

FOOD FUTURES FOR SHEFFIELD AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE
MEETING 14 / 1 / 99 AT THE NEW TOWN HALL

JADE BASHFORD AND
PAUL KNUCKLE
RICHARD CLARE AND
DARRELL MARYON
RACHEL WILEMAN
JOHN MARTIN
CAROLE STOCKER
DAVID MIDDLEMAS
JOANNA LY
SUE GRIEG
MARK GAMSU
ROSE TANNER
AL JACK
SHEENA CAMPBELL
MATTHEW WEST

SOIL ASSOCIATION LOCAL FOOD LINKS

SHEFFIELD ORGANIC FOOD INITIATIVE
SHEFFIELD COUNCIL LOCAL AGENDA 21 OFFICER
S.C.C. ALLOTMENTS OFFICER
SHEFFIELD ENVIRONMENT CONSORTIUM
COMMUNITY COMPOSTING NETWORK
HEALTHY GARDENING GROUP
SHEFFIELD HEALTH AREA CO-ORDINATOR
HEALTHY SHEFFIELD NEW OPPORTUNITIES FUND
SHEFFIELD ORGANIC GARDENERS
NORTH-EAST SHEFFIELD PERMACULTURE GROUP
SINGLE REGENERATION BUDGET
BEANIES WHOLEFOOD CO-OPERATIVE

APOLOGIES

ROGER BUTTERFIELD
DAVID GREY
ROB STONEMAN AND/OR
NIGEL DOAR
ISOBEL WRIGHT AND
JACKIE EVANS
TIM COOPER
MIKE PAINES

SHEFFIELD ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING
HEELEY CITY FARM

SHEFFIELD WILDLIFE TRUST

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY SERVICE
SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER COURSE (S.HALLAM)
ALLOTMENTS RESEARCH (S.HALLAM)

MINUTES OF FOOD FUTURES FOR SHEFFIELD AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE 14 / 1 / 99

Paul explained the history and current work of the Soil Association, which is now the certification body for 70% of organic produce grown in Britain. Their Projects Department provide strategic consultation to Local Authorities and commerce, and work to support local food-growing initiatives.

Jade outlined Food Futures as a programme of 15 area-based projects to develop sustainable local food economies over eighteen months each, funded by the National Lottery. The presentation restated the information already provided in the written project outline. Jade stressed that the aim is to build on initiatives that already exist and focus on practical actions that have tangible outputs.

The pilot programme that has been running for the last six months in Leicestershire was described. This has already begun to generate benefits by bringing together participants with shared interests and improving understanding between urban and rural communities.

Jade then asked whether the meeting wanted the project to run in Sheffield.

Richard explained that several elements which would contribute to and benefit from Food Futures are already in place or are being planned. Jade and Paul acknowledged that there were positive indicators, as represented by those present.

Jade went into more detail about the Soil Association's requirements should the project go ahead. Paul stressed the commitment they have made in their Lottery bid to benefit deprived and ethnic communities. Other areas with an interest in running a Food Futures include Powys and London, though none has yet been selected. Jade said that as a candidate for Food Futures, Sheffield seems to have a lot going for it.

Rachel mentioned that £10,000 was a lot of money. Paul detailed the support and development expenditure that the S.A. would deliver over the 18 months. Paul then explained that the contribution required from local sources would not be required to be paid before the project could begin and that, in fact, this contribution could be paid over the whole period of the project, which could be spread over three accounting years.

Mark Gamsu commented that this level of funding seemed quite achievable, if the process can successfully engage and represent the wide range of sectors which could contribute to and benefit from the process.

Sheena explained the Single Regeneration Budget in Sheffield. She explained the geographical areas covered and the themes, currently young people and community economic development. S.R.B. is trying to have as holistic an approach as possible. Sheena said that Food Futures contained several elements which would qualify for SRB funding, either for area-based projects or for citywide co-ordination. Mark said that he thought we would be more likely to be successful if we aimed to raise more than the initial £10,000.

Richard asked whether the S.A. were prepared if the scope of the process expanded beyond the workshops and advisory role. Paul said that S.A. would be happy if the process took off and that this was the role of the action groups within the proposed structure. Richard pointed out that if the partnership model proved successful, much of the work involved could be adopted by those who have a special interest in certain strands and that it would be possible to arrange for specific elements within the overall project to be fulfilled by secondments by the most appropriate bodies to take responsibility for specific strands, such as research for example.

Richard pointed out that many allotment sites are near to or within regeneration areas and that investment in allotments would be a desirable output from regeneration spending. John explained that he is working on several projects that are complimentary to and would benefit from the process. He also noted that there has recently been an upsurge in awareness of and interest about allotments on the part of elected council members.

Sue informed the meeting about a bid she is working on as part of the Health Action Zone, which would research food poverty. She was worried that at present there was a danger of similar projects overlapping or even competing against each other. Mark explained that he was aware of many initiatives which could combine in a synergistic way and that he understood the need for a process which would co-ordinate and network between these disparate but interlinked initiatives. It would be valuable if we could arrange a visit from the L.A. 21 officer who is co-ordinating Food Futures in Leicestershire. Would it be possible to invite her to the conference?

