

# Thrings meets...

Kelly Barfoot, owner of Boxxfresh



**K**elly Barfoot talks to Thrings partner Sally Pike about Boxxfresh, and explains how the Titchfield-based vegetable delivery business is on a mission to get more fresh produce into people's lives.

#### **Where did the idea for Boxxfresh come from?**

I have always loved food and even married into a farming family. My background is in personal training, and my clients often wanted advice about how to shop and what to eat, so I began sampling a few veggie boxes to help them. After getting to know a number of local and specialist growers, my husband, Jon, and I launched Boxxfresh in 2017 with the aim of inspiring people to eat food which was better for them.

#### **How has the business developed?**

When we first started we would pack a few boxes in a little barn next door to our house and work on a computer in the kitchen. Largely as a result of word-of-mouth marketing, we have grown and today operate in large offices, have a sizeable packing facility and deliver fresh produce to the doorsteps of customers in Hampshire, Sussex, Surrey and Berkshire and Dorset. It's been quite a transformation.

#### **Is your focus on winning more customers or introducing new lines?**

Boxxfresh has grown as a result of us being out there and connecting with customers. We've developed our 'Extras' page so people can purchase things like breads, juices, chutneys, and tapenades to go with their veggie boxes. They might only want something extra once a month, but it's giving them other options. We want the business to continue growing organically and let the products speak for themselves.

#### **What gives you the greatest satisfaction?**

We get so many messages from individuals and families telling us how we've changed the way they plan their meals, how they shop, how they cook and how they eat. I also like the fact we're particular about what leaves the pack house. Our veggie boxes contain fresh produce which is usually picked and packed in the same day. I don't mind ugly tomatoes, odd-shaped aubergines or wrong-sized cabbages, but everything must be fresh.

#### **Do you and Jon get time away from the business?**

The business has moved a few miles away from the family home, but switching off can sometimes be difficult. Exercise

helps us keep our minds focused for work, and despite our children asking "why are you talking about work again?" we make a point of spending quality time together as a family. As a result, we're able to close the office door, take a deep breath and feel we're away from things for a bit.

#### **Have you got any words of wisdom for budding entrepreneurs?**

If you're launching a business, go with your gut feeling, do something you love, always be prepared for things to take longer than you expect, don't try to please everyone all of the time and never give up. And don't worry about things you can't control – like the weather. Wet and freezing weather slows everything down, and while farmers might have continued working tirelessly, customers still want their produce to be delivered. It can be a challenge, but we've worked extremely hard to connect with our customers and educate them about how the business of growing and delivering vegetables works. ♦

