

Lincoln Food Partnership

For fairer healthier greener food

Welcome to the February 2020 Edition of the Lincoln Food Partnership Newsletter

This edition of the Newsletter is about the multiple benefits of food.

We report on the way in which the Lincolnshire County Council, working with the Districts, is seeking to reduce 'off the plate' food waste and turn it into renewable energy. A book by local author, Harriet Gross, *The Psychology of Gardening*, also points out that gardening improves the mind and body as well as feeding us, and the Cultivate Lincoln community shop in Lincoln also builds on the essential links between food and health. Finally on this theme of multiple benefits, we review the way in which the University of Lincoln is combining education and growing in its community garden.

Because it is the time of year for it, we also report on the TWO Oxford Farming Conferences that took place in January, illustrating the divergent views about both the ethics and the economics of food production. But as time goes on, the two conferences seem to have more and more in common.

Please do contact us if you would like to share your news stories about any aspect of local food – whether it is a growing project,



local produce-making and sale, cooking communities or tackling food waste. We would be pleased to showcase your work, no matter how small, in this newsletter.

Our email address is: lincolnfoodpartnership@gmail.com

If you are happy to continue to receive this newsletter and therefore be considered a member of the Lincoln Food Partnership community of interest, you need to do nothing.

If on the other hand you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, just email us. Many thanks for your interest

Nigel Curry,
Co-chair Lincoln Food Partnership

Recycling Waste Food in Lincolnshire

Some of us oldies will remember 'pig bins'. For the rest of you, they were a means of collecting 'off the plate' food waste for feeding pigs after the Second War. The idea is back in Lincolnshire, but with a difference.



The Lincolnshire Food Partnership (not to be confused with the Lincoln Food Partnership!) - the 7 Districts that collect household waste, and the County that disposes of it - set up a kerbside 'off the plate' food waste weekly collection trial in South Kesteven in mid 2018 and this was extended last year.

Some 4,700 households are involved and the waste is being converted into renewable gas at the Hemswell Biogas Anaerobic Digester, for use in commercial vehicles and for heating. The project will also reduce landfill – where food waste gives off harmful greenhouse gasses.

Whilst this is still being trialled (some issues still to be ironed out), the Partnership is committed to carbon reduction policies, and if this approach is feasible, there are plans for more digesters across the County. The County could recycle around 48,000 tons of waste food a year in this way – about 13% of all domestic waste.



Gardening is good for you!

It is now widely understood, from research conducted at the University of Bristol over 10 years ago, that soil contains a natural anti-depressant microbe called *Mycobacterium vaccae*, which can stimulate the production of serotonin in the body, a neurotransmitter that makes us feel relaxed and becalmed.



Local author and academic, Professor Harriet Gross, has broadened this 'therapy of gardening' theme beyond just 'good chemistry' in her book the *Psychology of Gardening*.

Gardening, she says, stimulates all of our senses, gets us absorbed (and therefore less distracted by our stresses and strains) and, the research shows, actually changes our sense of time so that our world slows

down. All of this can 'de-clutter' our minds to give us renewed energy when we return to the hustle and bustle of daily life.

And if that isn't enough, gardening with others - like in City community projects such as Liquorice Park, Birchwood Big Local, Green Synergy, and a host of smaller projects around schools and churches – will build friendships, improve learning and combat loneliness.



All of these benefits, of course, are in addition to the prospect of sharing and eating, fresh, seasonal food that we've grown ourselves with our fellow gardeners – and experiencing all of these benefits again. Grow your own food and you'll enjoy it twice!

Cultivate Lincoln – for your own good

Cultivate Lincoln is not just a shop – it is a Community Shop. Its commitment to good food lies in the range of herbal teas that it serves, the wholesome healthy cold drinks on offer and its raw vegan cakes. It provides an excellent example of how the food and drink we consume is an integral part of our health and well-being.



In recognition of this, Cultivate Lincoln offers a number of other well-being services to integrate with the food and drink offer: it is a community hub, sells a wide range of alternative medicines (plant based, of course!) and provides a calm and relaxing natural environment in which to relax. And in the spirit of community, there are workshops and events such as meditation, yoga and women's circles to further to extend the well-being experience.

It is good to be reminded that food is part of a wider collection of actions that we can use in pursuit of self-care.

Find out more about Cultivate Lincoln at <https://www.cultivatelincoln.co.uk> and pay it a visit in Grantham Street, Lincoln.



A Growing University Education

Students and staff at the University of Lincoln are growing their own food. The University's 'Kitchen Garden' has been producing fresh food since 2017 at the Brayford Campus.



A core team meets weekly during the peak growing season to cultivate root vegetables, leafy greens and fruit. They are grown in planters built by University contractors and filled by staff volunteers. A small compost bin and water butt complement the garden, and wild cherry trees were planted in the area during

the Big Climate Fight-back in November last year.

Volunteers are encouraged to take produce home and share it. Extra produce was also taken to Mint Lane Café last summer and the University Chaplaincy has run "soup kitchens" with student support in the past.

The garden is located behind Witham House and is marked by an information board designed by a recent Illustration Graduate at the University. The Spring re-launch of the Kitchen Garden will be on 18th March, alongside a variety of other gardening events on campus.



Enquiries can be directed to environment@lincoln.ac.uk

Two Farming Conferences at Oxford.

The Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) has been going for 80 years. Sponsored by big agri-business such as BASF and Massey Ferguson, over 400 delegates attended in January this year to plan the future of commercial British farming.

But a much younger 8 year old conference was also talking place at the same



time: the Oxford *Real* Farming Conference (ORFC). Touching 1,000 delegates with over 250 people turned away, themes here were of more radical agriculture ideas – community growing, urban farming, permaculture, agro-ecology and the like.

Attendees were a younger more diverse cohort, with many not landholding farmers themselves but with a clear commitment to the future of food. It is increasingly popular: the first conference had only 85 delegates.

Encouragingly, many of the key issues discussed were common to both conferences. Brexit embraced opportunities and concerns at both, environmental payments were widely welcomed and even debates about the future of meat eating held some common ground.



It is encouraging to see a greater degree of common purpose in these two conferences (ORFC was initially set up *because* of their differences). It would be even more encouraging if, sometime soon, they are able to hold some of their sessions together.

Get Involved: Tell a Friend...

If you know of other people or organisations who would like to be involved in the Lincoln Food Partnership, please help to spread the word. Why not start by forwarding this newsletter to them?