Richard explained that he has booked the Quaker Meeting House for the one-day conference on the 8th of February. This can function as a means of engaging as many participants in the project as possible from the very start. Mark confirmed that this would be a sensible way to proceed to ensure that the process is inclusive.

Richard presented drafts of an invitation advertising the conference and an updated list of contacts, which will be used to distribute invites, and asked if there were any additions to the list. John said he would copy this draft advert and distribute them to all the allotment societies in Sheffield.

Paul asked Rachel what commitment S.C.C. could make to Food Futures. Rachel explained that she was keen to support the process by providing venues and contributing her own time because it could meet many of her objectives in terms of sustainability, but that the Council was not presently in a position to make any financial commitment.

Richard, Darrell and Rose will meet next week to discuss funding and to arrange administration for the conference.

FOOD FUTURES SHEFFIELD MEETING

4 pm 14 / 1 / 99

INVITED

JADE BASHFORD AND PAUL KNUCKLE	SOIL ASSOCIATION LOCAL FOOD LINKS
RICHARD CLARE AND DARRELL MARYON	SHEFFIELD ORGANIC FOOD INITIATIVE
RACHEL WILEMAN JOHN MARTIN	SHEFFIELD COUNCIL LOCAL AGENDA 21 OFFICER S.C.C. ALLOTMENTS OFFICER
CAROLE STOCKER DAVID GRAY	SHEFFIELD ENVIRONMENT CONSORTIUM HEELEY CITY FARM
DAVID MIDDLEMAS JOANNA LY	COMMUNITY COMPOSTING NETWORK HEALTHY GARDENING GROUP
SUE GRIEG ROB STONEMAN AND/OR NIGEL DOAR	SHEFFIELD HEALTH SHEFFIELD WILDLIFE TRUST
ROSE TANNER AL JACK	SHEFFIELD ORGANIC GARDENERS NORTH-EAST SHEFFIELD PERMACULTURE GROUP
ISOBEL WRIGHT SHEENA CAMPBELL	AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY SERVICE SINGLE REGENERATION BUDGET
MATTHEW WEST TIM COOPER	BEANIES WHOLEFOOD CO-OPERATIVE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER COURSE (S.HALLAM)
MIKE PAINES	ALLOTMENTS RESEARCH (S.HALLAM)

(APOLOGY -- ROGER BUTTERFIELD SHEFFIELD ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING)

AGENDA

CONFERENCE 10 AM - 4 PM MONDAY 8TH FEBRUARY

AT QUAKER MEETING HOUSE

-- SPEAKERS -- MORNING / AFTERNOON

-- DRAFT ADVERT / FLYER

CONTACTS LIST / NETWORK

DEVELOPING THE LOCAL FOOD CULTURE AND ECONOMY IN SHEFFIELD

- HOW MUCH FOOD IS GROWN IN AND AROUND SHEFFIELD?
- ORGANIC PRODUCE IS PRESENTLY TRANSPORTED GREAT DISTANCES TO SUPPLY THE MARKET DEMAND IN SHEFFIELD. HOW MUCH OF THIS COULD BE SUPPLIED FROM LOCAL SOURCES?
- HOW CAN WE DEVELOP MORE LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION?
- THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS FRESH, NUTRITIOUS, UNCONTAMINATED FOOD SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT NOT A LUXURY
- LOCAL FOOD GROWN IN A HUMANE AND HUMANISING WAY
- POSITIVE EFFECTS ON GENERAL HEALTH, DIET AND NUTRITION
- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WITH A FOOD-GROWING COMPONENT CAN CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION

- EMPLOYMENT POSSIBILITIES
- LONG-TERM / FAR-SIGHTED INVESTMENT FOR ENDURING / PERMANENT IMPROVEMENTS
- THERE IS ALREADY A NETWORK OF ACTIVE PROJECTS AND THERE ARE PLANS TO INITIATE MANY MORE IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO MEET DEMANDS FROM GRASSROOTS COMMUNITIES
- SUSTAINABLE FORMS OF HORTICULTURE AND AGRICULTURE CAN ALSO PROVIDE RELATED BENEFITS TO OTHER SOCIAL PROBLEMS, SUCH AS WASTE MANAGEMENT

There is a strong case for a project dedicated to developing the local food economy in Sheffield.

The extent of the area's social and economic deprivation means that we will soon qualify for European Objective One status. Locally-grown and organic foods should have a big part to play in social and economic regeneration. This sector can deliver long-lasting benefits that would be ecologically sustainable.

Although Sheffield seems to be especially disadvantaged, as a post-industrial city with a lack of access to local produce, it also has many potential advantages, such as the 3,600 hectares of green space within the city boundary.

The time is ripe for a process which could co-ordinate and support the large number of existing and planned activities with a food-growing component.

