



Norfolk  
Community  
Foundation



# Nourishing Norfolk

October  
2024 Update



# Nourishing Norfolk

2023

## November 2023

The first 'Spark' report is published by the Foundation. 'Food in Norfolk' takes a holistic view at the food system, why Nourishing Norfolk is necessary, and the bigger picture of challenges in our food system.



Read >

## Jan 2024

The Shelf food hub in Diss opens



## June 2024

Nourishing Norfolk participate in a national learning event at the House of Lords by Baroness Boycott, hosted by Feeding Britain.



## June 2024

The Duke of Edinburgh visits the Nourishing Norfolk team at the Royal Norfolk Show

## May 2024

The growing programme is launched in collaboration with Notcutts.



## June 2024

The Community Pantry in North Walsham opens

## June 2024

Coastal Community Supermarket opens a hub in collaboration with Cromer Foodbank

## March 2024

Radio 4's The Food Programme covers the Nourishing Norfolk programme in depth, on recommendation from Delia Smith.



Listen

## May 2024

Earlham Community Shop and North Lynn Food Hub officially open

## May 2024

Full evaluation of Nourishing Norfolk commissioned thanks to National Lottery Funding



## June 2024

Norse help Nourishing Norfolk deliver their 10,000th kilogram of food to food hubs. As well as delivering food with their n-able fleet, they also provide a warehouse space in Norwich.

## May 2024

Hosted by Holiday Inn Norwich with hospitality provided by students at City College Norwich, we shone a spotlight on the amazing work of food hubs and those supporting them at the first ever Nourishing Norfolk Awards, presented by Delia Smith!





The journey of Nourishing Norfolk has been one of remarkable growth. Between 2021 and 2024, we have grown our food hub network by **800%** and seen an **8,000%** increase in households signed up for food and support. This represents over **33,000** people who have accessed affordable food in **25** friendly spaces where they can get support with other challenges they may be facing.

For nearly 4 years, our mission has been to ensure that no one in Norfolk goes hungry. We've provided immediate relief from hunger while also equipping individuals and families with the tools to overcome food insecurity, and helping them aspire to more. Our work is rooted in collaboration and innovation, always driven by the needs of the communities we serve. As we reflect on our progress, we are inspired to continue evolving and expanding our efforts to build healthier, stronger communities.

**Claire Cullens MBE**  
Chief Executive



## What has changed since 2023?

Since 2023, we've recognised that ensuring **no one in Norfolk goes hungry** was just the beginning. Our 25 food hubs have successfully provided essential groceries and support, but as we predicted, food is more than sustenance—it's a gateway to addressing broader issues like loneliness, education, and mental health.

As a result, we have developed our proposition to build better connections between people and food. Our mission, **Building healthier communities through food**, reflects this direction. We aim to reconnect people with food from farm to fork while addressing gaps in skills, knowledge and confidence to create healthier, more connected communities. We need your support as we grow our programme to help fund community projects creating local food ecosystems for social benefit.


# The Network at a glance...



**51%**  
saved off of the average shopping basket



**13,200+**  
households registered with their local food hub



**33,000+**  
people accessing a Nourishing Norfolk food hub



**25**  
food hubs offering affordable food & support across Norfolk



**Our warehouse supplies**  
**70%**  
of the food hubs each week



**85**  
essential product lines stocked in the warehouse



# Nurturing healthy lives

Food is a great place to start when it comes to healthy lives. As a basic need, food is something that we all have in common and brings us together in a plethora of ways. Hubs open the door to discussions on health and wellbeing in a different way.

## Food for healthy lives

Food hubs, first and foremost, help ensure people have enough to eat. Norfolk has high levels of malnourishment, stemming from poor access to food and services in both rural and urban areas. Ensuring both of these areas are well-fed are strengths of the project – with large urban hubs and mobile rural offers supporting a broad range of people.

Naturally, hubs also lend themselves to discussions around healthy eating. 1 in 6 Britons do not feel confident cooking with fresh ingredients, but when volunteers can spend time with members to help them

## Case study:

“A little girl came in with her parents. The day before, she had watched Disney’s Ratatouille, and she convinced her parents to take fresh tomatoes, onions, and other vegetables to make the film’s signature dish. If the hub hadn’t been there, it’s something that they may not have tried. Fresh veg can be expensive and it’s a big risk for families to try something new, knowing that their child may not like it. Because the veg was free, they could take that chance and are eating more healthily because of it.”

**Coastal Community Supermarket**

understand what to do, they feel empowered to try new things.

## Mental wellbeing

Most hubs report engaging with members of their community experiencing problems with their mental health. This varies hugely at hub and network level, ranging from people



struggling with loneliness to people with serious mental health problems and substance abuse.

Hubs have taken a range of actions to support people. For example, the charities which manage Dereham Food Cabin (Wellspring Family Church) and Soul Foundation Social Supermarket (Soul Church) host wellbeing groups, where people are supported directly with their mental wellbeing in a community environment with specific, structured offer. Others, such as Caister Community Larder, run casual community cafés alongside

their food hubs, helping people to find connections in their community. These interventions can be beneficial whilst waiting for clinical support to begin, or for preventing clinical intervention from being needed in the first place.

