

Aberdeen Beautiful



Communities, Green Space and Sustainable Food

Summary

On Saturday 8 June 2019 around 25+ people came together in the Sir Ian Wood building at Robert Gordon's University, Aberdeen to present and discuss ideas on how the use of Green Space and Sustainable Food Growing can be promoted within communities.

The event created a strong amount of energy and enthusiasm for the topics and some common themes emerged over the course of the day.

We are now sharing these outcomes, first with attendees who are already working on them in their communities and then, more widely, in hopes of making further new connections and engaging more energy, support and ideas.

This is an open process and anyone interested in any aspect is encouraged to get involved. A list of the topics brought forward by those attending can be found in Appendix 1; the notes captured during the discussions can be found in Appendix 2. A list of relevant contacts is also included below. Please contact any of the Aberdeen Beautiful team if you need any further information or introductions.

Themes From The Discussions

Use of public spaces for growing food – community orchards and gardens –

Allotments are much sought after, but there is also an increasing variety and provision of other kinds of green space and food growing sites being made available. Can the Community Empowerment Act, through tools such as Community Asset Transfer, Land Ownership and Participation Requests help communities access land for local growing? Knowing what the City Council (Local Authority) owns may help identify suitable areas of land to focus efforts on. Barriers include – knowing how to acquire / use the land, regulations on food sales, allergy concerns. A local advisory body could help aspiring producers - Could this take the shape of interested citizens getting together to share information? Will this take a more formal role, funded / supported by public services?? First step is to bring together knowledge, resources and experience from those bodies, including community groups already pursuing this successfully – there are a number out there. Require the provision of community gardens and orchards in new developments.

Healthy diets and nutrition – eating fresh produce, improving cooking skills, community cooking events, organic rather than industrially grown – More education is needed on the benefits of and how to cook for a healthy diet, including practical knowledge

and skills and budget / affordability information. Small and more frequent shopping to buy what is needed / alternatively, 'weekly buy' shopping where larger amounts can be bought at discount. Better links between all kinds of transport to make sure people can access affordable, healthy produce when nearest shops may be far away. Focus on addressing barriers which are currently leading to or prevent improvement for those experiencing 'food poverty'. Engage schools in the provision of cooking lessons and the creation of school gardens and orchards; encourage children in a positive way to get used to growing and eating home grown food. Celebrate local food growers.

Promoting locally grown produce and encouraging new producers – food trails and events, support for new producers – Some cities are successful in promoting their food growers and vendors through food trails; Aberdeen can do this too. Develop an eco-friendly trail, promoting cycling and walking. Farmers market trails, food trails around restaurants and cafes promoting signature dishes, linkage to other activities and events e.g. music festivals, NE250 touring, a fish food festival, tying in with Events 365. Regional and local links. An opportunity to learn from NEOS (North East Open Studios). Promote locally grown wheat and crafted bread.

Sustainable food growing and usage – Reducing food waste through education on how to use leftovers to make appetising meals and also on what a "use by date" really means. School gardens where produce is picked fresh to meet immediate needs. 'Waste' fruit and vegetables can be turned into other foodstuffs e.g. soups, vinegar, cider. More hydroponic growing systems.

Protecting our natural environment - It is important for us to maintain the quality of our soils if we want to grow good food. Compost the waste and return the goodness to the soil. Provide a welcoming habitat which has diversity for the insects and birds and to attract many species of pollinators. Be aware of how human impact can negatively affect nature e.g. different colours of LED street lighting, some can negatively impact while others can be better for plant-life, animal life and eye-sight, etc.

Contacts – to help take the ideas forward

Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce – Circular North East Project Manager: Terri Vogt tel. 01224 343933; email terri.vogt@agcc.co.uk

Moffat Can – see what people in Moffat have achieved at www.facebook.com/moffatcan

Newton Dee Bakery – a local bakery in Bieldside www.facebook.com/NewtonDeeBakery

The Mill of Benholm - situated within the conservation hamlet of Benholm near the coastal village of Johnshaven, Aberdeenshire. A local centre for arts and crafts and subject of a current Asset Transfer and Community Ownership proposal.

