

PRESS RELEASE: 13.00hrs 14th November 2023



Coronation Food Project launched by The King and Queen

To mark His Majesty's 75th birthday, the Coronation Food Project was launched during a visit to a surplus food distribution centre in Didcot

The King and Queen visited a surplus food distribution centre in Didcot today, where they launched the Coronation Food Project, a new initiative to save and circulate more surplus food and use it for social good.

The project, which was inspired by The King, aims to create a fairer and more sustainable future by saving more surplus food, supercharging food distribution through centres like the SOFEA hub in Didcot, and supporting the wider sector with flexible funding. The initiative is being led by Baroness Louise Casey and Dame Martina Milburn and coordinated by the King Charles III Charitable Fund.

Baroness Casey said: "Up to 14 million people in the UK are facing food poverty at the same time that millions of tonnes of food go to waste each year. The Coronation Food Project won't solve the issue of food poverty, but we can and must make a difference for communities in such stark need. This work is urgent given the winter and Christmas that so many families will face."

Dame Martina explained how the project will support leading food rescue charities, including FareShare across the UK and the Felix Project in London, to enhance and scale the infrastructure that gets surplus food to where it is needed most. She said: "We need more warehouses, more fridges, freezers and refrigerated lorries. When there is a glut of surplus food, we need ways of keeping it fresh so that it doesn't go to waste. We also want to give a boost to some of the thousands of brilliant local community initiatives that are doing vital work in this area, so the project will include a grants scheme, once we've raised enough funds."

During their visit to SOFEA, FareShare's regional hub in Didcot, The King and Queen met staff and volunteers who transport surplus food into the warehouse, store and pack it before sending it out to more than 120 community organisations in need across Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Wiltshire.

Their Majesties also met senior figures from the food industry, both major retailers and manufacturers, who have joined forces under a new model to save even more waste and generate additional food for the charity sector. Through the Alliance Manufacturing

programme, they aim to utilise surplus and donated resources of any kind - food, packaging, labour and capacity - to produce more nutritious food to help people in need.

Richard Kennell, CEO of SOFEA said: “Day in, day out, our staff and volunteers are collecting surplus food and making sure it gets out of the warehouse and on to the plates of people in need. The reason today has been so special, is that it lets us shine a spotlight on what they do. It’s such an honour for us to welcome The King and Queen to our depot and I can’t wait to see the difference the Coronation Food Project makes.”

The Coronation Food Project will be made possible through the generous support of philanthropists, donors and corporate partners. Dori Dana-Haeri, who chairs the project’s development committee said: “I was astonished by the scale of both food waste and food poverty in the UK, so I wanted to do something practical to help and I am delighted to be volunteering for the Coronation Food Project. If you share our mission to reduce food waste and feed more communities in need, we’d welcome you on board as a donor or partner.”

The public are being urged to support the project by donating via www.coronationfoodproject.org .

Ends

For further information contact Paul Brown on 07970 523 670 or media@coronationfoodproject.org

Notes to Editors

The Coronation Food Project

Inspired by His Majesty King Charles III, the Coronation Food Project aims to create a fairer and more sustainable future by:

- Saving more surplus food
- Supercharging food distribution networks
- Supporting the wider sector with flexible funding

Coordinated by King Charles III Charitable Fund

King Charles III Charitable Fund was founded in 1979 and awards grants and incubates initiatives to help people and communities to change the world around them. Inspired by His Majesty’s values of harmony and sustainability, the Fund is committed to creating lasting improvements to people’s lives and a sustainable future for all.

In Partnership with FareShare and The Felix Project

FareShare is the country’s national food redistribution charity, delivering over 55,000 tonnes annually to over 8,500 charities providing all manner of services such as school clubs and community centres, simultaneously avoiding 95,000 tonnes of CO2 going to waste.

The Felix Project, as London’s largest food rescue charity, collects fresh, nutritious surplus food that cannot be sold, and delivers it to community organisations and schools so they can help the most vulnerable in our society.

SOFEA

SOFEA, FareShare's regional food distribution hub for the Thames Valley, at Didcot rescues surplus food and redistributes it to 120 community organisations in need, across Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Wiltshire. The centre, which has been operating locally since 2014 has 50 staff and 150 volunteers. Last year it rescued and redistributed 1,200 tonnes of food - produce that otherwise would have gone to waste.