

the jellied eel



How can
sustainability
embrace
ethnic
lifestyles

Black and Green

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London Food Link runs a network of organisations and individuals with members as diverse as farmers, food writers, caterers and community food projects. Both London Food Link and its members run projects that help to:

- increase the availability of sustainable food in London
- tackle the barriers preventing access to sustainable food for all Londoners
- celebrate and protect London's diverse food culture

Editorial

Spring is in the air, which for most of us will mean a better chance of starting to get food from our own country and, if we are lucky, maybe our own region. For me it means more embarrassment at my own feeble efforts in the garden, which is why I normally leave it to someone else! This does however, leave a little more time to find out who is growing, rearing or fermenting the stuff. And all of this hard labour has resulted in a fantastic showpiece for London's local food in Oliver Rowe's restaurant, Konstam, which opens at the end of April (see page 15 for more details).

In the spirit of Spring we are going to see some new arrivals. The end of May sees the launch of the long awaited (by me at least!) Mayor's food strategy (see page 6 for more details). For most of you this has probably seemed an age in the making and you might be wondering what all the fuss is about. But this strategy enshrines everything that LFL stands for, and is testament to the hard work of everyone in the network. After all the talk of the last few months, we now get to the exciting bit, where we should start seeing some action.

Another new arrival in June will be LFL's first annual members do. This is taking place in the middle of London Sustainability Weeks, on June 7th at City

Hall and will give everyone a chance to get together and find out about the other people and projects in the network and eat some lovely food (see page 6 for more details).

While we're on the subject of you lovely people, I'd like to thank all of those who took the time to send in the member's questionnaire, and well done to Harrow in Leaf who were picked out of the hat to win a year's free LFL membership. We had some really positive feedback about the e-forum (our email list) and the Eel. So in true contrary fashion we decided to give it a make-over, which we hope you like as much as we do. In response to the feedback on the website this will also get a makeover this summer, so send me your ideas on what you would find useful e.g. lists, links, information, etcetera....

Maybe we've been talking to too many restaurateurs, but we've noticed a bit of a gap in the market for local truffles (no not the chocolate kind - and if anyone is offering, please leave it a little while as Easter excesses are still painfully visible). We are hoping to bring over an Italian truffle hunter who is very keen on seeing what fungal delicacies lie undiscovered in England, this practice having died out here last century. So if there are any woods worth hunting in drop me a line. You never know, he may even sell us one of his special dogs.... ■

Ben Reynolds



LONDON FOOD LINK

94 WHITE LION STREET, LONDON, N1 9PF

TEL: 020 7837 1228

FAX: 020 7837 1141

EMAIL: BEN@SUSTAINWEB.ORG

WEB: WWW.LONDONFOODLINK.ORG

AROUND TOWN

Central Fantastic Five Fruit and Vegetable Co-op is expanding!

The co-op was established after consultation with the local residents identified access to affordable fruit and vegetables as a barrier to healthy eating. Local community food initiatives that promote 5-a-day and aim to reduce health inequalities are supported by the Government's Choosing Health White paper.

The Co-op was set up in September 2005 and is run by local women and supported by Kensington and Chelsea Primary Care Trust. The stall provides fresh and affordable fruit and vegetables on the Dalgarno Estate, North Kensington, and runs every Friday between 10am and 12pm at the Dalgarno Community Centre.

It has been so successful that there are plans to expanding the Co-op to three satellite stalls in two primary schools and a Nursery school in North Kensington.

If you would like posters or flyers to promote this co-op to North Kensington residents, or know anyone who may like to volunteer, or want more information about this local food initiative please contact Kelly Morris,

KELLY MORRIS, COMMUNITY HEALTH
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT WORKER
0208 383 6242
KELLY.MORRIS@KC-PCT.NHS.UK



Fantastic Five Fruit and Vegetable Co-op is expanding!

A Moveable Feast food buying project

A Moveable Feast (AMF), south Westminster's Healthy Living Centre, is running a series of supermarket trips in March and April as part of a larger food buying/food access project. The food buying project aims to address the issue of limited access to affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate food in the local area. Currently many families are travelling long distances to buy such food.

This part of the food buying project is working with carers, lone parents and people living alone to help ease the stress of shopping, both financially and physically. The trips will go to Tesco's in Vauxhall Bridge, which offers more variety at a cheaper price than the local supermarkets. A free crèche is provided and all travel costs will be reimbursed. The group will be accompanied by AMF's community dietician who will be available to discuss budgeting, nutrition and health with the participants.

A Moveable Feast (AMF) is also excited to announce the launch of their website - www.amevablefeast.OriginationinSite.com - and welcomes all comments. AMF is a five year partnership project, funded by the Big Lottery, which aims to improve the quality of life for the local Arabic speaking and Bangladeshi communities in South Westminster.

The website has two main aims; to inform local people and organisations about AMF, and to encourage the local Arabic and Bangladeshi communities to share their stories and views about living in SW1. Naziha Aarab, presenter of the Arabic and British Show for SW1 Radio, and volunteer for AMF, helps to gather stories from the local community and write articles on topical issues about health and Islam. These stories and views help guide AMF in providing appropriate health and social activities for the community.

LOUISE BECKINGSALE
020 7222 0303

LOUISE.BECKINGSALE@ABBEYCOMMUNITY.ORG

East Towards a greener food and drink sector

London Sustainability Exchange recently completed a project, funded by Government Office for London, encouraging and enabling Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) led food and drink sector businesses to exemplify more sustainable business practices.