Scotland The Bread and Soil To Slice is a participation project that runs alongside the crop research and the locally-controlled production of a grain and flour supply, see <http://scotlandthebread.org/soil-to-slice-2/>

Aberdeen Community Food Network is a city wide group which meeting every 3 months. The purpose of the group is to develop and raise the profile of practical food skills, services and facilities across the city www.facebook.com/AberdeenCommunityFoodNetwork.

Ron Finley Project – about a man who will not sit still and watch a problem take root. He knew what it's like to drive 45 minutes just to get a fresh tomato. In 2010, he set out to fix the problem. Outside his front door, that is. Ron planted vegetables in the curbside dirt strip next to his home. And quietly, carefully, tenderly started a revolution. "I wanted a carrot without toxic ingredients I didn't know how to spell," says Ron www.facebook.com/ronfinleyproject

The Virginia Food System Council is a Board of 24 volunteer Directors, representing all aspects of our food system from local producers and consumers, social justice and environmental non-profit organizations, to dietitians and statewide organizations. They formally began working to strengthen Virginia's local and regional food systems in late 2007. <http://www.virginiafoodsystemcouncil.org>

One Seed Forward Two Seeds Back - their aim is to encourage people of all ages to grow their own vegetables and fruit, eat them and give some to others in the community to enjoy. <http://oneseedforward.co.uk>

The Allotment Market Stall (TAMS) is based in Aberdeen, Scotland and was established in 2012. Since then it has brought seasonal, fresh, local allotment-grown vegetables and fruit to Aberdeen City. theallotmentmarketstall.org.uk/

Green Box Aberdeen is initiative to reuse or upcycle. (freecycle, reuse, upcycle, events, secondhand, charities and sustainable products) www.facebook.com/groups/greenboxaberdeen

Information Sharing

Even if you weren't able to come along on the day, we'd love to hear your ideas or on any projects you are developing that we can help to promote!

Contact with us on our Facebook Page: . [facebook.com/AberdeenBeautiful/](https://www.facebook.com/AberdeenBeautiful/) or by e-mail, at: aberdeenbeautiful@gmail.com.

Appendix 1 – Individual Topics Explored (with name of initiator)

Can communities take over public vacant land for food growing and orchards? - Neil Clapperton and Jonathan Smith

Urban Soils: Protecting soils to develop a green living space – Paul Johnston

No food waste – using food, cooking leftovers – Adrian Atkinson

Eating fresh produce for personal health -

Could we have a food-based event or ‘food trail’ in Aberdeen? - Sandy Gustar

Locally grown wheat and locally baked bread – Sandra Davidson

Community empowered green space & How to engage a wider range of population in food growing and promote the use of green spaces to grow food? – Jonathan Smith

Opportunities for local food businesses and urban agriculture – Samantha Jameson

Community cooking events? Like Spanish Catalans? – Javier Dominguez

Food sustainability: organic vs industrial food – Javier Dominguez

Community food growing: how to make it more visible? -

Eating fresh produce for personal health & Nutrition info and cooking skills – Samantha Jameson

The North East Pippin – growing community orchards - Sandy

Engaging institutions to source local food and drink -

Encouraging pollinators and supporting bees, etc. – Julie-Anne Butchart



Appendix 2: Communities, Green Space and Sustainable Food – 08/06/19 – Flipchart notes



Round 1

1.1 Can communities take over public vacant land for food growing and orchards? - Neil and Jonathan

Community Empowerment Act

= legal basis + money?

= Right To Buy (?), asset transfer

Right to allotments

Council want rid of OSM responsibility

Knowing what the Council owns?

→ AV mapping project

→ Target

Legally responsible individual ---> Limited liability bodies

Volunteering vs Resp / B. / Forms

Roy Findlay; LA Food Growing (Did we mean [Ron Finley, The Gangsta Gardener](#), Can you dig this? Movie?)

BBC Food Programme podcast

NHS sees the benefit

Have support from various parts of the Council

1st thing: bring together resources / knowledge / experience

[Virginia Food System Council](#)

→ All food growing strategy

Strip back the forms / connection to strategy? SG the worst

Other public sector land ownership?

Food policy – ACC 2013?!

Talk to planning?

Also issues in rural environment

e.g. Newtonhill?

Rural poverty; connection

Monoculture agriculture -> biodiversity

Collaborations

Community small holdings

1.2 URBAN SOILS: Protecting soils to develop a green living space – Paul Johnston

Think out of the box

All things come from healthy soil

Understand nature

Think about “permaculture”

Compost it! Grow it.

