

The Scottish Pantry Network - GlasGrow

Interview with Richey, Operations Manager

Describe your project

The Scottish Pantry Network is a not-for-profit organisation that connects and supports community-led pantries throughout Scotland, aiming to reduce food insecurity and food waste, while promoting dignity and choice for individuals and families.

Some of the activities we deliver include running cookery classes, developing training and employability skills through cookery course leadership courses, the Prepmate meal kit enterprise, and the GlasGrow project (see below).

We're doing outreach cookery classes with organisations throughout the city. We're also training people to give them employability skills to be able to lead cookery courses for us. With Prepmate, we design and pack up and distribute meal kits to pantries throughout Glasgow, and also train people up in skills such as warehousing, logistics and menu design. This year we have distributed 20,000 meal kits just through the Thrive Under Five programme.

GlasGrow project

The Scottish Pantry Network has teamed up with Kinkell Farm Partnership to develop the GlasGrow Farm Fresh Project. This will see vegetables, herbs and microgreens grown in 50 beds at Kinkell Farm, to supply the Courtyard Pantry in Glasgow, thereby making fresh, healthy, nutritious food accessible to all.

Located in Lennoxton, East Dunbartonshire, Kinkell Farm is a family-run farm, the no-dig market garden is managed by Claire and David Hosie. Their naturally grown produce, free of chemical pesticides and fertilisers, promotes soil health, biodiversity, and environmental sustainability. Claire and David will also train volunteers, supporting knowledge transfer and employability projects in agriculture.

The overarching idea is based on changing the food that people eat, we're following preventative health guidelines. We have had interest in our meal kits from Health Boards around the country who looking at diabetes and kidney disease prevention.

What are your plans for the future?

We hope to use the fresh produce from the farm in our Prepimate meal kits, so that will mean training people in farming, production line, distribution and warehousing skills. We hope to develop the circular economy idea.

We want to produce a guide on how to deliver a similar project to GlasGrow.

What are the challenges?

With the GlasGrow project, the farm is outwith the Council area, so there have been problems with different funding streams applying to the work inside and outside of Glasgow. It's also revealing how much land you actually need to grow the food - 50 beds just for one pantry. The availability of land will be an issue if we want to expand the project.

Another challenge is putting in place infrastructure on the farm to support volunteers - ie a tea and coffee room, with toilets. Eventually the farmer decided to pay for it and we lease it from him.

Finally, Glasgow City Council reneged on £50,000 which we were counting on to deliver the project, so we had to put a lot of time into filling that gap.

What does sustainability mean to you?

Creating a system where people get highly nutritious fresh produce, reducing food waste, and making the GlasGrow project viable.

What is one wish you have for the future of Glasgow's food system?

From my point of view, I've looked into the many different things that farms can do, to support local food systems and access to nutritious affordable food. I hope that other farms and projects will look at new and innovative ideas of linking together and getting food to where it's needed. Farms in particular need to look at new ways to remain viable going forward.

Find out more: www.scottishpantrynetwork.org.uk (Search for 'Farm')

