

CAMBRIDGE ORGANIC GAZETTE

courgette



Brand Match

Cambridge Food Hub and Organic
get coordinating looks

You're having pilaff!

Try our versatile
veg-box recipe

Local Food Ecosystems

Duncan's book
is published

Core values

We set out our stall
(our fruit and veg stall)

After a break, the
Courgette magazine is back
with a new look and lots of
exciting news

Comment from Duncan:

Founder and owner of Cambridge Organic



For a variety of reasons this is the first edition of the Courgette this year, but we're making up for it with a bumper twelve-page special edition and boy-oh-boy do we have some big news to share in this one.

The past twelve months have been transformational for the Cambridge Organic Food Company. I started this business 23 years ago on a shoestring budget and for the vast majority of the time money has been tight and we have relied on prudence, ingenuity and resourcefulness to get by.

Throughout the pandemic, demand for our box scheme has been unprecedented. In a relatively short period of time, we find ourselves having a little money in the bank. These resources are still modest by a lot of people's standards, but we will make them go a long way: the Food Hub is now considerably closer to becoming a reality.

Something I'm keen to point out is that to date the Food Hub project hasn't received any external funding. All the work developing the Food Hub so far has been funded by revenue generated by the box scheme, so the fact that we are now able to go ahead with the project is entirely down to you, our members. So, by continuing to support us with your highly valued custom you are not only getting a regular supply of organic fruit & veg, but you are also helping to transform the food system. That's something you should feel really good about.

The first exciting thing we have to share with you is the launch of our new branding. Nowadays we have two distinct brands that are both part of the same company; 'Cambridge Organic', being the organic box scheme enterprise that you are familiar with, and 'Cambridge Food Hub', which is intended to create and support Cambridge's 'Local Food Ecosystem'. Our new brand brings these two elements together with a similar theme, and I must say that we're thrilled to bits with what our designer, Shuk-Yee, has come up with. The launch of the brand goes hand in hand with the launch of our new website, and a whole new management system behind it. More about this on pages 3-5 and 8-9.

The other really exciting piece of news from my own personal perspective is that I'm able to announce the launch of my book 'Local Food Ecosystems; How Food Hubs Can Help Create a More Sustainable Food System'. Copies will be available on a 'pay as you feel' basis, and all profits will go towards the Cambridge Food Hub building. I really hope you will read it as it sets out a vision for a more just and ecologically sound food system and explains just what we are aiming to achieve with the Food Hub. More on page 6-7.



COMPLEMENTING LOGOS

In praise of our twin logos

Cambridge Organic and Food Hub get a coherent new look

This edition of the Courgette magazine is proudly displaying our new logo and branding. Loyal readers will remember the revealing of a new logo in the September issue last year. That was largely my own handiwork; it's fair to say it wasn't received with universal acclaim and crucially, further work was still needed to unify the Cambridge Organic and our sister company, Cambridge Food Hub, into one coherent brand. We therefore decided to engage a professional graphic designer.

The designer we chose was Shuk-Yee Lee-Wan. She's been a wonderful person to work with: very enthusiastic and a great communicator, incredibly patient and totally engaged in what we do and how best to convey it. The approach we decided upon retained elements of last year's logo design, in particular the two fonts used for 'Cambridge' and 'Organic' and the line between them breaking for the dot of the 'i' of 'organic'.

The same fonts and the linking line detail have been applied to the Cambridge Food Hub logo. The two logos are recognisably linked together, not only by the shared fonts but by common elements in their logomarks (that's the image bit of the logo – see the new words

we've learnt!). Both share a roundel of vegetables. Inside that circle, Cambridge Organic has a selection of produce, while the Food Hub features activities (or rather funky little people performing the actions) to illustrate the service the Food Hub provides its business members.

I think one of the coolest things is that we have seasonal variations of the logos! We're all about seasonal food, so we thought why not have seasonal logos? You can see a spring/early summer version on the front cover starring asparagus and purple sprouting broccoli. We're keeping the other ones under wraps, so watch out for a different circle of veg on each Courgette edition throughout the year now that we are going back to a bi-monthly schedule.

