

Gwell Cysylltiadau Busnes Organig



Better Organic Business Links

Making Cardiff a Sustainable Food City: Putting the Cardiff Food Charter into Practice

Report of a conference held on 5 April 2013 at South Riverside Community
Development Centre, Cardiff

Organic Centre Wales

June 2013



Acknowledgements

Better Organic Business Links – Gwell Cysylltiadau Busnes Organig

Organic Centre Wales has secured nearly £2 million for The Better Organic Business Links (BOBL) project, to deliver sustainable growth to the Welsh organic sector over four years: 2009-2013.

Opportunity to promote sustainability

The BOBL project gives the organic sector in Wales a unique opportunity to:

- Develop new, emerging and existing markets for organic produce.
- Innovate in farming, processing and product development.
- Promote sustainable practices on farms, in abattoirs, in cutting rooms and kitchens and along the food chain.
- Raise market awareness among producers and increase sales across the range of outlets.

Tackling all parts of the supply chain

The BOBL project is working in partnership with a range of specialist providers to deliver these opportunities by focusing on:

1. Driving innovation through trials and research.
2. Supporting market development opportunities such as agri-tourism and supply chain efficiency programmes.
3. Disseminating up to date market intelligence, by commissioning detailed, focused consumer attitude surveys.
4. Addressing key structural problems within the sector, such as imbalances in organic horticulture supply and demand, and the availability of organic pullets.
5. Cross cutting issues: Sustainable Food Communities and Secure Alternative Markets.
6. Running an integrated communications campaign to help the sector deliver clear messages about the benefits of organic food and farming.

By strengthening the sector at all points along the supply chain, the project aims to leave a legacy of a more robust, responsive and sustainable organic industry in Wales.

The project is funded under the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013, which in turn is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

For further information on the project please see:

<http://www.organiccentrewales.org.uk/business-bobl.php>

Or contact The BOBL Project, c/o Organic Centre Wales. Phone 01970 622248

Background

The Cardiff Food Charter, launched in April 2012, lays out the principles for Cardiff to become a 'sustainable food city'. The Cardiff Food Council is devising an Action Plan to implement the Charter and this will be published later in 2013.

- Cardiff Council aims to create a 'One Planet City' and recognises that a more sustainable food system has a key role.
- There is an unprecedented level of public concern about the provenance of what we eat.

This mini-conference, organized by the Food Council and Organic Centre Wales, brought together key players in Cardiff's food system (food producers, commercial companies, researchers, health practitioners and activists) to find common ground, and turn talk into action, on: -

- How we can work together better to make Cardiff a Sustainable Food City.
- What we can learn from other cities who are further ahead on this path.

Programme

Following the opening talks on 'Sustainable Food Cardiff', which included a review of the five areas of the Charter, most of the morning was given over to group discussions. Delegates were allocated to groups with a mix of backgrounds (public sector, voluntary sector, catering, growing, policy and so on) and each group spent about 20 minutes at each of five tables in turn, discussing the themes one by one. Actions were recorded by the facilitators and are presented in this report. The event was also used to gather more information for the Good Food Assets Mapping Document, available from Eryl Powell.

The meeting concluded with a plenary discussion and locally sourced organic lunch.

Report

Below are the facilitators' reports for each of the five themes, compiled and edited from flipcharts written at the event. All participants had an opportunity to contribute to all five. Text from the Food Charter is included in a box to introduce each theme.

Theme 1: Health and wellbeing for all

Chair: Eryl Powell, Cardiff Food Council.

- *Access to affordable healthy food and to information that helps people make better food choices should be a fundamental right for everyone in Cardiff.*
- *All food providers – manufacturers, retailers and caterers – should provide safe, nutritious food to promote the health and wellbeing of the people they serve.*

Actions from the meeting

1. Nerys Howell, Food consultant to work with Cardiff Museum to change the food offer, to consider nutritional standards, Change4life campaign local food, costs.

Barrier: identification of local producers, working with French company that currently hold the catering contract.

2. Sandy Greenslade – to develop Cardiff Food Council links with SE Wales food working group (made up of local authority tourism and food officers, Springboard) actions of the group include training for Welsh chiefs, menu development and local sourcing for retailers and shops.

Barrier: Uncertainty of the continuation of funding for the initiative. Continuity of supply.

