



Square Meal Debate Event Report



Kingston Maurward College, Dorchester
28 November 2015

This report is prepared for event participants, agencies who have a role to play, and those who we seek to influence and involve.

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Above Photo: Ian Rees leading Farming Workshop.

Front Cover: A packed hall greets presenters at the Square Meal Debate at Kingston Maurward College.

Executive Summary

A ground-breaking event, convened by Communities Living Sustainably (CLS) in Dorset during Dorset Food Week 2015, brought together a diverse range of delegates with interests in farming, good food for all, public health and wildlife conservation, converging at Kingston Maurward College, Dorset's premier agricultural teaching centre.

Over 100 people, many of them new to CLS, attended the **Square Meal** Debate reflecting how important these issues are, and how those with very different starting points have concerns that overlap. As well as community food activists, the event attracted influential participants from a range of statutory bodies including Dorset County Council, Dorset Local Nature Partnership, Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Environment Agency, Public Health Dorset, Natural England, Wessex Water, third sector organisations such as Dorset Community Action, Dorset Wildlife Trust, Partnership for Older People, RSPB, the Landworkers Alliance and the National Farmers Union plus several chefs and food businesses including retailers and caterers.

The event was framed by the 'Square Meal Report' – a document co-authored in summer 2014 by 10 NGOs: the RSPB, Friends of the Earth, the National Trust, the Food Ethics Council, Sustain, the Wildlife Trusts, the Soil Association, Eating Better and Compassion in World Farming, working with the Food Research Collaboration.

Published ahead of the General Election in response to the lack of serious consideration given in the manifestos of the main parties to the intertwined issues of food and farming, public health and biodiversity, Square Meal aims to start a conversation and thereby change the narrative about the future of food in this country. [See Annex A].

Our event in Dorchester, designed to push these issues into the public eye locally and to expressly call for partnership, collaboration, leadership and political will, was one of the first such regional debates of its kind. Delegates participated in thematic workshops and a local feast, followed by a series of presentations and Q&A session.



The overarching outcome of the day was unanimous agreement that **education and incentivisation** all along the food chain is absolutely key to driving the cultural change required to achieve the vision of sustainable farming and eating for everyone. This emphasis on education was qualified by the need to create **dialogue**, while also building social links and empowering people to make the necessary changes.

The importance of **inspiring people** to want to make informed choices through understanding and caring about the impact of the food they eat was also underlined.

“It’s educating not only the consumers so they want to make an informed choice about which food they buy, but it’s educating producers, educating the educators and then getting people out and inspired by the wildlife and nature in Dorset [which can be adversely impacted by our food choices]” Delegate

It was acknowledged, however, that this educational work can only be fully effective if and when accompanied and supported by the requisite policy drivers, both nationally and locally, which will make sustainable food choices affordable and accessible to the majority of consumers.

In the absence of leadership from Government, there is still much that can – and indeed must – be done locally. Many community organisations are taking matters into their own hands and tackling these issues at the local level, even as they struggle with short term funding and inadequate resources for problems which are admittedly complex and long term and for which there are no quick fixes or silver bullets.

While small scale innovations are essential to test and perfect what works on the ground, a massive national awareness raising programme is needed alongside reforms to how subsidies for food production are calculated and administered. The costs of artificially cheap food simply show up in the billions spent dealing with diet related ill health and environmental degradation.

A diet that is healthy for people and planet alike must be normalised and will save NHS resources to the tune of billions in the coming decades. Increasingly, a healthy diet – one full of fruit and veg and less, better quality meat – is synonymous with a sustainable diet, which is good for the planet too.

“Dorset has a lot of really good food culture but the impact [of poor diet] on health and work with communities seems to be very dependent on individuals in individual places, rather than any coherent policy.” Delegate

Another resounding message was the need to take personal responsibility – both for choosing to eat a local and sustainable diet oneself but, understanding the urgency of the situation in the face of a growing population, climate disruption and the rising cost of diet related ill health, also to start dialogues with colleagues, friends and family about the issues.

