

# COMMUNITY KITCHEN

## IMPACT REPORT 2023

5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Brighton & Hove

# FOOD

Partnership

## THE COMMUNITY KITCHEN

The Community Kitchen is a cookery school with a heart in the heart of Brighton. Any profits raised from classes with chefs and food experts help to run community cookery groups for people on low incomes, and those living with dementia, mental ill health, isolation and other life challenges. The space is also available for venue hire and private classes, parties, team building and other events.

The Kitchen is run by the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, a non-profit organisation with 20 years' experience using food to create positive change in people's lives - helping people learn to cook, eat a healthy diet, grow their own food and waste less food.

Before opening the Kitchen, we had been teaching cooking in neighbourhood community centres and churches. The Community Kitchen was built in spring 2018 after a successful crowdfund campaign supported by hundreds of local people. Since that time, we have cooked with over **5,000 DIFFERENT PEOPLE**.



Despite being closed for almost two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have also:

Shared over **15,000 MEALS** at our communal dining table including with people paying to attend our evening and weekend classes, as well as private parties, hires, events and team building sessions



Run over **1,000 COMMUNITY COOKERY SESSIONS** for people in need including people living with dementia, learning disabilities, physical and mental health conditions, families and children on low incomes, refugees and migrants, carers and many more.

Shared vital life skills with over **1,000 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE** who attended sessions with local schools, half-term and school holiday sessions and free courses for families on free school meals



We couldn't have reached so many people without our busy social media and website presence – find us **@BTNKITCHEN** – where we have over 5,000 followers or look for our class listings at: **WWW.BHFOOD.ORG.UK/EVENTS**

We couldn't do the community work outlined here without the support of our many grant funders. The Postcode Local Social Investment also funded the production of this report.





*"I've lost more than 10kgs just from eating better and walking more. Mentally, the change in me is huge too. The course got me back on track. I gained confidence and now want to test my limits to see what else I can do. I find small jobs on our community noticeboard and I've also started volunteering for the Kitchen and it feels great. I feel wanted and appreciated and it helps put structure back into my life. It's something to look forward to in my week."*

Community Cookery offers healthy meals alongside cookery and life skills for vulnerable people including people living with dementia, learning disabilities, physical or mental health conditions, families and children on low incomes, refugees and migrants, carers and many more.

We offer longer, 5-week cookery courses to build essential skills, alongside one-off classes - topics include 'low energy cooking' (where we give away slow cookers and hand blenders), make your own takeaway, baking and bread basics, food and mood nutrition sessions, affordable seafood and batch cooking.



Since we opened, **OVER 2,000 DIFFERENT PEOPLE** have attended these sessions, and the courses have made life-changing impacts. By the end of a typical 5-week course:

- **42%** decreased how often they eat takeaways/ ready meals
- **66%** feel happier after attending
- **45%** report making new friends

3-6 months later, participants tell us:

- **69%** are eating more vegetables
- **58%** cook more from scratch
- **51%** eat better within their food budget
- **47%** throw less food away
- **14%** started volunteering
- **10%** had started a new job



When the Community Kitchen couldn't be open due to lockdown restrictions, our team of staff and volunteers helped to run a food distribution hub for dozens of local food banks and other providers. By the middle of lockdown, emergency food parcel provision had increased by 710%. We started distributing new, healthy recipe kits to local families living on a low income. These kits continue to go out during school holidays and since starting we have sent out **12,000 RECIPE KITS, ENOUGH FOOD TO MAKE ALMOST 50,000 MEALS.**



*"The kits improved my outlook on what we choose in the shops, changing our diet, not just for me but for the kids as well."*





# COMMERCIAL CLASSES

The regular programme of cookery classes in the Community Kitchen covers everything from patisserie to fermentation, Indian street food to Japanese, and much more. Classes are led by experienced chefs from a range of local food businesses, who share professional tips, delicious recipes and new meal inspiration. The Kitchen also hosts guest chefs from local restaurants for one-off 'masterclasses' – which help raise funds for community work.

**CLASSES BY NUMBERS** – Since we opened we have had 5,000 bookings, run 400 classes, and hosted 30 different team chefs teaching over 100 different class topics. **LOCAL CHEFS DONATED TIME TO DELIVER 45 MASTERCLASSES RAISING OVER £20,000 FOR OUR COMMUNITY WORK.**

Popular classes sell out quickly and gift vouchers are a top present for the holidays, birthdays or any celebration. We host a huge range of cooks, from the keen dinner party host who wants to improve their skills, to the reluctant cook looking for new inspiration, those seeking an alternative to the pub, solo cooks who we pair up to work together and make new friends, people new to Brighton, teens and parents, date night couples or just groups of friends out to try something new.

