

PROJECT

FIRST FOOD-SHARING SOCIAL MEDIA SITE FOR STUDENT ACCOMMODATION AIMS TO

Waste not want not to share in land of plenty

Each UK family wastes 24 meals a month – Foodhall tries to change this

WRITTEN BY
ESTEL
FARELL OIG



It is time for students to stop wasting and start sharing,” says

founder of the University of Sheffield's new Foodhall project Louis Pohl said.

“Our aim is to empower students to change the social norm. We are very daring in that sense.”

Foodhall, the first food-sharing social media

network for student accommodation in the nation, has been created by the 24-year-old University of Sheffield architecture graduate, whose aim is to make students happier and healthier while lowering food waste.

The project began thanks to a new crowdfunding platform launched by the University, the Sheffield Crowd. The website works by giving students a place to share and work on their ideas.

The Foodhall website allows students to create communal meals, share their leftovers and ask their neighbours for ingredients.

Louis said: “People nowadays are more comfortable with digital platforms so it may be easier to send an



open message saying: ‘who wants to come over for a BBQ?’”

Foodhall works by allowing the host to decide how many guests can attend an event and then start a discussion over what they are eating that day and who is

bringing what. People may offer to bring ingredients, or even dishes.

“Even though we are trying to keep it very altruistic and encourage hosts just to ask for a meal in return, it can be specified that every person pays £2, for example,” added Louis.

Louis believes that food sharing is the perfect way to get to know people from different cultures and to create a more “holistic” life. He said: “It is the one moment when you really get a bit of time to speak with somebody and there are no other pressures.

“You are happier when you are sharing.”

Louis, who has taken a year out before his mas-

ters on architecture to work on Foodhall, started thinking about food sharing in his first year when he was living in student accommodation.

“We live in a global village but people may find it difficult to connect with others locally. Cooking communally and borrowing basic ingredients will become easier with Foodhall.”

It is hoped that introducing students to food sharing when they first move to the university will help create a cultural shift amongst students and boost the communal atmosphere at the University's student accommodation, which has already been voted Number 1 by students in the 2014/15 Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey.



A group of students get together to

However, getting the project off the ground hasn't been easy. “The main challenge is that we need to get a lot of people that really want to see this happen and use Foodhall,” Louis said.

“We have received a lot of support from the University,” he said. “The university is amazingly supportive of projects like this that are

Sheffield's new air pollution garden

Sheffield's Botanical Gardens will become home to the first air pollution garden in Europe thanks to a researcher from the University of Sheffield being awarded a grant to create the unique project.

The garden, which will be established in collaboration with the universities of Leeds and York, will provide observations of air pollution effects on plants while raising awareness of the consequences of degraded air for humans.

Dr Maria Val Martin, the

University of Sheffield researcher in charge of the project, said: “We want to raise awareness of air pollution through the plants.

“Visitors will be able to see the impact air pollution has on the plants' leaves and read about the effects on human health in some explanatory signs in the garden.

“Air pollution in Sheffield is bad – we do not meet European regulation standards. It leads to about 500 premature deaths per year.”

Poor air quality conditions can cause respiratory illnesses, such as asthma, and aggravate existing cardiovascular diseases, cancer and can even cause premature death.

Dr Val Martin, who is a lecturer in Environmental Protection in the University's Faculty of Engineering, said that the air pollution garden will be the perfect addition to Sheffield City Council's Air Aware campaign.

Air Aware was launched last January to raise aware-

ness of air quality in Sheffield and encourage people to drive less.

The exact location of the garden will be decided in September and the plants, which will include lettuces and wheat, will be sowed next spring.

The researchers are hoping the garden, which has been funded by the White Rose University Consortium, will be used as a blueprint to establish more air pollution gardens across the UK.



Dr Val Martin, from the University of Sheffield, at the Botanical Gardens

MAKE STUDENTS HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER WHILE REDUCING WASTE



MONIKAKLAVINS

cook and celebrate the launch of the Foodhall pilot website in the latest edition of Sheffield's Real Junk Food Project, a surplus food café

quite aspirational."

