

Finding the plot

Access to land for food growing groups in urban areas

October 21st, RISC building Reading

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Women's Environmental Network (WEN) and Sustain's Local Action on Food Network bring you:

Finding the plot

Access to land for food growing groups in urban areas

When: 21st October 2009, 10am-4.30pm

Where: RISC Building in Reading

This is an event for community groups and interested individuals across the country that are facing challenges in accessing land for sustainable food production. This event will allow attendees to share skills and experience on how through policy and practice access to land can be improved across the UK.

A sister event next year, organised by Landshare.org, will focus on rural areas and the urban fringe.

The day will include:

- Talks from experts and keynote speaker Rosie Boycott, chair of the London Food Board.
- Lunch and an exclusive tour of the RISC edible roof garden.
- An afternoon programme of issue specific workshops and sessions. Sessions include: planning constraints, site management, project sustainability and more.



RISC roof garden, Reading



Planting brassicas, Canterbury allotments.

Rates: £25 Non-members

£15 Local Action on Food / RISC or WEN members

To book a place please download the booking form at www.localactiononfood.org and send to polly@sustainweb.org with payment. For more information Tel: 0207 837 1228.

For more information on joining Local Action on Food or Women's Environmental Network, please see www.localactiononfood.org or www.wen.org.uk.

Thanks to the Tedworth Trust for their support towards this event.

local
ACTION
ON FOOD


Women's
Environmental
Network

www.risc.org.uk

FINDING THE PLOT

This event was jointly organised by Sustain's Local Action on Food network and The Women's Environmental Network. It was an opportunity for networking, knowledge exchange and skill acquisition, for community groups and interested individuals that are facing challenges in sustainable food production. Set at the location of the inspiring Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC) edible roof garden.



INTRODUCTION: Myles Bremner of Garden Organic

Garden Organic's scientific research aims to develop and improve the techniques used in organic agriculture and to advance the knowledge of organic production systems, focusing on commercial organic horticulture in temperate areas and on sustainable agriculture in developing countries.

In a brief introduction to the day's proceedings, Myles Bremner focused on the crucial nature of three key issues:

- Access to land
- Skills provision
- Access to markets

He also highlighted that the major obstructions that currently stand in the way as falling into two distinct categories:

- Restrictions of policy
- Local or community barriers

Today's meeting hopes to advance solutions for both these sets of difficulties.

KEYNOTE SPEECH: Rosie Boycott, Chair of the London Food Board

In an inspiring address, Rosie Boycott discussed a range of issues that surround food-growing, community gardens and sustainable land management.

Community gardens as inspiration leading to a general uplift of an area or estate

- East End estate gardens developed into friendly and safe zones resulted in first-generation immigrant women having a place to feel secure, welcome and

comfortable. E.g. WEN Tower Hamlets projects such as the Wapping Women's Centre Garden Project.

80% of the world's food is grown by women

- Women living in politically unstable or oppressive states disproportionately affected
- Women as building blocks of the community

There are a number of pioneering projects in the UK and abroad including:

Capital Growth

Campaign to help Londoners create new food growing spaces

- Focuses on growing in smaller, non-conventional spaces e.g. rooftops
- Corporate backing e.g. British Water, Transport For London

Let's Go, Let's Grow: Edgware Estate

- Garden amid tower blocks, maintained and mostly used by mothers and children, costs £3 a year
- Plants grown in builder's bags
- Highlights the importance of civic pride in safety and community issues
- Has been far more effective than external/police initiatives

Global Generation at King's Cross Station

- Example of how to address land-owners concerns about long leases and the potential for redeveloping unused land in future
- Gardens are created in decommissioned skips placed on land destined for building
- Small, temporary and autonomous
- Portable growing space, and short term lease options make negotiation with large, land-owning corporations far easier
- Initiatives gain cross-party political support, across the boroughs

Grant Park Vegetable Garden: Chicago

- Tax breaks for roof gardens/green roofs
- Vegetables grown used to feed the homeless

Food is fundamental

Nationally

- Britain's loss of food culture is seriously damaging to us as a society. The dying concept of the sit-down family meal contributes to family breakdown and problems of child obesity.
- New UK initiatives with parks are encouraging individuals to reconnect with the origins, growing process, and the production of food.