Food Futures can provide a forum for the diverse range of interests in local food to work together to form a consensus which is capable of helping local food culture and initiatives to grow.

SOIL ASSOCIATION'S FOOD FUTURES PROGRAMME EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SCOPE

- DEVELOP THE LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY
- STIMULATE PRODUCTION TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR ORGANIC AND LOCALLY GROWN FOOD
- IMPROVE INTERACTION BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL COMMUNITIES
- PROMOTE THE SOCIAL BENEFITS OF FOOD-RELATED ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNITY CAPACITY-BUILDING AND REGENERATION

PROCESS

- ESTABLISH A FORUM TO ENGAGE CURRENT AND POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTORS TO THE LOCAL FOOD SECTOR
- CORE GROUP TO CO-ORDINATE LOCAL NETWORK
- ACTION GROUPS TO FOCUS ON SPECIFIC AREAS OF INTEREST
- TRAINING WORKSHOPS TO PROVIDE NATIONAL ORGANISATION'S EXPERTISE TO RELEVANT LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

PARTNERSHIPS

- LOCAL AUTHORITY
- HEALTH AUTHORITY
- VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR
- ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
- FARMERS AND GROWERS
- FOOD PROCESSING AND MARKETING BUSINESSES
- ALLOTMENTS, CITY FARMS AND COMMUNITY GARDENING PROJECTS
- EDUCATION AND TRAINING SECTOR

OUTPUTS

- ESTABLISH AT LEAST 3 SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVES
- IMPROVE INTER-AGENCY CO-OPERATION AND COLLABORATION
- INCREASE ACCESS TO LOCAL AND ORGANICALLY-GROWN FOOD FOR PEOPLE ON LOW INCOMES AND IN MULTI-CULTURAL COMMUNITIES
- ESTABLISH RELEVANT TRAINING AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES
- DEVELOP AND SUPPORT:- GROW YOUR OWN / COMMUNITY COMPOSTING / L.E.T.S. / CREDIT UNIONS / FOOD CO-OPS / COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE / SUBSCRIPTION FARMING / FARMERS' MARKETS / W.I. MARKETS / LOCAL ORGANIC CERTIFICATION AND CONVERSION / LOCAL FOOD DIRECTORIES / BUY LOCAL CAMPAIGN / FAIRTRADE

**CONTACT: RICHARD CLARE SHEFFIELD ORGANIC FOOD INITIATIVE
C/O 41B BURNS ROAD SHEFFIELD S6 3GL TEL: 0114 2686727
THE NEED FOR A QUALIFICATION IN ORGANIC HORTICULTURE / MARKET GARDENING**

There is currently a lack of formal qualification opportunities for anyone wishing to develop a career based on specifically organic cultivation. It is possible to take conventional courses in horticulture (NVQ) and gardening (C&G) and concentrate on course elements which are relevant or specific to organics. The educational and vocational need for training and qualifications based solely on 100% organic techniques is beginning to be recognised at university level, but until market demand reaches a critical size, the bodies responsible will continue to treat organics as a poor cousin of the conventional, chemical horticultural and agricultural industries.

Courses organised in recent years by Sheffield College have been designed to meet the general trend towards more ecological practice in the municipal, amenity and landscaping sectors. This provision reflected a genuine shift in expectations on the part of potential employers, but was indistinct from industry-wide standards of good practice which have welcomed the re-introduction of organic techniques wherever they have been perceived as more successful, safer or more economical.

The domestic and municipal gardening markets have already accepted and adapted to their customers' demand for increasingly eco-friendly practices. This can either mean that they are as organic as possible or simply that there is an organic component included.

It is only in the production of food, market gardening, that there is a real requirement to be completely Organic, to fulfill the requirements of marketing certification and guarantee that produce is completely as safe and as beneficial as possible for human consumption.

Although the horticultural sector has been devastated by recent crises in agriculture, the demand for organic and locally grown produce currently exceeds available supply manyfold. The Organic sector, though much smaller than the continental average, is presently doubling annually, in terms of acreage in conversion, 60,000 Hectares registered in 1998.

Imminent reductions in subsidies and potential changes to the C.A.P. mean that this trend is likely to accelerate in the near future.

The only element missing from this equation is the supply of people qualified and competent to grow food organically, taking into account the increased need for human attention in organic systems and the fact that not all conventional producers will be willing or able to adapt to the challenge of conversion.

In addition to the need for broadscale, commercial organic producers, there is also a growing consensus in support of community-supported organic projects, linked to the wide range of social benefits they are capable of contributing to positively ; community-building and development of the local economy; health, wellbeing and mental health; exercise, diet and nutrition; occupational therapy and special needs. This reflects the increasing public expectations relating to organic, local and own-grown food as an aspiration or lifestyle choice.

Taking these factors into account, there would seem to be an inevitable demand for qualified and experienced organic growers. If this scenario is correct, there will be an expansion in this field in the next few years. At present, there is an opportunity for a training organisation to meet this prospective demand.