

the oxford food bank

FEEDING THE COMMUNITY - PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Rolling with the Round Table



OFB and Round Table representatives at the official handover of our new delivery van

In May, thanks to the generosity of Oxford Round Table, OFB took delivery of a shiny new Transit van to join their fleet of delivery vehicles.

Round Table's Christian Petersen said "we have known for some time about the great work being done by OFB within the local community and the huge importance of their delivery vans. When we decided to offer them support it soon became clear that using £12,000 to fund a new vehicle would have an immediate and major practical impact on their operations".

OFB's Facilities Coordinator David Kay was more than happy to get hold of the keys. "We are truly grateful for this donation as it allows us to retire our oldest van, and replace it with something bigger and more reliable, enabling us to deliver even more food to the local charities that need it".

TripAdvisor starts the journey with OFB

TripAdvisor believes that "we are better together". Supporting our local communities is a common sentiment and is part of their corporate culture.

Following an internal survey OFB was one of the charities shortlisted by TripAdvisor's Oxford employees for its innovative support to the community and for making a huge difference in reducing food waste and poverty.

In April OFB representatives met with TripAdvisor to explain the mission and the logistics behind our unique model of a food bank. The TripAdvisor Charity Committee, launched to support causes that matter to their employees, were unanimously impressed with the numbers and how converting £1 into £20 worth of food delivered is just a great lesson of operational efficiency.

This is why they have made a clear commitment to support OFB through regular volunteering and financial aid through their grant process. This will allow OFB to plan and be sustainable over the long-term to reach even more communities in Oxfordshire.



The Tripadvisor Charity Committee

Grundon serves up a second course of support for OFB



Benson-based waste management company Grundon raised £5,000 for OFB last year and has committed to continue its fundraising in 2017.

Grundon managing director Clayton Sullivan-Webb, who has joined the food bank team on their rounds, said: "One of the charity's main aims is to reduce food waste in the Oxford area and that's something we support. We continue to work hard to educate our customers about food waste, promoting the fact that disposal should always be the last resort. We do understand that sometimes there is no choice, so by encouraging all businesses to segregate food from other waste we can collect it separately and raise funds for this great charity."

Big Food Rescue - OFB on the BBC

Last autumn BBC cameramen started appearing in the OFB base on a regular basis, and following us out on the road as volunteers visited suppliers and charities. The end result was a series of five programmes broadcast on BBC1 under the title 'The Big Food Rescue'.

The filming focussed on the OFB model, and how it can impact beneficially on the local community. In addition to footage in and around Oxford, there was detailed coverage of The Felix Project in London, a separate charity set up using exactly the same operational model as OFB with a lot of help from our founding Directors, David Cairns and Robin Aitken.

All five episodes can be viewed by searching for 'BBC The Good Food Rescue' on the You Tube website, or by using links from the News page on the OFB website.



The Food Bank Christmas Lunch

Many of OFB's clients close over Christmas, but most food suppliers have more waste than ever. A group of dedicated OFB volunteers, including chief organiser Sara Strong, decided to do something about that.



On the day, over 300 diners and 100 volunteers came together at The King's Centre to share a meal prepared from food that would otherwise have been thrown away.

Diners came from MIND, Gateway, Archway, Tandem, Restore, and our Syrian refugee community, as well as those who simply wanted to share Christmas with others. Every diner was offered transport and over 70 takeaways were distributed to those who preferred not to come to the Centre.



There was entertainment, music, and even impromptu Syrian dancing. Diners were given petcare and dogfood, food bags, and backpacks for the kids.

Best of all was the atmosphere of inclusivity and celebration amongst both volunteers and diners. Clips of the event on Facebook have been viewed well over 5,000 times. Roll on Christmas 2017!

Our founder trustees, and the new team

The Oxford Food Bank exists thanks entirely to the energy and inspiration of our two founders, David Cairns and Robin Aitken. Now that we have four vehicles, a secure base, three employees, two walk-in chiller rooms and over a hundred volunteers, it is easy to forget that the whole venture began with David and Robin using their own private cars, operating out of a disused print works, and collecting initially from a single supermarket.

Now, after over seven years building the OFB up into the remarkable operation it is today, David and Robin have, since January, both stepped away from their overseeing roles and resigned from their positions as respectively Chair and Deputy Chair of the Trustees. We must not forget that without their individual talents and determination OFB would never have become such a unique and respected organization, collecting fresh food from an increasingly large number of outlets and wholesalers in order to deliver, seven days a week, to over 80 local charitable organizations. In the 2014 Queen's Birthday Honours List David and Robin were both awarded MBEs for Services to the Vulnerable - a well deserved recognition of their sterling efforts over the first five years of OFB's operations.

One of the basic principles of the OFB from the start was that nobody would be charged for either the collection or the delivery of food. It is entirely thanks to the organizational skills and fundraising acumen of our two founder members plus, of course, the unceasing daily work of all our volunteers that we have been able to keep to this. We collect and deliver food free of charge from whoever is willing to provide, and to whoever can use it to alleviate food poverty.



Robin Aitken and David Cairns

The position of Chair of the Trustees has been taken over by Paul Medley, with the support of Noel Heaven, Treasurer, Deborah Lewis, Employee Liaison, James Boylan, Deputy Chair, and six other volunteers on the Board of Trustees.