Project Buywell: London Sustainability Exchange

- Area assessment has shown that many 'grocery' shops only carry lemons, garlic and poor quality potatoes, while one-third of the shop is devoted to alcohol

- Intended to counter the ‘food deserts’ that exist across many of the most deprived areas of our cities
- Aims to change Britain’s eating habits by changing what is easily available.
- Making it easier to buy good-quality, affordable and culturally sensitive food locally through influencing what's already there
- Setting up new schemes based on local need

Globally

- Growing health and food security crisis
- Current global food system may be effective, but is fragile and wasteful

We cannot afford to be complacent. Food growing is a great way to put “heart and soul back into the community.”

Rosie Boycott: Questions & Answers

Leasing of rooftops?

- Planning, building & retrofitting for garden support will become mandatory in new buildings. Further information on Sustain website www.sustain.org.uk (urban agriculture pages)

Decline of traditional market gardening in peri-urban areas, e.g. Rickmansworth?

A solution requires:

- Strategy to move things into London
- Reconfiguration of the market
- The creation of ‘hubs’
- Finding new channels of distribution, e.g. if producers sell premium products directly to restaurants, the production chain becomes viable. Plus, better produce is used.

How to motivate people to get involved, specifically people of a deprived or underprivileged background?

A solution requires:

- Inspirational leaders
- An individual or group that can act as a driving force
- Motivation by example or demonstration
- Publicity
- Market initiative as being cheap and straightforward



PRESENTATIONS:

1. Mikey Tompkins, University of Brighton: An edible urban landscape

Researching and testing the adaptation of social and physical space in contemporary cities

The key is to create a landscape that is not single use. Examples:

- Apiaries on the roof of the Royal Festival Hall, the South Bank.
- Gardens incorporated into Liverpool Street Station, East London.

Adapting Physical Space

Key issue: planning for growing must be integrated into the current land use, and be sympathetic to current land use. **Retrofitting** is crucial to gaining the support of the local population. Various case studies cited:

Elephant & Castle

The landscape is currently **atomised**

- No productive use
- Advanced mapping techniques required to make the best use of space
- Considering available horizontal open space does not give a true picture of the potential use of the landscape
- Need to use both aerial photography and investigate the space on ground level

21 hectares of public space available:

- Estimates from the GLA and Borough Council are far smaller
- Shows an over-reliance on remote-sensed data
- Could provide 27% of weekly vegetable requirements for 16, 245 residents

Surrey Street, Croydon

- Example of growing food closer to the urban consumer
- 25 hectares available, mostly of rooftop space
- 1 block provides 4 hectares - if productive, this could produce 43 tonnes of edible produce
- Rooftops have the added advantage of being easy to secure
- Top storey of a car park has been turned into a car park

Adapting Social Space

Key issue: The move from gardening to agriculture, and the need to consider economies of scale to successfully move from:
Private -> Community -> Economic
Food Gardening -> Market Gardening -> Urban Agriculture
Factors change as scale changes, including harvest, destination, proximity, greenhouse gases, spatial, gender, and crop.

Proximity & Connectivity

Key issues:

- Dealing with existing infrastructure
- Changing public perception
- Non-architects must have a role in the design of a new urban landscape

Greenhouse Gases

- Is local really better?
- Or could diet change be the answer?
- The refrigerator is the enemy considering issues of emissions, manufacturing, but more importantly, leads to wastage.

Crisis vs. Permanency:

Urban agriculture has precedents in times of austerity.

Case Studies:

- Cuba: Special Period
- South Africa: during Apartheid, sanctions and blockades
- Dig for Victory: Royal Parks in London turned into allotments during the war
- 21st c. equivalent – credit crunch? Climate change?

Productivity: gardens vs farmland.

Gardens can be equally productive and save on distribution costs, environmental and financial.

Mikey Tompkins' presentation can be found on the Sustain website and the WEN websites: www.sustainweb.org www.wen.org.uk

2. Vic Else, Director, Brighton & Hove Food Partnership: Using Local Authority Land

Core beliefs and objectives:

- Link between food, health and sustainability
- Share skills and knowledge
- Membership organisation – events, campaigns and consultations
- Spade to Spoon – a food strategy and action plan (pioneer scheme)
- Harvest Brighton & Hove – secured significant lottery funding

Proving urban agriculture is possible.

