



Lewes District Food Partnership October 2025 Update

Natalie Pearson, LDFP coordinator

General updates:

- Natalie will be going on maternity leave from 18 December 2025, with Hilary Schan (currently Food Project Manager at SCDA – in charge of operations at Newhaven and Peacehaven Community Supermarkets – taking on cover from December/January, building up to the full 30 hours of the LDFP Coordinator post while Hilary's replacement at the community supermarkets is recruited).
- October was Good Food East Sussex month, during which multiple food events took place across Lewes District and East Sussex.
- The Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships was publicly launched with a webinar which promoted the importance of Food Partnerships and how food systems work can support the responsibilities of the new Sussex Combined Mayoral Authority.

How are we addressing the priority areas?

Developing more sustainable and dignified approaches to community food support

- Attended a meeting of the Multi-Agency Financial Inclusion Steering Group to discuss how crisis support can be more effectively delivered and how community resilience can be enhanced through national funding.
- LDFP has passed discussions to SCDA re. getting a new Community Navigator post to work across the Emergency Food Network.
- EFN agreed to work together on a winter fundraiser, which will have a launch event in Lewes on 27 November and be match-funded by Lewes District Council for up to £5,000.
- Funded autumn events at food banks and community food projects through Household Support Fund to foster local community connections in these spaces.
- LDFP working as a community partner with the Brighton Uni MA Health Promotion programme for a student project to map community food support, identify gaps in the 'food ladder', and consider nutritional impacts.
- The Lewes Flood Event raised money for the Emergency Food Network through sale of refreshments.

Fostering Young People's Connections with food:

- Twinning project meeting at Plumpton discussed desired outcomes and possible approaches to evaluating the farm/school twinning project with schools and farms being matched and activities planned.
- South Malling Primary School in Lewes interested in running a pilot scheme of BRITE Box, which would provide weekly, healthy, children-friendly recipe kits for a class of



children to prepare with their families for one term. Exploring funding possibilities and logistics, in partnership with Lewes Town Hall.

- LDFP working as a community partner with the Brighton Uni MA Health Promotion programme for a student project to evaluate primary school food culture in Lewes District, using one or more schools and their current initiatives as a case study. This would feed into what a whole-school approach to food can look like.
- Healthy Start meeting raised possibility of Food Partnerships being distribution partners for vitamins.

Championing a Good Food Culture for Lewes District:

- Around 15 events happened across Lewes District as part of Good Food East Sussex month, involving different communities and parts of the food system.
- These included working with the Lewes Climate Hub on a programme of food events for October. We created a food map showing food assets, including food producers and projects that people can get involved in, drawing on the Grow Cook Eat network. Two members of the LDFP steering group, Emily O'Brien and Ronald Ranta, along with Collette from Ashurst Organics farm, spoke on a panel on food resilience, bring in angles of food security, household resilience, health, culture, community wealth. Well attended and good engagement with questions and discussion after presentations. LDFP signposted as a resource to make connections with local food producers and projects.
- The LDFP apple press was loaned to a handful of different locations to make the most of seasonal apples.
- Buyers and Suppliers event in October cancelled due to staff ill health, but to be rearranged.

Pinch Points:

- Harriet and Jane attended Lloyds Foundation annual meeting to hear from and network with other projects working on lived experience.
- Three participants contributed to a video by Other Voices, a project working towards a wider range of perspectives being included in decision-making. The topic was the future of Lewes – how can it a good place to live in the future, in the light of new planned development. This was presented at a Lewes Planning Group meeting which ran workshops on topics including public engagement – where insights from Pinch Points were fed into, then translated into a report for the South Downs National Park Authority to consider.
- Ongoing engagement with community partners e.g. Emergency Food Network to recruit new participants and provide an update on findings so far and future plans.
- Attended a meeting with work coaches at Job Centre to discuss their needs, challenges, participant recruitment, and how to work together. Need for signposting



information came up and the challenge of supporting people to make sustainable changes to their lives through work.

- Due to delays by the Lloyds Foundation in approving the Year 2 budget and monitoring report, the delivery date is likely to be extended from end April 26 to the summer or autumn, depending on how far budget can stretch. A project extension into Year 3 to continue/consolidate the work is possible assuming good progress is made.

Priorities for November

- Continue to make progress on Pinch Points Year 2 work plan.
- Presentation and workshops with Sussex Alliance at Plumpton Conference 20 November.
- Launch Hardship Fund for EFN.
- Launch EFN Winter Fundraiser.
- Wrap up Seasons social prescribing project.
- Allocate remaining HSF money and create/share evaluation form.
- Write handover for Hilary.