Air quality

Good messages from this



1.3 No food waste – using food, cooking leftovers – Adrian Atkinson

Schools?

No cooking lessons??

Demos in schools

OSF – Garden schools

Zero waste cafes ✓

CFINE ✓**

Demonstrations

What happened to Home Economics?

Action?

Curriculum practical changes

ACC + national

Food / meals

Education – use by dates

Change **mindset** – How?

Too much choice - Too cheap?

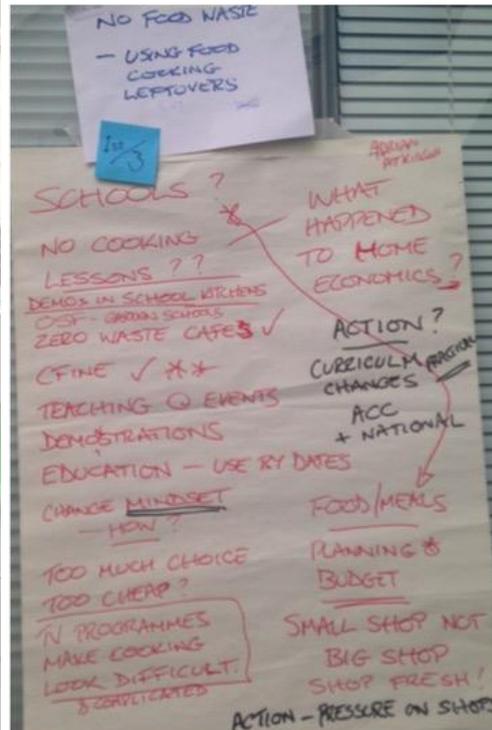
TV Programmes make cooking look difficult and complicated.

Planning and **budget**

Small shop not big shop

Shop fresh

Action – Pressure on shops



1.4 Eating fresh produce for personal health

Combined with another topic?

1.5 Could we have a food-based event or 'food trail' in Aberdeen? - Sandy Gustar

Edinburgh – Trail around community gardens and allotments (<https://ewh.org.uk/trails/food-heritage/>)

Make it eco-friendly – cycling and walking

Fruit trees in the City – in schools – in parks

Foraging for food – Encourage people and make it acceptable

Linkage with CFINE – sale of surplus food

Make information on sustainable food available on line – already have [Sustainable Food Aberdeen Map](#).

Linkage with livestock – free-range chickens in orchards

Food trail around cafes, restaurants – linkage to NE250

Farmers' markets tour

Promoting different country cuisine – Have a card you get stamped if you taste a specific dish

Have different themes throughout the year

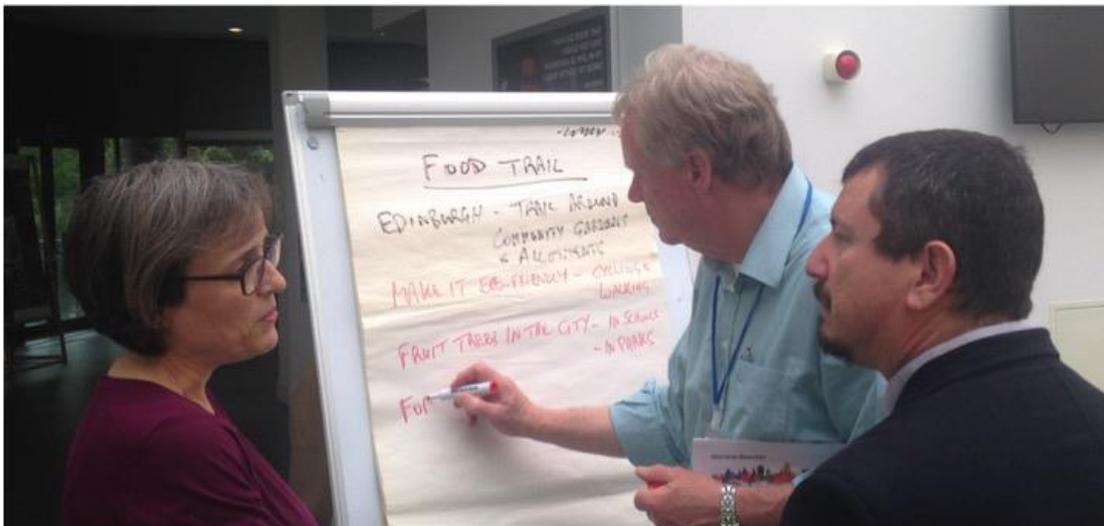
Food event in Aberdeen: e.g. [Isle of Wight Garlic Festival](#)