The aims of the B&HFP:

- Increase *skills and confidence* of local people in growing food through training, volunteering, mentoring and apprenticeships.
- Improve *awareness* of the benefits of growing, buying and eating local produce
- Improve *access* to local food by increasing opportunities across the city to grow and buy local produce.
- Increase the amount of food produced locally by increasing the space available to grow food.
- Ensure strategies and guidance that support land use and infrastructure for urban agriculture are developed and implemented within the city.

Developing Links with Local Authorities

- Develop a **long-term** relationship
- Convince L.A.s that food strategy is a **key issue**
- Work out how to influence the influential
- Briefings to Cabinet meetings
- Stay non-aligned (cross-party)
- Keep food-growing on the agenda

E.g. Working with Brighton & Hove Council

- Commitment to project before we sought funding from the Big Lottery local food fund
- We developed relationships as part of the campaign
- Recognition that they couldn't put in cash to the project
- Offered in kind support of officers and commitment to work with us

Key issue: Relationships are still valuable even when no cash is available

Council:

- senior staff have many useful contacts.
- helped broker a deal with the NHS
- identified waste land / potential sites for urban agriculture

University of Brighton:

- creating a map of waste land
- volunteers searching the streets at ground level, identifying plots

Allotment Federation:

- worked together to ensure more effective use of allotment land

Potential Site Checklist

- Determine ownership
- Consult with ecologists
- Check **safety** (contamination, instability etc.)

A unified point of contact is a must

- Easier to produce framework
- People more likely to make contact
- Reduces risk of being lost in bureaucracy

Using Local Authority land

Allotments: bringing back into use to overcome horrendous waiting lists

- 50 disused plots revived
- Leaner plots – size halved to avoid daunting newcomers
- ‘Starter plots’ - ¼ size and mentored by a seasoned allotmenteer
- Managing allotments better – ensuring an adequate proportion of plot is cultivated and Council meets some costs e.g. water & fencing
- Demonstration growing garden -temporary space for 2-3 years with raised beds and pots, and a guarantee that the land will be restored if the public no longer want it / lose interest

Housing

- Estate projects, e.g. Breaking New Ground project
- Land owned by housing authority not currently built on and unwilling to lease
- Solve issue with temp. let (3-5 years) for use in food growing
- Working with tenants - short lets often allay fears of sitting tenants

Using farmland

- Currently farmed under tenancy agreements. Potential site for a Community Supported Agriculture Scheme

Successful Strategies: Communitisation

- Briefing Councillors / Council Officers about the project
- Acting as central communications point; a contact point for community groups
- History of Food Partnership
- Recognising time things take
- Fairness in decision making
- Local enthusiasm

Ensuring Implementation

- Tenure – Council’s internal legal processes
- Responding to consultations
- Sustainable Communities Act
- Make sure food-growing is integrated into Legislation and Core Strategy
- Providing a platform for lobbying
- Urban Agriculture must stay on the agenda and in public awareness

www.harvest-bh.org.uk

www.bhfood.org.uk

3. Jane Lucy, Land Share: Approaching Landowners

Land Share was born out of a family project to use derelict land in a Bristol estate. Similar projects had been previously pioneered in Devon, Yorkshire and Isle of Wight

Notes a general shift in people's views towards a more long-term perspective in the context of climate change.

The usefulness of having media onsite. Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall is a director.

The internet inspires a spirit of collaboration, and enables it.

The website hosts several sets of listings:

- growers looking for space
- landowners wanting their space to be worked
- people offering skill sharing

It is possible to search the listings via map of the UK, type of listing, specific skills or regionally.

