

Healthiest Town Aberfeldy 'Better Food Better Health' project: brief update

Purpose:

- To encourage and enable people from the Aberfeldy area to understand the links between affordable healthy food, sustainability and healthier living

Objectives (over 3 years of funding):

1. support healthy, affordable eating from locally sourced ingredients thereby reducing food miles
2. reduce food wastage from shops, restaurants and households
3. encourage active participation in growing, cooking and learning in our community with a particular focus on those who are or may become at risk of food poverty
4. address climate change through community fruit tree planting scheme

Project Plan: year 1

- identify where pockets of food poverty exist in Aberfeldy and surrounding areas
- identify referral sources (e.g. Community Food Larder, GP practice, other community food providers)
- identify sources of expertise (locally and beyond) for learning to preserve and conserve donated fresh foods
- pilot feasibility of conserving and preserving excess community food
- deliver 12 participative affordable cooking community lunches
 - deliver 2 workshops on techniques for conserving and preserving fresh food / food waste
- deliver 2 demonstrations promoting affordable cooking and growing
- raise profile through participating in local events relating to climate change, food waste and healthy food security
- develop and deliver 'FeldyCook' ingredient bags with recipe ideas, working with local businesses

Key members of project team:

Emma Burtles (Part-time Project Manager)

Imogen Karas (Healthiesttown Aberfeldy)

David Ashcroft (Healthiesttown Aberfeldy)

Kaja Ekiert (Handam)

Progress so far against original proposal- since February 2023

- part-time project manager (EB) appointed
- Working under 'Better Food, Better health.. for you and the planet' and possibly a 'Good Food Place' for the area
- links made with key people in community who understand where food poverty exists (eg Community Food Larder, UTV Anti-Poverty)
- Links made with national and Perth and Kinross initiatives – Sustainable Food Places, Nourish, Cook It! and health promotion
- Look at scope of carbon friendly diets

- some local sources of expertise identified (e.g. local expert in foraging and dehydrating foods; growing expertise at Little Trochry Farm)
- nucleus of interested local people identified and initial meeting held to discuss actions for the year
- as Co-op local community cause, attendance at local store on 1 April to engage with Aberfeldy folk
- participation in Aberfeldy Climate café monthly meetings, with an active role in presentation and discussion at April meeting which had sustainable food as its theme
- participation in University of Edinburgh/Innovation UK project with ‘food insecurity’ as a potential theme in bid for further funding to support food resilience in the Aberfeldy area
- Planning of publicity campaigns

Review: three months in!

The project team meets regularly and has had active discussions about the proposed plans. We are keen to strengthen the links between healthier eating practices and our carbon footprint as a community. We are also aware of the potential fragility of food supplies in an area such as ours with some of the poorest transport links in Scotland, and are keen to promote greater resilience. Additionally, we are conscious that there are a number of food-related projects ongoing, both locally and nationally: we need to be able to be fluid and flexible to engage with these whilst at the same time not duplicating what others are already doing.

We have spent time thinking through the framework for the project – P and K Council have just recently joined the Sustainable Food Places Network so will engage with their work as they progress. We would like to aim to be a Good Food Place which would cover climate and health. We have identified other interested individuals within our community who would like to become more involved with this project- such as a nutrition coach, people interested in promoting good food and others keen to develop community food growing projects.

We will be launching the project at the Aberfeldy Farmers Market on Sunday May 7th, with a stall that will include promotional materials and a range of recipe ideas for simple, healthy food using leftovers and locally available ingredients.

EB and IK met recently to review the programme for year 1 and concluded that:

- **mapping** is an important early task to identify gaps and needs in healthy, sustainable food provision and practices. We intend to set up a meeting for wider group to start this soon.
- **Food Action Group** – this would help bring all relevant and interested groups together and to ensure all projects work together
- **reducing food wastage** is an important aspect of the project. There is a successful scheme in Aberfeldy whereby fresh food left over at the end of each day is transported to the Community Food Larder behind Aberfeldy church. We would like to engage more actively with this, to understand the common ‘glut’ and spare foods so that we can link these to healthier eating recipes and ingredients boxes/bags.
- **Participative lunches:** are an important aspect of the project and need to be carefully planned to meet the needs identified from mapping, and to avoid duplication with other local initiatives. There is a PKC-run project (‘Community Cookit’) which provides free training for people to help families make healthy meals which could help us to ‘cascade’ our work into the community. We The Food Action Group can ensure these lunches are set up on a sound basis, meeting the needs of our community. We are keen to focus on lower-energy, carbon friendly cooking techniques to show how eating healthily can also mean eating affordably.

- **Recipe cards/bags:** we are keen to link closely with the Co-op in this initiative as the major supplier of food in the Aberfeldy area. We are conscious that there are other local food suppliers, however: as the new Handam shop takes shape we will aim to link the healthy food on sale there, especially with the fresh veg to be supplied by Little Trochry Farm. We will actively engage with other food suppliers, such as Balhormais Farm and McDonalds Butchers to link healthy ingredients with simple, affordable recipes.
- **Workshops:** we aim to run the first of these in the autumn, with a focus on conserving and preserving.
- **Campaigns** – we plan to run several campaigns throughout the year on reducing waste, carbon friendly diet, eat real food and eat local

Imogen Karas
Emma Burtles
April 2023