

## **Lewes District Food Partnership January 2025 Update**

In mid-January, Natalie Pearson took up the role of LDFP Coordinator, and has been getting inducted into the role, projects and networks, with guidance from colleagues and Nancy's handover. As it was agreed that there would not be an update in December 2024, this update will touch on a couple of activities from December in addition to January.

Natalie Pearson, LDFP coordinator

### **General updates & celebrations:**

- Stef sadly announced that she would be leaving her role in early March. This means that Penny will step in as Chair of the LDFP Steering Committee, among other things, until someone else is in post.
- After 3 years of the Alliance for Dignified Food Support, this blog outlines the history, achievements and future plans of the Alliance:  
<https://lewesdistrictfoodpartnership.org/guest-blog-three-years-of-the-alliance-for-dignified-food-support/>
- The winter crowdfunder received £861 in donations, which is being match funded by the Enjoolata Foundation, with an additional £2,000 from Lewes District & Eastbourne Borough Councils. This money will be processed by SCDA and distributed among the EFN.

### **How are we addressing the priority areas?**

From March 2024, this section will respond to priority areas determined by the steering group strategy refresh. From May 2024, it will include a separate report for progress with the Pinch Points project.

### **Strategy development:**

- Natalie has made some further text and structural edits to the strategy and action plan, adding a graphic representation of the three priorities. The latest version of the strategy was shared with the Steering Committee and small adjustments have been made following feedback.
- Natalie is liaising with Seanne to arrange presentation of the strategy to the LD informal cabinet and get it ratified before public launch.
- Natalie has also work on a theory of change for the Partnership, consulting Sustainable Food Places staff and resources, and the Steering Committee. This will be refined and published as a complementary document for monitoring, evaluation and learning.

### **Champion a Good Food Culture for Lewes District:**

- Natalie is engaging with the Grow Cook Eat network to allocate the £6,000 in Household Support Fund in small grants earmarked for community growing projects in the spring, including a network event (15 grants of £400 each).

- Friends of Bishopstone Station, supported by LDFP, held a free kimchi-making workshop to promote the benefits of this food for gut health and share skills for making good food.
- Natalie attended a Sustainable Food Places network meeting, in which ways to feed into the National Food Strategy was discussed.
- Natalie has been discussing with Vera (Sustain) about the possibility of continuing 'Good to Grow' week in 2025 despite a lack of dedicated funding for it; what are the minimum needed in terms of comms to enable people to rally round the national event and share their projects. To be continued.

#### **Foster Young People's Connections with food:**

- Natalie has arranged to Plumpton College about delivering a talk about food systems and food insecurity in March.
- Opportunities to attend free cookery classes for young people and families have been shared on LDFP social channels.

#### **Develop a more dignified approach to community food support**

- In January's EFN meeting, discussions included reports of a rising numbers of users around Christmas/January time and an external speaker from FareShare joined to discuss some issues that have been experienced by food projects re. the quality of surplus. Members were offered the following: (i) receiving Household Support Fund vouchers for their members/users and (ii) setting up their own Hardship Fund, which the majority of projects have opted into. LDFP with SCDA have been planning the process and will provide guidance to project for issuance of the vouchers. Natalie has drafted the MEL framework for the Hardship Fund and shared it with Anna.
- Natalie, with input from the wider SCDA team, has drafted the content for a leaflet that signposts people facing financial hardship to a range of support services in Lewes District, depending on their circumstances and challenges. IFAN will produce it and LDFP will print and distribute among networks.

#### **Pinch Points:**

- Phase 1 of the workshops was completed in December 2024. Phase 2 begins in February. Planning has included analysing the themes that emerged from the phase 1 workshops and inviting policymakers to attend for an informal discussion of how things work at a council level and possibilities/barriers to influence.
- A one-pager to summarise Phase 1 has been drafted to share with stakeholders and interested parties. LDFP has arranged a meeting with representatives from Lewes District Council to brief them on the project and align expectations for next steps.

#### **Engagement with Alliance for Dignified Food Support**

- Malling food bank has signed up for an evaluation against the ADFS dignity principles – to be organised.
- Jay liaising with EFN volunteers to organise 2 x information sessions.

## **Priorities for February**

- Progress the LDFP strategy towards its ratification and publication
- Successfully complete the first two workshop of Phase 2 Pinch Points workshops
- Organise spring events for Grow Cook Eat network
- Distribute HSF among EFN and support them to establish hardship funds
- Launch the Seasons/Foundry Healthcare social prescribing pilot
- Organise dignity training and evaluations at participating food banks