To make a difference to people in Dorset there needs to be a collaborative approach by the various organisations and institutions with expertise and responsibilities for narrowing health inequalities, conserving biodiversity, managing landscapes, producing and retailing food and educating this - and the next -generation about the importance for personal health of a healthy diet. Happily, the organisations which staged the Square Meal Debate have committed to continue working together to lobby for change. There are still others who need to be brought on board and we hope this document will serve as an invitation to collaborate, pool resources and keep this important conversation alive.

Aims of the Event

In the run up to the Paris Climate Talks we wanted to push food into the public eye to achieve the following:

- Utilise the Square Meal report to stimulate local debate and action
- Raise awareness of how issues interconnect and identify priorities for joint local action
- Highlight the need for effective partnerships, collaboration & leadership to resolve them
- Stimulate greater stakeholder debate and involvement
- Leave legacy for CLS in Dorset, showcasing work to date and plans for the future

“Excellent event, well run with some very insightful and passionate people. Perfect venue, well run, excellent food and stimulating debate” Delegate

Envisioning a better food future for everyone

An opening address framing the issues in Square Meal was followed by 4 themed workshops facilitated by local experts in their fields. Delegates spent the day considering the need and opportunities for integrated food and farming policy and practice which also protects public health and wildlife. Together we imagined a future vision of Dorset where everyone has access to good food, diet related ill health is a thing of the past and farmers who produce sustainable, healthy food which does not destroy the environment on which food production depends, are rewarded and thriving.

Such a future is characterised by a nutritionally aware populace that understands the value of food produced without excessive environmental cost from short supply chains and has easy access to it at an affordable price. Consumers have a strong sense of seasonality and the food trade reinforces this with its menus. Shops, restaurants, cafes, market stalls and workplace canteens proudly use, serve and sell the best local and sustainable produce. Local and sustainable food is clearly labelled and not seen as exclusive but is conveniently available to buy at a wide range of outlets including pubs, community centres, post offices, and via mobile grocers; and supermarkets stock produce from the local area. Food waste has been reduced to zero and town-wide meals bring the community together to rebuild social links.

Young people grow up knowing how to cook good food including vegetarian and vegan cuisine and have the skills to shop well. People are slimmer and more active, levels of overweight and obesity have fallen, there is less strain on adult social care and the NHS, health visitors and children's centres champion good food and cooking and growing projects are

integral parts of curriculum. People understand how to be healthy through food, exercise and lifestyle choices. Processed food has long since been jettisoned in favour of fresh produce, cooked from scratch and fast food is healthy too.

Parks are filled with fruit and nut trees, food is grown in open spaces and forest gardens are grown on any spare land. All children eat a healthy and nutritious school lunch, care homes and hospitals serve freshly prepared meals and communities have access to growing space.

Farmers have become re-integrated into the communities they serve. The farming workforce is youthful, trained in sustainable methods and are fit for purpose to grow crops, subsidised because they are produced for the public good. Farmland is bio-diverse, the landscape is full of colour and birdsong, wildlife is abundant. Soil and habitat is protected from pollution and destruction and people understand the need to value and protect the landscape on which food production depends. Many more people work on the land on mixed farms, where nature conservation and food production happens side by side. There is much more horticulture to reflect dietary guidance that we need to eat much more fruit and veg to protect our health and less livestock to reduce emissions from animal agriculture, one of the key factors causing climate disruption.

In short, a cultural sea change has occurred!