Fish, beef – Make much more of fish festival – all types of seafood

Taste of Grampian

Link with local music

Learn from NEOS (North East Open Studios) on how to organise and also link to NEOS – Art and food



Round 2

2.1 Locally grown wheat and locally baked bread – Sandra Davidson

[Scotland the Bread](#)

Cove Craft Bakers? Inverurie couple? Like beer, cider

Difficult to get outlets, sales opportunities?

Minerals, nutritional value

“Farm in a box” – Urban farm; Could you do this for grains? Or even a community bakery?

“Bakery in a box”

Biodiversity, interplanting wheat with fruit trees

NZ bakery § Glasgow model

Network of local craft bakers?

[Tap o' North Permaculture Farm](#)

Price v access (Donate)

Partners?

[Mill of Benholm](#)

[Newton Dee](#)

[Milltown of Arbuthnott](#)

2.2 Community empowered green space - Jonathan

Community Empowerment Act

- Community Asset Transfer
- Participation Requests
- Right to Buy / Own / Lease / Rent Land

Permanent Uses but also Temporary Uses

- For example, if land is scheduled for future development but will be empty / not used for some time

Visiting Days to Community Growing Projects, inviting:

- Community
- Public Service Colleagues
- Elected Members
- Social Firms, Market Stallholder, etc

Community in the driving seat, with support from other sectors where possible

Building evidence of benefits

Encouraging community to take forward initiatives and how to get involved

Broad variety of uses including, but not only limited to Food Growing

- There can be activities and areas of interest for all

Making more use of the green space that we have, as well as seeking to secure / protect more

Bringing community together

Confident, comfortable, empowered

2.3 How to engage a wider range of population in food growing and promote the use of green spaces to grow food?

Similarities - should connect with 1st topic in Round 1: Community Empowerment Act

Community asset transfer

Pathway of the request

Right to buy lead

Lease (1-70+ years, 1-100+)

Ownership

Rent

Allotments

Permanent + temporary =

Community results

Regular contributions

Community in driving seat

Building evidence of benefits

Encouraging community to **get involved**

Visit days

Shops and XXX to see

Making more of spaces we know

What more is needed?

Broader support of other projects

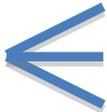
School – allotments

Gardens – skills (???)

Broad variety of users **including**: food XXX, business community XXXX, confident councillors

2.4 Opportunities for local food businesses and urban agriculture – Samantha Jameson

If it's a business, it'll work!

Barriers  Acquiring the property
Regulations on food
Allergy concerns

Body to guide / advise producers

Central or local funding required

Making use of local buildings and community centres to grow and sell food

How do we encourage entrepreneurs to start up food businesses?

Could we access a list of publicly owned buildings – particularly ones not used

Asset register is online

Hydroponic food production – efficient, no large land demand

[Moffat Can](#) project – see what they did

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/moffat-can-launches-scotland-first-aquaponics-2572908>

Information hub could help people know where to look / go for info, e.g. [Aberdeen Climate Action](#), [James Hutton Institute](#).

Web info can be difficult to manage and keep up to date – needs to be organic in nature, no bureaucracy – look at Virginia model ([Virginia Food System Council](#))

A shame that there are empty buildings on Union Street. The challenge is that they are privately owned.

2.5 Community cooking events? Like Spanish catalans?

Combined?



Round 3

3.1 Food sustainability: organic vs industrial food – Javier Dominguez

One free-range chicken = two years

One industrial chicken = twenty days

To feed the planet ...

What is sustainable?

3.3 Community food growing: how to make it more visible?

More visibility through a brand or scheme

Celebrate local produce

More groups

“Grown local”

Directory of growers

Group synergy (Synergy with bus companies?)



