

well
together

SOUTH OXFORD COMMUNITY CENTRE



South Oxford Community Association manage and run activities at the community centre on the edge of Hinksey Park, serving residents from across central Oxford and beyond. They received £2,497 to support 'Hinksey Park Community Kitchen' cooking lessons at the community centre.



The community kitchen sessions build on previous successful pilot cooking workshops. Full attendance at two initial sessions, accompanied by some excellent reviews and feedback from the attendees, evidenced a need for these types of events. The model that developed involved demonstration of a recipe using a simple induction hob. After cooking and sharing tips together, the participants enjoy eating and socialising. A WhatsApp group enables everyone to continue sharing ideas and to keep the group in touch between monthly sessions.

Bringing people together with food is a joy and watching the group share their knowledge is even better. The sessions have taken a life of their own, with group members taking a lead exploring different cultural cuisines.



A HUB FOR THE COMMUNITY

The Community Centre has a number of rooms and a busy timetable of activities. A diverse range of sessions supports local residents to keep active, connected, and eating well. Martial arts, bingo, yoga, dance, drawing, and singing sit alongside community café sessions that welcome people into the hub.



FRIDGE, LARDER, CAFE AND KITCHEN

South Oxford Community Centre hosts a range of initiatives to support access to healthy and affordable food. The community fridge (started with support from Oxford City Council) is accessible three days a week. Anyone is welcome to take food from it or to donate food. Although the main objective of the initiative is to reduce food waste, it also serves as an important source of free food for local residents and an opportunity for people to come into the centre and find out about what else is on offer.

More recently a community larder has been established. This 'pop-up' hub, in conjunction with SOFEA enables access to food that is surplus through a weekly subscription. Community larders provide a holistic approach including access to additional services and saving money on bills.



The Hinksey Park Community Café is a truly inter-generational event, providing a place to meet neighbours, take a break from home-working, and make new friends. The café space is fully accessible. Everyone is welcome for coffee, tea and cake, and soup made fresh each week. The Café runs on donations.

The community kitchen sessions were introduced when it became apparent that people were more comfortable picking up processed goods and tins rather than fresh fruit and vegetables.

Some of the visitors to the community fridge do not have access to a cooker and use only a hob or a microwave. The coordinator and volunteers at the community centre offer advice on ingredients in order to expand people's confidence in choosing fresh foods. Due to the rich diversity of the residents in the area, the community kitchen shares different nationalities' cuisines, benefitting from the knowledge and skills of volunteers from different communities.

Donated or surplus food that is not used is then passed on to other sessions and activities to ensure that nothing goes to waste through the week.

“A fantastic way to learn, meet new people in the community, share lunch, experience different cultures, recipes and all while using up surplus food waste.”