

LDFP MAY UPDATE

May, with all its bank holidays, has been an unusual month with long weekends of rest juxtaposed with cramming everything else in to a four-day week. Predominantly this month's focus has been starting the Feeling the Pinch: Have Your Say! workshops in Lewes; I have been astounded at the level in which people are desperate to tell their stories having shared that they feel "voiceless" and they're "sick of shouting at the TV".

How are we addressing the priority areas?

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

- The Emergency Food Network meeting in May was attended by 9 partners who are all experiencing an increase in numbers and donations being down.
- 6,500 sausages were saved from being wasted, and redistributed amongst the Lewes & Brighton Emergency Food Networks. We received a call from Havens Food Cooperative that Elite Fine Foods had frozen sausages with a short shelf life that they wanted to donate. We jumped to action to connect community & emergency food projects and arrange deliveries. This is an example of how robust networks can act quickly to help save food waste.
- Stef Lake spoke at the premier of a short film made by Sarah Clifford from InRoads production about Lewes foodbanks and the Lewes Against Food Poverty collections. The panel included Debbie Twitchen Chair of Landport Residents Association and Foodbank, Mark Perryman from Lewes Against Food Poverty, Matthew Bird Mayor of Lewes and LDFP steering group member, and Stef Lake Chair of LDFP. You can watch the [short film here](#).
- I attended a talk at Charleston Festival with Henry Dimbleby who wrote the 2021 National Food Strategy for the government. It was a very interesting talk which was chaired by Kath Delmaney (CEO of Sustain), I was able to ask a question about the role of Food Partnerships and local food strategies. I met Henry Dimbleby afterwards and he said he would put me in contact with the Alexandra Rose charity in London who are supporting an innovative approach to food poverty by giving vouchers to people to use at the local fruit & veg market.
- In May, Stef was invited to speak as part of a panel exploring food justice, at the [Extinction or Regeneration conference](#) in London, hosted by Compassion in World Farming and IPES (International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems). She spoke about the role of food partnerships as a mechanism for achieving food security.

"It was such an enormous honour to be asked to contribute to the Extinction or Regeneration conference. The programme of speakers included world renowned experts on sustainability and animal welfare, such as Vandana Shiva and Carl Safina, as well as indigenous farmers, activists and academics from across the globe. To be included was an absolute privilege and I thoroughly enjoyed engaging with the other panel members on the topic of food justice and providing a local perspective on how we are tackling food inequity - through the development of the community supermarket model and a set of principles for dignified food support."

Feeling the Pinch: Have Your Say Project

- First two workshops went very well.
- Themes that have been arising from the workshops: rising cost of living, housing (security, cost, availability), mental health, insecurity & fear, illness & caring responsibilities, additional needs, income insufficiency, social security & the benefit system, unexpected costs and having little to no savings
- We have been capturing stories and quotes to present them at the final session at the end of June where local policy- and change- makers are invited along to listen to the real experiences of Lewes residents.
- *“an appliance breaking down should not cause a nervous breakdown”*
- *“you never realise how easy it is to be made homeless until you are”*
- *“when you’ve been homeless you always feel homeless”*
- *“everything is so linked, if you can’t afford your rent you start thinking: what do I have to go without?”*

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

- Second visit to Lovebrook Farm CIC which is an “ecological wellbeing project in the heart of the South Downs”, they focus on “regenerative food production, community wellbeing and transition”. They are very community-minded and their ethos is all about sharing resources and connecting with nature. They have a number of volunteering days and do veg boxes. I have connected them with the Head of Horticulture at Plumpton so they can talk about student apprentices to help on the land. I gave them some information on places to promote their veg boxes including the Open Food Network. They are interested in hosting an event on their land that incorporates cooking and eating together.
- GM has been connecting with projects across the district, visiting Peverells Community Garden in Seaford. G is also creating helpful resources that will be available on the website, including a list of kitchens that communities can use for workshops, as well as local independent businesses that can cater for events.
- I attended a talk “From emergency response to resilience: future-proof of city region food systems” which brought back to home the importance of long-term visions. There were speakers from across the world who spoke about resilience theories and how we need to make plans now to adapt and transform our systems, not just absorb the shocks.

How can schools become community hubs for the development of a good food movement?

- Attended a meeting at Priory school with the Green United group of students to listen to their Big Asks around food waste and sustainability. The meeting was also attended by Hannah Jones, Senior Contract Officer, and Sarah Hungerford, Property Contracts Service Manager from East Sussex County Council. It was interesting to hear the students talk about their desire for healthy vegetarian options and their concerns about food being wasted. I spoke with Hannah Jones about how, as a food partnership, we would love to know more about the ‘ins and outs’ of school food contracts as it is difficult from the outside looking in to know where we can influence (this was also relevant for the students, as it turns out their main ask: different food portions for different age groups, in order to reduce waste, is not something

that can be influenced on a local level as it is set by central government and the Food Standards.) HJ was happy to share her contact and I will follow up with some questions as some other queries came up around 'meat-free Mondays' and using the kitchens outside of school hours.

Long term visions

- The four food partnerships, representatives from East Sussex County Council and Alex Britten-Zodani from Food Matters met to discuss Phase 2 of the Good Food for East Sussex Plan. The Food Matters work has been looking at how to bring forward the recommendations from
- May's quarterly steering group meeting was attended by 7 representatives. We heard updates from the EFN and Grow, Cook Eat Network and partner groups. We also discussed the organisational structure of LDFP and reviewed the aims of reviewing the structure:
 - Creating new funding opportunities
 - Clarifying roles, function and structure
 - Future proofing beyond the current SCDA contractThe group identified some questions to explore, but agreed to stay unincorporated and housed by SCDA for now
- Stef is in the process of reviewing steering group membership and is checking in with each current steering group member. We are aiming for a core steering group of at least 8 people to shape the strategic direction of the food partnership. Membership will be clarified at the next meeting in July.

NEXT STEPS

- June Newsletter
- Visit to Newhaven harbour and learn about the Levelling Up fund for the Newhaven Fishing Industry
- Day of Celebration in Westminster on the 14th of June, a networking event for MPs and food partnerships hosted by Sustainable Food Places
- Final two Feeling the Pinch workshops, followed by the Truth Hearing on the 27th of June attended by council members, politicians and others who support Lewes residents
- Meet with the four food partnerships and Alex Britten-Zodani to work out next steps for Phase 2
- Finalise draft of Principles for Dignified Food Support and share with national organisations including Your Local Pantry, Trussell Trust, IFAN, Feeding Britain etc.



6,500 frozen vegan sausages saved from landfill!



Ruby meeting Henry Dimbleby at Charleston Festival



Stef on the panel on Achieving Food Justice at Extinction or Regeneration Conference



Sarah, Stef, Matthew, Debbie and Mark at the screening of One Extra Item at The Depot