



# The real junk food cafe

## The value of food

**Raised £29,322 from 414 supporters**

**+£6,000 +Extra funding from Community Business Crowdmatch**

Single use plastic, car emissions, and wood burning fires. These are often the things we think about when talking of climate change. But what about the tonnes of food that ends up in landfills across the globe? Believing that all food is valuable and should be eaten, a group in Brighton wanted to bring their Junk Food initiative to the city centre.

In the UK, [a third of all food produced or imported is wasted](#), becoming a major contributing factor towards climate change. This food is often perfectly good to eat and is rejected by supermarkets because it doesn't meet quality standards due to its look, commonly being labelled as 'wonky'.

For over five years, the Real Junk Food Project Brighton has been intercepting food destined for landfills. They now intercept over 10 tonnes of food each month and their team of volunteers, peel, chop and prepare it and their cooks serve delicious meals to over 500 people a month in pop up lunch cafes. These cafes run on a [Pay-As-You-Feel policy](#), which means their guests help cover their costs through donations if they're able.

Through their initiative they also offer jobs and kitchen training to those less able to find work (such as those suffering from mental issues, those recovering from addiction, or ex-offenders).

In 2019, the team behind the Real Junk Food Project were given an opportunity they couldn't pass up. [The Infinity Food Co-operative](#) offered them the chance to lease their property and use it as a vegetarian/vegan cafe using the surplus food they intercept. This cafe would secure their future as they would finally have a permanent place to call home.

They estimated that they would need £25,000 to cover their setup costs and refurbish the property. They hoped to raise the much-needed funds by [setting up the Junk Food Cafe crowdfunder](#).

The Real Junk Food Project Brighton's non-executive director, Paul Loman, said, *"The whole point about crowdfunding was to encourage our community to have a stake in our future. We were both raising funds but also telling our story at the same time. Grant funding gets harder all the time and usually comes with strings attached as well as delays and onerous reporting and constraints."*

## An outpouring of support from the crowd

Their loyal supporters rallied around, donating towards the new cafe and sharing the crowdfunding campaign far and wide. In 38 days, [414 members of the crowd had raised £29,322!](#) This also included £6,000 of extra-funding from [Power to Change's Community Business Crowdmatch](#) which aims to help start or grow community businesses in England.

Paul told us, *"The extra funding came at a pivotal time in our campaign. The matched funding kicked in when we hit £6k which meant that we were suddenly at £12k which was nearly half way to our target. It gave the campaign a great boost as it showed that we had momentum and a realistic chance of success."*

He continued, *"Crowdfunding meant that we were able to embark on a risky project: the lease of a property in which we could run a daily cafe. It enabled us to generate excitement in the community for the project and engage a large number of people who we trust will support the cafe in the long term."*



Proving just how loving and encouraging their crowd of supporters are, one donator commented, *"Junk Food is probably the greatest idea anyone has ever had. Not only to reduce waste, but also to feed Brighton's most needy. Fridays at One Church are always a beautiful, diverse, joyous occasion where all people are equal, tucking into a brilliant meal. The team are so dedicated, skilled, hard working and compassionate. It's an honour to eat the food they give their time to create. I am so looking forward to coming to the café, and hope to continue supporting however I can. Change the world, one belly at a time. #FeedBelliesNotBins!"*

Since crowdfunding, the Real Junk Food Cafe team are working on getting the new cafe open to feed the public and stop tonnes of perfectly good food going to waste.

Paul explained, *"It's early days as we haven't yet opened the new cafe which was the objective of the fundraising campaign. It has, however, provided a great talking point and a buzz in our community. People are very excited. As a result, we've had large numbers of people pledging support in kind for example carpenters, plumbers, decorators and cafe volunteers."*

## Top crowdfunding tips from the Real Junk Food Project Brighton

After receiving so much love and support from their crowd, an extra funding grant of £6,000 from Power to Change, and a promising start to their new venture, Paul left us with his top tips for anyone out there thinking about crowdfunding for their own dream.

*"It's all about being relentless in your marketing. Talking about the project at every opportunity. Finding new angles to feature on social media to keep your project in front of minds. Listening to advice - particularly from the Crowdfunder team. You're not the first to do a campaign so learn from others."*

Find out if you [could be eligible to unlock extra funding](#) for your business or great idea. What are you waiting for? [Start crowdfunding today!](#)