Project activities included providing five free environmental audits to a range of restaurants, takeaways and pubs in the London Boroughs of Newham, and Barking and Dagenham. The audits aim to help identify motivators and barriers to more sustainable management, and highlight the cost savings and efficiency gains that can be made by businesses reducing waste production and improving resource efficiency. Most small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can save at least 10% on waste and utility bills by adopting low or no cost measures, such as buying in bulk to reduce packaging waste, recycling glass in publicly situated 'bring banks', returning waste cooking oil and cardboard to suppliers, and using low-flush toilets.

The work that London Sustainability Exchange tested in East London (see page 12) will help inform the development of a three year work programme with this sector, funded by the London Development Agency. The project will provide advice and support for businesses to increase resource efficiency and reduce their environmental impact. The project

aims to support 300 businesses through group events, with 200 receiving tailored one-to-one environmental audits and follow-up support.

London Food Link is part of this programme and will be partnered by Sustainable Energy Action, Hospitable Climates, London Remade and the Asian & Oriental School of Catering, with London Sustainability Exchange managing the project. If you wish to get involved, please contact Zeenat from LFL.

GAYLE BURGESS

LSX ACTING PROJECT MANAGER

0207 324 3626

G.BURGESS@LSX.ORG.UK

WWW.LSX.ORG.UK

ZEENAT ANJARI

LONDON FOOD LINK

0207 837 1228

ZEENAT@SUSTAINWEB.ORG

East State visit to Newham

As part of his State visit to the UK, the President of Brazil, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, visited the West Ham & Plaistow New Deal for Communities (NDC), Newham on Wednesday 8th March 2006 to share ideas on regenerating deprived areas. During his visit the President was briefed by Eric Samuel, head of Community Food Enterprise Limited, about the work of CFE in promoting healthy eating and health education in Newham.



East Food gathering in Tower Hamlets

'I feel treated on this generous day'. So they should be treated! On 29 March, 60 people came together at the Brady Arts and Community Centre in Tower Hamlets for a networking day, organised by the Women's Environmental Network (WEN). The event was a celebration of a special kind of food growing. Those gathered were a testament to the fact that food is grown in cities in corners and on balconies, and grown by women together. During the day participants shared stories and this season's growing visions, ate a superb lunch prepared by the Coriander Club and learnt about seed saving, receiving free seeds from the national Heritage Seed Library's (HSL) collection.

The day concluded with a visit to the Coriander Club's growing site at nearby Spitalfields City Farm, described as one of the most inspiring food growing places in London. Commenting during the event, Yeonsuk Chung said that she 'would grow the seeds she'd received with care and attention'. Nargis who coordinates the parent's growing project at Arnhem Wharf Schools, talked about growing new vegetables, 'cauliflower and carrots, and composting to perfection.'

This event is part of a series of activities that WEN organises for women and groups involved in urban food growing. They are for anyone with a passion for food, from the plot to the pot, and combine celebration

State visit to Newham





Exchanging seedy ideas in Tower Hamlets - Credit: WEN/Sophie Tomlinson

with learning new skills. The next in the series is a national event that will take place in Bradford, on 20th September 2006, co-organised with Bradford Community Environmental Project's (BCEP's), ShoNirbhor growing groups. Travel will be arranged from London.

FOOD@WEN.ORG.UK

North Tesco rejected in Barnet

In January there was good news for communities fighting unsustainable supermarket applications. Barnet Council rejected a proposal for the conversion of a carpet warehouse into a new Tesco Express store, which would have been less than a mile from an existing Tesco store. The

"How to...oppose a supermarket planning application"

www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/campaigning_against_supermarkets.pdf

"Local Development Frameworks and your community: Influencing retail policy". www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/ldfs_and_retail_policy.pdf

"Calling the shots: how supermarkets get their way in planning decisions" www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/calling_the_shots.pdf

application was rejected on the grounds of the likely damage to the town centre. The Council's area planning manager said: "The project would have a significantly greater harmful impact on the vitality and viability of nearby town centres than the existing lawful use". This case is significant as it is one of the first to be decided since new national planning guidance on town centres (PPS6) was brought in. See page 7 for more information on what other organisations are doing to protect small, independent shops.

RICHARD HINES

RICHH@FOE.CO.UK

North East Making connections in the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

Making connections between people, vision and place was the buzz when forty representatives from community groups in Waltham Forest came together in mid-March. All present were interested in improving local access to good quality food. This included local food growing projects, Primary Care Trust nutritionists, housing association staff, inter-faith community workers, Sure Start employees

with parents and allotment holders.

Ben Reynolds from London Food Links talked about activities elsewhere in London and Josiah Meldrum, from Eostre Organics, East Anglia, discussed how they could work with community organisations in East London to improve the supply of quality produce. The three local organising groups were encouraged by the range of groups interested in the workshop. These three groups are one of ten local pilot groups for a national project development partnership: SPAN (Sustainable Production in Active Neighbourhoods) is building the capacity of these groups as they seek sustainable solutions in local areas. These experiences are contributing to a national learning programme, coordinated by five national organisations. This workshop was an example of local work under the SPAN partnership and was supported directly by the Women's Environmental Network (WEN), one of the five national partners in SPAN.

