

the oxford food bank

FEEDING THE COMMUNITY - PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Reporting for action!



Over the last year food banks have featured strongly in the news, with an ongoing debate about the main causes of food poverty and the best ways to solve the problem. December 2014 saw the culmination of a lengthy All Party Parliamentary enquiry into hunger in the UK with the issue of two reports (an Evidence Review and a Report titled 'Feeding Britain').

Both of these reports are downloadable at: www.oxfordfoodbank.org/about-us/news

This followed close on the heels of an October 2014 Oxford University report by Annelise Bissett which included some eye-opening statistics on the amount of waste reduction achieved by OFB together with the recommendation that the OFB model should be adopted throughout the country.

Eco-energy at Agrivert

OFB aims to reduce food waste by keeping food nearing the end of its usable life in the human food chain, but inevitably a small proportion of the produce supplied to us has to be disposed of because it has become inedible.

Since February 2015 OFB has been taking its excess food waste to the Agrivert plant at Cassington. In the words of OFB Director Robin Aitken "We needed to find a better way of disposing of our waste. Oxford Food Bank is all about sustainability and the Agrivert, bio-digestion plant turning waste into electricity which can feed into the National Grid, is an ideal green solution for us."



From left, David Kay, Robin Aitken and Cathy Howard of OFB, Harry Waters and Andrew Simm of Agrivert at the anaerobic digestion plant near Cassington.

Nominet gears up for fundraising push



Nominet Team at a recent cycling-themed Company Day

Oxford based internet company Nominet, which has been supporting us as its chosen charity since October 2013 is gearing up for a fundraising push over the coming months. The company, best known for running the UK domain name registry, has already raised more than £16k and recently refreshed its charity group with two new staff members stepping up to take the lead. Fundraising events planned for the summer include Wimbledon themed strawberries & cream and a summer raffle.

Simply the best.....

Yes, it's official, Oxford Food Bank has Oxfordshire's Best Team of Volunteers, as confirmed on February 4th at the 2015 Oxfordshire Charity and Volunteer Awards ceremony in Oxford Town Hall.

Having been shortlisted for two awards our hopes were up at the start of the evening, only to be cruelly dashed when we were pipped to the post by Bicester Green in the Environmental Award category.

Several tense minutes followed before OFB were announced as winners of the Best Team of Volunteers Award and a happy trio of representatives (David Kay, Cathy Howard and Brian Johns, as pictured below with Danny Crane-Brewer from award sponsors Hunts on the left) trooped on stage to enthusiastic applause all round.



In the words of OFB Chair David Cairns "This award is recognition of the true essence of the Oxford Food Bank which is 100-plus dedicated volunteers coming together and working hard, week in and week out in their own spare time to achieve the objectives of the charity. Quite simply without them we wouldn't exist"

All together now "simply the best, better than all the rest ..."

Meet the team—volunteer profiles

With over 100 volunteers at any one time we can't introduce them all personally in one go, but here are three of our enthusiastic helpers for starters.

Nick Walker



Nick Walker loading an OFB van with food waste to take to Agrivert

"I have found volunteering at the Oxford Foodbank just what I needed - I was between jobs and wanted some structure to my week, and was looking for something that would hopefully do some good in the community.

Before I worked at the Foodbank, my image of a foodbank was serried rows of tins being given out to individuals. The role has given me an insight into the logistics of storing and delivering fresh food, and also taught me about fresh food I'd never heard of and given me lots of recipe ideas - the creative approach by community organisation chefs to using the ingredients, having to think on their feet as they don't know what will be on the van, has been an education!

The work of disposing of waste food in a sustainable way using anaerobic digestion, (the hidden, less glamorous, but essential part of the Oxford Foodbank model), has also been extremely interesting. Working alongside lots of people from different backgrounds on all the different shifts, and meeting people at all the organisations we deliver to, particularly around my own neighbourhood, has been very rewarding."



Philippa Hack delivering food to O'Hanlon House

Philippa Hack

"I'm a student in Oxford, and began volunteering with the food bank around four months ago after a taster session hosted by the Oxford Hub's 'Student Volunteering Week.' I take two to three shifts a week on a fairly irregular schedule.

Volunteering here gives the priceless opportunity to visit and aid Oxford's many local charities: most of which I did not even know existed, let alone their daily operation. As an avid cook myself, I also draw great enthusiasm from talking to working chefs, learning their styles and preferences. There's a profound charm in redistributing excess food, like a modern day (lawful!) Robin Hood.