The most important aspect of the website is as a forum for communication:

- hosts discussion pages
- FAQs
- events promotion
- space for campaigning issues

Benefits include:

- a reputable corporation
- connecting like-minded people
- the media reach
- the provision of pro forma legal agreements
- a free, embeddable platform

There are multiple levels of engagement:

- landsharing
- skillsharing
- affiliation: being part of a positive institution, spreading the word

Despite local authorities claiming there is no interest in growing:

- 40 000 registrations
- 6500 listings

There is a broad range of appeal:

- The site is primarily used by individuals, but more and more groups are turning to it.
- Often those offering land for growing are elderly and frail, or simply very busy. Many heart-warming stories to be found there.
- The majority of growers are novices; this acts as an excellent confidence-building exercise, with the backing of great resources and the expertise of more experienced growers.
- The majority of landowners offer space for more than one grower, providing a great nexus for information exchange and skill sharing.

Land Share is involved in many partnerships and collaborations, including the LHA, Capital Growth and Grow Organic.

Capital Growth Land Share Project

- aim to have 2 012 community growing spaces by 2012
- a landshare partnership scheme for those without access
- implement a process by which landowners can invite growers to apply for space
- backing from British Waterways and TFL

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Faced with issues of bureaucracy and blockages, how is it possible to engage and influence people like estate managers, who don't attend conferences such as this one, but ultimately have the power to start up or shut down a growing project?

Mike Wohl, Director of Let's Go, Let's Grow:

"Posters and holding meetings don't work – you have to do what amounts to social engineering."

Upcoming conference hosted by the National Housing Federation should provide a good forum to talk to the bureaucrats.

In general, the things to remember are:

- women and children are key
- the need for targeted marketing
- the need for translators
- organised workshops specifically directed at ethnic minorities
- good old-fashioned door-knocking
- the need for new ways of setting up community groups

Rosie Boycott, Chair of the London Food Board

Capital Growth is hosting a symposium of landowners and borough representatives.

- identifying potential obstructions and doorways
- explaining the benefits of growing projects

The NHF are organising an Estate Management event.

How do we address the issues of pollutants, e.g. petrol deposits, when growing in an urban environment?

Rosie Boycott: "Wash it."

Land testing and advisors are available, although expensive.

Suggests growing in raised beds, skips and pots.

Using compost.

Sunflowers remove lead: 1 year of sunflowers, followed by 1 year of vegetables.

When planting in raised beds, rooftop gardens etc, there are no micro-organisms. Is it possible to maintain soil structure, is it really sustainable?

Mikey Tompkins, Brighton University:

One year in – and so far so good.

ATTENDEE PRESENTATIONS

Leon Ballin: Grow Sheffield

- Grow Sheffield aims to influence local food policy.
- Community organisation that catalyses organic urban food growing with an artistic slant.
- Allay anxieties/underconfidence in growers by organising events and hands-on demos.
- Artistic element has meant it appeals to a greater range of people.
- A 'light touch' organisation: minimal central control and rotating responsibilities.

The Abundance Project:

- Collects excess/unwanted fruit and redistributes it.
- A viral project, spread v successfully, largely word of mouth

Community Growers:

- All share knowledge
- No experts per se, instead, people who are already embedded in the community
- Focus on the growth of confidence

Allotment Soup: An Arts festival organised in allotments.

Also involved in projects on sustainable food mapping.

Helen Wright: True Food Club

Originally simply a buying co-operative, enabling neighbourhood families to buy wholesale. Project has expanded and expanded, and now TFC go to community centres, bring dried goods and vegetables, have a market stall and very soon expanding to a shop.

- Highlights the key issue of access to markets
- TFC are 'vaguely organic' - mostly garden produce
- Two-thirds of members are now professional growers

Mark Hillyer: Mortimer Green Group

- Issue of access to land with a less urban focus.
- Survey showed many more people wanted allotments than there was availability for.
- MGG search out land, often using non-traditional spaces, such as the back of a pub. A very helpful landlord allowed access for growers - mutually beneficial. Also, a local chapel provided half an acre

The MGG vision: patches of growing space distributed around the village.

Including, but not restricted to:

- traditional allotments
- communal orchards
- other odd patches of growing space

Eventually leading to market-place where the community could sell the excess produce.

Dave Richards: RISC

- RISC found themselves in possession of a building that was very fortuitously over-designed: steel girders and reinforced concrete in the roof. Avoided the

most major obstacle to rooftop gardens; the need to retrofit buildings to make them sustainable of taking the weight.