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*“We approached Brighton Community Kitchen with a slightly silly idea that perhaps they could arrange a birthday bake-off for 10-12 people. They jumped on the idea and really ran with it to make it a lovely success! ... Thanks for putting up with us all singing, dancing and cackling loudly at our own jokes ... you're all amazing!”*

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*“I've now been three times to classes at the Community Kitchen. Each session has been absolutely brilliant. You learn all the skills from knowledgeable and passionate chefs, but it's so much more than that. You get to sit and share your food with the other participants so it's a sociable activity too. Everyone is always so friendly and the staff and volunteers have created a welcoming atmosphere so anyone attending on their own would immediately feel at ease... I'd totally recommend the Kitchen for a class, it makes a great present!”*

## PARTIES, TEAM BUILDING AND VENUE HIRE

Our Community Kitchen is available for a wide range of private events - birthdays, team building, photo and video shoots, private classes, meetings and more. Groups can hire the space and run their own activities or we can supply cookery teachers and all the ingredients for a successful event.

Popular party menus include canapes, choux buns, tapas and gnocchi but our team have cooked up creative menus from Sunday lunches to South African banquets or even a classic chicken kiev...

We hoped people would get creative about using the space and they certainly have. We've hosted:

- **30+ DIFFERENT TEAMS BONDING OVER THE HOBBS TOGETHER** – whether from tech, design, health, catering or charity sectors... from Brighton, London, Holland and Korea
- **30+ PARTIES AND CELEBRATIONS** – from hen parties to big birthdays or even Christmas lunches
- **80+ VENUE HIRES** – an eclectic mix including a book launch, webinars, video filming, charity fundraisers, recipe testing, community/ charity activities and supper clubs
- **11 LOCAL CHARITIES HIRING THE KITCHEN SPACE REGULARLY** to run sessions for their clients
- **OVER 100 FIVE-STAR REVIEWS** on Google and Trip Advisor

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*“Rented the Community Kitchen to prepare a meal with my co-workers, and it's a brilliant space. It's really a great place and the work they do in the community is truly admirable. We're looking for excuses to use the kitchen again soon!”*

# VOLUNTEERS

A team of dedicated volunteers support all our cookery activities. Volunteers help cookery leaders to ensure the smooth running of courses and masterclasses. A sense of humour, patience and confidence in the kitchen are essential, and our team of volunteers includes over 60 people at any one time.

Since we opened over 140 people have given over **10,000 HOURS OF VOLUNTEER TIME** to support our work. 23 of our volunteers have stayed with us since we opened in 2018, and 10 of our volunteers have moved into paid roles, doing freelance work at the Kitchen to help host events.

Volunteers come from a huge range of ages and backgrounds, some work at home and look forward to socialising in the evenings at our classes, others are new to the city looking to meet like-minded people and some are retired but all are looking to give back. Every single one of them makes a difference to our work, whether keeping the kitchen sparkling clean or sharing a kind word with a participant over a cup of tea.



*"I feel privileged to be able to spend a small amount of my time volunteering at the community kitchen. It's very true that you get back from life what you put into it, and volunteering at such a well organised and important facility is very rewarding. I get to meet many and varied lovely people, and learn something new every time I'm there."*

– Simone Aylward

# OUR VALUES

As a social enterprise, any profits raised at the Community Kitchen support our community cookery activities, and we offer discounted hire rates for small community organisations to use our space for their own events. Our community cookery courses are offered on a pay-by-donation basis and we offer both a concessions rate and a bursary scheme for our evening and weekend classes. We want everyone to experience the benefits of cooking and eating together, regardless of finance, confidence or ability.



*"Well, I love volunteering for you because it's a reminder, not that I need it, that food is about joy and connection. I talk and write about it all the time, but I SEE and FEEL it every time I work with one of your groups. It's a very special thing indeed."*

– Gilly Smith, food writer and podcaster

We also believe in spending and investing in ways that benefit people, the local community and our wider environment. This includes:

Signing up to the **BRIGHTON LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN** for all our staff wages and ensuring we pay this wage or above to all freelancers or contracted companies (eg our handyperson and cleaners)

- Recycling all food waste from our classes and events in our **ON-SITE COMPOSTING TUMBLER – SAVING 38 WHEELIE BINS FULL OF FOOD FROM INCINERATION EACH YEAR!**
- Promoting plant-based options, and ensuring the majority of our classes have plant-based menus
- Buying high welfare or organic eggs, dairy and meat
- Avoiding plastic packaging for fruit and vegetables where possible
- **SUPPORTING LOCAL, INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES** – through our purchasing but also our masterclasses and chef partnerships, where we help each other to reach new audiences
- Sourcing fruit and vegetables for our community activities from local suppliers and focusing on seasonal ingredients. Since 2022, we have also been able to **GROW SEASONAL PRODUCE FOR OUR CLASSES AT OUR PLOT IN STANMER WELLBEING GARDENS.**

# FIVE YEARS OF THE COMMUNITY KITCHEN IN NUMBERS

**1 COMMERCIAL DISHWASHER** (bought with donations from our supporters and volunteers once we realised how essential it was!)

