

Lincoln Food Partnership

For fairer healthier greener food

Welcome to the December 2019 Edition of the Lincoln Food Partnership Newsletter

As we come up to Christmas, this issue of Newsletter focuses on the important role of food in its community context.

In Lincoln, we have a number of groups that tackle food poverty directly. There are two food banks – the Lincoln Community Larder and the Acts/Trussell Trust – who together have seven outlets in the City. Let Them Eat Cake distributes hot meals on the City streets to rough sleepers. And FiSH – Food in the School Holidays – feeds over 700 children in the City who would otherwise get free school meals in term-time. But there are over 4,000 such children in the City, and holiday hunger remains a problem for them.

In addition, a number of venues use food for improving relationships between people in the community at large. The YMCA's Eat! monthly free meals provide an opportunity for anyone who wishes, to share a meal, to come and have a chat and to make new friends. Mint Lane Café has as its strap line 'Friendship Through Food' and



all are given a warm welcome.

Queen's Park Community Hub provides social eating in a training context, where those with special needs can learn how to cook and serve in a friendly but live environment. In the Arboretum Café, too, Abbey Access training offers a range of food-related courses to help people back into employment, whilst providing affordable meals to the general public in a social context.

In many ways it is a sad reflection that, in the 5th richest country in the world, the demand for these services is growing exponentially. Be it to combat poverty, or isolation, or just cheer someone up, it is a potent reflection that food has the power to achieve all of these things simultaneously.

Please do contact us if you would like to share your news stories about any aspect of local food – whether it is a growing project, local produce-making and sale, cooking communities or tackling food waste. We would be pleased to showcase your work, no matter how small, in this newsletter.

Our email address is: lincolnfoodpartnership@gmail.com

If you are happy to continue to receive this newsletter and therefore be considered a member of the Lincoln Food Partnership community of interest, you need to do nothing.

If on the other hand you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, just email us. Many thanks for your interest

Nigel Curry,
Co-chair Lincoln Food Partnership

STOP PRESS Help to buy Mint Lane! A Community Share Issue

In 2020, there is an opportunity to buy the building in which Mint Lane Community Café is housed, to help secure its future. It shares Number 12 Mint Lane with some 10 other community organisations all concerned to develop mental health and well being. This is a great opportunity to make a difference for community self-help in the City as well as helping the café.

Please do give your consideration to buying some shares for this worthwhile cause. They can be bought in blocks of as little as £50.

Full details of the share offer are here:

<https://involveincoln.org.uk/share-offer>



They would make an absolutely wonderful Christmas present!

Lincoln Community Larder: 30 years of help to those in the City in food poverty.



Lincoln's oldest food bank, Lincoln Community Larder, has been addressing the issue of food poverty (and indeed other poverty issues) in the City and its surrounding areas for over 30 years. And the issue is getting bigger every year.

It is a registered charity that is run entirely by volunteers, and it provides basic nutritious food and other amenities to those in need of short term help.

They also support those suffering from illness or special needs.

The Larder issues vouchers to a variety of agencies in the area who then refer people in need of assistance and give 3 days' worth of food for each person included on the voucher. In this way, they helped over 3,500 people in 2018, and a third of these were children.



Operating from a central warehouse, the Larder has three outreach locations in Rosemary Lane, at St Giles Methodist Church and at St John the Baptist Parish Church.

Help and support are always needed in terms of donations, fundraising and volunteering – both for collecting food and distributing it. If you can contribute in any of these ways, please contact the Larder at:

lincolncommunitylarder@hotmail.co.uk
or the Lincoln Food Partnership.



Acts Trust: fighting hunger in Lincoln families.

Methodist Church.



One in five of the population of the United Kingdom lives below the poverty line. The Trussell Trust is the largest national charity addressing this issue in respect of food. In Lincoln, Acts Trust runs the Trussell Trust Foodbanks across four locations – the Bridge Community Venue, Moorland Park Methodist Church, Birchwood Life Church, and the Central Methodist Church.

Acts Trust has been running these Foodbanks for 11 years, and as with other food banks in the City, they are getting busier all the time. During the last year, over 3,600 people relied directly on food parcels from this Foodbank. The Trust provides a minimum of three days' nutritionally balanced, tinned and dried food donated by the local community.



Beneficiaries are also encouraged to seek further help through one of Acts Trusts' support projects such as advice, budgeting courses and job clubs as well as mental health support groups.

Acts Trust is looking further to support Foodbank users through the creation of a Waste Food Supermarket with some help from the Lincoln Food Partnership.

If you want to get involved in the work of the Acts Trust's Trussell Trust Foodbanks – either by donating or volunteering, then contact amy@lincolnfoodbank.org.uk or the Lincoln Food Partnership.



Let Them Eat Cake: nourishing the homeless

Poverty at Christmas can be devastating, and this is nowhere more acute than if you are homeless. Let Them Eat Cake is one of the groups in Lincoln which provides outreach support for those with no home to go to. And central to this service is a good hot meal.



The group, made up of volunteers, is in the City Centre several nights a week to collect donations and to offer nourishing food and a hot drink to those sleeping rough. Braving all weathers for over two years now, the group also provides first aid kits, clothes and an often much needed listening ear. A large proportion of what is distributed is funded by the volunteers themselves.

If you want to get involved, either by donating or volunteering, Let Them Eat Cake can be contacted via their Facebook page, and they meet at 7:30 on a Sunday night and go out for 2 – 3 hours and will respond to call-outs as they have the resources.