The knottier issue of what would need to happen to make these changes a reality was harder to articulate and in reality will take the commitment and continued dialogue of a range of stakeholders. For sure, this future will require policy change, national and locally and a massive “educational project”

A delicious evening meal, based on Bridport schoolboy Blake Ford’s winning One Pot recipe at this year’s Bridport Food Festival, “My Dorset Tagine”, was cooked up with passion by the in-house catering team at KMC. Using lamb from the college’s on site farm and vegetables from the **Charmouth Dragon**, a mobile shop selling produce from West Dorset’s small scale agro-ecological growers plus other local producers, the meal was an edible demonstration of the wonderful produce on offer in Dorset. After dinner, the panel, comprising national speakers from the Soil Association and RSPB, along with Dorset-based representatives of the National Farmers Union, Landworkers Alliance and Bournemouth and Poole Sustainable Food Cities, sparked lively audience questions.

Photo: Speaker panel, from left to right: Paul McNamee, Linda Hull, Rebecca Laughton, Sarah Watson, Robert Lasseeter, Cllr. Rebecca Knox, Rob Percival.



Workshop findings: themes, key points and interconnections

Each themed workshop identified three points to share with the other groups and one priority for action. Full notes from the workshops can be found at Annex B.

Farming

3 key points to share:

- Policy change and drivers are needed to help expand local food systems.
- Greater focus on communication aimed at consumers (health message) and producers (training and added value).
- Equal value for all forms of producers (veg & meat) creates a working landscape that will change the 'chocolate box' aesthetic.

Priority for Action

Take personal responsibility: be part of communicating the personal benefits of our local food systems incentivise people.

“Encourage local small scale fruit and vegetable producers by providing their produce in schools, hospitals and institutions.”

Delegate

Food for All

3 key points to share:

- Reach beyond the middle classes – normalise local and healthy affordable food.
- Educate and incentivise all along the food chain to raise awareness and encourage people to buy local.
- Support the distribution and marketing of local produce and local food projects.

Priority for Action

Educate and incentivise all along the food chain (by achieving this it will help to reach beyond the middle classes and there will be a greater understanding that local food can be affordable and available to all).

Health

3 key points to share:

- Local councillors should make planning policy that restricts where supermarkets are built, uses business rates as a tool to promote healthy eating businesses/shops and allows food growing in Council owned public spaces.
- Local Enterprise Partnership priorities don't reflect what we are talking about today and they have a largely urban focus. £60 million of funding is being channelled to Dorset through the LEP of which little is going to this area.
- Dorchester hospital tries to source local and fresh food. Leading by example should be adopted by government and procurement teams of other local service providers.

Priority for Action

Lead and educate by example in all aspects of life and within the community.

“Good food for all will save the NHS a fortune. Put diet at the core of health policy (especially plant based).” Delegate

Wildlife

Three key points to share with others:

Education - for all consumers about the real price of food i.e. the cost to the natural environment and wildlife.

- Choice – consumers must be able to make informed choices about the food they buy. The real cost of food to wildlife must be identified so consumers remain informed.
- Recognition – of food that is produced in a sustainable fashion so consumers can make the informed choice.

Priority for action:

Education is needed to drive the cultural change needed to reduce the impacts of farming upon wildlife.

The key interconnection between these themes was the need for policy change, personal responsibility and education – not just of consumers, but also of producers, the food trade, the health profession, local elected representatives, children and young people.

Wider Outcomes

Common ground

The common ground established between the representatives of farmers large and small was a satisfying result, and supported the conclusion that education and dialogue are the key to change. The received wisdom is that industrial scale farmers and smallholders are diametrically opposed in their views about the future of food but the event saw these two camps having much more to agree on than disagree about. Indeed in the words of Paul Cottingham, NFU Environment Adviser for the South West:

“Reading through the Landworkers Alliance response to the Square Meal Report, there’s an awful lot of it which is exactly what we campaign for...” Delegate



A need for changed priorities

The Landworkers Alliance, a union of small and medium scale agro-ecological farmers, is calling for the development of a National Food Policy embodying the principles of food sovereignty. In particular, they seek a major change to the way Common Agricultural Policy subsidies are administered which currently makes industrial scale food cheaper to produce while ignoring all the externalised costs to public health, wildlife and the environment.

