

Behind the scenes

The Babraham Institute



In conversation with **James Gifford** - Deputy Facilities Manager

How do you start your day?

With a coffee while I go through my emails. I try and check them just once a day.

How long have you been doing this job?

I started here 4 years ago as an apprentice when I was 18 – I'd done lots of temporary jobs before then – landscape gardener, DJ, worked in a pharmacy. I'm also a qualified football coach, but I did A levels in science so it's always been of interest to me.

How many people are on site?

Within the science park there are 20 buildings housing 66 companies and around 1,000 people. The philosophy for the park was to help small businesses of maybe just a couple of people to get set up, and a lot of those have grown up now into more significant businesses. We also have big organisations like CRUK on site. The history of this estate is fascinating. Babraham Hall (the building where my office is) dates back to 1835 and since the 1950s when it was sold to the Agricultural Research Council, animal research has been carried out. The science behind cloning Dolly the Sheep was developed here.

How many dining options are there?

There are 2 café outlets and a restaurant which has 50-100 covers. We also do functions – there is a 200 seat theatre which makes it a popular venue for seminars, AGMs and showcases. The latest café just opened in January this year.

What are your pressure points?

We own all the kitchen equipment and we used to have manufacturers doing maintenance and servicing which meant dealing with lots of

different companies. Now we use MCFT it's a one-stop-shop and much easier, although we saw a lot of Ellen in the early days as she was dealing with hand-me-down equipment and there were lots of call-outs as a result.

What do you enjoy most at work? I love learning new things. For instance, we've just finished a £90k refurbishment project and I handled the telecoms – programming handsets and switchboards was all new to me!

What's the most popular offering?

Fish and chips on a Friday is a firm favourite.

What's your favourite gadget?

I'd have to say the Bluetooth speakers we've just had installed in the office – it's so nice to work to music.

How did you hear about MCFT?

Through a friend of a friend – I then did some research online to find out a bit more.

How would you describe your relationship with McFarlane Telfer?

Fantastic – it's pretty great when I have a problem and somebody's here within 4 hours. The fact they have specialist fridge engineers and specialist oven engineers means they can often fix the problem very quickly. The portal allows me to log an issue at any time, it doesn't have to be by phone or within normal office hours. I just pick an item and which building it's in, and get an email response saying who will come and when. I also love not having to scan and file service reports – it reduces my admin.



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