The local groups in Waltham Forest are now developing the idea of a 'local food hub': a place where people can get quality organic produce, be informed about food nutrition and food growing, receive training, be involved in food enterprise. Future activities also include a local food festival which will take place at the height of the harvest season, Saturday 2 September 2006. Contact Organiclea for more information about this even

WWW.ORGANICLEA.ORG.UK

Bulletin

A bit of a do for London Food Link members

We are pleased to announce the first annual LFL members meeting will be taking place on 7th June at City Hall. Having spoken to many of you, and reading your answers to the member's questionnaire, there is a unanimous demand for a regular informal meeting to share ideas, hear about what everyone is doing, and discuss what you think we could be doing to help you in the future. The meeting will start at 4.30pm and will run until 7pm. We are hoping to have some exciting talks and great food. I hope as many of you as possible can come. Please let me know by emailing me or returning the insert.

BEN REYNOLDS

LONDON FOOD LINK PROJECT OFFICER

BEN@SUSTAINWEB.ORG

020 7837 1228

Farm Sunday

Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF) have developed Farm Sunday and on 11th June farmers will be opening their gates to the public for a few hours to see the countryside at its best. Each event will be unique, with its own activities based around the host farm's own story. Activities during the day may include a farm walk, nature trail, tractor & trailer rides, pond dipping, mini farmers market or picnics. If you are a farmer and would like to register your event with LEAF to receive top tips, promotional material and support to help make your Farm Sunday event a success go to the LEAF website. If you want to find the location of your nearest participating farm, please contact Roly Puzey at LEAF.

ROLY PUZEY

ROLY.PUZEY@LEAFUK.ORG

WWW.LEAFUK.ORG

London Sustainability Weeks

London Sustainability Weeks (LSW) will take place once again in the first two weeks of June 2006 - Sunday 4 until Sunday 18 June, incorporating World Environment Day on 5 June. LSW events are about celebrating what is being done all over London to make the city more sustainable. Hundreds of activities will be taking place including the Camden Green Fayre (4 June) Kent Food Fayre (8 June),

and Better food for Croydon (10 June). Events are listed for free on their website and in a printed events guide. If you are thinking of organizing an event, or want to find out more about what's going on, check the LSW website.

WWW.LSW2006.ORG

London Food Strategy Launch

The Mayor's food strategy: Sustainable Food for London, will be launched on Tuesday 23 May 2006. The launch will be accompanied by an implementation plan and announcement of key initiatives to implement the strategy. The London Development Agency (LDA), with the help of consultants Brook Lyndhurst, have spent the last couple of months revising the strategy to take account of the contributions from the consultation. A summary of these contributions will be published on the LDA website. For more information on the strategy and its launch please contact the LDA.

LONDONFOOD@LDA.GOV.UK

WWW.LDA.GOV.UK/LONDONFOOD

Exotic vegetables grown in the UK?

Emma Hockridge, the project officer for Sustain's soon-to-be-expanded hospital food project (see page 8) has won a research bursary from the prestigious Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust. She will be studying the potential for growing exotic vegetable in the UK to see if this could encourage people from ethnic minority groups who already have growing skills to become involved in UK agriculture. The research will include travel to countries including China, Australia and Japan to study growing methods and how to involve a broad



section of the population in growing activities. Emma is keen to hear from people who have experience of growing exotic vegetables and herbs, or of involving ethnic communities in growing, particularly in rural areas of the country.

EMMA HOCKRIDGE

HOSPITAL FOOD PROJECT OFFICER

EMMA@SUSTAINWEB.ORG

Community Markets

Over the last six months Eostre Organics, a producer co-operative based in East Anglia, has been looking for new ways of linking community groups to its grower members. The result has been the development of 'Community Markets' that not only create those links but also generate an income for the groups involved and increase the availability of fresh, affordable, organic, and ethically



traded produce in London.

Groups choosing to run a Community Market are provided with a stall, equipment and training - Eostre staff help run the market for at least the first month. Over time, with the Eostre stall acting as a hub, other food producers as well as local artists and crafts people are attracted, creating a busy weekly market.

The first two Community Markets, at Sunnyside Community Garden and Freightliners Farm, have been running for just over a month, and the benefits are already clear to Robert Donkers, manager of Freightliners, 'The market stall doesn't just generate an income and links to farms in East Anglia - it's also brought a lot of new faces onto our Farm'. Both groups will visit growers over the summer - the first trip is planned for May - as well as joining growers and other friends of the co-op for social events.

From its inception Eostre's grower

members have insisted that the co-operative should do more than just wholesale their produce. Eostre is therefore very keen on working with city farms, residents associations, schools and other community groups and has developed a network of organisations that run box schemes, cafes and markets.

JOSIAH MELDRUM

COMMUNITY PROJECTS MANAGER FOR
EOSTRE)

01953 456 800

JOSIAH.MELDRUM@EOSTRE.CO.UK

WWW.EOSTREORGANICS.CO.UK

Local food update on WEN-page

Check out the new local food pages on the website of the Women's Environmental Network (WEN). WEN is a national charity and membership organisation which campaigns on environmental and health issues from a women's perspective. WEN's Local Food campaign offers training and support to groups of women growing food in urban areas. Caroline Fernandez, the Local Food Project-Network Developer at WEN, welcomes any feedback about this addition to the website.

CAROLINE FERNANDEZ

CAROFERN@DSL.PIPEX.COM

020 7481 9004

WWW.WEN.ORG.UK

Fair Trading?

Last month the Office of Fair Trade (OFT) announced that it would recommend that the entire grocery sector should be investigated by the Competition Commission. Sustain has submitted a response to the OFT along with a number of leading industry association and companies including the major multiples, the Association of Convenience Stores, the Federation of Wholesale Distributor's and the National Farmers' Union.

