



52, Westsgate Street  
Gloucester  
GL 2NF

# WIGGLY NEWSLETTER

Registered charity "The  
Wiggly Worm Ltd"  
Charity no: 1124647



## LEARN - COOK - SHARE

Wiggly Charity believes in the power of food to build confidence and self-esteem. We work to bring communities together and help address social isolation. Wiggly is proud to support vulnerable, marginalised and disabled adults and children with our inclusive cookery workshops.



### Heritage Hub to Wiggly Kitchens



Wiggly's collaboration with Project Grow and the Gloucestershire Heritage Hub has been going (or should we say growing!) from strength to strength.

Community Interest Company Project Grow, an [RHS Grow with It Champion](#), has been planting and harvesting vegetables at the Hub Community gardens, less than eight minutes' walk from the Wiggly kitchens.

**FROM SOIL  
TO PLATE IN  
LESS THAN 8\***  
(\*MINUTES THAT IS!)

Each week, a wonderful team of volunteers harvests seasonal vegetables which our Wiggly Chef uses to create delicious dishes for our cookery courses. Our Chef designs each week's recipes around the vegetables available so that our participants can use the freshest and most local supplies to learn to cook.

You can read more about our collaboration to use seasonal vegetables and tackle waste in this [BBC article](#) by Jo Durrant and Harriet Robinson.





# FULL CIRCLE VOLUNTEERING

One of the best things about our partnership with Project Grow is the full circle opportunities that we are able to provide to our participants. The gardens offer them the opportunity to get involved in the end to end process of planting, growing, harvesting, preparing and cooking the freshest local produce.

We first met Ben when he came on a Wiggly cookery course this Spring. Ben lives with autism, and although he already had some good foundational cookery skills and knowledge, he had lost confidence in himself after having struggled with the fast-paced nature of a commercial kitchen. With support and mentoring from our Wiggly Chef, Ben's self-confidence has gradually returned and he is now a regular volunteer with Wiggly, cooking alongside our Chef at the Gloucestershire Deaf Association monthly lunch clubs as well as planting and harvesting vegetables for Wiggly in the community gardens each week.

It's so wonderful to see Ben thrive and build on his employability skills. Thanks for all your hard work Ben!



## SEASONAL SENSATIONS!



The Wiggly Thriving Communities course is in full swing and has now completed its Spring and Summer sessions.

The focus for each five-week course is on learning how to use seasonal produce and make the most of vegetables while they are at their freshest and most abundant.

Our participants come to us for a variety of reasons, from seeking respite from caring responsibilities to individuals with mental health issues and those going through treatment for long-term illness. But one thing they have in common is a love for learning to cook and boost their confidence in the kitchen.

The group have produced some fantastic meals so far, including Ragu Bianco, loaded nachos and a selection of vibrant summer salads.

The autumn course starts in September and frankly we can't wait!

Thank you to Gloucestershire County Council for funding this series of seasonal courses.





# #morethancooking : Case Study

You may have seen us using the hashtag #morethancooking when we talk about the impact that Wiggly can make. But what do we mean by that? This case study explains the difference that Wiggly has made to one of our participants.

Martin\* is an 50 year old man living in supported living accommodation where he has access to a shared kitchen. Martin has difficulties with both his physical and mental health, has type 2 diabetes and suffers with leg ulcers alongside severe depression and anxiety.

In summer 2023, Martin attended a 12-week Wiggly cookery course with a focus on healthy eating. When he came to Wiggly, Martin lacked confidence and relied on convenience meals such as microwave burgers and packaged foods for his meals. Main meals are generally prepared for the residents by support workers at his accommodation, and although he had had the chance to learn to cook with his fellow residents, Martin had struggled to keep up in group sessions due to his dyslexia.

When Martin attended the Wiggly course, he was given Widgit Easy Read picture recipes to use and our Chef adjusted the pace of teaching to match his learning pace. For the first time, Martin found that he was able to read the recipes in real time, enabling him to keep pace in the kitchens.

Martin said that he felt more comfortable at the Wiggly course than at any other previous cookery course, and he quickly gained in confidence, progressing from making a home-made soup in week one to making fish cakes and turkey burgers.

12 months later, Martin’s support worker tells us that he is still cooking once a week at his living accommodation and really enjoying it, using the Easy Read recipes that Wiggly provided. Martin described the Wiggly course as “really good fun”.

