



FoodSmiles St Albans

Community Supported Agriculture

FoodSmiles - good for people, good for the planet

Community supported agriculture (CSA) is a partnership between farmers and consumers in which the responsibilities, risks and rewards of farming are shared.

CSAs are communities of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland, in essence, becomes the community's farm, with the growers/farmers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production.

FoodSmiles is a CSA and was one of the first in the country





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Community gardens address increasing concerns about the lack of transparency, sustainability and resilience of our food system. It is one of the most radical ways that we can re-take control and ownership of our food system and it's not new!

They are:

- ecologically sound, often organic
- viable businesses
- examples of community investment
- local direct sales model with majority of produce from farm itself

Most CSAs in the UK are horticultural but there are also flower, livestock, poultry, egg, fish, herb and biofuel CSAs.





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Why FoodSmiles makes sense:

Provides local fresh and nutritious food and creates sustainable food systems -

- Creating **direct connection and engagement** between UK farmers, farmland and their communities
- **Mental and physical health and wellbeing benefits** for communities, volunteers and farmers
- **Whole farming pound** is retained in the **local economy**
- Can produce **direct routes to market** for existing landowners and farmers
- Providing **environmental benefits, stewarding biodiversity**
- Supporting **job creation and skills development**.
- **Volunteering** opportunities
- Creating **vibrant food communities**
- CSAs are **economically viable**
- CSAs are **self-reliant**, a **good model for new entrants** who then move on to larger farms creating the **next generation of farmers**



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- CSAs are the only organisation dedicated to supporting and promoting local food production in the UK
- Around 200 farm members, representing over 50,000 people are eating from a CSA, with enormous growth in demand in the last 18 months as the interest in organics and self-reliance is rekindled.

The Vision

A CSA in every neighbourhood across the UK – FoodSmiles is a great example.





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We started in 2013 when a small group connected to Transition St Albans came together to create a local food-growing scheme. The project was designed to benefit the local area by producing organic food, building community involvement, and encouraging sustainable growing.

In 2014, after being unable to find suitable land in St Albans itself, the group began work at Hammonds End organic farm in Harpenden, Stuart Roberts kindly found a plot on the farm . Members cleared and restored the site, repaired polytunnels, built compost bins, and began planting.





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Community Supported Agriculture?

Stuart Roberts of Hammonds End farm employs farming methods that work with nature, and believes it is critical that food production and caring for the environment work side by side on a modern progressive farm. How he farms addresses his own approach to the big challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and antibiotic resistance.





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We held our **first AGM in 2015** and expanded through grants and crowdfunding with a packing shed and 4 polytunnels. It also became a Community Benefit Society, allowing us to sign a formal tenancy agreement and adopt a legal structure.

From 2016 onward, FoodSmiles broadened its community role to **St Albans**, taking on land at Hixberry Lane and later launching **Incredible Edible community** gardens in the town centre.

By 2019, FoodSmiles had 35 members, representing several nationalities, and was harvesting around 1,600 kilograms of produce each year.

We have educational and social activities such as skills sessions, volunteer sessions, and attend public events. These activities make FoodSmiles a community network centred on sustainability, learning, and local participation





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FoodSmiles' vegetables and fruit are distributed to members in weekly veg boxes following our harvesting sessions. Because the farm was Soil Association certified, the group also adopted formal organic growing practices and detailed record-keeping.





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People get involved in three main ways - Subscribers, Friends or Volunteers at the Incredible Edible gardens. Friends support the organisation by purchasing low-cost shares and can attend meetings, receive newsletters, and take part in events. Subscribers make a bigger commitment by helping grow food on the organisation's sites, paying an annual fee, and committing an agreed number of hours per month in return they receive weekly veg boxes when produce is available. Volunteers can also support the public-facing town gardens.

Food Smiles is different every week – we can be digging the beds over , turning compost, sowing seeds, watering, repairing the tunnels or harvesting. No one day is ever the same. Plus we have some of the best cooks who come up with great cakes for sharing at our afternoon tea break.





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The membership year is 1st Mar - 28th Feb

	2026 Fee	Minimum Monthly commitment	
Tier 1 Worker * Account	£0	14 hours	(£1 share must be purchased)
Tier 2 Worker Account	£80	7 hours	
Tier 3 Worker Account	£160	4 hours	
Tier 4 Non Worker Account**	£250	7 hours PER YEAR	





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Food Futuring

Food Futuring is:

A research collaboration between the [Institute for Creative Futures](#) at Loughborough University London and [Reimagine Everything](#), a St Albans-based participatory design collective.

A collective visioning project that brings together stakeholders from across Hertfordshire to co-create a shared vision for a healthy, fair and resilient local food system.

Food is life - But the way we produce, sell and eat food in Hertfordshire doesn't work for everyone.

Unhealthy diets. Rising costs. Hungry bellies. Unnecessary waste. Struggling farms. Dying soils. Poisoned rivers. **Collaborating locally we can change this.**



2 of many collaborators



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