The response, from Sustain's Food Poverty Project, urges the OFT to insist that the Competition Commission listens to disadvantaged communities if it investigates the grocery market, and recommends giving local communities enough power to be able to choose the shops they want and need.

CLAIRE MILNE

FOOD POVERTY PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

020 7837 1228

CLAIRE@SUSTAINWEB.ORG

Politicians launch damning report on supermarkets

In February, the All Party Parliamentary Small Shops Group (APPSSG) launched its report, *High Street Britain: 2015*, documenting the rapid and continuing demise of small shops across the UK in the face of growing supermarket dominance. The report warns that, despite their seemingly low prices and convenience, supermarkets are not only wreaking havoc on the UK's traditional small shop sector, but are also plundering the planet and destroying local economies and farmers. What's more, supermarkets' new found interest in the convenience sector, or 'compact' format, could see entire communities lost to "ghost town Britain".

The group of 76 MPs has made numerous policy recommendations and the Food Poverty Project is planning to work closely with them to ensure Government acts on these proposals. Without such action, low income consumers and other disadvantaged communities may be left with no shops in their area or one large supermarket, and no choice.

To get a copy of the *High Street Britain: 2015* report contact the office of Jim Dowd MP, 020 7219 4617 or see www.retail-network.org/

Save Small Shops campaign

The Evening Standard has launched a campaign to preserve London's independent small shops which are being put at risk by the march of the supermarket giants, high rents and unhelpful council parking policies. Across the country, more than 7,000 family or individually owned shops disappeared between 2001 and 2005 - a 21 per cent slump. The campaign follows hot on the heels of the launch of *High Street Britain: 2015* (see above).

The newspaper is calling on councils and the Government to use planning law to protect locally owned stores. They believe there should be a law to stop massive rent rises being imposed on independent shops. If you want to join the campaign please sign their petition on the website and use your consumer power to shop local. See page 5 for success in Barnet.

WWW.THISISLONDON.CO.UK/NEWS/SMALLSHOPS/

Online forum launched for anti-Tesco community campaigns

Tescopoly, an alliance of campaigners, environmentalists and trade unions, has launched a new web page allowing people to come together and swap information on local campaigns against Tesco. The move is designed to help local people organise co-ordinated action against the increasing dominance of the supermarket. The campaign's organisers include Friends of the Earth, the New Economics Foundation and the Small and Family Farms Alliance.

WWW.TESCOPOLY.ORG

Living Medicine looking for land

Living Medicine is working to set up Britain's first herbal medicine centre to teach people how to use food and herbs for health. Championing sustainability at all levels, it will be a new kind of public garden, to enchant the community, visitors and professionals alike to use and to exchange knowledge about food and herbs. It will be - literally! - rooted by those diverse local communities who use plant medicine traditions - Western, Islamic, Asian, African, Chinese and so on. Living Medicine will revive this precious knowledge and incorporate it into mainstream healthcare through partnerships with schools and the NHS. We want also to inspire every one to make and use their own kitchen pharmacy, be it on windowsill, garden, or community garden.

The (non-profit) Living Medicine Centre will include a herb and food garden, world food café (with training), education centre, herbal pharmacy, shop and herbal medicine clinic. We are looking for a site in Central London that is both prestigious and close to a diverse community. It needs around a 2 acre site - at least an acre of land for the garden, plus building space of a 1000 sq metres. If anyone has ideas about possible sites, or would like to know more, please contact Alex Laird

ALEX LAIRD

PROJECT DIRECTOR, LIVING MEDICINE

0207 736 8975

ALSL@BTINTERNET.COM

WWW.LIVINGMEDICINE.ORG

Funding round up

Big Lottery

In case you are a little overwhelmed by all the different grants being launched by the lottery, we thought we'd do a round up of those that might be relevant to you. You can apply for any of these right now, unless it states otherwise below:

Changing Spaces

Between now and 2009 the Changing Spaces programme is making available up to £234 million to help communities in England improve their environment. The programme will have three priority areas: 1) community spaces; 2) local community enterprise; 3) access to the natural environment.

Young People's Fund

The Young People's Fund supports projects across the UK that will improve local communities, including offering more opportunities to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Specific aims include promoting healthy lifestyles and economic well-being.

Awards for All

This is a UK-wide programme providing small grants of between £500 and £5,000 to small groups.

Reaching Communities

This programme offers grants of between £10,000 and £500,000 to projects in England that help improve local communities and the lives of people most in need, including building healthier, more active communities, developing life skills, and improved rural and urban environments.

Wellbeing

The programme focuses on three strands: mental health, healthy eating, and physical activity. Statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations (including social enterprises) and private organisations can apply for funding under this programme. The lottery expects to make no more than twenty awards with most being well over the minimum portfolio size of £1 million. Portfolios should operate at national or regional level. First stage applications should be in by **28th July 2006**.

For more information about these and other Big Lottery funding programmes visit:
www.biglottery.org.uk/programmes
or call 08454 102030.

A Government-complied list of potential funders

The Government's sustainable development team has pulled together lists of funding opportunities from organisations and Government. To see the lists visit:
www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/what/funding.htm or call 020 7238 5811.

Defra's Rural Enterprise Scheme and the Bridge House Trust have both agreed to fund a two year project to build on the success of our Better Hospital Food initiative.

More good public plate



Farm worker in an onion field - Credit: Sarah Hannant

food on more es!



It's now three years since Sustain published, with East Anglia Food Link, the ground-breaking report *Good Food on the Public Plate: a manual for sustainability in public sector food and catering*. So much good work has been done since then, by so many people and organisations, that it's sometimes hard to remember how bad the situation was!

