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## Issue 4 - February 2022

### Good Food News – celebrating the food in Leicestershire!

Welcome to Good Food News, where we aim to improve and applaud the great work being done in sustainable food and farming in the county.

News to share? Email [goodfood@leics.gov.uk](mailto:goodfood@leics.gov.uk)

#### Do one easy thing

Go green and get yourself a food caddy.

Stop peeling veg over the kitchen bin, do it over the caddy instead. Empty it on a compost heap or into a compost bin.

You can use the compost to complete the cycle and grow your own plants, fruit or veg in happy, nutrient-rich soil.

The serious bit: Around a third of all household waste is food waste. Food waste such as veg peelings, used tea and coffee, eggshells and banana skins can be composted to feed your garden.

Food waste in Leicestershire: The majority is food that simply wasn't eaten. This means binning 55,000 tonnes of food annually. Or one in every five supermarket bags. Its purchase, collection and disposal costs Leicestershire £123 million a year.

Leicestershire residents can find out more about composting on the [Less Waste website](#), as well as purchase caddies and subsidised compost bins through [Get Composting](#).



#### The whole story on wholefoods!

Life moves so fast that sometimes we don't know what we've lost until it's gone. As a society, home-cooked meals have been declining against ready meals and takeaways – and it's been showing in our

health and in our waistlines.

Trying to create balance is Sue Garside, a great cook and an evangelical wholefood nutritionist. Sue is running the Green 2 Lean plant-based cookery course at Coalville's Marlene Reid Centre. Her first recipe was a meat-free Bolognese.

"It's easy, it's quick, it's delicious," she says, "and it's not got any of the downside of the meat one. It's got way more veg, fibre and less fat.

"You don't count calories with this food," she adds.

Due to the interest in Sue's cooking course, there is potential for future dates to be held at weekends. For more information, visit the [Marlene Reid Centre website](#).

P.S. Hungry for more? ['Plant-based nutrition: a sustainable diet for optimal health'](#) is run by Winchester University and accredited by the British Society of Lifestyle Medicine.

[Check out the wholefood veggie bolognese recipe](#).



## The fridge that keeps on giving

The popular Wigston Magna Community Fridge runs for an hour, four days a week. Even when faced with the pandemic, and the family centre where it's held temporarily closed, the volunteers kept the fridge open and running.

Taking deliveries of fruit, veg and bread from most of the big and smaller supermarkets, it means there's plenty of free food that's just hit its 'best before' date.

"The amount of food we've stopped from going to landfill is incredible," admits Volunteer Development Officer Hayley Downing, "and since March we've received 20,000 kilogrammes of food."

Most of the customers are working people keen to save good food from a rubbish fate, and many hear about the fridge through word of mouth.

But the fridge also serves the dual purpose of helping people in a pinch.

"There's a nice community link up," adds Hayley, "with the food connecting to adult social care and family workers. It is quite a wholesome project.

"And if we get people coming in every day or they tell us about difficulties, we tell them to go to the food bank. The majority of people we see just don't want it going to waste. Most people come because of the green aspect."

The fridge was set up through the environmental charity Hubbub UK and is held at the Wigston Magna Children and Family Wellbeing Centre in the town's Long Street.

[Find your nearest community fridge on the Hubbub website.](#)



## **Eat Them To Defeat Them**

Getting children to eat their veg is often a struggle – and the consequences of losing this time-honoured tussle grow bigger each year.

How much bigger? One in five youngsters starting primary school are now overweight or obese, and that becomes one in three by the end of Year 6.

This. Ends. Now. Come on Leicestershire kids! We need help in taking these vegetables down! The national Eat Them To Defeat Them campaign – a seven week nutritional self-defence class for superheroes – gets our kids to give carrots, peas and their ilk a proper chomping.

In 2021, 100 county schools – just over 25,000 pupils – joined the fight. With activity packs, and support from the local Food for Life initiative and the county council, it made some impressive in-roads into veg eating.

Parents and older siblings even increased their veg, too.

The charity's 2021 survey said 84 per cent of participating schools reported their children were eating more vegetables and 66 per cent of schools saw reduced food waste.

Schools can enrol for the [Eat Them To Defeat Them programme](#) or email [schools@vegpower.org.uk](mailto:schools@vegpower.org.uk)

If your school signs up, we'd love to hear from you, email [goodfood@leics.gov.uk](mailto:goodfood@leics.gov.uk)

# JOIN THE FIGHT!



## The strangely uplifting story of beans on toast

It started, as these things often do, with a chat between like-minded people. "Wouldn't it be great if we could get kids interested in growing food?" "What if we could grow beans for beans on toast?" "What if we could do it here, with organic and regenerative farming, and make Leicestershire beans on toast?"

