

Food Distribution Roundtable Discussion

Background

In our feasibility study prior to the formation of GCFN (2017), one of our networks central asks from community food providers, growers and social enterprises was to look at food distribution and bulk buying of staple, local fresh food. Through Sustainable Food Places we have seen similar community food distribution networks setup across the UK to meet these same needs.

As part of GCFN's Covid19 Response project we setup a **Food for Good (FFG) Coalition** lead by Community Transport (CTG) with electric vans, GCFN looking at supply and supported by Slow Food Glasgow and the University of Glasgow. This project provided a staple supply of fresh local veg organic veg from social enterprise Locavore and local growers in Glasgow. We purchased dried and tinned food from ethical suppliers Greencity Wholefoods and sourced directly from some local producers. After making calculations we FFG were able to balance competitive prices when considering organic vs ethical vs local, non organic food but culturally appropriate. FFG joined Interfaith Food Justice networks' food sharing Whats App group and worked with the Scottish pantry Network providing transport for shoppers. FFG supported over 40 community food providers directly and several more with Fareshare pickups for almost 2 years.

Although the project has winded down mostly. CTG are continuing some services dependent on funding.

More recently food distribution has been raised as key priority in two themes of the Glasgow City Food Plan.

Discussions

Learning

Several pantries in development looking at ways to coordinate supply of local fresh fruit and veg and connect to best suppliers raised by Ingrid (LINKS practitioner) at Knightswood Pantry food group and Jamie at DRC Youth Project in Yoker.

It was discussed how can we share costs, transport and tap into supplies of food such as 'wonky' veg.

The supply of affordable food is key but if local organic and non-organic ethical is considered, with the value for money calculated then this information should be shared across community food providers to support local food economies.

Neil at Eco Trust said there are 5 community food providers in their area and they are wanting to look at ways they can coordinate transportation, storage and bulk buying of food supplies platform

Several people raised that it would be useful to have a food supplier/sharing platform where producers could also post or be contacted directly.

There is a need for a better supply of culturally appropriate food for organisations who work with refugee, asylum seekers and those from a diverse range of ethnicities.

Organisations need support as they scale-up in the different types of food whether fresh needing refrigeration or storage or the certification/training needed.

Robert from GCVS when considering transport and energy wanted to know how we could 'green' up our supply chains.

It was noted how GCVS and Glasgow Helps supported coordination of food distribution to those in need during the pandemic. GCFN also fed information into this via the Urban Roots free food map.

A need for more citywide coordination was discussed here and mentioned previously in working groups during the pandemic.

It was mentioned GCC recent Transport Strategy does not commit enough to supporting communities with the infrastructure they need whether free transport to those living in food deserts or hubs/transport for food distribution.

Marie from Senscot mentioned successful models she had heard from with community food providers in other Scottish Cities such as Edinburgh Community Food, CFINE in Aberdeen and North Lanarkshire Community Food Initiative.

Priorities

A study looking at what assets and gaps in food distribution there are across Glasgow was welcomed by all participants.

Organisations such as GCVS and their previous work, The Scottish pantry Network, Third Sector organisations with vehicles such as Community Transport Glasgow, Golden Generation, NATA for example and local community food providers should be engaged to see who can offer what and who can lead in coordination whether citywide or local.

An example of support offered was from Kamgan from AfricAlba who said their premises at Stirling Road could be used as a distribution hub for food pickups.

CTG and GCFN have been in talks to look at a feasibility study to answer what assets are available for food distribution across Glasgow and what organisations could be involved in coordinating/leading this across the city.

Next steps are CTG and GCFN to setup a meeting looking at the scope of a study.