



In light of all bills increasing and adding strain to all households, we wanted to share some "Top Tips" with you, around ways you may be able to save some money on your food shopping bills and energy efficiency.

Community Larders

www.sofea.uk.com —Once on the website, go to the purpose projects tab and you will see information for Community Larders.

Community larders offer people a non-means tested (anyone can join!) membership starting at £3.50 a week. The purpose of the larder is to re-distribute surplus food. Larders have ambient food (food found in your cupboards, tins/pasta etc) Fresh fruit and veg (the veg maybe wonky or oversized) and at some larders, chilled items. An individual member can expect to go away with at least £15 worth of food a week!

Larders are also about more than just food! Many larders offer different services such as cafes, so members can sit and have a chat, uniform swap shop, homework clubs etc. Most larders are run by voluntary groups and are unique to their community.



**Both of these Cost £3.50
Community Larders
"Powered by SOFEA"**



It's your choice!

www.sofea.uk.com
reg charity 1155783

**Reduce your Bills
Reduce Landfill
Reduce Food Stigma**

Olio App

The Olio app is a free app, available to download on your phone or laptop/tablet from your app store.

Olio is for food-sharing, aiming to reduce food waste. It does this by connecting those with surplus food (normally individuals that may have collected reduced items from shops) to those who need or wish

to consume such food. You can use the app for free but need to collect the food from the person directly. Top tip for using the app – check the app early morning and late in the evening – this is when members frequently put items on!



Too good to go

This is another free app you can download on your phone/laptop. This app lets customers rescue unsold food from shops and restaurants to save it from going to waste. You can purchase a "Magic Bag" from local establishments. You can set how far you are willing to travel and it will show you what is available. The costs of the magic bags vary but start at around £3-£4 The establishment will show you how much the value of the bag should be worth.



Community kitchen



Didcot has a fantastic Community Kitchen, that is held every Friday from 12-3pm. The team use surplus food to cook lunch for everyone that attends. This is more than just about food though. It is a great opportunity to meet new people in the community and make new friends.

Community fridge

Community Fridges can give out surplus food to members of the public. Locally we have a community fridge in Abingdon and Wallingford and hope that Didcot may have one in the future. Maybe if you work in Abingdon/Wallingford, or visit there on a regular basis, you could consider using this service?

Abingdon Community Fridge

<https://www.facebook.com/abingdoncommunityfridge/>

Wallingford community fridge

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/192042231748598>

Wantage Community Fridge at the Mix in Wantage—*Google The Mix Community Fridge*

Shopping for reduced items “Yellow sticker” and making most of your freezer

You may be surprised that lots of different foods can be frozen! For example, did you know you can freeze cheese! Supermarkets tend to reduce short dated products towards the end of the day. By making the most of your freezer you could help to save yourself some £'s! Check out the website below that has some great tips!

<https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>



What's the difference between Best before and Use by Dates?

There can often be misunderstanding between Best Before and Use By dates. Best before dates are generally found on items that are not stored in the fridge when you buy them. A best before date means that the **quality** of the product will decrease after this date but can still be consumed.

Use by dates are generally found on products you would buy from the fridge/chilled department. These products must be used before this date or can be frozen on this date to preserve its life. Again, check out the section above for guidance on freezing products.

There are websites that sell products that have passed or are close to their Best Before Date. This could be another way to cut down on the cost of the food bills.

Check out these websites, as examples of what is out there.

<https://www.approvedfood.co.uk/>

<https://cheapfood.co.uk>

Supermarket members cards and vouchers

When shopping in the supermarkets, most of them now offer members cards. These can give you money off offers, save you points that you can spend at a later date, plus some give vouchers to use on future shops. We know that we all have lots of cards these days but some stores give you the option of an app on your phone to use instead of a plastic card. It can pay off to look at the offers and plan shops using your vouchers. We know that this can take some planning but it can definitely pay off in the long run!

You may also want to look at the way you shop. We can all be guilty of picking up items we don't really need. Supermarkets are designed to make us shop! It maybe worth trying shopping online. Some supermarkets you can either select to pick up in store or for home delivery.

The other thing that can help if online is not an option, is to make a plan for meals for the week, writing a list of what you need and then being really strict with yourself while in store to not buy off the list. It may also be beneficial to do shopping in separate stores. You may find

one supermarket offers better value on frozen goods and another on your fruit and veg. To help with this, you can use www.trolley.co.uk. You can search the products you use and it will show you the prices at most of the major shops.

If you are over 60, did you know that on Tuesdays, Iceland offer 10% off your shopping! All you need is proof of age and ask at the till!