To complete this peculiar fairy-tale, all that was missing was a man selling magic beans ...and that's when Professor Eric Holub, a plant geneticist from the University of Warwick, showed up.

Eric's haricot beans – Godiva and Capulet – have been tweaked for the British climate and can cook more quickly, using less water and energy.

With the beans in hand, it meant Beth Lambert, the co-creator of the non-profit Eco Village in Market Harborough, Graham Willett; the overseer of Stanford Hall's organic seven-acre community farm and Gavin Fletcher of Leicestershire County Council's Sustainable Food Partnership, could proceed with their mission.

But why beans on toast?

This tasty and well-loved British institution is a favourite with vegans and carnivores alike...but we currently ship 50,000 tonnes of beans from North America to Britain each year.

Ditching the food miles and pollution, our county beans were instead grown amid wildflowers and organic soil on three acres of regenerative farmland at Stanford Hall, near Lutterworth.

On a warm October day, around 70 children from Market Harborough C of E Trust spent 40 minutes picking the beans.

Those beans were laid out to dry ahead of threshing, while beans that had been prepared earlier were then served up as beans on sourdough toast.

"Most tried it and some were even going up for seconds," says Beth, whose daughter was among those on the trip.

Amy Cooper, of the Secret Seed Society, co-ordinated farm and food activities, including singing The Beans On Toast Song, written by musician and conservationist Cian Dalglish.

"To design and host the first Beans on Toast school day was so exciting," says Amy, "we were making history and the children felt it.

"The way we farm is enlivening for children – they see the relationship between wildlife, bacteria, seeds, weather, our hunger, our tastebuds and our Beans on Toast team."

"It's undeniably good fun to be growing beans," added Amy, "but these holistic projects are creating food while also creating skills, community, health and healthy soil."

News just in: The Beans on Toast project will be continuing with an expanded growing area and more community engagement in 2022.



### **Now that's a good idea...**

Obesity, believe it or not, is not always about Henry VIII style gluttony. For many, it's about eating roughly 200 calories too much each meal. But what if food and drink told you how long it would take to 'burn off'?

Testing this idea was Professor Amanda Daley of Loughborough University, who had her food labelling research published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health in December 2019.

Professor Daley's project added a symbol of a person running and walking to different food choices. On a fizzy drink with 140 calories, its 'burn off' time was 26 minutes' walking and 13 minutes' running.

Why a symbol? On average we spend six whole seconds making a food or drink choice.

Did it reduce participants' average calorie intake?

It certainly did.

### **Hard fact**

In Leicestershire, 60.6% of adults were either overweight (BMI 25+) or obese (BMI 30+) in 2017/18. The figures for Year 6 pupils in 2018/19 was 34.3% for England and 30% for Leicestershire.

Obesity and its related ill health costs the UK NHS £6.1bn each year. It also costs local government in England £0.35bn in social care costs and the wider UK economy £27bn.

Covid-19 has hit the UK harder than other nations because of our majority overweight population, with diets high in calories and low in nutrients responsible for inherent ill health.

## Healthy Place Making

There are lots of people working to improve the health and wellbeing of people and places across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Active Together has created a data portal to help people working in the field find and share the latest info, projects and data.

For more information, visit the [Healthy Place Making website](#).

## Think of it this way

If unsustainable food systems are damaging the planet...

"Cheap, highly processed food is also taking a toll on our bodies. Eighty per cent of processed food sold in the UK is unhealthy. There is a sound commercial reason for this: unhealthy food is more popular. The human appetite evolved in a world where calories were hard to come by. We are predisposed to pounce on any food that is high in fat and sugar. And once we start eating this kind of food, we are programmed to keep going: our hormones take longer to send out satiety signals than they do with lower-calorie foods."

Henry Dimbleby, author of the National Food Strategy 2021

## Coming soon...

In our next edition: An online food waste prevention programme - and how you can win a Wonky Veg Box subscription, a bokashi bin, food vouchers and more.

The county farmers creating a splash with their world-beating fresh Leicestershire oat milk. And one thing to ponder. The beautiful counties of Leicestershire and Rutland are 85% farmland.



For more information visit [resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/good-food-leicestershire](https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/good-food-leicestershire) or email [goodfood@leics.gov.uk](mailto:goodfood@leics.gov.uk)



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