

Good Food Story

Wester Common Unity Market

Interview with Dale, Manager of The Courtyard Pantry

Describe your project

Wester Common Unity Market is a twice-monthly community market, which sells affordable, fresh produce to local people. The market links into the aims of the Courtyard Pantry – to widen access to good quality food at affordable prices, to local people. It runs in the courtyard outside the community cafe, which also serves hot food throughout the day.

We source our produce from Blochairn market on Friday and sell it on Saturday. So it's very fresh and the quality is very good. We supplement what we get from wholesale suppliers with local suppliers. So our oyster mushrooms from Glasgow Mushroom Company, the bread from Freedom Bakery and we source some of our dry goods from Greencity Wholefoods.

We started as a pilot in September 2025, it was successful so we started up on a monthly basis, and from June 2026 we are now running twice a month.

People are very impressed by the longevity of the produce. Actually the quality is what's bringing people back. The produce from the supermarkets – people are finding it only lasts 1 or 2 days.

Why did you start a community food market?

We wanted to make it easy to access fruit and vegetables on a regular basis. And also at a price that people can afford. There's evidence that healthy produce is twice as expensive than less healthy produce, per calorie.

For me, affordability means people can pay for food alongside other of life's essentials, like housing, clothing, things like that. Supermarkets don't make any money on their fruit and veg, so that gets people into their stores. But that means that somewhere along the chain somebody is not getting paid, or making a loss. We wanted to set our prices so that it wouldn't be any more expensive than say Tesco, or Morrisons.

What are the challenges?

It's a balancing act between paying our staff well and keeping it affordable. And also how do we make the project financially sustainable without relying on funding.

For a project of this nature to be financially sustainable, and making sure everyone gets paid in the supply chain, it requires some form of grant funding.

What's one wish you have for Glasgow's food system?

That it's given the material support to create an alternative, to create that equitable, sustainable food system, that everyone's crying out for. Not just a pat on the back, wish you well, but the financial support, the human resources.

Also the removal of the bureaucracy to allow these projects to happen. For example, setting up a market, in terms of who what certification you need, it should just be a lot easier than it is. It can be difficult to find the right person to speak to, to guide you through it. The council could make it a lot easier to do this stuff.

What are your plans for the future?

We're slowly building up our offer, there's a momentum building, there's an appetite for it (excuse the pun)! In the future we'd like to increase the frequency of the markets.

Contact

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