**1 ALBUM LAUNCH** during Brighton's famous Great Escape Festival

**1 BOOK LAUNCH**, for Lerato Umah-Shaylor's Africana with accompanying DJ set

**2 FAMILY CHRISTMAS DINNERS**

**3 CHEFS** who have taught over **100 COOKERY LESSONS** each

**4 HEN PARTIES**

**5 WORKSHOPS** (online and in person) to share our Kitchen model with other places nationwide and internationally

**5 CONTINENTS' CUISINES** covered in our classes – from Asian street food to the cuisine of Uzbekistan, from North African feasts to South American ceviche to European patisserie...

**5 OUT OF 5** is the average score we receive from participants on our commercial cookery classes

**6 AFFORDABLE SEAFOOD LESSONS** run by volunteer Chef Pat from Brighton institution Riddle and Finns

**6 SESSIONS RUN FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS** – from South Korea, Iceland, Amsterdam, Belgium, France, and the USA

**7 COOKERY-THEMED BIRTHDAY PARTIES**

**12 VETERANS** joining a Christmas-themed baking singalong celebration

**17 VISITS** from celebrity chefs and bakers

**22 GROUP CLEANING SESSIONS** from the volunteers at Good Gym Brighton

**29 TEAM BUILDING** cookery/ baking session

**38 WHEELIE BINS** full of food waste saved and composted in our on-site Tumblers each year

**45% OF COMMUNITY COOKERY PARTICIPANTS** report making new friends

**45 FUNDRAISING MASTERCLASSES** with local restaurant chefs donating their time to support our community activities

**52 WEEKS** of collecting donated flowers for our dining table from a local florist (each year)

**55 SLOW COOKERS** distributed at our low-energy cooking classes during winter 2022-23

**58% OF COMMUNITY COOKERY PARTICIPANTS** are cooking more from scratch, 3-6 months after attending a course

**60 COOKERY WEBINARS** reaching 700+ people all over the world

**70 PEOPLE** at our biggest private party booking yet

**100+ 5-STAR REVIEWS** on Google & Trip Advisor

**140 DIFFERENT VOLUNTEERS** giving their time to help at sessions

**150 APRONS** washed and folded each week

**242 BOOKINGS** for private parties, events and team days

**288 DONORS** to the crowdfunding that helped to build the Community Kitchen

**378 COMMUNITY COOKERY SESSIONS**

**434 COMMERCIAL COOKERY CLASSES**

**612 COOKERY SESSIONS** for schools and families on low incomes

**5000 FOLLOWERS** on social media

**15000 MEALS** shared around our sociable dining table



## MASTERCLASS HALL OF FAME:

Jamie Halsall (Cin Cin)  
Isaac Bartlett-Copeland & George Thomas (Isaac At)  
Kane McDowell (Sugardough)  
Michael Bremner (64 Degrees/ Murmur)  
Dave Mothersill (the Coal Shed)  
Masterchef winner Kenny Tutt (Pitch)  
Steven Edwards (Etch)  
Minesh Agnihotri (the Kari Club)  
Kanthi Thamma (Palmito/ Easy Tiger)  
Duncan Ray (Little Fish Hove)  
Alun Sperring (The Chilli Pickle)  
Harry Dyer (V&H Café)  
Patrick McGuigan & Helen Chesshire (Cheese & Wine experts)  
Louise Campbell & Sam Lambert (Mestiza Filipina)  
Xavier Buendia (XDB Photography)  
Dan Cotton (Humble Plates)  
Julien Plumart (Julien Plumart Patisserie)  
Holly Taylor & Toby Gineen (Kindling)  
Yoddi Papa (Papa Pitta)  
Bookie Mitchell, (Namo Eat)  
Bertie van der Beek (Pizzaface)  
(The Black Market Brighton)  
Polly Tyrer (author of Leith's Vegetarian Bible)  
Sam Pryor (Fourth & Church)  
Alex Tzimos (Nostos)

Brighton & Hove

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