Wells Food Network

Preparation for the programme planning workshop to be held on 17/10/’16
Findings from group work at the meeting held on 23/2/’16 to explore the merits of Wells joining the network of Sustainable Food Cities

1 Themes
2 Gaps in provision and opportunities
3 The good stuff which is already happening

NB: these findings are the result of 2 hours work by 30 invitees representing all three sectors across the local food system. They have not been formally reviewed by WFN and are presented in their raw state.

Section 1: Workshop themes – correlating with WFN’s current strategy

1 Promoting healthy and sustainable food to the public
   • Inc: fairs, festivals, free opportunities to taste and learn, community food initiatives…………

2 Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill health and access to affordable food
   • Inc: social provision for vulnerable groups, advice on diets, support for exercise and weight control………………

3 Building community food knowledge, skills, resources and projects
   • Inc: community food growing, allotments, edible landscapes, holistic approach to food education in schools………………

4 Promoting a vibrant, diverse, sustainable local food economy
   • Inc: adding value to farm produce, directly connecting producers with consumers, encouraging local / independent retail outlets…………

5 Transforming catering and food procurement
   • Inc: food accreditation, sourcing locally grown ingredients, attention to provenance, adoption of high ethical and animal welfare standards………

6 Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system
   • Inc: organic and low ecological impact production, crop gleaning, redistribution of surplus food, promotion of home composting, food waste…. collection
Section 2: Gaps in provision and opportunities

2.1 Promoting Healthy Food
- Education in schools and for young mothers.

2.2 Food Poverty - Diet related Health
- Understand where food poverty exists
- School kitchens could be made more accessible
- New housing designs sometimes do not include a dining area
- Schools to spend more time on food content rather than design of packaging
- Hospitals, care centres and residential homes producing food from local sources
- Food banks taking fresh food
- Reintroducing Meals on Wheels for older/vulnerable people
- Parents invited to eat with children at school meal times

2.3 Community food resources
- Need to identify land for community use.
- Need to get more schools involved with growing, eating and cooking – education
- Competitions may encourage participation; children learning more and getting engaged may encourage more parents to follow suit. Team kids with grandparents.
- Encourage lunch boxes competition to see who has the healthiest contents – the Big Lunch Box Reveal.
- Free lunches for primary school kids – there is no such thing as a free lunch – explore.
- Council could offer tubs and window boxes for a small fee (as they do with compost bins) to those residents who do not have gardens to encourage them to grow veg, fruit and herbs.
- More edible plants and fewer flowers could be grown in parks and other places (not on roundabouts) where Councils and business sponsors currently plant; veg can be colourful too.
- Promote a schools/kids/parents competition to produce fresh, affordable, untainted food for the community and have a presentation and prizes.
- Identify a prominent visible area to cultivate so residents see what is happening and become intrigued.
2.4 Local food economy

- Need for more “affordable food” markets
- Lack of locally provided organic veg box schemes
- Need to push supermarkets to source food locally
- Need for more local food sourcing by restaurants/cafes
- Lack of awareness of local food suppliers and how to find local food
- Lack of awareness of where to buy milk that pays farmers a higher premium
- Need for more sustainable farming to deal with a changing climate: eg, more focus on soil, shade, resilience, agroforestry
- Need to promote a vegetarian diet
- More joined up farming needed; so that maize growing on the Mendips doesn’t result in soil degradation and then flooding of farmers lower down.
  - Need to bust the myth that buying local food is more expensive

2.5 Catering – Food procurement

- Outlets should be proud to advertise local produce
- Promote:
  - Sustainable Restaurant Association
  - Food For Life accreditation in schools
- Sign up a national chain of restaurants to source local food

2.6 Reducing waste/ecological impact

- Need to teach cooking skills/use wonky veg
- More awareness needed of composting and recycling
- Make people aware that it’s okay to use leftovers – clarify difference between “use by” and “best before” dates
- Improve understanding of food storage to give longer shelf life at home
- Encourage more waste collection/redistribution
- On the go recycling – more recycling bins on the streets (get children to design them?)
- Persuade all multiples in Wells to adopt Asda’s cheaper wonky veg box idea – and make it local
- More training and more champions needed, especially in schools
Section 3: Good stuff which is already happening