EpiGenesys, a software company owned by the University, has developed the Foodhall website and academics have been providing advice. The project may even expand with the Department of Architecture by having pop-up kitchens across the campus. This project has the potential to be rolled

out to other universities and into high density architecture nationwide, so it's great we're leading the way here in Sheffield," Louis said.

Students can try the early pilot site at www.foodhall-project.com.

To find out more, visit: <https://sheffieldcrowd.com/project/foodhall-the-social-network-for-foodsharing>

HOW MUCH FOOD DOES THE AVERAGE BRITISH FAMILY THROW AWAY?

The average UK household wastes nearly £60 a month by throwing away almost an entire meal a day. Each British family throws away 24 meals a month on average, according to the UK's Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP). WRAP found out that Britons are

discarding 4.2 tonnes of food and drink annually that could have been consumed. The top three foods being wasted in British homes are bread, potatoes and milk; the equivalent of 24m slices of bread, 5.8m potatoes and 5.9m glasses of milk are being wasted daily.

One-fifth of what households buy ends up in the bin – and around 60 per cent of that food was edible. The main reasons for the waste are shoppers buying more than needed, lack of clarity around storage and labelling and over-estimating portions.

Scheme gives you chance to hire a bike from just £15 a year



Some of the bicycles outside the University's cycle hut

People in Sheffield will be able to hire bikes from as little as £15 a year, thanks to a new University of Sheffield public bike hire scheme.

Sheffield ByCycle will be available to all and will initially feature 30 bikes for hire from five docking stations on the university's campus.

However, the scheme could grow quickly as the university has secured funding from Sheffield City Council to expand Sheffield ByCycle to Devonshire Green, Barkers Pool and the train station later this year.

Darren Hardwick, travel plan coordinator at the university, said the university is exploring working with other organisations such as hospitals.

Darren said: "Some people want to cycle on the odd nice day but don't want to invest in buying a bike. We want to give people an opportunity to cycle without having to necessarily commit to doing it all the time.

"We expect everyone using the bikes to wear a helmet and follow general cycling safety."

Sheffield ByCycle aims to bring different parts of the campus together while creating links with other areas of the city.

The scheme's big launch will take place in September, however it will be operating from late summer.

Annual membership will cost £15 and will include £5 credit. The first 30 minutes of every rental will be free of charge and, then, every hour will cost £1.

Instructions and a tutorial video will be available and users will be able to use a website and phone app to manage bookings and to find out where bikes are available.

The bikes will have integrated lights and a lock.

Alumni volunteers triple in just one year

The number of University of Sheffield alumni volunteers has nearly tripled in the last year, with dedicated graduates totting up more than 6,700 hours of volunteering between them. In the last academic year, 670 volunteers took part in a host of activities – including mentoring current students – compared to only 275 volunteers the year before. On average, each of them has volunteered for 10 hours. Head of alumni relations at the University of Sheffield Claire Rundström said: "Alumni volun-

teering has taken place across the university for some time, but there was never any formal central co-ordination of it. "Former students can make invaluable contributions to areas such as employability and recruitment and there is a huge amount of willingness and enthusiasm from alumni to support the university. "Therefore, we recruited an alumni volunteer manager and some other staff just over a year ago to help co-ordinate how we can work with our graduates to make the most of the skills they can offer

and since then we've attracted lots of volunteers, who recognise how rewarding helping people who were in their shoes can be." Graduates can get involved with the university again in a variety of ways, such as helping at open days, providing career profiles, taking part in eight-week online career mentoring, or speed networking events, in which alumni meet students to talk to them about different career opportunities available to them. Other programmes include City Connections, in which up to 40 students from disadvantaged

backgrounds travel to London to visit alumni businesses and network with senior alumni to raise aspiration and develop skills and confidence. University of Sheffield Geography graduate and alumni volunteer Tom Popple said: "Volunteering provided me with a unique opportunity to reconnect with the university and share my own professional experiences with students from my department. "I thought the concept and delivery of City Connections was fantastic and wish there had been something

similar to this when I was still studying. "I will certainly volunteer again when possible." Economics student Dominic Shepherd added: "Networking with Sheffield alumni can really change students' lives for the better, providing an opportunity for students to receive advice from people they wouldn't normally get the chance to meet." To find out more about how you can volunteer for the university, visit www.sheffield.ac.uk/alumni/volunteering