- Context of post-Eighties, - Thatcher, Band Aid. Suddenly an awareness of global food chains. RISC found themselves on the agenda, and with the capacity to have not just a green roof, but an edible green roof – a forest garden run on permaculture principles.



Tour Rooftop Garden at RISC

Dave Richards can provide a list of all the plants: dave@risc.org.uk

‘Forest gardens’

- Term coined by Richard Hart; project @ Much Wenlock
- Multilayered garden: trees, shrubs, crops.
- Agro-forestry Research Trust; Martin Crawford @ Totnes

RISC garden

Combination of mostly N. American and Chinese plants, plus some native specimens:

- Canopy: deliberately chose trees that do not cast shade to maximise growing space: self-fertile cherry, Japanese raisin, snow pear
- Smaller trees: crab-apple (useful for orchard pollination), black mulberry, pink peppercorn
- Herbaceous: Echinacea, St. John’s wort, valerian (all herbal remedies)
- Ground cover: permanent ground cover conserves moisture and suppresses weeds: Chinese artichoke, Oudo, *Wasabia*. Mulching also produces same result: RISC uses a mulch of 3-4 inches of woodchip & newspaper.

Green walls

- Constructed from debris from Reading Abbey (Oxfordshire limestone quarried in 1100s)
- Creepers, brambles, Japanese wineberry, edible honeysuckle, Japanese rampant evergreen with jasmine-scent grow on this warm wall. Thrive in dappled shade.

Heritage apples

- Grows a selection of breeds that were nearly lost but are regaining popularity.
- The 45 degree angle helps to propagate spurs.

Sustainability

- Water is collected from all of the surrounding roofs.
- Percolates through a sponge reservoir and a drainage layer into a 2000 litre storage tank.
- Pumped through garden using energy from solar panels and wind turbine.
- Reaches beds through a drip irrigation system.

The garden uses a 1000litres/night. Due to the limited capacity of the storage tank, there was a need to use mains water during the drought of 2006. The only way to be truly sustainable is to have a larger tank for storing harvested rainwater. Future plans include the digging up of the car park for a storage reservoir.

There is a deliberate choice of plants that demonstrate multiple uses. Also for plants that tell story. The garden tells a different story depending on whether your tour is guided by a herbalist, a historian, a folklorist

WORKSHOP NOTES



1. Access to Land for All

- Why women? 80 % of the farming worldwide is carried out by women and they also constitute 70% of the worlds poor.
- Women are more vulnerable to food poverty. They are also more likely to have direct contact with food as they generally do the cooking, shopping and waste disposal.
- Research shows that women are more environmentally aware then men, more concerned about environmental issues and more proactive.

Issues

- Women and BME groups can be difficult to engage with, but projects that have been set up are very successful.
- These groups often don't have access to land in an urban environment
- How to appropriately engage with the community and address problems of isolation.
- Food growing often only attracts older women.

- Different ethnic groups have different support issues.
- Language a possible barrier.
- Some women are more comfortable working in their own groups and not comfortable integrating.

Solutions

- Involve children. Working with groups with children has been more effective in that children get engaged and bring their parents.
- Creating case studies to share information: WEN as a resource and can be contacted to share their experience.
- Using a community champion to pull different people in the community together.
- Develop land sharing schemes: e.g. through the Council.
- Finding formal and informal opportunities and nurturing them.
- Access to land in parks. Parks have other facilities, like buildings and toilets, and is a public space.
- Language lessons to overcome the language barrier or using other methods to communicate such as sign language.

2. Managing volunteers

Issues:

- Getting volunteers involved and how to maintain volunteers engaged in the project.
- Engaging volunteers on tasks that are not as appealing.
- Assessing volunteer reliability.
- How best to manage volunteer's time and work, and avoid overloading volunteer or not giving volunteer enough work or inappropriate work.
- How to deal with cancellations, and how to avoid cancellations affecting the overall project too drastically.
- Analysing why volunteers stop, e.g. not seeing their work being put into use.

