



THESE PEOPLE ARE
BEING INSPIRED
BY YOU

well
together

There are friendships being made that you would never expect.



My grandad has two allotments which we've eaten from our whole entire life, so I know what vegetables are going to come when, and what meals to plan around what. He's 83 and still going strong

I've always had my children involved with cooking, where a lot of parents don't. And I found when you allow the child to cook with you, they explore more food. If they know what it is, what it looks like and how to cook it, they're more interested in trying it.

My oldest, he's 14 now, when he started primary school, I made friends with so many different mums, dads, aunties, uncles... and it was very apparent that they struggled to get their children to eat vegetables. They weren't sure how to cook, never been taught to cook. So that kind of sat in the back of my mind. When we started coffee mornings at the local school and I kept saying, you know, "We need to teach these people how to cook". Then they piloted a slow cooker group in the school hub, which I was initially on. And the concept of it was really, really good. But the criteria was very small about who could join which meant a lot of people weren't able to access that. And once you'd been on it, you couldn't come back. Loads of people were wanting to keep going. They wanted to learn more recipes. They wanted more inspiration on, you know, how to hide vegetables. So, I really pushed to open it to the wider community including the older generation. And just share my knowledge about homegrown seasonal vegetables.

You're watching everybody learn at the slow cooker group. I provide the menu and the food, but there's no instruction - so they can add what they want, or not. It's more of guidance of this meal. You can change it and do different things. You can hide vegetables so your kids will never know they're in there. You know, a couple of them say, "My kids won't eat anything" - yet their kids are eating these meals and want them to be cooked again!

My son doesn't have a lot of time in school. At home, he thoroughly enjoys cooking and growing vegetables, so I brought him along to the group. The first week he was showing people that didn't know how to cut certain vegetables how to cut them. And he shares recipes that he likes to make at home, that he likes to put together. They enjoyed that as much - the group like having him there. So it teaches him as well. You know, these people are being inspired by you and giving him something to look forward to each week.

There are friendships being made that you would never expect. Like just in general public, they wouldn't meet, they would have no reason to talk to each other. But because we're together, we have so many friendships that have happened and have continued, not just in the group. They swap numbers and they meet up and take their children out. They join different baby groups together. They share recipes they really like to do at home, which I think is really nice. It stops people from being lonely. It gives them somewhere to be, someone to talk to, a nice warm space, a cup of tea and a chat.

We've got one lady, her husband's passed away, and he did all the cooking, so she didn't know how to cook. And we're now able to teach her how to cook nutritious meals. Different spices she'd have never thought of trying, and it just opens up options of different meals that she probably would never have thought of.

The group's doing really well. Each term we're having many more families join in. We're going to have to probably look at doing two days, because at the moment we've got 19 families on this one, and that's probably capacity, so it means I'm having to turn people away now, which is a shame because I don't want to. For those dropping their children off at school, they can come straight to us. We have some elderly people so they can walk to us, and it's not too far for them to go. It's a nice, big clean space. There's everything you could possibly need in the kitchen to help which I think is really good. And it's warm. We are able to have the toddlers come along as well and there's places they can play, which then means more people can come too - a lot don't have childcare. So they bring them along and they're welcomed. And it's pass the baby - some days you'll be handed a baby just to help the mum while she's cooking her dinner.

We don't get much here. We kind of get pushed to the side and forgotten about. So this is actually something that we are able to use, that people are able to go to. The school are very friendly and accommodating, so just having it there is amazing.





To help us understand the impact of Well Together, for organisers and attendees of funded activities, we have used storytelling as a component of our evaluation framework. Storytelling is an approach based on the Most Significant Change technique that has been used by the Old Fire Station since 2017, who now offer training and support to partners across Oxfordshire.

The Well Together stories are being gathered from organisers volunteering or working for a range of groups and organisations, and from the people who take part in the activities provided by groups. They are being collected in 2025 by the Well Together programme team who have been trained as story collectors.

By telling their stories, participants taking part in this approach, have the chance to reflect on what has changed for them through their involvement in providing activities and / or participating in them. How has it affected their life? Why has it been important to them?

The stories were recorded, transcribed and then edited down to two pages each - aiming to use the teller's own words, retaining their "voice" and reflecting the teller's insights into the impacts and the significance for them.

*For more information about this methodology, and to read stories collected from a range of other projects visit the Old Fire Station's website dedicated to this approach:
[Storytelling: Human-friendly evaluation](#)*

With thanks to our story tellers

Well Together is delivered in partnership by OCVA and Community First Oxfordshire. The Programme is funded by the NHS Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board.