Food hubs feed into a broader picture of community health by building confidence and connection in communities. We hope that continuing to strengthen communities, encourage healthy lifestyles, and tackle mental health challenges, we can build resilience locally and reduce strain on statutory services.

# Building skills for life and work

From helping people discover how to cook healthy meals to building confidence and competencies for the workplace, food hubs have been helping people build skills since the beginning. This year, we have focused our efforts on building capacity within hubs to support volunteers and increase digital inclusion. After seeing its impact, we hope to secure further funding to continue this work.

## The Power of Targeted Funding: Volunteer Coordinator Fund

Several hubs have told us about the time and resources that it takes to coordinate and support their volunteers, many of whom face challenges within their own lives. Thanks to support from the National Lottery Community Fund, fundraising from Norfolk Superhero, local businesses and generous individuals, we were able to launch a 'Volunteer



Coordinator Fund' specifically for food hubs.

Most hubs used the funding to create or maintain a dedicated volunteer coordinator post. Thanks to these new roles, at any given time, there are now 300+ volunteers across the network, providing 1,000+

volunteer hours each week. We estimate that in labour value alone, this is worth in excess of £0.5 million each year.

These roles have enabled those with lower levels of confidence and independence levels to participate in volunteering. Building volunteer skills creates

a more resilient volunteer base which gives hub managers more time to find suitable training opportunities for their volunteers and offer specialist support to their members.

The has created environments where volunteers, particularly those from 'atypical'



backgrounds, have built confidence and achieved personal goals. Some hubs have focused on helping volunteers transition into employment, supporting them with job applications, CV building, and interview preparation.

It has also enabled a whole group of people typically excluded from volunteering to discover its joys and connect with their community in a new way.

### Building Community Knowledge: Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion has also been a key part of this work. As well as providing access to devices and the internet, hubs have been helping people get online to get more out of their community. With many rural banks and post offices closing, hubs have helped people move their banking online and supported them to access it.

They also help people connect to online medical appointments and apply for benefits, rebates and other financial support. They also assist members in

setting up emails, navigating the internet, producing documents, completing online forms, registering on job sites, creating a CV, responding to interview invitations, keeping Universal Credit journals, and completing school applications. This support empowers members with essential skills, helping them overcome hardship and build confidence.



### Case study: Bringing it all together

The Pantry, Kenninghall, received Volunteer Coordinator Funding to support their volunteers more effectively:

“A lady first approached the Pantry as she had experienced some difficult changes in her life and needed food at the right price for her and her children, as well as other support from the team. She wanted to “give something back” and

eventually began volunteering. She wanted to get back into the work, but needed to update her skills with technology, CV writing and gaining relevant qualifications - but did not have a computer or broadband.

The team offered her the use of a laptop at Pantry sessions that they had secured through a grant. They guided her through setting up email addresses and helped her

register for an online course, create a CV and apply for jobs. She received an interview offer, which boosted her confidence further, and she then moved into employment locally. She is still accessing the Pantry as the job she has is minimum wage and she ran up some arrears whilst unemployed, so being able to pay that debt down whilst accessing quality, wholesome well-priced foods has been beneficial.”

Wrap around care in the  Nourishing Norfolk Network

- Foodbank referrals
- Norfolk Assistance Scheme
- Community fridge
- Healthy Start
- Form filling assistance
- Community transport
- Shelter
- Norfolk Community Law Service
- DIAL
- NatWest
- Barclays
- Anglian Water
- Christians Against Poverty
- Crisis packs
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Letter reading and literacy help
- Hygiene bank
- Fuel bank
- Advocate making phone calls
- Finances

- Pandora
- Daisy Project
- Feathers Futures
- Domestic violence

- Mobile phone clinic
- Love Food Hate Waste initiatives
- Access to internet
- Job search
- Department for Education placements
- Bloom project
- Multiply numeracy workshops
- Skills
- Cookery classes
- Free slow cookers
- Adult Education
- CV writing
- Tech Skills 4 Life
- Volunteering

- Cancer support group
- Yoga
- Wellcome
- Age UK
- Rest hubs
- Thrive project
- Fibromyalgia/CFS support group
- Walking for Health groups
- Wellbeing Wednesday project
- Substance misuse and addiction support
- Subsidised foot health clinic
- Grief cases
- Ex-offenders support
- Mind
- Social prescribers
- WoW bus
- Dental bus
- Physical and mental health

- Safety
- Police
- Fire Service
- Scammer awareness workshops

- Craft clubs
- Young carers groups
- Youth groups
- Competitions for children throughout the year
- Free pack ups for children in holidays
- Book corners
- Cookery classes
- Read and Feed
- Summer holiday clubs
- For young people

- Bingo
- Hot-Spots
- Age UK
- Ukraine and refugee support groups
- Upcycling and recycling workshops
- Community cafe
- Meet up Mondays
- U3A groups
- Cancer support group
- Warm spaces
- Book swap
- Gardening club
- Cycle hub
- Mens Shed
- Isolation and loneliness



# Growing programme

Although our region supplies 33% of England's edible crops, we know that many people struggle to access healthy, fresh produce. Nourishing Norfolk food hubs have been making strides to change this, but providing food hubs with fresh fruit and vegetables remains challenging.