I can also bear witness to the dizzying scale of the food distribution networks. Seeing supermarket shelves, perfectly replenished every morning, begs the question: "how!?" Collection runs with OFB give an appreciation for the sheer volume of food kept on the move. The warehouses: enormous; the quantity of produce: unreal. This complexity is almost totally masked by the consistency and comfort of a well-stocked aisle.

In hindsight, I also really appreciate the opportunity to talk to fellow volunteers, and so gain glimpses into lives outside my usual social circle. I suspect many young students, like me, grow quite insular in their choice of acquaintances. We tend to gravitate towards those with similar ages or interests, out of safety or convenience. Progressively, my Oxford gained greater scope and context through those who lived and worked locally, both as a city and adopted home."

Sumukh Kaul

"Volunteering at the Oxford Food Bank has been a fantastic experience for me. I heard on the BBC local news about how it had grown from two men using their own cars to one of the biggest charities in Oxford in just a few years, and I decided to see how I could help.

As a freelance writer and editor, I was looking for a way to give back to the community that could fit around my busy and unpredictable schedule. The Food Bank ticked all of the boxes - the sense of fulfilment you get when you go out is second to none, and the flexibility of the shifts means you can do as much as you like at a time that suits you.

Volunteers come from all walks of life, and bring loads of different experiences to the Food Bank. The Food Bank has around 100 volunteers, so you're meeting new people and catching up with old friends all the time. The Food Bank runs all day, 7 days a week, but you always feel like a close knit team. So many people have been volunteering here for years - you get a real sense of warmth and family, and as a new volunteer I've been made to feel really at home.

I love the variety of the things you do - you'll never have two identical shifts, and definitely never be bored. The time you give has an immediate impact - your hard work goes straight to the more than 60 charities and community groups the Food Bank helps. I've loved my time here so far and I've been absolutely kicking myself for not getting involved earlier."



Sumukh Kaul checking food in one of the OFB chill rooms



OFB Supplier Profile

FarmAbility is a programme of the Farm Inspiration Trust (UK reg. charity no. 1135282)



What do we do?

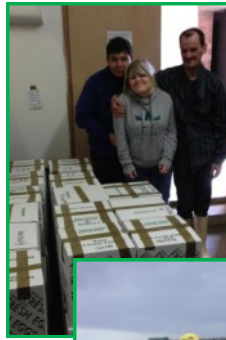
www.farminspirationtrust.org/farmability

FarmAbility is an outdoor, farm-based programme of varied activities in animal husbandry, horticulture and seasonal tasks for 'co-farmers' (adults with autism and learning disabilities). Supported by enthusiastic, experienced staff and volunteers, co-farmers gain a real sense of purpose and achievement, while building the practical and vocational skills they need to move forward in their lives.

How do we do this?

We run the FarmAbility programme four days a week throughout the year.

We design a varied schedule of activities for each co-farmer, which we hope will result in both therapeutic and practical benefits, including the opportunity to gain credits towards a nationally recognised qualification (ASDAN).



Our community links are very important to the programme and to our co-farmers. Contributing in a useful way to the local community, like packing eggs for our friends at the OFB, offers co-farmers the chance to be recognised for what they *can* do, and brings a sense of pride in the knowledge that they are helping others. It is inspiring to think that co-farmers can create valuable links between a working farm and wider, worthwhile initiatives across Oxford, through charities like the Food Bank.

Our Suppliers

In addition to **Farmability** we are also indebted to the following supermarkets and food wholesalers who generously donate food to us:

Alatoni	Bicester
Aldi	Bicester
Aldi	Botley
Aldi	Didcot
Bookers	Oxford
Chef Direct	Didcot
Fresh Direct	Bicester
Nettlebed Creamery	
Roots	Oxford
Sainsburys	Bicester
Sainsburys	Kidlington
Rowse	Wallingford
Waitrose	Headington

Contact us:

The Oxford Food Bank is a charity with dual aims of reducing food waste and helping disadvantaged members of the local community. These aims are achieved through the daily redistribution of fresh food that would otherwise be thrown away by supermarkets and food wholesalers.

We are totally reliant on donations and volunteers to enable our operations to continue.

To find out more about volunteering see:

www.oxfordfoodbank.org/support-us/volunteer

For details on how you can send donations to us see:

www.oxfordfoodbank.org/support-us/make-a-donation

Keep up to date with the latest OFB news at:

www.oxfordfoodbank.org/about-us/news

General enquiries can be sent to us via e-mail or post at:

info@oxfordfoodbank.org

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