



FOOD CONNECT

Taking good food further

IMPACT REPORT YEAR FOUR



Registered charity no. 1158700

What is Food Connect?

Food Connect is a zero-emissions food redistribution service.

It was set up by Hubbub, an environmental charity which runs the national Community Fridge Network. Community fridges share food on an honesty basis, are open to all and reduce the environmental impact of food waste.

As the cost-of-living crisis continues, many of the Community Fridges have provided a lifeline to people struggling to feed their families. Food Connect has seen a further 17% increase in demand this year. This continues to rise across the country.

Food Connect uses zero emissions vehicles to collect food for multiple community fridges. It improves the efficiency and reliability of sharing food between businesses and community organisations.

Hubbub first trialled Food Connect successfully in Milton Keynes in 2020. The project has since scaled to three London sites in Camberwell, Merton and Waterloo.

This report provides the impact to date of Food Connect MK



Food Connect Milton Keynes

Food Connect Milton Keynes currently helps ten community organisations access quality surplus food that support projects such as community cafes, youth groups, children's centres and community meals.

Netherfield

The Ark MK
Unity park
Hedgerows family centre
Moorlands Family centre
Wise ones over 50's group

Great Linford

Great Linford Community Hub Café
Great Linford Social Club
Willen Hospice
Great Linford Youth Club

Wolverton

Community Cookalong
Community Hub
Rehome Your Electricals
Repair Café
Community Barn Dance
Eat Your Pumpkin events
Craft Fayre Café
Lunch drop in at Kings

Westcroft

Parent and tots stay and play
Wednesdays over 60s Club

Conniburrow

Great Linford Youth Service
Great Linford Community Café

St Marys

Saplings Childrens Centre

Tinkers Bridge

Beanhill Community Fridge
Tinkers Community Café
MK Swan Rescue

Coffee Hall

Woughton Community Café
Woughton Youth Services

**“Without the support
of Food Connect, the Great
Linford Community Fridge
would not be able to operate”**

*Cllr Donna Nicholls
Great Linford Parish Council
June 2024*

**“Collaboration is key.
By working together, we can
understand where there is
need and the challenges. We all
benefit from our collective skills,
connections and experience and
this enables us to help even more
people and organisations.”**

*Hel Innes
Food Connect / Hubbub
December 2023*



Local impact in Milton Keynes

Since 2020, Food Connect in Milton Keynes has been able to:

- Collect over 1375 tonnes of food
- Equivalent of over three million meals
- Support 184,000 visits to a community fridge
- Cover 95,000 miles in an electric van and cargo bikes
- Save over 21 tonnes greenhouse gases (GHGs) relating to transport*
- Employ nine flexible, Living Wage, green, part-time jobs
- Collect 3-5 tonnes every week
- Meet 14% increase in demand in 2024
- Increase food collections by 30%

* Figures from Department for Transport 2023 based on a diesel van producing 228g greenhouse gases per mile

“I used to be a volunteer and am now a part-time courier collecting food from shops across Milton Keynes for our community fridges in an electric van. I get first-hand experience seeing the positive impact the scheme has.”

*Lynette Daniels
Food Connect Courier
December 2023*



Deeper impact

For many, access to free food is crucial in difficult times and we have seen food insecurity and demand on community fridges soar in the UK since the Covid pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis.

While Hubbub's primary objective in setting up the Community Fridge Network was to reduce food waste and make the most of all our resources, community fridges have become essential sources of food for thousands of people. However, free food is not a long-term solution to food insecurity and we call on the government to ensure that everyone has the income required to cover all their needs with dignity.

“Food Connect provides at least 50% of the food that we provide for clients who are in need and often vulnerable. We could not provide our services without the Food Connect deliveries. We have people queue up for the food for up to four hours and often have people turn up who are crying out for help”

*Leigha Britnell
Conniburrow Community Fridge,
July 2024*




Food Connect supports

Food Connect MK supports more than food redistribution through community fridges. It helps initiatives such as:



Tinkers Bridge Residents Association that organise warm room sessions and hot food for local residents.

Old Bath House and Community Centre that deliver a 'Cookalong' program that teach basic cooking skills and share mealtimes that encourage healthier diets, cooking on a budget and getting to know one another for groups of +55 men, parents and their children.



Conniburrow Community Centre that run a community cafe providing hot food for their guests as well as a safe, warm place to eat, meet and access other vital services within their community.

Woughton Youth Service who engage and support hundreds of local young people including providing access to regular food every week.

Great Linford Parish Council that provide a Café, social club and youth services that support local residents to connect and access good food



“

As a single person household with Universal Credit of £320 per month, decent food was not affordable for all meals. Thanks to Food Connect I had access to really good food, helping me get through to the sunnier uplands of being a pensioner. Times are a lot better now, bless you!”

*Community fridge volunteer and visitor
December 2023*



“A huge THANK YOU for all the help and support you have given us at Kings Community Centre. We have been able to meet so many vulnerable people’s food needs!”

*Sam Forbes
Kings Community Centre
and Foodbank
May 2024*

“Food Connect play a hugely positive role in many of our community activities. Without them we wouldn’t have the resources to source this food ourselves, which would have a negative impact on the service we provide to our community.”

*Sean Perry
Woughton Community Council
August 2024*



What's next for Food Connect?

We are working with our partners to support local ownership, long-term sustainability and open sourcing the Food Connect model so that other communities can benefit. We welcome conversations from prospective local partners and funders that would like to help sustain and extend this service.



Thank you to

Our current funders: Starbucks, MK Community Foundation, David Lock Associates, local supporters and fundraisers.

All food partners that have shared surplus food in continued efforts to reduce their food waste.



Old Bath House Community Centre for hosting and running the service in Milton Keynes.

Our network of community fridges and hosts

Milton Keynes: Sian, Ritchie, Mark, Nathan, Steve, Lynette, Adam and Elliot

Our team that work tirelessly to make Food Connect a success.

They are our true food waste warriors!