Paul first became a volunteer during those early days in the disused print works and has been a Trustee since 2015. He still volunteers at the base once a week.



Paul Medley

Meet the team—volunteer profiles

Deborah Lewis

Barley Brexit Build-up. It's the B word again. And don't we know it. We've collected it, delivered it, brought it back to the base and piled it high. Only the enthusiasm of the OFB volunteers could shift these barley mountains.

I have been volunteering at the Food Bank for over 3 years, braving the driver's seat after 6 months. 'Promotion' to the Agrivert food waste run has been an eye (and nose) opener.

The OFB supports a lunch club in a Wolvercote church hall. As one of the volunteer cooks, we have a small meat budget and with the wonderful produce from OFB, we can cook up a feast, full of vitamins, minerals and proteins. The club members live independently and wouldn't prepare such a healthy lunch themselves. I don't know who said older people have small appetites!

Another food drop goes to a 'Village Diner' in Buckland, where the wonderful school cook Clare, having prepared lunch for 80 children, calmly rustles up a 2 course meal for up to 40 people.

The school sends over a few 10 year old children to help the volunteers serve lunch and clear tables. Seen as a privilege, they love their duties. They do, however, seem to prefer rushing back to class rather than help us wash up!



Deborah unloading one of the OFB vans at our base

I have been an OFB trustee and fund-raising committee member for a year now. The Food Bank is a simple yet brilliant charity, working at the grass roots for the local community. I'm very happy to be a part of it.

David Wiafe

Deciding to volunteer with OFB is truly one of the most satisfying decisions I ever made. The amazing thing is that all the volunteers have the same thing in common; they are all good people with good hearts, and with a willingness to help their fellow man. This makes being an OFB volunteer fun, rewarding, and effortless.

The Food bank has 2 main operations; collections and deliveries. We collect food donations from suppliers on a given route. My main collection route is Bicester and I enjoy the journeys as you can use them as opportunities to find out more about your fellow volunteers; then there is the excitement of what food, and how much we will get from our generous suppliers.

Deliveries are every bit as satisfying and great fun. The loading of the van, and going around delivering to the charities on a given run, seeing the results of our efforts at first hand.

The general running of the OFB is a thing of beauty – It's great to have managers that help the volunteers to fine tune their collections, so that we end up with less food being thrown away as waste; volunteers are all helpful and we all work as a team which makes everything smooth and easy.

With all the silly things happening in the world around us, it is easy to think that the world is really a harsh and uncaring place; yet being a volunteer at the OFB is enough to assure you that there truly are some good people in the world.



David at one of our suppliers

Mick and Jane Long

We have been volunteering at OFB since almost a year after it was set up by David and Robin in 2009 and was run from the Lamarsh Road site. Mick first found out about it after he retired and was looking for a small volunteer driving job when he saw an appeal for such in the Oxford Mail. After I gave up work I occasionally helped him out when the student helpers were unavailable and it was then that he persuaded me to help him permanently.

Over the years we have taken on many roles, from collecting at Fresh Direct to delivering to various charities. For the last few years we have regularly been doing deliveries on a Wednesday morning, and established, we hope, a good rapport with the volunteers and staff at these charities. We have gained a particular friendship with Ma Smith and her family of helpers at the Cowley Road Community Soup Kitchen and have attended several functions given in her honour.

Before we started with the food bank we were so unaware of the food wastage involved and still are now at times! We think the OFB are doing a great job and will continue to support them for as long as we can.



Mick and Jane delivering food to Ma Smith

For more details about becoming an Oxford Food Bank volunteer see www.oxfordfoodbank.org/support-us/volunteer or e-mail us via operations@oxfordfoodbank.org

OFB is coming to an event near you this summer

Over the summer OFB will be manning stands at a dozen or so public events including the following:

- ◆ Saturday 20th May - Oxford Mela, Rose Hill Community Centre
- ◆ Saturday 10th June - The Big Green Day Out, Broad Street, Oxford
- ◆ Sunday 2nd July - Cowley Road Carnival, Cowley
- ◆ Saturday 20th August - Elder Stubbs Festival, Rymers Lane Allotments, Cowley
- ◆ Saturday 16th September - Binsey Fete, Binsey Village Green

Come and visit us at these events for a chance to chat to our volunteers and find out more about OFB.



How you can donate

OFB receives no government funding and is totally reliant upon financial donations from individuals and organisations to fund its operations. There are many ways in which you can give us money, from cheques and bank transfers through to simply texting, and don't forget Gift Aid too. You can read more on the 'Make a Donation' page of the OFB website at <http://oxfordfoodbank.org/support-us/make-a-donation/>

Our Suppliers

We are indebted to the following food wholesalers and supermarkets who generously donate food to us:

Alatoni	Bicester
Aldi	Bicester, Botley, Horspath & Didcot
Bookers	Oxford
Chef Direct	Didcot
Fresh Direct	Bicester
Gail's Bakery	Summertown
Marks & Spencer	Bicester, Cowley, Oxford & Summertown
Roots	Oxford
Sainsburys	Bicester & Cowley
Rowse	Wallingford
Tesco	Cowley
Waitrose	Botley & 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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