

Glasgow City Food Plan

Development Day notes: Community Food

In attendance: Abi Mordin (Glasgow Community Food Network and Theme Lead), Ruth Mellor (NHS GGC Health Improvement/Glasgow City Council), Andrew Cumbers (Adam Smith Business School), Helen Traill (Adam Smith Business School), Judy Wilkinson (Glasgow Allotment Forum), Sandy Paterson (Glasgow City Council Growing Spaces), John Casey (NHS GGC Health Improvement), Irina Martin (Nourish, previously of Woodlands Community).

Apologies: Emma Iller (Urban Roots), Tricia McConalogue (Bridging the Gap), Laura Mowat (Glasgow City Council Planning), Gary Stewart (Glasgow City Council Communities)

Introduction

The group had a wide ranging discussion covering the role of the group, the vision for community food in Glasgow, things we would like to see change and happen, and finally actions for group members to take away and work on. Note this was only the first meeting and all these thoughts and ideas will be further developed and refined.

Role of the Group

- Ensure community food organisations and projects are supported, effective and working together.
- Ensure we are not siloed
- Push bigger institutions to do more to support community growing (including City Council, NHS large estates, University, Faith groups)
- Ensure there is good cross working between themes within the food plan

Vision of Community Food

We talked about:

- Joined up and connected 'community food hubs' in every local area – comprising community growing, orchards, cooking, shared and community meals, food education and skills. Community food (and the people who work/volunteer in it) should be seen for the value in and of itself, not just as a mechanism for fixing societies ills.
- Collaborative and cooperative working was seen as essential – across sectors with links to other activities, signposting etc...
- Explore food and grow food as individuals and as communities – outwith the pressures of money. Space to share and develop skills. Autonomy. Skill building. Having room to decide where you want to be within that. Brings different types of people together, breaking down barriers.
- Not one size fits all – principles and values are the same, but how you implement it is different. Components – flexible, sustainable, polymorphic, social, adaptable to community needs and circumstances

Issues – and some initial solutions thinking

Resilience – Issues around short term funding, funding dependency, fire fighting.

Thinking outside the box, building in enterprise through social aims and cooperation. Eg, Link into the local food economy, selling and contracting services, Pay As You Feel models etc...

BUT secure external funding will still be necessary. Institutions to think about how they can better offer support.

Partnerships with business eg Woodlands Community Cafe supported in kind by local restaurant chain.

Capacity – Distribution of projects and services not the same across the city. Eg, NHS Health Improvement teams work in different ways.

Personal capacity of people working/volunteering in community food – frontline work can be hard. Solutions include Peer Support (Community Food Socials) facilitated by GCFN, Nourish Dignity Network.

Skills Gaps – *Teachers* – desire to do more growing/food education, but lacking the confidence/ability to deliver – idea: GCFN could design CPD training, but local organisations do delivery.

Urban Farming – community food projects could count as informal learning.

Horticultural apprentices – both City Council and Langside College do training, but this is more around amenity horticulture.

Home economics – only if teachers are available. Children having to pay for materials – in home economics. School kitchens should be able to be used by community groups but remain in accessible. Not all schools have preparation kitchens.

Lack of food literacy/education – People unaware of what they are eating, need a better understanding of the food system, growing, shopping and cooking skills. Climate emergency: Re-imagine the food system along sustainable lines. Food for exploration and learning.

Information dissemination – public knowledge – We don't always hear about good work in other areas. Use networks better to share information and learning.

Local people not necessarily aware of local projects – more work around raising the profile and increasing the presence – GCFN core role. Something like Power of Food Festival (Edinburgh).

Make sure open days, events etc... are collectively promoted.

Community Growing is not Urban Agriculture – The 2 are connected but there should not be an expectation (from Food Economy, for example) that community food projects will feed Glasgow.

Access to Land – Growing projects are often still on rolling 'Permission to Use'. Others have 25 year leases. There should be continuity across the board.

Growing (community and market gardening) should be higher up the planning agenda. Incorporate Community Food Spaces/Hubs in new community design. Needs to be paradigm shift. Community Empowerment Act could be used.

Supply Chains – For community shops, cafes, meals and cooking projects. Limited access to locally grown through traditional supply chains. GCFN working on bulk buying project inc local produce for community food orgs.

Opportunities and Resources

Included in our discussion were elements that can help resolve some of the above issues. Chiefly this was recognised in a strong and diverse working group with multiple external connections. Also discussed:

Strong networks: GCFN, Health Improvement (beyond Glasgow), Central Scotland Green Network, Nourish Dignity in Practice (Scotland wide)

Good Practice:

- Woodlands community café connected to homes and schools, i.e. Hillhead primary school, p1s go at certain time of year, competitions with community meals.

- The Bellahouston Walled Garden partnership - annual event where bring together everyone, open doors event to show what can grow in the garden, ex offenders project, dementia project
- Leamy Foundation, West Dumbartonshire – every school in area going to have a growing space, then mentors from Leamy Foundation linked to it.
- Greenheart – Market Garden plus orchard, has education, growing (for cafes), and surplus to food banks/community meals.
- In progress – Govan ‘food for good’ has local partners working together, action plan created, covering a range of topics, and working with broader partners to improve things
- Informal community forest garden near Crosshill station

Place Standard for Food: Could adapt the place standard to look through a community food lens - the values of different community food projects, what is important to them, and then look at areas and see what is there/can be improved upon/ is missing. Link it with good stories and good practice.

Other ideas: Push for a city council run (organic) farms

Use of having numbers on how much the areas produce – Sandy supplied: 80,000 tonnes of food produced in allotments in UK last year – but not for sale.

Also local democracy bill coming up – how would this work at the local level?

And Finally...

Those present felt this had been a positive discussion with some good initial ideas. We recognised that this is going to be hard but an important piece of work.

We want to make sure community food projects have plenty of opportunities to input into the process. We left the meeting with a series of actions around different topics pulled from the discussion. Prior to the next meeting, smaller groups or pairs are working to:

1. Define the topic, highlight what specifically is important
2. Suggest short, medium and long term actions
3. Suggest how these actions could be measured to see if they have been successful
4. think about who needs to be involved
5. consider what the resource implications might be
6. Note where connections would be expected with other topics/food plan themes (food economy, catering & procurement, young people & children, environment & food waste, fairer food & food for all)
7. Be a maximum of 2 sides A4, and note any references used.

The topics are:

- Community meals as a normal part of our culture
- Food literacy and food education
- Community Food Place Standard
- Community food sustainability: include , spaces connected to private business – being enterprising – stable resilient — funding models/ partnerships with private sector
- Community Food hubs being embedded in communities - Planning priorities to enable community food spaces
- Informal training into the food sector- Training/upskilling