



## **Annual Report 2022-23**

This report covers the ninth year of our operation, from April 2022 to the end of March 2023.

### **Overview**

This has proved to be an important year in the charity, defining the future direction for the next few years. Covid had a significant impact on the work we either did or supported, including the loss of a number of connections and networks which had helped to shape our mission. There was also a loss of energy and vision which threatened the future of the charity. Fortunately, we retained a strong link with the Bensham Community Food Co-op which itself reached a crossroads during the last year with a need for clearer governance, better financial planning and a management structure which could help it grow in the future. A planning meeting for the Co-op decided that it was not in its best interests to set up a new charity and that the charitable objects of Soul Food Spaces fitted perfectly with the purpose and aims of the Co-op. Taking on full responsibility for the Co-op was agreed by the Soul Food Spaces trustees with four new trustees joining to strengthen the Board.

Due to work and other pressures, Steph Edwards decided to step down after three years as a trustee, however we were delighted that Phil Conn agreed to continue. In addition Tom Rooke and Kath Hayward who had been key in setting up the Co-op joined the Board along with Beldevie Moubiri and John Carpenter, the latter agreeing to take on the role of chair at the February meeting. One further trustee is likely to join the Board in April/May 2023 and we are currently considering whether to seek another member to lead on PR/Comms.

### **Projects**

Prior to the above changes which took place early in 2023, the relationship with the Bensham Community Food Co-op took the form of paying for the monthly membership of FareShare along with a few direct purchases of food and goods. Collections of surplus food from local shops has never really picked up again since covid along with the pressure on volunteers collecting late in the evening or early morning. Fareshare provide an interesting and eclectic mix of items on a regular and consistent basis with much of the remainder of the food coming from local churches, charities, schools and individuals who now know to provide fresh produce, rather than just dried and tinned goods, which many have been conditioned to do by conventional food banks. Numbers attending the Food Co-op have continued to rise over the last year and reached or even exceeded pre-covid levels on some occasions. There is no doubt that growing levels of poverty and financial hardship in Bensham are affecting our numbers

along with higher numbers of asylum seekers being placed in the area and the North East in general because of relatively cheaper accommodation costs.

### **Finance**

The Financial Accounts for 2022-23 show the incomings and outgoings of the charity. We had an income of £6188 and expenditure of £3192 meaning that at year end, our balance was £5888 compared with £2892 at the close of the previous year (2021-22). The bulk of this difference is accounted for by a single anonymous donation of £3333 which we received in December to support the Food Co-op. We have not sought to spend the money this year as we know that the forthcoming year will bring new financial challenges with a fund which had supported the Co-op no longer being available.

Our spending on the Food Co-op in the year 2022-23 increased by around £1400 to £2916 as things continued to open-up after covid, along with growing financial hardship that has hit the local community. Around £300 of the spend on the Co-op paid for new membership cards, a cost which is unlikely to be repeated for several years. Planned giving over the last year increased to £2300, with £353 received as gift aid for the previous year's donations. We spent £127.50 on website domain name and website management.

### **The Future**

The new trustees and a clearer responsibility for the Food Co-op have given the charity fresh impetus going into the new financial year. There are many challenges ahead as we seek to maintain or even develop the existing provision, put robust governance in place and establish a properly costed and funded service. There are many opportunities too, not least in looking to see how we can continue to fulfil our wider charitable objects by supporting or developing other projects and activities which feed people physically, emotionally and spiritually as we managed to do in the early years. We have played our part in helping a great many people over the last year and we look forward to continuing to do so in the next year and in the years to come.

Soul Food Spaces Trustees; April 2023

## SOUL FOOD SPACES

### Income and Expenditure summary 2022-23

From 01.04.2022

To 31.03.2023

**Opening Balance 2,891.88**

#### Income

Planned Giving	2,300.00
Misc. Donations	3,523.34
Fundraising	-
Grants	-
Gift Aid	353.76
Other	10.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,187.75</b>

#### Expenditure

Grants	-
Food Co-op	2,916.24
Other Projects	-
Marketing and Publicity	127.50
Finance & Audit	-
Expenses	28.00
Other	119.95
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,191.69</b>

**9,079.63**

**Closing Balance 5,887.94**