Gallery were illuminated with artwork by Peter Blake after the Food For London Now appeal handed out 20 million meals

Landmarks light up as we thank amazing supporters who brought London together

celebration of the incredible fundraising effort created by pop artist Peter Blake exclusively for our campaign and displayed to the public for the first time.

Scarlett, 23, who stopped to take a picture of projection, said the results of the campaign had been "amazing". "I love the way it lit up the pavement," she

added of the Blake illustration, which thanked Londoners for their support.

Matthew Flood of the lights' operator Landsec said it had been a "privilege" to be able to share "some of the amazing achievements of Londoners as they volunteer, work and donate to bring the city together". The

Blake design also covered the front of the National Gallery, where crowds took in the spectacle last night, and the dome of St Paul's cathedral in the heart of the city.

Mother-of-one Ilona, 42, said: "The pandemic has made life so tough for many. The Government do not realise

how tough it has been for all of us but yes what you're doing as a newspaper — working with all these charities — is helping many people, I'm sure."

Dr Gabriele Finaldi, the director of the National Gallery, said it was "delighted" to support the appeal and celebrate the way people had come together.

And deputy mayor Justine Simons said the artwork — which also adorned the face of the gallery during the first lockdown — served as "a sign of strength and solidarity".

"It is a campaign that has made a real difference and will be more important

than ever ahead of a Christmas that will be like no other," she added.

The Dean of St Paul's, the Very Rev Dr David Ison, said: "This year has been so difficult for many people in London and beyond, so it was great to be able to project hope onto the iconic Dome of St Paul's in the week leading up to Christmas."

Celebrating the work of our appeal partner The Felix Project, he added: "If you can, do support their work in bringing hope to others."

Vincent Wood and Abbianca Makoni

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