There are more elements of our new branding overleaf. We hope you love the new designs as much as we do.





THE CIRCLE OF FUN

A look around our new branding

The 'circle of fun' rapidly became established as our name for this large circle, encompassing lots of the design elements for both the Food Hub and Cambridge Organic. It was one of the first designs which Shuk-Yee showed us and for a while we hadn't found a use for it. That was when I complained, 'We're not using the circle of fun' and from then on the name stuck.

The circle of fun not only includes lots of lovely produce that you might get in your veg box, but also many of the activities which the Food Hub either already performs or will perform once the building is up. So, the tractor represents our local growers; there's quite a bit of food prep going in as there will be in the Hub's incubator kitchens. There are even vegetable peelings and spent coffee grounds to show the Food Hub's emphasis on a circular food economy, where nothing is wasted. And before anyone else says it, yes, some of our new branding is garbage!

D.B.

Circle of Fun Our 'Circle of Fun' brings together aspects of Cambridge Organic and the Cambridge Food Hub's new designs.



Seasonal

We have had new seasonal logos designed for us, highlighting produce from across the seasons. You'll see these logos featured on our Courgette magazines and on the website. Look out for our festive logo at the end of the year!



If you'd like to ask Shuk-Yee to work on your own graphic design project, she can be contacted via:
info.sycreative@gmail.com
<https://sycreative.carrrd.co/>



Cambridge Food Hub

One of the key purposes of our rebranding task was to bring together the branding of Cambridge Organic and the Cambridge Food Hub. The Cambridge Food Hub's branding mirrors Cambridge Organic, but highlights people too: so you'll see little characters doing activities such as chopping up veg, driving tractors, holding veg boxes...



Icons

We have created icons to represent our core values. Check out the back page of the magazine for more of our logos emphasising key aspects of our business.



Van-tastic designs

One by one, our vans are going to the signwriters and returning with one of these fantastic designs. As before, each of our electric vans will feature a different vegetable. One side has the Cambridge Organic logo while the other has Cambridge Food Hub and the same vegetable being prepared. Our two large (still diesel) vans both feature the circle of fun.



There are already several of the new van designs out on the road: have you seen one yet? Let us know when you do!



LOCAL FOOD
ECOSYSTEMS

How Food Hubs Can Help Create a More Sustainable Food System

DUNCAN CATCHPOLE
FOREWORD BY TONY JUNIPER



LOCAL FOOD ECOSYSTEMS

Duncan's book launch

This is a really exciting moment for me as I get to announce the launch of my book.

My colleagues and I have been working on the Cambridge Food Hub project for some eight years now and as those ideas evolved, we began to realise that we had something very special and exciting on our hands. The 'Local Food Ecosystem' is a radical departure from the conventional food system. It is a food system built upon principles such as wholeness, balance, cycles, diversity, and interconnectivity, and which conforms to an entirely different economic model.

The Food Hub has been operational, albeit in a 'pilot' phase, for a couple of years now, but I don't think many people fully appreciate what goes on behind the scenes, or the principles that underpin it, which is a shame because it might just point the way to a much more sustainable food system. I therefore felt it was necessary to write a book so that people could understand the concept a little better.

The purpose of writing the book was more to share knowledge and ideas than to make money. I very much hope you will read the book so that you understand just what it is we are trying to achieve, and also to understand that as a member of our box scheme you are very much a part of the 'Local Food Ecosystem' and therefore contributing towards its aims and objectives in a very real way. We wanted to make the book as accessible as possible and have therefore decided to sell it on a 'pay as you feel' basis. You can buy a copy for as little as it cost to be printed or download an audio version for free. This is very much in keeping with the concept of the 'knowledge commons', which is itself a feature of the same kind of economic principles that the Local Food Ecosystem adheres to.

The other purpose of writing the book was to help fund the Food Hub project, and literally every penny over and above the printing costs will go towards that. So, even though you can get a copy for free I hope you'll consider paying a little extra to support the project. As a guide, the book has a cover price of £15.