At the same time, there's still a great deal more to do, so Sustain was delighted when Defra's Rural Enterprise Scheme and the Bridge House Trust both agreed to fund a two year project to build on the success of our Better Hospital Food initiative.

What we achieved

Avid *Jellied Eel* readers will know that the project was run for two years by Sustain, working with the Soil Association and it aimed to increase the proportion of sustainable food in four London hospitals to 10% of their routine catering. The hospitals were:

- Ealing General
- Royal Bethlem, Beckenham and Lambeth
- Royal Brompton
- St. George's

At time of writing the Royal Brompton has switched over 15% of its spending to local and/or organic food and, although the other hospitals have not yet matched this impressive achievement, good progress is being made.

In particular, the mental health trust, the South London and Maudsley, will now be incorporating all their sites in the project, including the Maudsley hospital and a number of smaller sites, as well as the original Royal Bethlem. This work with mental health trusts links well with Sustain's diet and mental health project, and we have already contacted the Mental Health Foundation, and groups who are interested food as part of treatment, such as the National Epilepsy Centre.

What next?

Emma Hockridge, the project officer, is now busy identifying even more hospitals - our target is 20 - to take part in the expanded project. Understandably, given the project's

success, there is a great deal of interest in joining, particularly from members of the Hospital Caterers Association, and the London Food and Supplies group. Many of these people came to a very successful meeting on 19th April, and we'll be pursuing our contacts with them in the coming weeks.

But it's not just London hospitals that will be involved. The project is expanding not only beyond London, to include the South East region, but will also work with other caterers, including schools and care homes in the region, the latter building on the work which Sustain has been doing with the National Association of Care Caterers (NACC).

Expanding the project will have a number of advantages, including allowing the development of regional procurement groups, to enable caterers to get the best possible prices for high quality local and/or organic products. The network of suppliers and producers will also be expanded.

Marketing and promotion

Importantly, we will continue and expand our promotional work with suppliers, caterers, their customers, and a whole range of professionals who work in these public institutions that serve food. Celebratory events, tasting sessions, training courses, publicity materials, visits to farms and more all help to encourage people to support the change to more sustainable food. Previous events have included festivals around Apple Day, British Food Fortnight, and a healthy and organic breakfast - all of which were very popular.

To do all this extra work, the new funding will allow us to recruit an extra project officer to join Emma. So if you know anyone who would fit the bill, or if you know of a supplier or public sector caterer in the South East who'd like to join the project, get in touch with Emma Hockridge on emma@sustainweb.org or 020-7837-1228. ■

EMMA HOCKRIDGE
HOSPITAL FOOD PROJECT OFFICER
EMMA@SUSTAINWEB.ORG
020 7837 1228

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG)

What does FCFCG London do?

We are a national membership organisation with around 80 members in London, ranging from large urban farms to small pocket gardens saved from development. Their location in inner city areas, many recognised as deprived, mean they are ideally placed to provide educational opportunities for local people, especially children, on where their food comes from. We have network meetings three times a year, in a different project each time. Feedback from these meetings indicate that they are useful for meeting other project workers and sharing information. We organise events to showcase the work of our members, and provide training according to members' needs. Members can request advice from a pool of practitioners for specific problems.

Who set it up and when?

Ian Egginton Metters has been the driving force in setting up the organisation, which celebrated its 25th anniversary last year.



Visits to the city farms and community gardens of North and East London in March 2006

Who is involved in your work?

City farmers are resourceful and hardworking people and are often at the forefront when it comes to seeing opportunities. Farms such as Lambourne End work with corporate groups to raise funds, Freightliners has developed several green building demonstration projects, Hackney has a franchised café, Spitalfields has a food garden for local women, and Wellgate has developed a cardboard recycling scheme. Gardens such as Culpeper, the Calthorpe Project and Hammersmith Community Gardens work with many different communities and provide valuable breathing spaces in the built-up inner city.

What have you been working on recently?

We have organised training events jointly with London Community Recycling Network, including a trustees celebration event, financial training on the new sorps*, guided tours of member projects, and a lambing weekend at the Lambourne End centre, where young people from the inner city benefit from time in the countryside. An Artist in Residence scheme produced a beautiful set of postcards by

Nessie Ramm which will be available soon. Included is Nessie's image of raspberries at Cable Street Community Garden.

What's happening next?

Planning meetings are already underway for the Capel Manor autumn show on 23rd September, and we will be at the Camden Green Fair on the 4th June. For photos of last year's show go to www.capel.ac.uk/News/Harvest2005/index.htm. There is a Community Gardens lunch on 7 July, and a young people's camp in August. We will be launching a City Farms bike route, and are seeking funding to reprint our popular London map.

CATHERINE MAUND

PO BOX 25359, LONDON NW54ZN

0207 485 5001

CATHERINE@FARMGARDEN.ORG.UK

WWW.FARMGARDEN.ORG.UK

* Statement Of Recommended Practice - the Charity Commission's financial guidance



City Farms & Gardens (G) London



Allotment Slot Trouble In The Pipeline

A hosepipe ban was inevitable in London and the over-crowded South East. Mind you, helping to run an allotment society, as I do, I am all for it. I would have banned hosepipes years ago. In the past they have encouraged a regular mis-use of an increasingly valuable resource. Talk to anyone running an allotment site and they will tell you about the person who left the hose running all night into his potato or bean bed. The worst example I have witnessed is a member who had driven his car to the plot and was washing it at our expense.

