

Lewes District Food Partnership March 2025 Update

Natalie Pearson, LDFP coordinator

General updates:

- LDFP's spring newsletter was sent out on 20 March 2025. [See here](#).
- Natalie presented the LDFP strategy to Equalities Stakeholder Group with positive responses.

How are we addressing the priority areas?

Developing more dignified approaches to community food support

- Through HSF6, Huggs supermarket vouchers worth £80 or £100 were successfully distributed to eligible clients of five Lewes District Emergency Food Network projects.
- In the March EFN meeting, members raised concerns about the proposed government cuts to sickness and disability benefits. Members suggested writing a joint letter to local MPs, first seeking evidence and support from wider network. Feeding Britain are also gathering responses to submit to the government by June.
- An email about the possible closure of the Lewes District Hygiene Bank, sent through the EFN google group, led to other Lewes food projects offering to take on the distribution of these products.
- Natalie attended the launch of a new report by Feedback on the problematic relationship between supermarkets and charities, i.e. food donations provide a convenient and free way for supermarkets to dispose of waste while not meaningfully tackling food insecurity/hunger. The report was shared with EFN network and was met with remarks about how to draw attention to the problem.
- Fresh salad and vegetables from Barcombe Nurseries were donated to Newhaven Community Kitchen and Lewes Community Fridge, following LDFP establishing contact about the farm surplus funding. Barcombe is keen to be more involved in community initiatives and to set up a process for donating surplus in future.
- Through the Alliance for Dignified Food Support, a workshop for Malling food bank volunteers was conducted following their evaluation, which many reported to be informative and helpful.

Champion a Good Food Culture for Lewes District:

- Supported by small grants through HS6, a programme of spring events by the Grow Cook Eat got underway in March. This included growing workshops, open days at gardens and community food events.
- Adur & Chichester held an event to consult on the forthcoming Local Food Plan for Sussex and the South Downs. LDFP could not attend but was involved in a planning meeting and will participate in follow-up actions.
- Natalie attended the Sustain Conference, which featured a keynote speech on food resilience from Tim Laing and sessions on 'the food strategy we need', 'the action agenda on the ground locally and regionally for a better food system'. The speech

and sessions can be watched back here: <https://www.sustainweb.org/events/mar25-sustain-annual-conference-2025/>. NP to write up a blog with reflections and share insights/possible actions with networks.

- Natalie accessed a toolkit for communicating about sustainable food, created by Oxford Good Food, and plans to share tips/discuss with GCE network.
- Natalie met Libby from Field Food, who offered the use of a barn in Piddinghoe for future network events.

Foster Young People's Connections with food:

- Natalie met with Priory School in Lewes to discuss the school's food-related activities and future collaborations, such as farm twinning and young people's participation in the LDFP 2025 conference.
- LDFP supported the launch of Pamoja Youth Club in Lewes through small grant funding and publicity.
- Natalie spoke to Rose Elliot at the Soil Association about their work and initiatives, including awards for schools.
- Natalie attended the school food re-procurement advisory board and was briefed on both the process of securing a new school food contract and contents of the draft.
- Natalie shared details of free teacher training sessions on sensory food education delivered by TasteEd.
- At the Sussex Food Partnerships quarterly meeting, a gap in traineeships and apprenticeships was highlighted – to teach agroecological methods. To follow up with farms/schools.

Pinch Points:

- Phase 2 of the workshops was successfully completed, which included participants engaging with some of the complexities of local policymaking and speaking to a local Councillor.
- The Pinch Points team attended and presented at a sharing session with other funding projects to hear about how others are incorporating lived experience into decision-making. Helpful discussions around creating the right kind of space for conversations, telling a collective story, co-producing, coaching and training.
- Year 1 reporting was submitted to the Lloyds Foundation.

Other

- Natalie shared a survey about the East Sussex Climate Change and Health Impact Assessment with relevant food contacts.
- At a Sustainable Food Places network meeting, a framework was shared for conducting a 'health check' of a Food Partnership. To look at for next steering committee meeting.

Priorities for April

- Gather views and evidence from EFN for letter to MPs and Feeding Britain's response to benefit cuts.

- Review EFN meetings and invitees (e.g. invite committee fridges?); organise thematic sessions
- Deliver successful Grow Cook Eat network meeting 22 April
- Begin to create comms plan for LDFP and carry out website updates
- Stakeholder mapping for Pinch Points project
- Launch the Seasons/Foundry Healthcare social prescribing pilot
- Engage with schools network on salient topics and upcoming events/opportunities
- Progress the LDFP strategy towards ratification and publication
- Register LDFP for the 2025 Sustainable Food Places Award