The book is due for launch on the 24th of May. Members of our box scheme can order a copy on our website, in which case it will be delivered with your box and you won't have to pay P&P. Copies can also be ordered by visiting localfoodecosystem.co.uk

"The Local Food Ecosystem considers the food system as a whole, and balances the needs of a diverse range of food enterprises in a way that achieves many social and environmental benefits"

WAITING FOR AN UPDATE

News on the progress of our new website

Loyal readers of the Courgette will remember a number of articles announcing the imminent arrival of a new website. We are still waiting, but there is an enormous amount of activity going on, both on our part and on the part of 'Boxmaster Systems', the software company that develops and supports our website and the admin system which lies behind it.

Now that our re-brand has been completed, the new website can launch with the new look and it will also coincide with the change of direct debit provider which we describe on the next page.

One thing which is contributing to the delay in switchover is that we have been put in touch with a 'UX specialist' to improve the user experience (= UX – no, I didn't know that abbreviation until recently either). We knew that the new website would re-size to fit mobile screens, which is going to be a big step forward in making it easier to use. But we now have hopes it will also function in a more intuitive and customer-friendly way.

Our move to a new website coincides with some big changes in Boxmaster Systems. We were early adopters and were one of the first veg box companies to use the software back in 2013. For most of those eight years, we've known that Boxmaster Systems was actually one man, but this year Michael has built the company up to a team of four. As early adopters, we've been using an early version of the software, while the veg box companies who've joined more recently have a more up-to-date one. But the user-experience improvements we're helping to shape will hopefully provide the basis of a still more advanced Boxmaster 3.0, which other veg box companies will benefit from in due course.

D.B.



DIRECT DEBIT CHANGEOVER

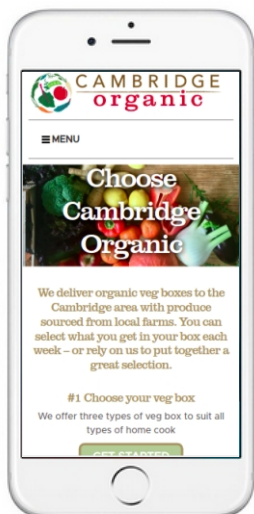
We will be changing our direct debit provider from GoCardless to London and Zurich. This process will not require any action from existing customers. Before the first payment is collected from London and Zurich, you will receive an email confirming that what appears on your bank statement will now be "L&Z re Cambridge Organic" instead of GoCardless.

What will change?

Hopefully one benefit for customers is that the direct debit mandate will now feature the words "Cambridge Organic". We have known customers to cancel their direct debit mandate in the past, as they were unaware of what it was for!

What will not change?

We will continue to take payment in arrears, i.e., after the delivery has been made. You will still receive an email before the money is taken, confirming the amount.



Mike: missing you already!

The end of May sees the retirement of our longest serving veg-box packing and delivery person. Mike Smart joined us in January 2006, which means he was already an established part of the team when I started later that year. For me, Mike is so deeply woven into the fabric of life at Cambridge Organic that it is very difficult to imagine how things will be once he is enjoying his well-earned retirement.

He has been the most loyal, patient, hard-working worker and friend we could ever have wished for. We've always said that his calm presence was the gel that held us all together, and there was certainly a time when his holidays seemed to coincide with the rare clashes of personality we experience.

Over the past few years, Mike has reduced his working days, and we've managed to avoid blows on his non-working days. So, although we hope to maintain the peace in his absence, we will all miss him very much.

When Mike is ready to leave on his delivery round, he usually calls out 'Missing your already!'. Writing this, I certainly am.

D.B.





NO FAFF PILAFF

It's a one pot wonder! – brought to you by Crow Hedger

For those lucky souls who work at Cambridge Organic HQ on a Monday (so not me, I'm afraid!), there is often a tasty lunch rustled up by Crow from the 'fruits of the fridge' – that's whatever is left over from the previous week's veg boxes. You can, of course, substitute whatever fruits of the fridge you find in your own kitchen!

D.B.

Ingredients

Crow's tip: if you're using fresh turmeric, grate it straight into the pan so it doesn't stain your chopping board (or entire kitchen). Lightly oil your hands to pick up the turmeric to stop them getting stained.



