

Lewes District Food Partnership January 2023 Update

How are we addressing the priority areas?

How can we move beyond foodbanks and develop a sustainable approach to tackling food insecurity?

- We've been thinking a lot about Volunteer Support this month, considering the amazing amount of work that is done by volunteers to run front-line services and acknowledging what this means in terms of protecting against burn-out and supporting each other. We ran a Mental Health First Aid Training course for volunteers across Lewes District which was hosted at Kings Church in Lewes, which is the venue of Malling Foodbank. It was attended by 27 volunteers from across the district. It's clear that there are thousands of hours of unpaid work being relied upon to tackle food insecurity, and whilst there is no easy way out of this predicament, LDFP are keen to support those giving their time as much as possible. We will be running periodical volunteer support sessions which will be opportunities for volunteers to meet up in an informal manner, share their experiences and hopefully relax and feel supported. There will also be opportunities for further training.
- Have started the Participatory Project 'Feeling the Pinch: Have Your Say!' which will be a series of workshops building confidence for people to share their lived experiences and their stories of food insecurity and other issues. I have been visiting projects across the Lewes District to recruit participants with inclusion, diversity and accessibility in mind. We hope to also recruit Community Partners; groups which are working closely within their communities who are allied with the aims of the project and passionate about campaigning for change.
- Following a meeting with the principal at Plumpton College I will be discussing with them how they could set up a 'Pop-Up Shop' for food on a Pay-As-You-Feel model to support their staff and students who are struggling with the Cost-Of-Living crisis, but also encouraging wider discussions around food supply chains and local food networks.
- Attended the Healthy Weights Forum and Healthy Start Forum.

How can connections be fostered to promote community growing, cooking & eating?

- Hosted the second Grow Cook Eat Network Meeting at the Growing Project in Seaford. We welcomed new members Lewes FC Community Garden in to the network. We discussed what a successful GCE network will look like and how sharing resources and applying for grants together will be beneficial. We spoke about doing some joined up events such as open days, or a celebration around harvest that links community cooking, eating and growing.
- Met with the head of Horticulture at Plumpton College who has offered student volunteers to help out at Community Gardens. Fitzjohns Foodbank are going to make use of this offer to restart the raised beds out the back of the foodbank.
- LS and myself have been developing a Community Café at Fitzjohns Foodbank which has been really successful and engaged a lot of community chefs, we hope we can share the experiences and see more projects incorporate community meals.



Fitzjohns Community Café



Grow Cook Eat Network Members

What are the links between food & other essential living costs – how can we ensure a joined up approach?

- Stef Lake attended the second Town Council Cost of Living Crisis Partners Working Group and we continue to work closely with the council to develop local resilience.
- Contributed to a Sustain case study on how Food Partnerships are working with their councils on HSF and COLC which will be shared with the LGA.

Engaging farmers and agriculturalists -

- Engaging with the Ouse Valley Climate Action group on areas to collaborate. Potential for joint mapping exercises around food growing areas but also a lot of community groups that share interests with both projects so we plan to attend each other’s meetings.
- Met with Helen from Wealden Food Partnership to learn how she has been working with farmers and discussing next steps for Lewes Food Partnership. I have been in contact with Brighton & Hove Food Partnership about running some more farm visits that they have been doing through their Soil in the City project.

Next steps:

- Steering Group Meeting scheduled for the 8th of Feb
- Newsletter to be published and shared widely as a resource for food news and campaigning & volunteering opportunities
- Present at Lewes Town Council Cost of Living Crisis Summit to talk about the 'Feeling the Pinch: Have Your Say!' project and the Toolkit for Dignified Food Support
- 14th of Feb – Dignified Food Support workshop at Kingston University
- Present at an Adur & Worthing meeting to talk about alternative models of food support and the Inequality Truth Hearing
- Attend the South Coast Right To Food Summit held in Worthing