This year, we called upon passionate allotment holders, gardeners, farmers and anyone with green fingers to share their passion for quality, locally-grown vegetables and fruit with their community. This new programme, called Nourishing Norfolk Growers, encouraged people keen to share their healthy, home-grown food to join the fight against food insecurity.

Thanks to a partnership with Notcutts garden centre, those interested in growing food more regularly for their community have been able to collect free seeds from their local food hub

"They're always so joyful to see the produce and I know it's going to be really enjoyed. That gives you the inspiration to keep going, keep growing and keep donating. I feel like it really gives me agency to be able to do something for my community."

**Kerianna Embleton,  
Allotment Holder &  
Nourishing Norfolk Grower for  
Sheringham Food Club**



to grow food now to donate later.

We have also been working with individual food hubs to better understand how we can help them develop skills and knowledge about food and its cultivation. We aim to increase the seasonal supply of fresh produce for Nourishing Norfolk food hubs and bring people together through the shared experience of growing food.

**Working with Dr Graeme Tolley, we have been scoping the current growing programme and what the future could look like:**

"I've been impressed with the amount of innovation in community growing projects, whether in practice or as potential ideas. This goes from the relatively small projects, such as seed libraries, DIY growing kits for members to take home and instructions on how to cook what you grow, to larger ones encompassing various growing schemes, raised beds, and allotments.

There is a wide focus on potential benefits with mental wellbeing and social connection, but also development of skills and qualifications for routes to



employment, and working with young families to incorporate growing and play. A key aspect is using the produce grown within the food hub for the benefit of members, as well as incorporating it within community meals, cookery classes and healthy eating workshops.

The conversation around community growing projects has been overwhelmingly positive, and our ambition is to provide staff and volunteers with the capacity to coordinate these projects alongside their other offers."



Coastal Community Supermarket - Wells-next-the-Sea

# Build-A-Basket

with Nourishing Norfolk

Shopping at a Nourishing Norfolk food hub can save someone 51% off a basket of shopping.

We can only help people make these savings by working creatively and collaboratively with a broad range of partners who organise donations, discounts and deals for our central warehouse and individual food hubs. Working with Norse Group, we redistribute these products via the warehouse - whether they come directly from suppliers or from hub surpluses.

As we continue to consolidate the network, we want to contribute to a resilient local food ecosystem, where everyone has fair access to what they need.



Chilled dairy, meat and eggs from Ankosé CIC



Donations from Easy Cleaning Solutions



Period products from Hey Girls!



Warburtons provide bread to hubs throughout Breckland



Rescuing national surpluses with deliveries from FareShare



85 lines of reliable, store cupboard staples from the Nourishing Norfolk Warehouse



Rescuing surplus locally with supermarkets and businesses



Donated vegetables from Nourishing Norfolk Growers



BOOKER  
Collaborative partnership with Booker Wholesale to secure great prices for store cupboard essentials



Discover how your business can achieve social impact through Norfolk Community Foundation's Good for Good programme >





# Creating a movement

For local charities and voluntary groups, collaborating and sharing resources comes as second nature. We formed the Nourishing Norfolk Network in early 2022 to formally bring food hubs together to learn from one another. Initially, the Network offered a platform for regular meetings and training to help each hub with its development. Since then, it has enabled active participation of all food hubs in the programme, empowering members both big and small to magnify their voices and affect change.

The strength of this network has been recognised nationally. Feeding Britain, a national programme which aims to eliminate hunger in communities, has been a close ally and advocate since the inception of the programme. More recently, Victoria Lewis (Food Strategy Development Manager) and Billie Lawler (Nourishing Norfolk Network Coordinator) were invited to



“The Norfolk Community Foundation has been the great driving force of all of the good work happening across the county through the creation of food clubs and community supermarkets. They’re a constant repository of great practice, good ideas, and all sorts of thoughts of where we can go next in this increasingly uphill task to try to prevent hunger and destitution across the county.”

**Andrew Forsey OBE, Director of Feeding Britain**

participate in a national learning event at the House of Lords by Baroness Boycott, hosted by Feeding Britain.

We will continue to further strengthen and consolidate the Nourishing Norfolk Network. We will help foster greater collaboration among local food projects, leading creating greater sustainability across the network as a whole. We would also like to build further national recognition and partnerships to influence broader food strategies both nationally and locally.

The Network has also:

- Helped Ankosé CIC get their wholesale offer of meat, eggs and dairy for charitable organisations running social supermarkets off the ground through introductions and piloting.
- Inspired Essex County Council to create their own network of social supermarkets, based on extensive conversations with us about our Nourishing Norfolk model.



Baroness Boycott and Rosie Bray with Tori and Billie



Thank  
you

for partnering with us to celebrate and champion our local charities and organisations, helping to build stronger communities from the ground up.



Norfolk  
Community  
Foundation

Together, Norfolk shines brighter

Find out more or get in touch

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Shining Norfolk Network Meeting