- 300g white basmati
- 250g onions, finely sliced
- 200g mushrooms, quartered
- Whatever veg you have to hand, e.g.
- Leek, quartered and very finely sliced
- Spinach, stems finely chopped and tops roughly chopped
- 4 bay leaves
- Turmeric, two fingers-worth, finely grated (or two tsp ground).
- ¼ tsp salt and ground pepper to taste
- Garlic to taste (Crow says that means one whole bulb)
- 3 cardamon pods, crushed with the back of a knife
- 2 tsp coriander and 2 tsp cumin seeds, toasted in a pan and then crushed
- 1 lime
- 1 stock cube (veg or mushroom)
- 30g vegan block

Method

- In a heavy-bottomed pot with a lid, sweat down the onions with the melted vegan block, salt and pepper until the onions are translucent. Add the spices and bay, garlic and mushrooms and stir round to coat.
- Make the stock with 750ml of hot water and add. Pop the lid on and leave on low for 15 minutes. After 10 minutes add the leeks on top to steam for the last five minutes.
- By now the rice should have absorbed the stock and be cooked through. Check the rice is cooked and add the spinach (or other leafy greens) and stir through. Squeeze the juice of the whole lime over to finish – it really brings the flavours out.
- Serves 4. You could roast some seeds up or toast some flaked almonds to sprinkle on top to add some crunch and protein.

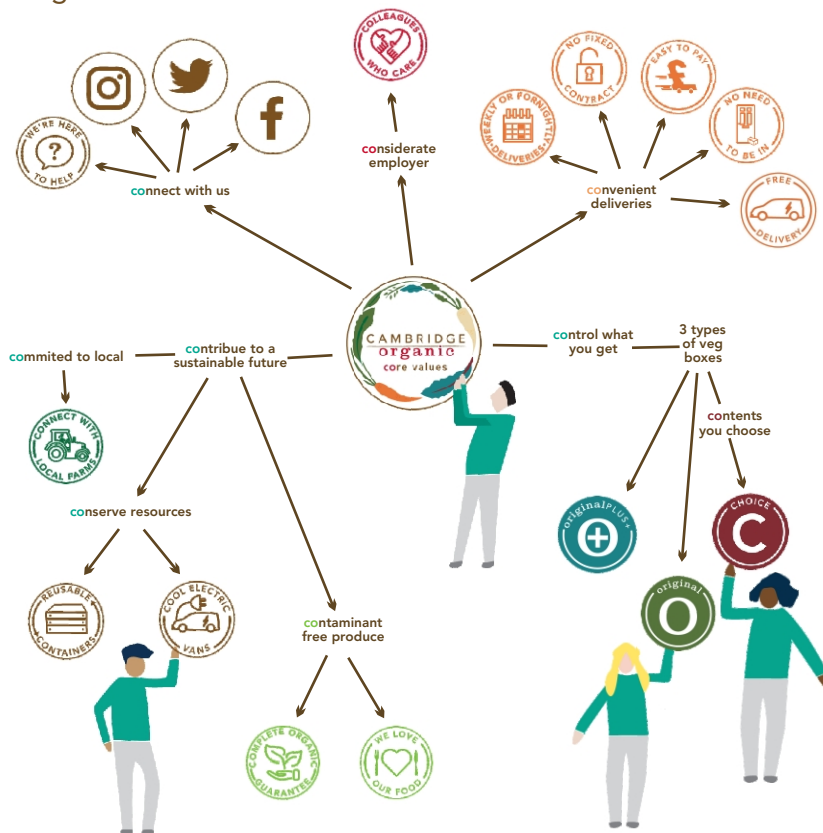




CORE VALUES



At Cambridge Organic our values are at the core of everything we do.



20% OFF YOUR FIRST VEG BOX

To claim your 20% off go to cofco.co.uk and enter the code 'BRANDNEW21'

Only applies to new members - but if existing loyal members refer a new member, you can also get 20% off your next veg box! Just ask them to put your name in the 'how did you hear about us?' box.

