



SAX Community Fridge

SAX Community Fridge – New Year Update 2025

This is our fourth newsletter to update our growing number of supporters, volunteers and visitors about the past year and future plans.

Who are we?

The SAX Community Fridge (SAXCF) was set up to address the issue of local food waste. It also appeared to be a great way to promote “sharing” within the community. It soon became clear that friendships and support networks were developing naturally and we are now recognised as a real community hub.

SAXCF is part of the Community Fridge Network run by the ‘green’ charity HUBBUB. We work closely with Community Action Suffolk and are part of the East Suffolk Food Network.

We have saved over 13 metric tonnes going into waste bins since January 2024 (an increase of 3 tonnes more than last year) and an incredible 40 metric tonnes in total since we began!.

Although we do have a fridge and freezer ‘back at base’, we continue to operate as an ambient CF holding Monday and Friday morning sessions in the Queen’s Head car park on the High Street in Saxmundham no matter what the weather! (well almost – we were very grateful to The Art Station opening up their “Old Bank” venue to us during a couple of extremely stormy days!).

Many people still see us as a foodbank and are therefore reluctant to help themselves from our community table. We continue to battle this perception and to emphasise we are NOT a food bank, a pantry or a social supermarket. We love the fact this is a ‘leveller’ project. **ANYONE** is welcome to take the food on offer on the table if they can use it or share it with a neighbour. Our community table offers either good food that is surplus and that would have been thrown away, or food that has generously been donated to the community. We trust that being able to come into an open space with food visible and available for everyone is easier for people with anxiety, mobility and embarrassment over food poverty issues.





Our growing community is just as important to us now as saving items from a waste bin. We are all becoming increasingly aware how debilitating loneliness can be, and therefore how important these regular drop-in sessions can be so helpful to all of us.

The volunteer team has continued to grow. In addition to the core team who help to run the car park sessions and collect the regular supermarket and bakery donations, we have several volunteers who are on-call to pick up unexpected donations from places as far away as Bury-St Edmunds and Southwold.

Our Year of Generosity.

This year our focus is on GENEROSITY.

We continue to be so thankful to Leon and Abby for providing us with such a perfect outdoor venue for our project, as well as making cake and home-made soup for everyone. We were able to express that gratitude by providing them with a couple of new stylish parasols and to give them some “Flowers In Bloom” bulbs, kindly provided by East Suffolk Council, for the car park tubs!

Once again we want to take this opportunity to express HUGE thanks to our regular supporters who continue to be vital to the on-going success of this project. These include Tesco and Waitrose (through the FareshareGo scheme), Pump Street Bakery, Munchy Seeds, Maple Farm, Platt's and Harvey & Co. Thanks also go to The Bell and At The Crossroads for making our coffee every week and to the HSBC who provide the tea and the Hot Chocolate. Thank you **all** so much. Please be assured you are greatly appreciated by the whole team.

Other businesses have been generous to us including the staff at Christies Care. We were able to purchase electronic scales and a new banner from funds raised by them for us at a breakfast event. Additionally they also gave free first aid training to 14 of our volunteers/visitors!





Our team have also been generous with their time and supported Maple Farm with some fruit picking. We love receiving their fresh produce on a Friday morning and it was a pleasure to give something back to them.

The Past Year

We have seen a large increase in the number of people reached by the project. Tesco asked if we could take on an extra evening collection – long story short, this has resulted in our being able to give a weekly donation to a toddler group, two local nurseries, and an early Wednesday morning pop-up CF at Saxmundham Primary School. This means we are reaching a wider range of ages (not just those able to visit us at 10:30am on Monday and Friday) especially young families.



As you can see from this photo, our volunteer team is getting younger by the minute! This young lad is our youngest volunteer and helps every Wednesday... For those you of a Health and Safety persuasion, this box was actually feather-light!!



SAX Community Fridge

Christmas week saw the first SAXCF “Flash Fridge”! This resulted from a large donation from the supermarkets late on Christmas Eve... 18 people were able to come to the church hall following a Facebook announcement. In addition these people were able to give food to their friends and neighbours – see some stats:



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Christmas Food Waste UK (2024) - 7,000,000 tonnes ends up in the bin.

This includes over 5 million Christmas puddings, 2 million turkeys, and 74 million mince pies

Bread and potatoes are still the biggest source of household food waste in the UK.

1,500kg of surplus food (including 350kg of bread) has been redistributed by SAXCF in December that's about 24 of these :



In 2024 SAXCF has redistributed 13.5 tonnes of food through our Monday and Friday sessions, our pop-ups at Saxmundham Primary School, two local nurseries, and local food banks and food projects.

Thank you for supporting the fight against food waste through this project.

Fun Fact : Britons eat almost twice as much chocolate as our American counterparts over the festive period.

We are now part of the East Suffolk Food Network and recently sent volunteers to the inaugural Suffolk Food Summit in Stowmarket.



We continue to work hard at building relationships with other local food projects and we all help each other as and when we can. We have recently been asked by the East Suffolk Food Network to meet with two ladies hoping to open a Community Fridge/Pantry in Framlingham. They were very enthusiastic about the SAXCF, took



lots of notes and are hoping to follow a similar model to ourselves and we look forward to supporting them in the future.

Having said that we are not a crisis food bank we have continued to support and build local relationships with families, through our links with the Suffolk Coastal Rural Debt Centre. We are able to respond quickly to a need by giving a SAXCF "Pay It Forward" voucher for Project 40Seven and IP17 GNS using donations given to us.

We were again asked to be involved in the SAX Art Fest 2024 as a community project. We were once again able to provide a community-focused area in the car park that Saturday. Amongst other things we provided free tea and coffee and St John's church (now SKC Church) provided Take Home Messages and a cake stall. Representatives from East Suffolk council also gave us field to fork kits to hand out, and provided Food Savvy information.



We held our fourth Apple Pressing session using apples provided by William again! We were able to give out freshly-squeezed apple juice to everyone who came along to the church hall.

The "Foundation Fitness" weekly sessions started by one of our volunteers, for volunteers and friends, continues to flourish. This class encourages and educates on movement and flexibility as we grow older. It has raised a considerable amount of money for Third World projects.

Our FaceBook page also continues to grow and now has nearly 1,000 members.



Summary

As you see, we have been rather busy in 2024 – we continue to be extremely grateful to our growing family of supporters, visitors and volunteers – many of whom have now become great friends!

We look forward to seeing what new challenges and opportunities 2025 will bring!