FiSH – food in school holidays

Around 4,000 children in greater Lincoln qualify for free school meals because of their family circumstances – and their number is increasing. But how can we make sure that they get adequately fed in the school holidays?

Local churches in and around Lincoln have been working with schools and local food retailers since 2016 on the FiSH project (and for many years before as the MASH project



on Monk's Road) in an impressive partnership to feed over 700 children in seventeen local schools in the school holidays.



Each child receives a voucher for £8 a week to be spent in an approved local shop (such as Tesco's, the Coop and McColls) on approved food items. The vouchers are separately colour-coded for each holiday week. And schools administer the scheme sensitively to reduce stigma.

There has been a great team effort in raising funds for this venture with support from Ruddocks for the printing of vouchers, a number of church fundraising events, help from local trust funds and start-up funding from the City Council for the pilot project.

In the run up to the Christmas school holidays, it is sobering to think of so many children in food poverty so close to home – and heartening to see so much compassion and voluntary effort in trying to tackle it.

This scheme costs nearly £31,000 a year, to run and has ambitions to reach even more children in more schools. If you would like to make a donation to the FiSH project, please contact: meals.fishproject@gmail.com or contact us at the Lincoln Food Partnership.

YMCA Eat! eating all together



Community is at the heart of eating together at the YMCA Lincolnshire. In the evening of the last Friday of every month everyone is invited to come and share a meal, to make new friends, to get to know neighbours and strike up conversations with people that you have never met before. The tables are set so you can't sit on your own and that's how the diners like it.

And the home-cooked food is delicious, with vegetarian options for those who choose. Chief cook Cecily Mumby said:

“we try to cater for all tastes as we have such a diverse range of customers from all over the town and from all walks of

life. We have between 70 and 80 people a week and the event is becoming increasingly popular”.

Coming up to its first anniversary, this means that Eat! has served around 3,800 meals so far and the feedback is very positive indeed. But the friendships made and the company enjoyed sum to more than just the physical nourishment.



And it doesn't stop there for YMCA Lincolnshire. With the armed forces breakfasts (for serving personnel, veterans and their immediate families), and of course the food provision at the Nomad Centre, they are serving over 10,000 meals a year for the community of Lincoln.

The Eat! meal is open to all at the Showroom on Tritton Road and is entirely free, because it is important to the YMCA to use food to bring people together. The staff even do the washing up!

Mint Lane Café: friendship through food



We featured Mint Lane Community Café in our October Newsletter, - it won the 'Caring Kitchen of the Year' award in 2019 - and it is an important piece in the jigsaw of tackling food poverty in the City.

One of its distinctive contributions is that it uses supermarket 'waste' food to create some incredible inexpensive nourishing meals for anyone who wants to come and enjoy the café – it is open to all.

And you won't be eating in isolation either – the Café's motto is 'Friendship Through Food' and you'll be encouraged to sit with others and have a jolly good natter over your meal. Their hot puddings are a speciality!

The Café has a small 'surplus' supermarket, also open to all, and there is always fresh fruit and vegetables to buy cheaply, along with a range of other produce. The Café is hoping to extend its scope with the installation of a walk-in freezer next year.



Importantly, if the Café has any of its food left over, it passes it on to Let them Eat Cake – profiled elsewhere in the Newsletter – showing that the food poverty agenda in Lincoln is becoming more 'joined up' over time.

Volunteers are most welcome at the Café. You can contact them at mintlanecafe@gmail.com

Queen's Park Community Hub - combining cooking and eating

The Queen's Park Community Hub is a thriving community centre on South Park offering a range of activities for both those with special needs and the general public. At the social and physical core of the Hub is the Growing Futures Café providing very inexpensive meals for all, made in part when supplies are available, from supermarket 'surplus' food.

As well as nourishing meals, the Café provides training opportunities for those who can benefit from a specialised catering environment (for example, those with learning difficulties, Autism, or with Aspergers), so learning how to cook and serve can take place in a 'live' situation.

The training is offered by Lincoln College and leads to a qualification. Several people in the past have gone on to employment in the catering industry. This year's Christmas lunch promises to be spectacular!

A traditional three course Christmas lunch is offered, with a nut roast vegetarian option, all for £7.50 and is available throughout December up to Christmas. Pre booking is essential on 01522 255359



It is always useful to recognise that local food economies have multiple benefits – in the areas of health, environment, jobs and community – that can provide a ‘glue’ to a diverse range of activities.

The Arboretum Café: training and skills with a wholesome meal.



Another local community café, this time in the Abbey Ward, is using food as a focal point for a number of training and social activities. The thriving (and expanding!) Arboretum Café, situated in the grounds of the Lincoln Arboretum, offers affordable meals to the general public, but a lot more besides.

Abbey Access Training, which runs the café, is keen to get local people into employment through certificated courses in food service, food preparation and serving the public, through the ‘Get in to Catering’ programme.

But it doesn’t stop there. In the run up to Christmas the café has put on free healthy eating courses, Christmas Wreath making courses and longer training in ‘Building

your Confidence’.



Community litter picking and collections for charities such as the Meningitis Trust, add to the community 'togetherness' of the café so, through the medium of food, it has become a great social hub.

The family friendly café is open from 8:30 to 15:30 on a Monday to Friday.

Get Involved: Tell a Friend...

If you know of other people or organisations who would like to be involved in the Lincoln Food Partnership, please help to spread the word. Why not start by forwarding this newsletter to them?

Keep an eye out for our next newsletter in January.