The startling revelation from the RSPB that DEFRA is currently working on two separate 25 year plans - one for the future of food and farming and another for the natural environment - do not appear to share a common vision, would imply there is denial that the two are inextricably linked.¹

In Dorset, the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) priorities were cited as unreflective of the day's discourse with its focus on urban areas and little of the £60 million of funding being channelled to the issues of unsustainable farming, food poverty and diet related ill health. In view of the fact that food and agriculture is a fundamental aspect of Dorset's local economy, this would seem to be short sighted.

“The Local Economic Partnership must recognise and respond to the needs of food producers in Dorset.” Delegate

However, it has been reassuring to learn that the work of Dorset Local Nature Partnership (LNP) covers 50% of the actions identified by the workshops and that the LNP has good links with the Local Authority.



¹ www.sustainweb.org/pdf/defra_June02.PDF

Exposure to the Issues

“This work needs long term funding – I work in a project doing a lot of things feeding into Square Meal but funding is short term while the solutions needed are long term.” Delegate.

The organising team were delighted that Cllr Rebecca Knox, county councillor for Beaminster Ward, Cabinet Member and chair of Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board attended. She took an active part during the day, chaired the evening session, witnessed the debate and was exposed to the issues. She left inspired and determined to use the levers at the disposal of the County Council to champion public sector procurement of local and sustainable food. The participation of delegates from Public Health Dorset was also important and we hope that both these institutions will stay involved with pushing forward on progress towards the kind of collaborative work needed to really make a difference on this agenda.

“[Many] doctors do not recognise food being related to health, councillors do not recognise food being related to health, so in my book unless councillors and the medical profession can really understand the fundamental difference that good food can make to people’s health, then we’ve got a real problem.” Delegate.



Networks are key to spreading the message

The wide range of delegates at the Square Meal Debate has generated a whole set of new contacts from a huge variety of backgrounds. New connections with delegates from Portland, Weymouth and Bournemouth demonstrated the reach of the networks active on these issues. If the task is education and awareness-raising, such networks will be invaluable for testing methods, sharing successes, lessons learned and spreading best practice. Similarly, if the task is lobbying, the commitment and input of locally engaged networks will also be powerful levers for effecting change. Some delegates remarked on how they felt encouraged and more hopeful by meeting like-minded people and by realising there is more awareness of the issues than they expected. The trick will be to turn this awareness into action...

“There are lots of organisations working around sustainable food that we need to link to!” Delegate

Let's utilise our consumer power

Finally, feedback at the end of the event reflected delegates' increased awareness of their power as consumers to affect change with retailers and the food trade. By requesting and enquiring about the provenance of food, consumers and diners can influence those who produce, sell and serve us food. Cllr Rebecca Knox also affirmed that (local) government listens to consumer demand.

“Consumers together can make a difference; we have power to make changes.” Delegate



Conclusion and next steps

Event organisers felt that the day had succeeded in raising awareness in various quarters but that the identified priorities still need to be actioned and made SMART – i.e. who will do what when. The organisers, including Dorset Community Action, Dorset Local Nature Partnership, West Dorset Partnership, Dorset AONB, Dorset Wildlife Trust and Dorset County Council have committed to working together to make change happen, and Dorset Public Health are keen to get involved.

The event called for policy change and drivers to help expand local food systems, such as supporting the distribution mechanisms for local produce, planning policy that is more amenable to increased horticulture and therefore polytunnels, renewable energy installations, promotion of healthy eating businesses and outlets, and local procurement policies to enable hospitals, care homes and schools to use local and healthy foods.

CLS in Dorset partners will follow up on the issues raised, and many participants are keen to continue to be involved in keeping the Square Meal Debate alive. There is much that can be done at a local level. Cllr. Rebecca Knox made commitments to put these issues, including diet and procurement, to Dorset's Health and Wellbeing Board, of which she is Chair.

The planning team is assembling an action plan which will refine the key priorities emerging from the debate, and identify what each partner will do to take forward the issues within their own organisation as well as collectively.