Long before shortages, the water bills have always been our highest overhead. Thames Water do not do themselves any favours. Having had the nerve to charge us £1,500 for digging up half a narrow road to change our re-connection and metering point, they have failed for well over a year to cap the old source of supply at the other end of our site, which is still pouring out water at the rate of gallons a day onto an almost flooded plot. Enterprisingly the plotholder put down guttering so that the water is taken to other parts of his site. All this despite at least five letters, and numerous phone calls to what was - before privatisation - a superbly run company. This is the same company that killed millions of fish last summer by releasing ton after ton of untreated sewage into the River Thames. They should have been brought before the courts, but were not.

The trouble is that all this arguing that we have to do gives us a negative image, when in fact we are true conservationists. I am encouraging everyone now to get their own water butts, and raid the skips for guttering



View from a shed

to fix along their sheds, so when the rains do come we benefit from it. There is nothing like rain water with all its minerals, as you can see from the growth after a mere shower. I should shamelessly mention that I go far more fully into all this in my forthcoming book! It does go on about re-cycling old wood and how I am a part of society known as skip ferrets, but it also tells of our battle to keep our allotment plot - East Acton allotments. ■

MICHAEL WALE

VIEW FROM A SHED. FOUR SEASONS AS AN URBAN FARMER, BY MICHAEL WALE IS PUBLISHED BY ALLISON AND BUSBY 5TH JUNE 2006 £9.99P

black and green?

Over the last year, London Food Link (LFL) has been gathering information on attitudes to sustainability from different communities. More specifically, we have been looking at how to engage a variety of communities, and the businesses serving them, and encourage them to embrace sustainability ideals. Countless networking events, factory visits and persuasive phone calls later, are we any closer to knowing? *Zeenat Anjari outlines where we are so far.*

The lifestyles of many of London's multicultural communities are defined by religious ideals, ideals that are embodied in concepts such as *tayyib* (wholesome in Islam), *ital* (vital in Rastafarianism), *ayurveda* (Hindu holistic system of healing), reverence of the *Kami* (Shinto gods of nature) and the *Sabbatical year* (preserving natural resources in Judaism). These spiritually motivated concepts encourage adherents to live what may be described as a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable life. But, as we all know, in London these lifestyles may be compromised in many ways, and we need help knowing how to do the 'right' thing.

LFL's work with food business owners from ethnic communities has highlighted the responsibility many feel to their own communities, including providing jobs or youth opportunities. *Scotch Bonnet Catering*, for example, is a social enterprise based in Lambeth that creates authentic,

I am using the marketing of chocolate to raise issues concerning our community

high quality African and Caribbean food while also providing training and employment for people with mental health needs and learning difficulties. LFL's project, *Sustainable food in Multicultural Communities*, is looking at ways to encourage business owners like these to consider that using local, organic or fair-trade ingredients is the next logical step in taking care of their communities' needs.

More than just money

Khalid Sharif, is Managing Director of *Ummah Foods*, a small company serving sweet-toothed Muslims with halal chocolates. *Ummah* is an Arabic word describing the global community of Muslims. When asked what is most important to catering and manufacturing companies owned by people from London's multicultural communities Mr Sharif suggests it's more than just turning a profit.

A great deal of detailed supply chain auditing is needed for Mr Sharif's business because, in modern food manufacturing, even if a single ingredient is acceptable, it may have come into contact with something that is not. For example, a vegetarian ingredient may have been extracted, processed or filtered using animal fats or alcohol. Mr Sharif also needs to ensure that machinery cleaning

processes do not use alcohol, and even make sure that the glue in the bar wrapper does not use animal fat.

This detailed monitoring needs a considerable investment of time and money by the company, because no formal systems exist for monitoring the religious compliance of processed foods that do not - ostensibly - contain animal products.

Ethical marketing

Ummah Caramel Chocolate is advertised with the slogan "*Community & Chocolate close to your heart? Ask for Ummah Caramel Chocolate next time you want some tasty chocolate and also want to change the world Insh'allah (by the grace of God).*"

What does the business of selling chocolate mean to Mr Sharif? "*From day one, we are trying to build up our company using a community based model*" so *Ummah Foods* aims to give a percentage of its profits to charities. All the chocolate packaging is designed by young artists to encourage more youngsters to turn their creative abilities into commercial success. The new *Ummah Orange Chocolate wrapper* is designed by a young Muslim artist who merged street graffiti with Arabic script to produce a striking and distinctly contemporary urban design.

Mr Sharif uses the marketing of his chocolate to promote charities, such as the *Muslim Youth Helpline* which supports young Muslims facing serious issues such as bullying, drug abuse, social problems, or mental health. "*I am involved in charities and community*



Xmas eve at Mixed Blessing - Credit: Sara Hannant

projects so this drives my understanding of what is needed in the community, and I feel we can make a difference as long as we don't try to be everything to everyone on day one."

Linking local and global?

Mr Sharif's social reasons for running a community-based business resonate with London Food Link's ethics. So has Mr Sharif considered using and promoting fair-trade chocolate as part of Ummah Foods' efforts to change the world?

"This is an aspiration of mine. But my main investment is in developing and monitoring halal systems. First priority are the issues of living in the UK; Bangladeshis and Pakistanis living in poverty, unemployed Muslim youth, treatment of old people, the homeless. There is a debate in the ethnic community that the 'fashion' in the media for promoting fair-trade is displacing important issues on our doorstep. I am concerned with community issues, local issues, local environment. I believe the role of business is to promote issues. I am using the marketing of chocolate to raise issues concerning our community".