Solutions

- It was suggested to always have more people rather than less for tasks that are particularly vital for the project.
- It was suggested that it would be useful to look at other organisations' minimum standards for volunteers, e.g. Groundwork.
- For some roles a volunteer description detailing tasks could be advertised and agreed by both parties, although the formality of this may be a deterrent for some.
- Have regular follow-ups with the volunteer to ensure volunteers feel valued, are clear what their role is, and are engaged with the project and other members.
- Write a list of general tasks that anyone can do to make people aware of the needs of the project.
- Celebrate the work of volunteers.



3. Site Sustainability

Issues

Volunteers:

- Skills and experience relevant to the project
- Maintaining commitment and enthusiasm
- Momentum to ensure it can run itself when funding is stretched
- A leader/champion to inspire, motivate and kick-start the project
- Empowerment of people to continue work and generate own leadership

Environmental factors:

- Surrounding land use
- Re-using waste.

Financial factors:

- Finding continuation funding,
- How to sell produce
- Hard to quantify social outcome of projects and therefore hard to use in funding bids

Social factors:

- Providing learning opportunities
- Involving community
- Prioritising: either providing local opportunity/skill development or income?

Solutions

- Involve community, specifically consult in planning stage
- Identify what skills are needed and form a working group incorporating different skills
- Be clear from start how people are going to be involved
- Ownership: establish responsibility for tasks
- Spread knowledge of project/site amongst participants to ensure continuity
- Raise profile: network with existing projects and learn from best practice
- Make local authorities aware of benefits of project
- Have a long term goal, and be clear about aims, e.g. consider the market for a social enterprise
- Consider reinvention through developing successful elements of project. Focus on one area to generate income for others
- Diversify funding streams

- In order to source continuation funding, develop new projects to access different pots. Consider using space as a home for different projects
- Risk analysis especially around funding. Assess worst scenario and incorporate into plan/strategy
- Resilient business management
- Provide learning opportunities
- Involvement with community groups
- Service provision, e.g. GP referral to food growing group, youth offenders working with growing groups

Example of successful food co-op 'Growing Communities' Hackney scheme: Cross subsidise to make it accessible to low income families. Targets people on low income and offers competitive pricing through having different sources for different commodities.

4. Training

Issues

- Types of training required:
- Growing skills
- Community engagement skills
- Staff training e.g. training for teachers to develop garden areas
- Project management skills
- Accessing funding and fund raising
- Commercial skills - how to sell produce
- Culinary skills – how to cook produce

The skills required are as individual as each project, e.g. different skills required for community development project than for one with more commercial outlook.

Solutions

- Balance tried and tested ways of doing things with experimenting and learning through doing. Making mistakes can be one of the best ways to learn!
- Speak to people who have experience of growing – use people as well as books

Training courses:

'Know your onions' – Somerset Community Food's own accredited Food Access Work training course. <http://www.somersetcommunityfood.org.uk/?Training>

Garden Organic – many courses available, including City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate in Organic Gardening (can be tailored to your needs / type of area you live in); 2-day composting course. <http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/>

5. Site Management

Issues

- Practical management of garden sites.
- Community development is as important an aspect in community gardening as growing is.
- How best to manage community groups in a community garden.

- When managing community groups, some people don't want to be part of a "committee" or a board.
- How best to structure and govern these community groups.

Solutions

- Practical management of site: there exists much information and literature on how to manage site using organic methods, e.g. Garden Organic, and also low maintenance techniques used in permaculture, such as "no dig systems" and forest gardening.
- Make meetings less formal, such as having no chairs and tables, meet in a garden, a polytunnel, or a pub, where notes are taken and passed around afterwards.
- Managing volunteers: hold regular activity days, events, also consider passing on responsibility to willing volunteers, to make it less work for one person.
- If managing a communal plot as a group:
- A rota of management tasks in the garden so not only a few people are doing all the work.
- Organise regular, weekly or monthly work days, weekly.
- Consider dividing the garden into mini plots, for members to tend to their own plot. Combine with joining in on work days to manage a community plot. E.g. Culpeper Gardens in London, <http://www.culpeper.org.uk/>
- Establish what group is needed for. For example, do you need to fundraise? If so, what kind of group do you need to be, to apply for funds?
- Important to have "terms of reference" for the group– a common ground that all agree on.
- Be careful of verbal agreements and understandings in community groups. Although sometimes unpopular, it is useful to have certain agreements and decisions written up to avoid future mistakes and disagreements.
- Some organisations have found it helpful to refresh their core group members regularly – making room for new people on the management board.

