

## Reading Town Meal is taking over Forbury Gardens again this year!

The beautiful Forbury Gardens will be hosting the Reading Town Meal on **Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2018, 12-4pm**, an event not to be missed! 2018 is looking to be the best yet and organisers are looking for everyone to be involved.

Since 2011, the Reading Town Meal has grown in its success, providing over 1000 people with a delicious meal prepared by the talented students of Reading College. The wonderful growers and allotment holders of Reading donate their fruit and veg to make this community-powered event, which celebrates locally grown food.

**It's not too late to get involved!** There are a number of vegetables which will still grow in time for the event, including **salad leaves, rocket, radishes and salad onions**. Beans and currants can also be picked and frozen now!



Whether you're a grower and can plant a few extra seeds, or if you've never grown before and would like the opportunity to gain a new skill, you can 'pledge your veg' at <http://www.readingtowntownmeal.org.uk/growersform.cfm> or email [growers@readingtownmeal.org.uk](mailto:growers@readingtownmeal.org.uk) so we know what you are planning to donate.

There won't just be a delicious meal to be had; there will also be music to listen to, stalls to visit, workshops to get involved with and many family fun activities. The Town Meal Steering Group Chair, Sharon Fitton, says, "nothing says community better than sharing a meal together. And the whole event is a real celebration of all that is produced locally. Come along and I'll guarantee that you'll leave feeling more positive about living in Reading".

Help is also not limited to growing fruit and veg. Community volunteers are also a vital part of the whole event. **Volunteering roles range from helping with the set up and clean up, supervising parking, organising competitions, handing out flyers to invite everyone to join in the fun, and generally overseeing the running of this fun filled event.** There really is something to

suit everyone's skill set. There are many volunteers who are keen to return and it would be great to see as many of the community involved as possible!

To become a volunteer, sign up here:

<http://www.readingtowntmeal.org.uk/volunteerform.cfm>

Or email us on: [volunteers@readingtowntmeal.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@readingtowntmeal.org.uk)

**We look forward to seeing you at the Town Meal 2018!**

**\*ENDS\***

Notes for Editors:

1. The Town Meal Steering Group is organising this event and comprises: Food4Families (a BIG lottery funded project managed by Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC)), Reading College, Reading Food Growing Network, Reading Borough Council Culture & Sport Services, True Food Community Cooperative and other volunteer members.
2. Food4Families aims to work with communities across Greater Reading to increase the amount of food grown locally and sustainably and has created 20 community gardens across Reading where people learn how to grow their own food under the guidance of professional tutors
3. RISC is the biggest Development Education Centre in the UK, working with schools and community groups to build understanding of sustainable development and promote social justice.
4. Reading Food Growing Network aims to promote and expand locally grown food through sharing knowledge, information and ideas alongside advice and support to local growers
5. Reading College Hospitality, Travel & Tourism department are contributing their expertise and use of kitchen facilities where their catering students will prepare and cook the Town Meal, which they will then serve in Forbury Gardens.
6. True Food Community Cooperative is a social enterprise, owned and run by its members, that enables its members and others to buy affordable organic food and other produce and supports local food production.
7. Reading Borough Council is supporting the event through logistical advice and support.
8. Each of the previous Reading Town Meals held in 2011 - 2017 have served over 1,000 people with a free hot lunch cooked from tasty local ingredients grown locally, and filled Forbury Gardens with stalls and activities all

celebrating local, sustainable food. A short film of the first Reading Town Meal can be seen here <https://vimeo.com/36269113>

- 9.** The photo shows Mary Tindle and Ted Jarrett growing and picking their own vegetables.