This approach to sustainability might not quite fit the idea of a "green" business promoted by many. But concern for local community issues is an integral part of sustainable development. Despite the fact that many people think it's just about "the environment", sustainable development has always been about social issues, about running a business ethically as well as profitably, and - of course - about saving the planet.

Many communities and their businesses are, through their spirituality, already addressing many aspects of sustainable development. Only it doesn't always go by this name. These achievements should be recognised and celebrated. If they are not, people are likely to resent being asked to do even more.

Zeena Anjari's report *Greener Curry: Sustainable Food in Multicultural Communities* will be available from Sustain this summer. Please contact her if you want to get involved in the project. ■

ZEENAT ANJARI

LONDON FOOD LINK PROJECT OFFICER

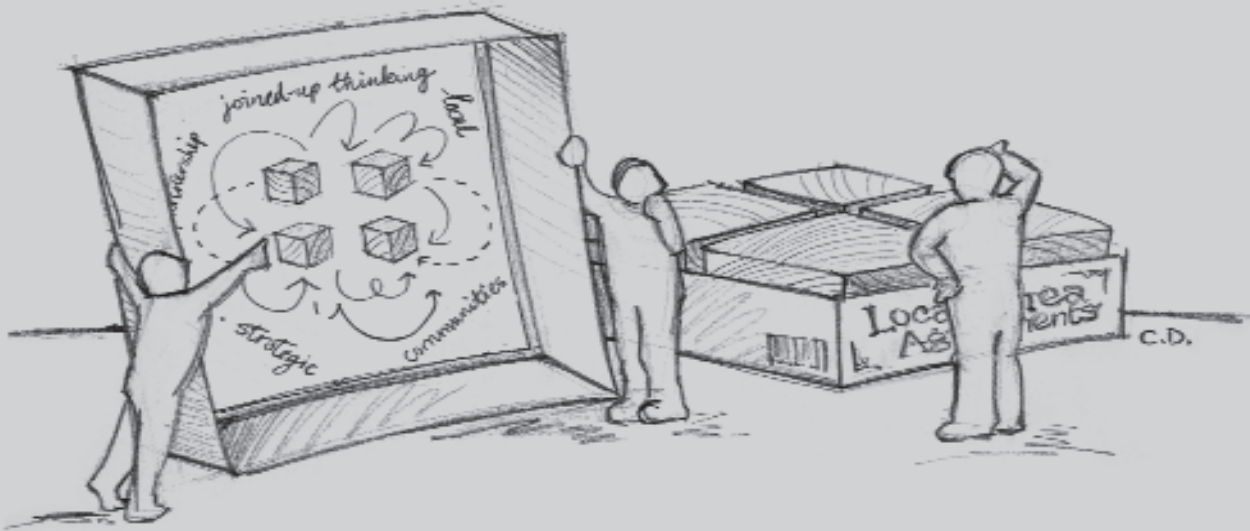
ZEENAT@SUSTAINWEB.ORG

0207 837 1228



"The Ummah is changing" giving voice to the changing Muslim world and its culture. In support for Aerosolarabic.com, Ummah Foods commissioned the up and coming British Muslim artist, Mohammed Ali, to design the Ummah Orange wrapper.





Credit: Ciara Devine

The partnership of partnerships: Are Local Area Agreements worth bothering with?

Partnership is the Government's word of the moment. The belief that organisations, both public and private, can achieve more by working together than they can do if they work on their own drives the growing emphasis on Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements (LAA). But is the Local Area Agreement yet another central government initiative leading to more bureaucracy and endless additional meetings? Hopefully the answer is 'no', as LAAs are all about bringing existing partnership arrangements together.

The Community Strategy provides the vision informing the Local Area Agreement (LAA), which 16 London boroughs will be busying themselves with this year (going live in April 2007). An LAA is made up of outcomes, indicators and targets aimed at improving performance on a range of national and local priorities. These priorities are grouped around four themes or 'blocks':

- Children & Young People,
- Safer & Stronger Communities,
- Healthier Communities & Older People, and
- Economic Development & Enterprise.

What has all this to do with London Food Link? The answer is that by addressing food issues, a local area could go a long way towards achieving the health and environmental goals in its LAA. As the Mayor's ambitious draft food strategy shows, meeting the varied challenges surrounding London's food

requirements and achieving a sustainable food system would have profound health and environmental benefits. You probably won't see the word 'food' in a borough's Community Strategy - but just a little persuasion should convince the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) board of its relevance. For example, the Government puts forward 'Being Healthy' as a possible outcome for the 'Children & Young People' block. No great stretch of the imagination is needed to see that improving food education and cooking skills in schools and increasing the number of children eating healthy school meals would be a genuine step towards achieving this; these initiatives may be happening anyway, but they will be strengthened by being in the LAA.

As for putting forward some action to be included in an LAA, it could prove useful to influence the Community Strategy where it is being 'refreshed' in tandem. Contact the area's Local

Strategic Partnership (the forum which drives the Community Strategy and includes representatives from business, community groups and public agencies such as Primary Care Trusts) to find out how to contribute ideas to both of these. The Sustain website has more information on how to contact LSPs. As community organisations are expected to be involved in planning and decision-making there ought to be opportunities to put issues of concern on the agenda.

For areas taking part in the current, '3rd round' LAAs, timescales were still uncertain at the time of writing (April). However, it is likely that discussions are now underway, based on high-level outcomes identified in the Community Strategy, with the content being worked on from May to around August before an initial submission is sent to the Government Office and partners in September. There will be considerable negotiating and redrafting after this, with the process completed in February 2007.