Links to helpful advice:

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens has a Community Garden Starter pack with useful information on how to set up a committee. Download publication for free from this link: <http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/publications>

For advice on governance and leadership see NVCO (National Council for voluntary organisations) website: <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/governanceandleadership>

Example of models:

Social Enterprise: <http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/pages/about-social-enterprise.html>

CIO – Charitable incorporated Organisations, see <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/registration/charcio.asp>

6. Planning

Issues

- Planning policy is complex but many growing groups come into contact with.
- Local authorities 'core strategy' is used for local sustainable community strategy and can be used to create more growing spaces
- Big debate: more allotments or community garden spaces? Community growing spaces are more flexible and easier to get, and there are fewer rules around selling produce, however allotment sites have greater legal protection
- Security of tenure

Solutions

- Many local authorities are currently drawing up new core strategies – opportunity to ensure food growing is included.
- Sustain - developing points that planners should include in core strategies or other planning guidance. See website for examples of responses to planning consultations and core strategies:
http://www.sustainweb.org/localactiononfood/food_and_planning/
- Asking Council to use a site temporarily and then putting pressure on the Council to keep it, or find a replacement site if they can't keep it. Although this could potentially lead to more growing sites, it can be problematic for a community group because they will not necessarily have much security of tenure.
- Planning Aid - an organisation that gives free legal advice to community groups has regional offices, so groups can get in touch with their local office for more specific advice

LANDBANKS: Jeremy Iles

- Survey has shown that, as well as land, growers and users want co-ordination, a central resource and a unified point of access.
 - Unifies the demand for land - allotments, communal gardens, school farms.
 - Received a research grant from DCLG and funding from the Local Food Fund (2002).
 - A central resource for finding access to land.
- For more info: jeremy@farmgarden.org.uk

WHAT NEXT? Tom Curtis, Landshare CIC (Oxford)

Landshare:

- Access to land in the wider food system
 - Policy development and research group
- “Future-proofing the food system”

Land dependence will always be an issue.

Current system is based on:

- Fossil fuel availability
- Long-standing trade agreements
- Unacceptable levels of CO₂ emissions

Therefore it is fragile and not sustainable.

Conventional agriculture will eventually fail, due to:

- Population growth
- Fossil fuels diminishment
- Phosphate is running out

There is a very real need for a holistic strategy.

Can Britain feed itself?

Yes, but the transition would be very shaky.

- Feedback loops would need to be very tight
- Demands need to be met fast

In the UK, 10% of productivity would need to be urban.

- Needs to be small-scale
- Needs to be people intensive

Potentially highly productive. Cities could produce 20% of Britain's food.

Need to establish 'food zones' around cities. Zoning in concentric rings

Diversification is the key

Need greater diversification and innovation in rural areas - often difficult as tends to be conservative, reactionary, difficulty of access and start-up.

Land Partnership

FarmStep, Northmoor Trust, Oxfordshire.

- Landsharing scheme to get the most productive and diverse output from the land PLUS greater community engagement and more contacts in the markets.

Aims:

- Developing the model
- Promoting land partnership
- Addressing technical issues

Through:

- Research
- Technical seminars
- Toolkits and matchmaking

Landshare believes in the need for innovation and is committed to building a best practice: www.landshare.org

FEEDBACK

Delegates were asked to give feedback on the following areas:

Time and duration

Almost without exception, delegates found the time and duration of the conference suited them.

Venue

An overwhelming majority of 97% gave positive feedback about the venue. Many were particularly impressed with the roof “very good, great roof garden, good, friendly staff”, “very good, inspirational roof”, and found the food “delicious, would have been good to know where the ingredients were grown”.

Speakers

Delegates found the quality of the speakers high. A majority of 94% said they were good or very good, and commented on their being “interesting – a good range”, and “informative”.

