



A message from our Chair, 15th April 2020

To the community of Florence Park and beyond,

Flo's is still here! Over the course of the last month we, as everyone has, have changed what Flo's does to adapt to the 'new normal' - still providing warmth alongside the essential services to the community.

I've been Flo's Chair of Trustees since February this year. I'm very proud to be part of Flo's journey and especially when I consider the awe-inspiring work of our fantastic team, trustees and volunteers over the last two months. I salute you all.

Today I'm writing to you for two reasons.

Firstly, we'd like your support in order to support others. Today we're launching an [online giving appeal](#) to support our free meal initiative and to help counteract the loss of income we're facing. Please consider supporting us, so that we can keep helping those who need it, as well as ensuring a future for Flo's when this is all over.

No one should face the virus alone. We're providing at least 60 free meals per week to those who need it most. People stuck at home with health conditions, the elderly over 70, the vulnerably housed and single isolated parents. We've teamed up with other local organisations to form the [OX4 Free Food Crew](#) - together we're providing 140 free meals per week.

Any amount you can spare will genuinely help. Please also spread the word among your friends and neighbours.

Secondly, to update you all about what we're doing:

Flo's cafe are cooking up nourishing and delicious meals in our cafe kitchen (our family loved last week's lasagne and salad!). Not only the 60 free meals for the most vulnerable and isolated as mentioned above, but also for everyone else. The [public can preorder](#) and collect the affordable meals in a safe way - a crucial way to keep up the spirits, support parents working from home, and sustain Flo's. The menu changes weekly and full details on what we're doing to keep people safe is [here](#).

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The **refill shop** has stayed open thanks to the amazing dedication of a mostly voluntary team who staff, stock and clean the shop- all whilst keeping a social distance and following new hygiene measures. We've been grateful for the popular demand and have started to [open more days per week](#). The shop has also increased its range to include flour, dried apricots, nuts and soon olive oil- this will mean you can do more of your weekly shop in a local, safe environment.

The community midwives are now seeing more and more parents-to-be as GP surgeries have closed for face-to-face appointments. The midwives now have more space at Flo's in order to allow for social distancing. It is vital that pregnant women have to visit the hospital as little as possible so we are accommodating them here.

Flo's nursery remains open for children of key workers - our nursery team have done an amazing job at providing safe online support and fun resources as well as the normal friendly and caring physical space for those that attend.

By [donating](#) to or [spending money](#) with Flo's at this time you're supporting the local economy - services like ours keep money where it's needed and the money you spend with us goes straight back into our community work.

Thank you to Annie, Makena, Helen M, Davide (our new and excellent chef), the nursery team of Tanja, Lucy, Lea, Melina, Laura, Lisa and Helen O, the newly joined Tania Muasa, Sam, all of the Refill Shop volunteers and also to our trustees for their guidance, calmness and support. You've helped keep us going - emotionally, actually and financially.

Stay safe.

Richard

Richard Hadfield
[Chair of Trustees](#)