If your borough is not one of those listed in the box, the LAA has already been agreed and it may be a case of examining closely the issues already outlined in it and showing how they justify allocations of time or funding for food initiatives. If the Government's approach is right, you will be hearing plenty more about LAAs in the not-too-distant future. ■

JASPER WALLACE

MORE INFORMATION ON LAAS -
WWW.LONDONFOODLINK.ORG

Case Study:

Greenwich's LAA

To see what completed LAAs look like have a glance at those of Greenwich and Hammersmith & Fulham (London's two 1st round pilot authorities), both of which are online. See www.sustainweb.org

Greenwich provides a good example of specific food-related targets and indicators. Under the 'Healthier Communities and Older People' block, perhaps the most eye-catching indicator is 'Increase numbers of community food initiatives in Neighbourhood Renewal areas with BME and other disadvantaged communities including 6 new fruit and vegetable co-ops and 10 new cookery clubs.' Supporting the aim of using schools to improve children's nutrition is a target of 'Halting the year-on-year rise in obesity among children under 11' with a subsidiary indicator of '50% of schools reaching locally agreed 'gold standard' for promoting childhood nutrition and increased levels of physical activity through the healthy schools programme by April 2008'.

Greenwich, whose agreement was signed off in March 2005, stressed the importance of themes that cut across all the blocks (the Economic Development block did not exist then): food issues certainly support outcomes in all the current blocks. It sees the LAA as a 'rolling' agreement, refreshed annually, so it is always possible to identify new food-related targets.

London boroughs involved in 3rd round LAAs

Barnet
Hillingdon
Bexley
Lambeth
Bromley
Merton
City of London
Newham
Ealing
Richmond upon Thames
Hackney
Southwark
Haringey
Sutton
Havering
Wandsworth

On the Menu

Konstam at The Prince Albert, Now Open

As reported in the previous Jellied Eel, London Food Link has been working with Oliver Rowe, chef/owner of Konstam to help him find producers based inside the area covered by the London Underground network.

In his first week, dishes included: Pan fried chicken livers with creamed nettles on toast, Thames fish'n'chips cooked in beer batter, and rhubarb pavlova. If you like the look of these, get there quickly as the menu changes weekly, depending on what is available this season.

Surprisingly, finding the ingredients was the easy part. The last few weeks have been spent working out the logistics of how to get the produce literally from the farm to the fork. A breakthrough came when Keith Bennet of Stockings Farm, who supplies meat and game, agreed he would also deliver fruit and vegetables and dairy produce from

nearby producers. To make their trip in worthwhile, we are now talking to other restaurants - such as Walnut in West Hampstead - about buying some of the produce.

Oliver's progress has been followed by the BBC for a programme which will be aired on BBC2 every evening for the first two weeks of June. Keep an eye out for footage of some ugly mugs from LFL!

KONSTAM AT THE PRINCE ALBERT

2 ACTON ROAD, LONDON WC1X 9NA

T: 020 7833 5040



Diary

May

- 23rd Launch of Mayor's Food Strategy, see p6
- 27th English Wine Week, see www.englishwineweek.co.uk/

June

- 4th - 18th London Sustainability Weeks, see p6
- 4th Camden Green Fayre, see p6
- 7th LFL network meeting City Hall, see p6
- 8th Kent Food Fayre, Bexley, see p6
- 10th Better Food for Croydon, see p6
- 11th Farm Sunday, see p6
- 15th - 18th Taste of London restaurant show, see www.tasteoflondon.co.uk/
- 17th National Nutrition Education Conference, healthy eating in schools at Royal College of Surgeons. See www.nutrition.org.uk

Join London Food Link Now!

The benefits of membership of London Food Link include:

- The Jellied Eel, our quarterly members' newsletter.
- A chance to influence policy-making on food issues including contributing to food and nutrition strategies, government and GLA consultations on food, farming, planning and the economy.
- Membership of an interactive e-mail group with news, events, jobs and developments around food issues in London.
- Discounts off London Food Link events, conferences, seminars and publications.
- Access to an online members' area with membership directory.
- A free copy of Growing Food in Cities to new members and 50% off all London Food Link publications.

To join London Food Link or for further details contact:

Ben Reynolds, LFL Co-ordinator

c/o Sustain, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF.
Tel: 020 7837 1228. Fax: 020 7837 1141.
ben@sustainweb.org
www.londonfoodlink.org

London Food Link members and supporters include:

Primary Care Trusts, London boroughs, business associations, retailers, farmers, environment and community groups, food access partnerships, allotment groups and food writers. Our work is guided by a working party of key London-wide agencies and groups representing food issues from farm to fork.



OUR WORK

To represent over 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level.

OUR AIM

To advocate food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, promote equity and enrich society and culture.

The Jellied Eel is the newsletter of London Food Link coordinated by Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming. It aims to keep readers abreast of developments in the food and agriculture policy arena that have an impact on London. Sustain takes every effort to summarise and reproduce accurately the information in *The Jellied Eel*. Inclusion of any material does not imply that it forms part of the policy of Sustain.

Editor: Ben Reynolds

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Volunteers: Ida Fabrizio, Atoho Jachalu, Hadija Mohamed, Jasper Wallace, Lucie Wancin

SUSTAIN: The alliance for better food and farming

94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF
Telephone (+44) 020 7837 1228
Fax (+44) 020 7837 1141
Web: www.sustainweb.org
Email: sustain@sustainweb.org

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