



THE REAL JUNK FOOD PROJECT CENTRAL

MANDATE FOR CHANGE

The Real Junk Food Project Central CIC (TRJFP Central) suspended all operations on Monday 23rd of March 2020, in accordance with new Government policy requiring the closure of indoor public spaces, cafes, restaurants, schools and leisure facilities. With the COVID-19 pandemic entering a new phase, TRJFP Central must now consider and plan pathways for the reopening of community operations, which enable operations to resume as soon as it is safe to do so.

This document outlines the approach TRJFP Central will take towards the phased reopening of community operations. It does not describe specific actions or details regarding how this will happen. The purpose of this document is to communicate to volunteers, community partners and other stakeholders that TRJFP Central is conducting a phased reopening in a considered and responsible manner to maximise social impact, whilst keeping stakeholders safe.

The aims of the **Mandate for Change** are as follows:

- To protect and promote the health and safety of all stakeholders.
- To ensure the sustainability and longevity of the Company.
- To comply with all British and EU legislation regarding social distancing.

These aims will be achieved through focus on five core areas of activity to guide our planning of the phased reopening of community services:

- Guaranteeing security
- Reopening operations
- Embracing partnerships
- Adapting to change
- Transforming practices

These five core areas of activity, acronymised GREAT, will determine the approach we will take to ensure TRJFP Central is reopened safely and effectively. They convey our belief in the value of the work of TRJFP Central, and our commitment to the greatness of our social impact.

GUARANTEEING SECURITY

In accordance with new Government social distancing laws, TRJFP Central suspended all operations on Monday 23rd of March 2020. We made a promise to our volunteers, partners, suppliers and customers that this suspension would be temporary, and that we would work to ensure the Company could recommence operations at the earliest convenience. We did this by:

- Keeping food supply lines open by placing interceptions under the control of partners
- Mothballing operations hosted with some partners (such as Harborne Baptist Church)
- Using resources and contacts to support other partners (such as St Germain's Church)
- Freezing all non-committed spending and making use of the CJRS to pay our employees

These efforts, although ongoing, appear to have been effective in protecting TRJFP Central. We commend the amazing work being undertaken by the team at St Germain's Church, which is providing vulnerable people with food throughout the pandemic. This has allowed for the continuation of interceptions, and consistent support from our suppliers.

From a financial perspective, many third sector organisations are experiencing difficulties, as donations dry up and grant funding is becoming increasingly scarce. Although vulnerable like other similar organisations, we are pleased to report that TRJFP Central remains solvent, and we have ringfenced funds to pay for essential annual overhead costs such as liability insurance.

Key commitments:

- 1) Continuing to enforce a spending freeze on all non-committed funds.
- 2) Remaining in contact with partners with whom operations have been mothballed.
- 3) Continuing to use our resources to support existing activities of partners.
- 4) Ensuring that partners continue to intercept the food to keep our supply lines open.

REOPENING OPERATIONS

Like other organisations around the world, TRJFP Central will have no single “reopening day”. The reopening of community operations will be phased. It is likely this process will take place over many months, in accordance with Government rules. Our sole commitment at this time is the recommencement of pre-pandemic operations; there will be nothing “new” any time soon.

The nominal date for the initial phase of reopening TRJFP Central is Monday 3rd of August 2020. On this date, we intend to reopen some of the Food Markets with NHS hospital partners, starting with Birmingham Treatment Centre and Rowley Regis Hospital. This date has been provided to us by our partners in the NHS and may be subject to change.

After this date, we will slowly reopen other community operations. The phased reopening of TRJFP Central’s operations will prioritise Food Markets and Community Cafes; events, catering, education and charity fundraising will continue to be suspended until further notice. This decision has been taken to prioritise areas of our work with the greatest social impact.

The slowness of this process, and the planning behind it, is frustrating in light of urgent need in local communities. We recognise, however, that all our volunteers have care responsibilities, employment, or other volunteering commitments. We therefore ask that volunteers continue to support each other, and avoid imposing unreasonable expectations on volunteer colleagues.

Key commitments:

- 1) Preparing to reopen Birmingham and Rowley Regis Food Markets on the 3rd of August.
- 2) Contacting other partnering venues to commence discussion of reopening operations.
- 3) Producing appropriate guidance for the safe and healthy conduct of all operations.
- 4) Supporting volunteers to contribute their time without compromising their wellbeing.