Using different methods to cook your food

A slow cooker can be a very easy and energy efficient way to cook! If you have not got a slow cooker, you can normally pick them up starting at as little as £15. U-Switch have looked at the efficiency and have said "They use just a little more energy than a traditional light bulb, and you can leave your food to cook slowly throughout the day while you're at work or when you need to get on with other things."

Slow cookers can also be a helpful tool, if you fancy try to do some batch cooking and freezing meals for later.

Microwaves are high wattage but tend to be used for less time, and crucially they only heat the water in food, not the air surrounding it as in an oven, so there's less wasted energy. We've estimated that microwaving a jacket potato often costs 25% or less of what it would cost oven-cooking one.

If you are cooking with your oven or on the hob, they will stay hot after switching it off and continue to cook! If you're cooking a pan of veg, maybe consider turning it off, just before its done! Will save you a little bit of energy. Also a top tip for the colder months, use the heat from the oven to help heat the house. When you have finished cooking, open the oven door!

For further tips on how to cook in a cost effective way, check out the U-switch guide below. They have lots of helpful tips.

<https://www.uswitch.com/energy-efficiency/energy-efficient-cooking/>

If you also wanted to look at things in more detail, you can use a free online calculator, to see how much it costs to use an appliance— www.sust-it.net/energy-calculator.php



The chart below gives you an idea of the costs of using different appliances. Please note, these are not exact costings. It will depend on the actual appliance you are using and the price of your electric/gas.

APPLIANCE	COST PER DAY	COST PER WEEK	COST PER MONTH	COST PER YEAR
ELECTRIC COOKER	87P	£6.09	£26.38	£316.54
DUAL FUEL COOKER (GAS AND ELECTRIC)	72P	£5.08	£22	£264.03
GAS COOKER	33P	£2.32	£10.07	£120.83
SLOW COOKER	16P	£1.15	£4.98	£59.76
AIR FRYER	14P	£1.01	£4.40	£52.74
MICROWAVE	8P	58P	£2.50	£30.02

Making the most of what you already have in the cupboards/fridge/freezer

We can all struggle at times for inspiration on what to cook after having a long day. The below website maybe able to help! You can put in what you have to use at home and it will come up with loads of suggestions for recipes you can try!

www.supercook.com

Why not give it a try? You may find a new recipe that you really enjoy.

www.bbcgoodgood.com is also another great website to find new recipes. You can see other peoples comments and tips which is really helpful.

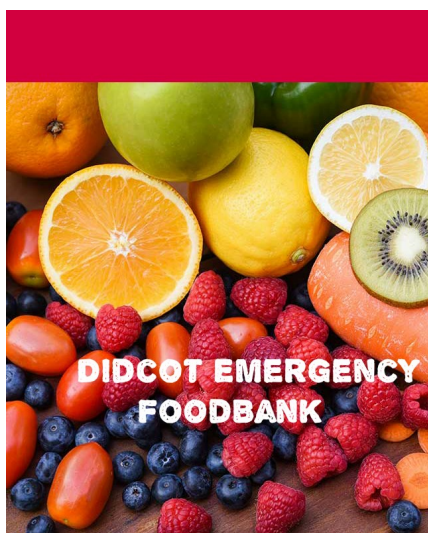


Foodbanks

If you are really struggling and choosing between paying bills and eating, you may be eligible to visit a foodbank. Didcot has a fantastic foodbank, that is open 2 days a week. You would need to be referred to visit it. This can be done through the GP surgery, through the Social Prescribing service or the Citizens advice. They can only support people in the short term but do very much want to help the local community as much as they can.

CAB - 0808 278 7907

Social Prescribing– you need to be registered at one of the 3 Didcot GP surgeries. Please email- Communitylink.sofea.nhs.uk



Consider buying food in bulk and sharing the cost with family or friends?

Food can be purchased in bulk in many different places, even Amazon! Again you can use the website www.trolley.co.uk to figure out if it's a good buy. Sometimes on Amazon, it will also have a facility that you can purchase the product on repeat. This then also lowers the cost as it will give you a discount. Just always be careful to make sure you know what you are signing up for.



We hope you have found some of these “Top Tips” are of use. Please feel free, if you are experiencing challenges in your life, big or small and would like to talk to one of our link workers, please get in touch! You will need to be registered with one of the 3 Didcot GP surgeries, to access the service. People are able to self-refer to our service so we are very flexible.

Contact details- our main email address- Communitylink.sofea.nhs.net

Our link worker can be contacted directly-

Selina@sofea.uk.com

Or please feel free to call the main office -

01235 510774