Integration of services

Invite to the gardens

3.4 Nutrition info and cooking skills - Jonathan

Cooking booklet:

Links with health

50, 60, 70+

Diabetes support, including:

- 50, 60, 70 +
- Young People and Schools
- Diabetes Peer Support
- Lifestyle changes
- Positive Improvements vs Reactive Adaptations

CFINE (Community Food Initiatives North East)

- Early example of cooking skills: Pasta, Rice, Cans

Learning, 'Home Economics' (Inclusive approach for people and pupils of all backgrounds)

Great British Bake-Off

- Among 2 Largest Audience Groups: 26 and Under, 68 and Over
- Demonstrates interest and potential for inter-generational links
- Baking as soothing experience and relaxing activity

Building Networks in the Community

3.5 The North East Pippin – growing community orchards

Food Assembly initiative:

<https://laruchequiditoui.fr/fr> (UK link doesn't seem to work)

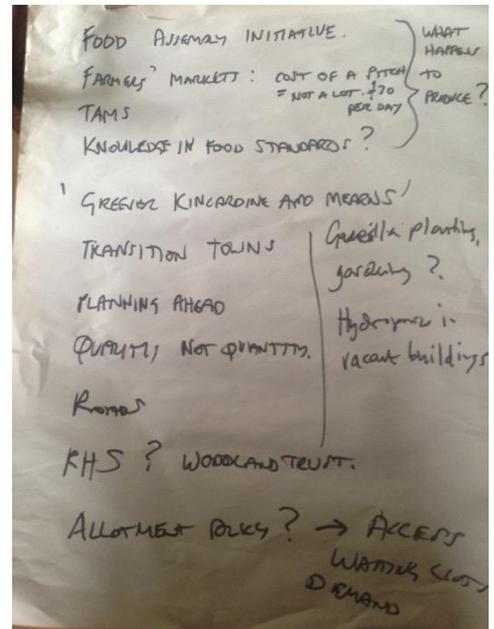
Farmers' Markets: cost of a pitch = not a lot - £30/day

TAMS (The Allotment Market Stall)

Knowledge in food standards?



What happens to produce?



Greener Kincardine and Mearns

<p><u>Transition Towns</u></p> <p>Planning ahead</p> <p>Quality not quantity</p> <p>XXX?</p>	<p>XXX a planting, gardening?</p> <p>Hydroponics in vacant buildings?</p>
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RHS? Woodland Trust

Allotment policy? Access, waiting lists, demands

3.6 Engaging institutions to source local food and drink

(Combined with 3.5?)

Encouraging pollinators and supporting bees, etc. – Julie Butchart

Bee hotels, bug hotels, "Green desert"

Wildflower meadows – corridors – orchards

Issues: LED streetlights – double frequency – “Yellow” vs white

Education on ‘bug’ appropriate plants, supports

Water sources – birdbaths, ponds, water butts

‘Bug sculptures’ – logs

Connections with bee keeping association (<https://scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/>)

Invercannie Woods – bee homes

The 'Open Space' Approach

A key strength of the Open Space approach is that everyone who takes part has the opportunity to share their experiences, put forward ideas and proposals and to highlight any issues that can be improved through innovation.

The aim is to encourage everyone who has an interest, from all walks of life, backgrounds and experiences to share a platform where all perspectives can be explored.

This involves taking forward the ideas shared, issues raised and reports like this to all of the partners involved, and to all possible levels of decision making.

This approach also encourages self-empowerment as a means to achieve making a positive differences in our communities.

There is already much that everyone is able to ourselves achieve, individually and even more so in collaboration with each other.

Next Steps

Many of the ideas raised have the potential to be initiated and promoted by each and every one of us, whether as citizens in the community or colleagues with expertise in a broad range of relevant sectors.

In addition to this Summary Report, we will also be providing an 'Appendix Report' which lists all of the discussions and ideas brought forward in more detail.

The Summary Report will be fully available and accessible to all, and we will also be sharing copies with key sectors and stakeholder groups to raise awareness of the ideas that have come forward.

We also encourage everyone who has an interest in these themes to connect with each other, as well as with the Aberdeen Beautiful Team, as it the initiatives and innovations that continue to come forward which will lead to the most positive and sustainable improvements.

Thank you to all who have been part of helping to make the day a success, and who continue to support this 'open-space' community-focused approach to innovation, ideas and development!

The Aberdeen Beautiful Team:

(Neil Clapperton, David McAra, Jonathan Smith, Peter Roberts, Tony Miller)