

Act!on

Disco Souperstars

The next moves in fighting food waste

From cooking to clubbing, from the mixing deck to the mixing bowl—the latest phenomenon in the war against food waste hit Manchester this summer. You may remember Feeding the 5000 from 2013, where Piccadilly Gardens and Wythenshawe found out (for one day only) that, sometimes, there is such a thing as a free lunch. This time the food rescued from landfill formed the centrepiece of an all-day event where chef met DJ—Manchester’s first Disco Soupe!

A bit of history first. Over in Leeds, chef Adam Smith set up the Real Junk Food Project to run a pay-as-you-feel café later in 2013. The purpose of this was to fight two massive problems at once: food poverty and the enormous amount of food that ends up in landfill. Former Manchester FoE food campaigner Corin heard about this and decided it was about time Manchester had its own version. The only snag was finding a permanent home for the project, but this has now been sorted in the shape of Manchester’s new creative wellness centre the Wonder Inn on Shudehill (www.thewonderinn.co.uk).

So much for the local side of things, now for the global. Disco Soupe, as you can maybe tell from the spelling, originated in Paris in 2012, and has now spread worldwide to Brazil, South Korea—and now Manchester. Basically, the aim of the movement is to save food from going to waste, like Feeding the 5000, with the added ingredients of mass participation and music.

As Disco Soupe is both part of the campaign against food waste and an excellent excuse for a party lasting all afternoon (and evening !), the Real Junk Food Project Manchester decided to stage their own version. On Saturday 20 June, the Wonder Inn opened its doors to invite the public to join in the fun.



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Just a few of the dedicated volunteers who helped make Manchester’s first ever Disco Soupe an event to remember

This was too good an opportunity to miss and several Manchester FoE campaigners decided to lend a hand on the day to help make the event into the amazing success it was. Chefs amateur and professional set up their burners both upstairs and downstairs to dish up everything from chickpea curry to vegan sausages.

I helped prepare some raw chocolate truffles for food campaigner Safia, piling them up on paper plates and watching them vanish in short order! Members of the public turned up to mingle with the chefs and helpers and help themselves on a ‘pay as you feel’ basis, the idea being that each customer pays for their meal in line with their own ability to pay.

We made a massive dent in the food waste mountain as large piles of mangoes and raspberries—which had been transported all the way from southern Spain only to be condemned to the bin—were turned into tasty fruit smoothies. However, this was not the end of the campaign! As long as food is going to waste, the Real Junk Food Project will keep going. To find out more, just visit www.realjunkfoodmanchester.co.uk