



Monday 11th September 2023

Dear Customer,

It's been a beautiful, hot and sultry week. Over now though. It's Sunday afternoon, the skies are darkening and the wind is getting up. Something is coming !

We have cavolo nero in the bags this week. You can steam or boil it for 3-5 mins after separating the leaves from any tough stems. You could also braise it. Add the cavolo to a pan with a knob of margarine a little water, grated nutmeg and lemon juice, or fry a little onion and garlic in oil, add chilli, kale, and a little water or stock. Cook for about 5 mins or so, until tender. Stir in cooked lentils or beans if you like.

Here are a few tasty recipes you could try this week:

Cavolo Nero, Squash and Bean Soup

½ tbsp olive oil

1 tbsp chopped rosemary

1 ½ litres vegetable stock

125g orzo pasta

200g cavolo nero, tough stems removed, shredded

1 onion, finely chopped

½ squash, peeled, diced

400g can chopped tomatoes

400g tin cannellini beans, drained

Heat the oil in a very large saucepan then add the onion and rosemary. Cook over a medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring often, until the onion has softened. Tip in the squash, stock and tomatoes, then season. Simmer for 10 minutes, adding the cavolo nero and orzo with 5 minutes to go. Stir in the beans and simmer for another 2 minutes. Season to taste. Serve with crusty bread.

Pasta with Cavolo Nero

200g dried spaghetti or other shape
chopped

3 cloves garlic, finely sliced

olive oil

100g cavolo nero, stems removed, roughly

generous pinch of chilli flakes

zest of small lemon

Cook the pasta to packet instructions. Heat 3 tbsp olive oil in a wide pan. Add the garlic and chilli flakes and cook on a medium heat for around 2-3 minutes until the garlic has turned golden. Add the cavolo and a pinch of salt and allow it to wilt down for 3 or 4 minutes. When soft transfer to a food processor with 1 tbsp of pasta cooking water and blitz until fine. Return the cooked, drained pasta to the pan. Add the pureed cavolo, the lemon zest and a good grinding of black pepper and mix well.

Cavolo Nero and Potato Curry

350 g potatoes

1 medium onion

1 tsp grated ginger

1 tsp ground turmeric

140 g cavolo nero

1 tbsp vegetable oil

1 tsp crushed garlic

2 medium curry powder

200 ml vegetable stock

Chop potatoes into bite-sized pieces and boil for 10-15 minutes until only just tender. Peel and chop the onion. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and fry the onion gently until soft. Add the dry spices and gently fry for a minute before adding the garlic and ginger and cooking for a further minute. Strip the cavolo from its stalks and roughly chop. Add the stock, the drained potatoes and the chopped cavolo. Cook for 5-10 minutes until most of the water has evaporated and the vegetables are tender.

The planning meeting for the housing estate is imminent. Thursday is judgement day, at 10am. We got the report from the planning officer who is recommending approval. She is the one who reads all the objections, liaises with the applicant, and then advises the councillors how to vote. It is last chance saloon. An 8.5m-high wall of terraced houses, the 'affordable homes', is to be built immediately in front of some little dairy cottages that look across the meadow and over the valley. She deemed it 'minor impact'. Everything had 'minor impact' in her assessment: the uprooting of 60 trees, the destruction of 200m of ancient stone wall and hedgerows; the 800 lorry loads of rock which will have to be removed.

The voting councillors arrived last week for the site visit. They walked round the field and stood in the middle of it a while. But they didn't see the context, what lies outside. Since we are all about to send emails to these individual councillors I suggested we needed to send videos to put it into context: Westfields, the medieval pasture; the Coast to Coast path; the lane from the Georgian racecourse. It is a beauty spot and they will destroy it forever. I spent much of Saturday taking videos. I found someone who could edit them. But when watching the videos back I thought they were lacking and decided to do a pastiche of videos and photos. I sent an email to our 'NIMBY group' asking them to urgently send me their own footage, their favourite photos of what we are set to lose – our landscapes, their homes - basically, to bring some humanity and emotion to it. Then, for some reason I thought it would be a good idea to use Elton John and Kiki Dee's 'Don't go breaking my heart', as a backing track. Within literally seconds of pressing send, I had an email back from the Mayor of Richmond clearly alarmed. I didn't even know he was in the group. And he'd already contacted ex-Mayor Parsons. A double mayor freak-out.

"Dear Isobel,

With great respect, I don't think putting a soundtrack behind the video will be of benefit and may even be counter-productive.

I have spoken with Cllr Parsons on this, and he agrees - just a simple video showing the approach to the site coming down from Westfields and the Racecourse will fill in the gaps..."

No humour allowed, this is a serious business. We are permitted three people to speak at the meeting for 3 minutes and the two Mayors make up two of them. My video could have made all the difference – the casting vote - 'oh alright then. I won't go breaking your hearts'.

I hope you have a good week,
Best wishes, Isobel