3.1 Promoting Healthy Food

- Markets and Festivals (Farmers Markets, Glastonbury Festival Green Fields, Wells Food Festival)
- Healthy Cafes and Wholefood Shops
- Community Produce (Bishop’s Palace veggie boxes for the Community Gardens, “Edible Frome” - a public place where you can pick your own food, Frome Food Assembly, Allotments, “Bonita” Community Food Gardens.
- Projects (Incredible Edible Project, Glastonbury Community Gardens, Free Gardening course at The Red Brick Building)
- Education (Advertisements on TV, Cathedral School gives cooking lessons to local children, Blue School cooking at Wells Food Festival.
- Somerset County Council initiatives from Public Health team - Zing! (health and fitness) and looking at Health Champions. [http://www.zingsomerset.co.uk](http://www.zingsomerset.co.uk) This links to Get Set Grow, Get Set Cook
- (One of Somerset Food Champions is also a qualified Nutritional Therapist – based in Frome)

3.2 Food Poverty - Diet related Health

- NHS - Health Visitors/Public Health supporting people who are food poor and promoting healthy living
- Gadgets, apps, pedometers supporting people trying to lose weight
- Weight watchers and generally the slimming world encouraging people to keep fit and reduce weight
- Food banks, Connect Centre, supermarket schemes to provide food to those who need it most
- TV and media coverage raising awareness e.g. Sugar Tax vs Fat Tax
- School programmes: Jamie Oliver promoting healthy eating in schools
- 4,5 and 6 year olds have free school meals, some are eating with a knife and fork for the first time!
- Somerset Community Food - training initiatives focusing on vulnerable groups and ‘at risk, obesity, diabetes etc.

3.3 Community food resources

- Lots of allotments in the area, some with waiting lists.
- Help yourself schemes, to excess apples etc.
- Guerrilla Gardening (but not much)
- Incredible Edible community project
- Soup kitchens in Street – Burns the Bread and Prêt a Manger donate leftover sandwiches/cake
- Food Vouchers available from Salvation Army/Citizens Advice
- Wells – Bishop’s Palace Community Garden, who run workshops
- Somerset Community Food
- Feed Avalon – Glastonbury, run courses
- Some schools have community gardens and grow food
- Red Brick Building Community Garden – grow some food for volunteers to use.
- Food such as tomatoes and strawberry plants were grown in Council street planters and hanging baskets for people to eat.

3.4. Local food economy

Suppliers
- Lots of local growers and producers
- Wide range of local produce
- Bishop’s Palace gardens, shop and allotment
- Local veg boxes
- Farm shops
- Somerset Direct, supplying local produce direct

Markets
- Wells farmer’s market
- Glastonbury farmer’s market
- Street farmer’s market
- Wells country market

Milk
- Fair price for milk campaign
- Milk delivery
- ARLA – paying proper prices for milk

3.5 Catering – Food procurement

- Restaurants sourcing locally:
  o Three horseshoes Batcombe – advertises local organic food
  o Bocabar
  o Excalibur (new restaurant in Glastonbury)

3.6. Reducing waste/ecological impact

Local authority

- Household food waste collections to Anaerobic Digestion plant which makes green energy and compost-like material
- Council composting scheme
- Love Food Hate Waste resources are available locally through Somerset Waste Partnership – display, promotional info, template text, toolkits and training for workshops,
so residents tackle key behaviours which lead to food waste. Also started Somerset Food Champions scheme to train volunteers to pass on practical food saving tips in their community.

**Other organisations**

- FareShare South West is looking at a possible local food hub
- Some supermarkets are donating surplus food to needy groups (Supermarket warehouse(s) donate surplus food to FareShare South West to support organisations working with the most vulnerable people in the community)
- Somerset Community Food has a list of organisations that accept ‘domestic’ fruit/veg surplus across Somerset
- Asda has a new scheme selling boxes of misshaped veg for £3.50
- Organic growers

**Other initiatives**

- Vanessa B-H is at an early stage of setting up a community potato buying group (sacks of potatoes for home delivery) –
- Frome grow/share schemes
- Courtauld Commitment: brands, retailers, suppliers, reduce food waste and packaging. For latest phase, see [http://www.wrap.org.uk/courtauld2025](http://www.wrap.org.uk/courtauld2025)
- TV programmes promote cooking skills
- Compost champions – Kim Robinson recommended contacting Rupert @ Carymoor Environmental Trust to get volunteers to talk/demonstrate at events
- SWP is building a network of Food Champions across (supported volunteer scheme) based on WRAP’s Love Food Hate Waste training, run by SWP.
- Various phone apps available to help with food reduction, understanding portion sizes, planning meals & shopping lists, recipe ideas for leftovers, and redirecting surplus food.