Workshops

The feedback was mostly positive about workshops, being “useful and broad”, although some felt more structure would have been helpful.

Format

Most who attended were happy with the format, highlighting there being a “good balance between talks and workshops”, and the event being “very well chaired”.

Most Valuable

There was a mixed response about the most valuable element of the day, implying a broad range of interests and needs were catered for. The most common responses were that it was useful to network, hear about other projects and share experiences.

Future Discussion

There were many interesting suggestions put forward for future discussions, including food in building policy for developers, engaging statutory bodies in food growing, and marketing and distribution. There were also many delegates that, having attended the event, were interested in joining Local Action on Food and WEN.

With special thanks to:

Polly Higginson and Sofia Larrinua-Craxton from Local Action on Food

Ben Reynolds from Sustain

Caroline Fernandez, Christine Haigh, Anna Letouze, Shan Vahidy, Jo Budd from Women’s Environmental Network,

Bente Madeira, Dave Richards, Fiona Grant, Tutu and Michele Atkins at RISC

The Tedworth Trust

Contacts:

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Local Action on Food Network www.localactiononfood.org E: polly@sustainweb.org T: 020 7837 1228

RISC www.risc.org.uk E: dave@risc.org.uk T: 01189586692

Attendees

Name	Project
Poppy Nicol	Cardiff University
Heather Stabler	St Luke's
Amy Murfin	Gloucestershire Food Vision
Hannah May	Somerset Community Food
John Payne	Somerset Community Food
Ann Baldridge	Brighton and Hove Food Partnership
Jess Crocker	Brighton and Hove Food Partnership
Sarah Waters	Brighton and Hove Food Partnership
Stephanie Ward	Waste Watch
Howard Lee plus	Hadlow College
Nina Thornhill	Hadlow College
Tom Allard	Hadlow College
Sean Clements	Hadlow College
Jeff Conway	Hadlow College
Kelly Howe	Hadlow College
Luke Meaton	Hadlow College
Rachel Sargeant	Hadlow College
Nick Ratcliffe	Hadlow College
Alexandra Beer	The London Assembly
Matthew Loveday	Islington Schools Food Growing Officer
Louise McCann	Northmore Trust
Tom Moggarch	City Leaf
Jo Foster	Growing in Harringey
William Routh	London Borough of Camden
Kate Millington	Individual
Sharon Fittion (RISC)	Food 4 Families Project
Caitlyn Jones	Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens
Julie Henley-Wilkinson	Food 4 Families Project
Megan Streb	WEN Southampton & Waterside/ Transition Southampton
Jo Worthy-Jones	Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Mark Hillyer	Mortimer Green Group
Bruce Irving	London Borough of Hackney
Mark Rogers	Circle 33
Elaine Henderson	Brent Friends of the Earth/ Kensal to Kilburn Transition Town
Alex Laird	Living Medicine
John Wilding	SEEDS Trust
Ray Barkley	SEEDS Trust

Keizia Barker	Birbeck University
Mina Samangoeei	Oxford Brookes University
Emma Donaldson	GreenSpace
Anne Augustine	WEN
Dr Ann Walker	Medical Herbalist
Kate Corder	University of Reading
Alison Quantrell	University of Oxford Botanic Garden
Nicola Durrant	Groundwork London
Rudi Schotter	The New Allotment Company
Pat Nield	Minding the Garden Project
Jane Lucy	Land Share
Rosie Boycott	London Food Board
Myles Bremner (CHAIR)	Garden Organic
Vic Else	Brighton and Hove Food Partnership
Mikey Tomkins	Centre for Research and Development, University of Brighton
Helen Wright	True Food Club
Mark Hillyer	Mortimer Green Group
Leon Ballin	Grow Sheffield/ Abundance
Dave Richards	RISC
Julia Winborn	Planning Aid
Jeremy Iles	Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens
Mike Wohl	Let's Go Let's Grow
Dagmar Hutt	Planning Aid
Mike New	Planning Aid
Christine Haigh	Sustain
Tom Curtis	Landshare
Ben Reynolds	Sustain
Caroline Fernandez	Women's Environmental Network
Anna Letouze	Women's Environmental Network
Shan Vahidy	Women's Environmental Network

