

MAKING THE MOST AND WASTING THE LEAST

Ideas and inspiration to help you live sustainably at home



European Union



gov.scot

EUROPE & SCOTLAND
European Regional Development Fund
Investing in a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Future

EQUAL ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE FOOD IN ANGUS

We all know what's said of the best-laid plans, and that is especially true during the coronavirus pandemic.

When Pauline Lockhart and Carol Malone embarked on launching a 'social supermarket' in Forfar, Angus, lockdown hit. Putting their passion project on pause for the time being, Pauline and Carol instead adapted their plans to make use of pre-ordered food to prepare free, emergency grocery packs for those in need in their community.

After all, helping people in their time of need is exactly what their social enterprise, Community First, sets out to do.

During lockdown so far, the pair and their small team of volunteers delivered over 35,000 meals. All people had to do was call a number and request a pack – either for themselves or on behalf of someone else.

"We were in a position to help and when we asked, everyone came together and did just that," Pauline said. "It's incredible and very humbling really."

In addition to preparing and distributing tens of thousands of meals, Pauline and Carol have now launched S-mart – a social supermarket that aims to give everyone access to affordable food while enjoying a positive shopping experience.

"Food banks were never meant to be the norm," Pauline explained. "While they've been a lifeline for so many people in their time of need, they can be seen as a sticking plaster for bigger issues."

S-mart is open to everyone, without the need to be referred and without a limit on the number of times customers can visit.

"While we can't fix the bigger issues that cause food poverty, we can give people access to food with dignity where no one is identified as 'in need'," Pauline continued. "If you're having a bad week, or it's the end of the month and money is tight, you can come in and get a bargain. With discounts of up to 50 per cent your money can go twice as far."

Shoppers at S-mart describe the store as a mini-mart with a farm shop feel to it. Pauline and Carol say every aspect has been designed in a way to provide a welcoming, friendly and positive atmosphere.

Carol said: "It's three things really: it's about supporting our community, tackling poverty and helping the environment, all by using surplus food. It's like a charity shop for food."

With a correlation between food poverty and poorer wellbeing, S-mart also aims to help alleviate some of the stress associated with grocery shopping on a budget with heavily discounted fresh fruit and vegetables. When researching the project, Carol and Pauline were acutely aware that everyone deserves a satisfying shopping experience and access to quality, healthy food, no matter their income.

For example, loose onions are on sale for 5p, and potatoes and eggs come at a cost of 10p each. S-mart's supply chain means it's able to maintain low prices while providing sometimes even upmarket brands that would usually cost much more.

What's more, by partnering up with organisations like Fareshare and independent food producers, redistributing perfectly good, in-date food that's simply not required elsewhere keeps food from being wasted. It also speaks to the power of community groups working together – indeed Pauline and Carol say S-mart would not have been possible without support from the Fareshare team.

"What you see in our shop, in times gone by, would have gone into landfill," Carol said. "The products themselves are well within date, and it's really good quality stock from lovely brands. Supermarkets have certain standards – but we don't care if the label is upside down and the customer doesn't care either."

Community First is now looking to connect with other organisations, businesses, retailers and food producers. The aim is to get as many like-minded businesses on board as possible.

So, what does the future have in store for Community First and the social supermarket? Pauline said: "If the Forfar store proves popular, which it's proving to be already, the plan is to open one in each of the seven towns in Angus. As long as there are people in need, Community First will be here to help."



"We were in a position to help and when we asked, everyone came together and did just that. It's incredible and very humbling really."

Pauline Lockhart,
Community First

FIND OUT MORE
[here](#)

ANY BUSINESSES WISHING TO
SUPPORT OR PARTNER WITH
COMMUNITY FIRST SHOULD EMAIL
hello@communityfirstuk.com

Love Food Hate Waste is here to help us all make the most of the food we love. Find out more at: scotland.lovefoodhatewaste.com

Or follow us on:

 lovefoodhatewastescotland

 @ZeroWasteScot

 lovefoodhatewastescotland



European Union



gov.scot

EUROPE & SCOTLAND
European Regional Development Fund
Investing in a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Future