EMBRACING PARTNERSHIPS

The frequent and rapid changes in Government policy mean that it is not possible to provide a confirmed step-by-step plan for the reopening of operations at this time. We will spend the next two months putting together plans to reopen operations in a way which ensures the safety of our volunteers, and embraces activities being undertaken by community partners.

We are of the belief that this planning should be led by the needs and vision of the community partners that have supported TRJFP Central throughout the pandemic. We will therefore be prioritising the needs of St Germain's Church, Harborne Baptist Church, NHS partner hospitals, and our suppliers, to determine how our plan of phased reopening will be undertaken.

TRJFP Central has always worked in collaboration with key community partners, primarily churches, community centres and hospitals, and has a mature network of partners across the region. Although we will always seek to work with new partners, at this time, our sole commitment will be to supporting our existing partners, their activities and stakeholders.

Our approach to the phased reopening of TRJFP Central will therefore not be dominated by thought concerning how we might "return to normal", but instead how we might "return better than before". We will embrace the excellent partnership working seen prior to the pandemic and will endeavour to develop it to fulfil the needs and wishes of our community partners.

Key commitments

- 1) Planning the phased reopening in accordance with the needs of community partners.
- 2) Seeking guidance from community partners on our operations and protocols.
- 3) Committing to reopening operations with existing partners before starting new ones.
- 4) Prioritising the needs of community partners as we "return better than before".

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

The pandemic has had a profound effect on global economies, cultures and institutions not seen since the Second World War, and people all over the world are wondering when life will “return to normal”. We believe however, that organisations like TRJFP Central have an obligation to pose and answer the question: do we really want things to “return to normal”?

This question applies to all aspects of life, but in the context of the work undertaken by TRJFP Central, it relates most to a broken food system which does not grant food security to most people, or ensure food sustainability for a fragile global ecosystem. It is therefore questionable whether there is much about the pre-pandemic world that makes a “return to normal” desirable.

Organisations like TRJFP Central – those which already recognised critical challenges to public health, social justice and environmental sustainability – have a crucial role in determining whether life after the pandemic will be better than it was before. We will therefore invite all volunteers to contribute ideas about how we can better serve the needs of local communities.

On a more practical level, the “new normal” will also impact on the way we operate out sites. We will work with our partners to provide clear guidance about working safely, with emphasis on safe food handling and interactions with customers. Much of this can be achieved by learning from and reflecting upon the work being undertaken by the team at St Germain’s Church.

Key commitments:

- 1) Seeking not to “return to normal”, but to “return better than before” in all operations.
- 2) Valuing the voice of volunteers and other stakeholders to determine how this will work.
- 3) Being an active in the global movement towards making life better than it was before.
- 4) Learning from the practices of the team at St Germain’s Church to guide our behaviour.

TRANSFORMING PRACTICES

Before the pandemic, the volunteers of TRJFP Central were undertaking innovative community work which had significant social and environmental impact; although we have always been good at capturing this impact, we have had limited time and resources for promoting it. We believe that the post-pandemic world should have an opportunity to learn from our volunteers.

This will require TRJFP Central to be more visible. After some consideration, the decision has been made that TRJFP Central will disaffiliate from The Real Junk Food Project, in order to better establish the Company as being rooted in the values, and serving the needs, of local communities in the West Midlands. Volunteers will be engaged in a rebranding exercise.

In July 2020, the *International Union of Health Promotion and Education* will be launching the **People-Planet-Health** programme, commissioned by the *World Health Organisation* to facilitate international knowledge exchange between activist groups, and contribute their voice and vision into the writing of the new *WHO Global Health Promotion Strategy*.

We have arranged for TRJFP Central to be the first group in the world to contribute its vision, thereby initiating this new global programme of sharing best practices between groups. We will be inviting all volunteers to tell us how their work at TRJFP Central should inform the new *WHO GHPS*, and which of their practices they think could and should be replicated across the world.

Key commitments:

- 1) Valuing our volunteers' actions as transformative practices for wider social impact.
- 2) Capturing and promote those practices to contribute to global transformation.
- 3) Engaging in the People-Planet-Health programme to share our vision globally.
- 4) Disaffiliate from The Real Junk Food Project and rebrand the Company.