3. Bogda Smroczyk – Capital Region Tourism – provide local food talks, bring producers, suppliers and tourism together.
4. Sue Paul (Assistant locality manager, UHB) – link community resource teams to growing and allotment projects so that people discharged from hospital can be better rehabilitated and connected to local community, helping to reduce isolation.
5. Ryland Jones (Sustrans) – Identify opportunities for health messages (e.g. change4life) to be embedded into other projects. Sustrans sustainable travel projects, bike-it could include advice about breakfast
6. Sarah Germain (Fareshare) – increase range of foods supplied (e.g. eggs, dairy, fruit, veg), identify opportunities to provide recipes and cooking tips. Encourage people to volunteer for Fareshare would encourage social interaction and reduce isolation.
7. Michele Fitzsimmons Develop a growing toolkit for schools, that would include curriculum links, sources of funding to support environment projects, organizations that could support it.

Theme 2: a thriving local economy

Chair: Steve Garrett, Riverside Market Garden

- *The public should help boost jobs and the economy in Cardiff and Wales by buying more Welsh food and supporting local food enterprises.*
- *Public and private sector bodies should procure and provide healthy and sustainable food in a way that keeps value within the local economy*

Summary of the discussion

Cardiff University would like to source more food locally. The main problems are to do with limited availability and consistency. Customers are used to availability at all times. One advantage of sourcing from large wholesalers is it guarantees supply, even if local growing conditions have not been good, and this is especially important in the light of poor levels of production in Wales and the rest of the UK last year.

Key factors to make local food attractive to commercial customers are quality, price, and delivery

Also, supermarkets are making purchasing agreements with local organic producers and “hoovering up” the available crops. **Total Produce** supply the University, and are trying to source more locally because it is a requirement for them now - especially since the university was awarded the Soil Association Catering Mark Bronze award. They are looking at dividing purchasing lots into smaller units to give better access to smaller producers. Welsh Government could do more to facilitate links between producers and large-scale purchasers. The University would be willing and able to pay a better price to producers than supermarkets. Welsh Universities are looking at lengthening their contract period with suppliers (currently three years) to enable local producers to plan ahead better how to meet that demand. Farmers do not feel encouraged enough to try to meet local demand.

The **Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens** wants to see more local and inner-city land being brought into vegetable production, especially derelict land that can't be used for development. They have set up the Community Land Advisory Service to facilitate this. One forthcoming project is Valleys Veg, which plans to produce veg for the local market. There are several small-scale veg producing enterprises in the USA and in the UK which show that it's possible to generate significant income from small pieces of land, and this could be a strong motivation for people to get into this. The Council needs to make a firm commitment to making land available for growing, because currently there are high pressures on any available land in the city for development. Allotments could do more to sell any surplus produce via for example a small shop on the allotment sites.

The **Green Shoots Catering Association** is promoting local sourcing. And there are significant opportunities for some kind of “hub” which could make local and sustainable produce more easily available to hospitality businesses and companies which host lunches etc.

The three largest **museums of Wales** are now specifying that their French catering supplier source a significant amount from local producers, because the museums want to

become “food destinations” and the provenance of their food is an important part of that. However, continuity of supply and delivery is proving to be a challenge. A 10-year contract has been signed with the supplier and may facilitate development in this area. Government agencies such as the **Nutrition Network for Wales** would like to source more locally, but not always aware of how and where to do that.

Again, some sort of “hub” sourcing and distribution operation would assist in this area. One idea is a “Local Food Wholesaler” where anyone looking for local organic food could go. However, funding would be needed to get such an operation of the ground.

One challenge for smaller local distributors is the number of legal and administrative hurdles which have to be overcome, and Welsh government could do more to assist in this area. “Helping producers to produce” only makes sense in the context of developing sufficient demand from local as well as national and international customers.

Some small local food producing enterprises are developing for example a “Community Nursery” in Bridgend, but because of their small scale, producers need to collaborate with other producers in some kind of co-operative marketing and distribution system if they are to secure supply into the future. There seems to be a niche for a small-scale distribution company, which could also have lists of availability and ordering capacity online,

It will help if there was clarity about what is meant by terms such as “local” and “sustainable”. At present, these are seen to be open to a wide range of interpretation.

There is a shortfall in training available to businesses and shops in relation to how to make best use of locally sourced food.

In order to be consistent with other sustainability values, it could be helpful to have food delivered to local restaurants by bike, as this would attract a lot of attention.

The council has a “healthy options” award, and catering businesses which have received it will probably be very open to purchasing more locally if it is price competitive and convenient for them.

RCMA is seeking to expand its farmers market into other parts of Cardiff, and these could operate as “shop windows” for small producers (as already happens at Riverside) to sell to local hospitality companies.