As a result of attending the Wiggly course, Martin has said that he feels more confident in the kitchen and is not as tempted to go to the shop for sweets and drinks as it has made him more health conscious and able to cook for himself.



That’s why we call it **#morethancooking**

*[\*Name has been changed to preserve anonymity]*



Cookery sessions are always popular at ENRICH, a holistic health and well-being course held at St Mark’s Church Hall in Cheltenham every Tuesday.

Funded by Cheltenham Borough Council and run in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Homes and other providers, including the Isbourne Centre and Third Age Fitness, our Wiggly Chef is supporting local people to learn the skills to cook healthy, seasonal, low-cost meals.

Enrich sessions will be running every week through to late October 2024. If you are interested in getting involved, contact [clare.davies@cbh.org](mailto:clare.davies@cbh.org)

PLEASE CONTACT US AT: [OFFICE@WIGGLYCHARITY.ORG](mailto:OFFICE@WIGGLYCHARITY.ORG)  
OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: [WWW.WIGGLYCHARITY.ORG](http://WWW.WIGGLYCHARITY.ORG)

# Cooking for Community

Wiggly is proud to cook for the School House Cafe Community Lunch that takes place every Monday in St Paul's Cheltenham.

Supported by Fresh Hope Charity and a number of other partner organisations, the Community Lunch is run on a pay as you can basis, meaning that you purchase a token for whatever you can afford at the counter on arrival, and hand your token over to our Chef to collect your lunch. If you can't afford to pay anything, don't worry, you are still more than welcome to collect a token and enjoy a lunch.

The best thing about the lunch is the fantastic sense of community that it generates. No matter what your circumstances, you'll always receive a warm welcome at SHC and Wiggly.



We are grateful to use vegetables from Good Food Cheltenham and donations of supplies from Creed Food Service to help keep our costs down.



The Wiggly team were pleased to take part in Gloucestershire NHS's Big Health Day 2024, held at Oxstalls Sports Park on 14 June. It was a brilliant opportunity to meet other partner organisations working to support people with disabilities, mental health issues, hearing or sensory loss across the County.

We also met lots of prospective Wiggly course participants and hope to be able to offer opportunities to cook with Wiggly to as many as possible of those who signed up with us over the next few months.

## Could you help Wiggly help people to cook?

If you like what we do, there are lots of ways to support us.

You could **make a donation through our website**, organise a **fund-raising event** or local businesses could **sponsor a Wiggly course**.

We also have **opportunities for volunteers**. We would love to hear from you if you could offer some time to help support our clients in the kitchen, or if you could transport equipment for our mobile cookery course or offer Wordpress web skills to help keep our website up to date.

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It's been a busy year so far at Wiggly, but we are more than aware that we still have more demand for our services than we have been able to address.

That's why we are enormously grateful to have received a multi-year grant from Barnwood Trust which will enable us to run courses for adults with learning disabilities and mental health issues and for vulnerable and marginalised families in Gloucestershire.

Keep an eye on our Facebook and Instagram pages @wigglycharity for details of new courses as they are launched.

We are also thrilled to be launching our first ever cookery course for veterans this month, kindly funded by the Honorable Charitable Company for Gloucestershire, the Royal Air Force Association and Alabare Charity.

A group of veterans living at Imjin House in Gloucester will be learning to cook on a budget with our Wiggly Chef, with a focus on using regular store-cupboard ingredients to make delicious and healthy meals.

At the end of the course, the group will use the skills they have learned to cook up a celebratory meal for fellow residents in their own kitchen, sharing their new skills over a wonderful meal together.



## And finally...



We couldn't put our newsletter out without a shout out to our partners at the brilliant Gloucestershire Deaf Association. Our Chef cooks the community meal at GDA Barnwood each month for around 40 guests, which is a real highlight of his month.

In June, GDA were kind enough to invite Chef Ryan along to act as Commis Chef to celebrity guest Punk Chef who was giving a demo to GDA guests!

Ryan had great fun helping Punk Chef create a really special chicken kiev with home-made butter, asparagus, radish, apple and micro-herbs. Dessert was french toast with caramelised apricots, chantilly cream, toasted nuts and maple syrup caramel.

This month, we are also supporting GDA with two specially designed workshops for their Dalmatians and NXTGEN children's and young people's groups. Thank you GDA!



*thank you*