

Lent focus on food crisis

BY SALLY HAMBLIN

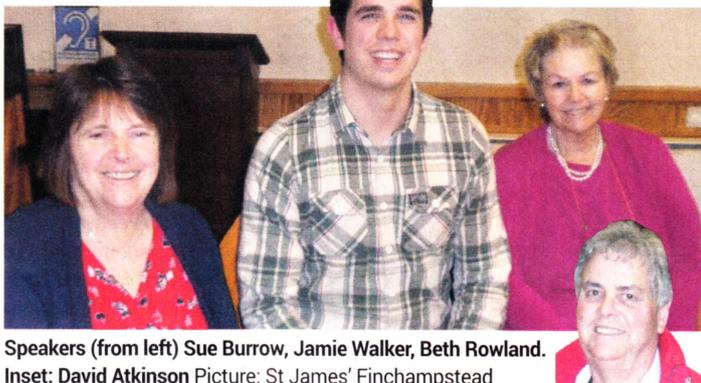
EVERY Tuesday during Lent, St James Church in Finchampstead holds a weekly lecture.

Xn has summaries of each of the series on our website, xnmedia.co.uk. This is an edited extract of a panel discussion held on Tuesday, March 25.

The panel comprised Sue Burrow, a volunteer at the Crowthorne Food Bank (CFB); Jamie Walker, Sport & Community Outreach Officer at Finchampstead Baptist Centre and involved with the Finchampstead Food Bank Agency (FFBA), which operates as a satellite of CFB.

Beth Rowland is admin director at Community Savings & Loans (Berkshire) Ltd; a credit union which serves those who live or work in Berkshire. It offers savings facilities and affordable loans to its members and is a local alternative to the high street bank, doorstep or pay-day loan lenders.

The panel members stressed how important these services are to the community, illustrating



Speakers (from left) Sue Burrow, Jamie Walker, Beth Rowland. Inset: David Atkinson Picture: St James' Finchampstead

the point by describing the issues and hardship some of their clients were facing. They personally have found their work extremely rewarding and they encouraged the audience in St James' Church Centre to do what they could to help.

A few examples for consideration were: educating young people on money management and running literacy and computer-skills courses for adults to enable essential form-filling.

David Atkinson, a member of the audience and also a volunteer at the Wokingham Food Bank,

joined in a Q&A session.

John Edwards summarised the evening by saying how deep seated the issues raised were for Christians, and that "a follow-up session would give a further opportunity to reflect on what we had heard and to consider our response."

❖ **The final lecture in the series takes place on Tuesday, April 8. The guest will be Mabel Boyd, who will talk about the work of the Churches in Reading Drop-in Centre. The session starts at 7.45pm and everyone is welcome.**

❖ **Read the full version of this report on our website, xnmedia.co.uk**