Welsh Tourism is trying to bring hospitality businesses and producers together, however it is often difficult to engage with the producers and the businesses. Producers are reluctant to change their production and marketing approaches, and businesses are wary of paying more for local produce because they’re not convinced that it will lead to increased turnover. However there is increasing evidence that for people visiting Wales, the provenance of the food they eat is more and more important. It could be that some kind of branding exercise (as was used by Plunkett Foundation in England) could be helpful in emphasising that the food sold at a particular establishment has been sourced locally. To date pubs and hotels are most open to this kind of approach, particularly the larger ones. For small businesses, price is a very strong driver, and they are reluctant to pay more even if it will result in better quality. There is a need for solid case studies that will persuade businesses that serving good local food will in fact result in increased turnover.

Street food festivals are helpful in raising awareness of the quality and availability of local food. There will be a Swansea Street food Festival this year, modelled on a similar event which took place in Cardiff at the end of last year. The Cardiff Street Food Festival will take place in this year if the Council is willing to allocate a location in the city.

There was a strong sense that there is already a lot going on, but different organisations and agencies aren't always aware of what each other are doing. The Cardiff Food Council website and a development worker could play an important role with linking people up and sharing information.

Theme 3: Environmental sustainability

Chair: Liz Lambert, Cardiff Council

- *Food production should conserve and enhance terrestrial and marine ecosystems and natural resources including soil, water and air.*
- *Food should be processed, distributed and disposed of in ways that reduce food miles and energy use, packaging and waste and that increase composting and recycling.*

Actions

1. Close the loop between food waste, growing and composting
2. Cardiff University has a new compost collection and could divert some to the student allotments.
3. Fareshare – identify more Welsh suppliers to donate food for redistribution
4. Sustrans – target food sector businesses to reduce mileage
5. Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens – work with Cardiff Council to increase access to land for community growing

Theme 4: Resilient close-knit communities

Chair: Jayne Hunt, University of South Wales

- *Food events and initiatives that celebrate the culinary traditions of Cardiff's diverse population and that bring communities together, should be promoted throughout the city.*
- *All communities should have access to a wide range of growing, cooking activities, land, buildings and other resources that enable them to take more control of their food.*

1. Community mapping (video, diagram) - Sue Thomas Public Health Wales library
2. Siop y Bobl – identifying premises – Cody Kelly
3. RMCA – more engagement through outreach work
4. Big Lunch - opportunities for communities to come together and eat (Rebecca at Green City events) event on the 4th May
5. Nutrition Network for Wales can help raise awareness and promote activity. Local food diversity festival (idea)
6. Cardiff university - Welcome to Wales week, where all food for one week was Welsh, annual event
 - Health and environment week + recipes
 - Cycling to work - free breakfast if cycle
7. Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens + EL – community garden set up through training and support, day set up to show how it can be done.

Barriers: making the connections/making the first steps who do I ask?
8. Transition Towns newsletter
9. Hospitals to have community gardens and feed into Cardiff Transition Town
10. Producers market at Cardiff Uni on St Davids day next year, with live demos, plant swop, veg festival – Cody help?)
11. Feeding the 5,000 (idea Fare Share Cymru)
12. RCMA free pitch at market to promote corporate food org's to join, local ones
13. Bogda Smreczak – Capital Region Tourism providing the linkage from producers to corporate customers
14. Isabel Beynon – knowledge sharing
15. Sustrans – DIY streets, residents to agree their environment, street party planning
16. Food tourism trail (RCMA + RT)
17. Influence Welsh Government to promote local grown food.

Barrier : time/marketing/spread the word/niche to mainstream

Barriers: Allotments not being allocated.

Theme 5: Fairness in the food chain

Chair: Dafydd Owen, Organic Centre Wales

- *Tackling food poverty – and the health inequalities that result from it – should be priority for public, private and voluntary sector bodies.*
- *Workers throughout the food chain, both in Wales and abroad, should have good working conditions and be fairly paid for their work and their produce.*

1. Price/value – more value from same food
2. Skills
3. Lots already happening – people don't know it (veg co-ops. Healthy start, vouchers)
4. Build on existing projects and ensure that links are extended across networks.
5. Sustrans – supply and distribution – work through schools and employers
6. Welsh Government to require food charter, include land mapping (Cardiff Farms is doing this)
7. Price of food related to Supermarket prices – is this the true cost of food?
Cost/health implications
8. Food is more important for some groups than others (elderly, young, infirm)
9. All people, no matter what background should be able to access local, fresh, organic. Supporting them and providing skills to be able to grow own can address this. Provide them with the land and support.
10. Cardiff Transition is mapping available land across Cardiff
11. Community Box planting across Cardiff (Farm Cardiff)
12. FairTrade city work links to link across to Food Charter plan.
13. Foodbanks – can we do more to help people use their food parcels, cooking on a budget etc.

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