

Rising energy and food costs are continuing to cause worry and stress for more and more families.

As a socialist I believe that by the strength of our common endeavour we achieve more than we do alone – and that's even more true in times like these.

We saw the latest example of some great teamwork last week with the official launch of the St Helens Borough Mobile Pantry van.

It really is heart-warming and reassuring to know there are so many good people and organisations out there doing everything they can to help those in need.

Just like our community response to the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, our common endeavour is what's made the mobile pantry a reality. Halton and St Helens Voluntary Community Action, Mission in the Economy, Fans Supporting Foodbanks, St Helens Food Alliance, our Council and many more all played a key role and I'm in awe of everyone involved.

It's St Helens Together in action, and I'm very proud to see that name and logo on the side of the van.

For most families, the current crisis is causing unprecedented choices and difficulties. But the fact is that we've all suffered over the last decade.

And as great as St Helens Together and the mobile food pantry is, it should utterly shame the government that it's needed at all.

The Resolution Foundation has reported this week that the average worker is £11,000 a year worse off than they should be after 13 years of appalling economic management and political crisis after crisis.

And last week the government revealed yet another budget that makes the top 1% of earners better off and does little if anything for ordinary working people. For example, the childcare announcement which grabbed many headlines will only come into effect in a couple of years, helping those who haven't even been born yet. It's great for them and much needed, but equally it's of no use at all to families struggling right now.

If you need help there is absolutely no shame in reaching out, and food pantries are open to all.

You can find out more and register for the mobile pantry at sthelensmobilepantry.org.uk, and find out more about the local food pantry network, foodbanks, help with bills, housing and more at www.sthelens.gov.uk/sthelenstogether.

Best wishes to all Star readers.