This report will be circulated widely, both within Dorset and to the national Square Meal coalition.

To keep in touch find out more, visit:

www.clsdorset.org.uk and
www.foodfuturebridport.org.uk

If you would like to be actively involved in taking the issues forward, please contact us on info@clsdorset.org.uk or ring **07917 476196**.



This event was organised by CLS in Dorset partners, with Dorset Local Nature Partnership and hosted by Kingston Maurward College.

Photos and filming: Robert Golden and Justin Owen. Films are available via www.clsdorset.org.uk and CLSDorset on YouTube. Visual Minutes: Petra Hughes.



Artist Petra Hughes captures the debate in visual minutes.



Annexes

A. What is Square Meal?



'Square Meal' - The Path To Fair, Humane And Healthy Food From A Thriving Countryside Rich In Nature

The Square Meal Coalition is made up of a number of organisations with a diverse range of interests and expertise. The organisations have come together with a shared message:

- There is overwhelming evidence showing the need for a major change in our national food and farming policy;
- The Government needs to show real leadership in addressing the issues in the UK's current food and farming system affecting public health, food systems, farming and the natural environment;
- These issues can only be addressed in a cross-cutting manner across all departments of Government.

More details are contained in our report:

Square Meal: why we need a new recipe for the future

The Issue

Although the food and farming industries are important elements of the UK economy they are, at the same time, contributing to problems which place a heavy economic and social toll on the public purse and the nation's wellbeing:

- £3 billion per year is lost as a result of air and water pollution, soil erosion, and loss and degradation of wildlife and wildlife habitats;
- £6 billion a year is spent on health issues caused by bad diets, with the costs to the economy as a whole set to rise to £50 billion annually by 2050;
- The UK has lost 44 million breeding birds in less than half a century, contributing to the quality of our countryside being further eroded and raising the cost of meeting our biodiversity targets;
- A large and still-growing number of families are dependent on charities for their food supply with the number of people using Trussell Trust food banks tripling over the past years;
- An estimated 16 million tonnes of food waste is generated in the UK each year - an unnecessary waste of energy and precious resources.

Our vision

The great British countryside is at the heart of our identity as a nation. Yet we are failing to safeguard its vital functions and realise its potential. We are calling for a new approach to food and farming policy which recognises that many of the most pressing health, food, farming, and environmental problems we face - and their solutions - go hand-in-hand. We want to see much greater public benefit from our food and farming systems.

Our vision is for a truly progressive UK food and farming sector that can thrive and grow jobs; and that can help to restore and enhance nature, food and farming systems. It will provide all citizens with affordable, healthy and environmentally sustainable food, produced to improved standards of animal welfare; and make certain our farmers and food sector workers are treated fairly and properly rewarded.

B. Notes from Thematic Workshops

1. Farming (Green Welly) Workshop

We asked the groups to think individually about what they would like the future to look like, then discuss in pairs. The pairs then posted their thoughts on our rural scene. The group then discussed these points and categorised them, which gave you what needs to change. The group then prioritised the top three changes to share with the other groups, and finally came up with one personal priority that we can all do, and one priority we should do together.



1.1. The future and areas which need to change:

Educate

- Food is valued
- Educate public on the integrity of British farming
- Integrate urban and country folk
- Clarify the high standards of UK welfare which increases the cost of production
- Change mind set. Clear correct information on what is the correct diet
- Encourage demand for local food.
- Communication / education
- Educate through children the importance of food to their health
- Music games for children education

Communicate

- Communicate in right way, i.e. economic argument to government, health benefits to communities
- Social media, journalism, creative ways of communicating
- People power
- Collaboration, sharing ideas, lots of local producers and availability
- Evening social food events in town: local food, cooked on site, producers information, pre-weekend (Thursdays)
- People power
- Adequate communication and education

Land management change

- Clean silt free rivers connected to floodplains
- Woodlands connected by hedges and grassland
- Hedge laying and hedgerow trees: bocage
- More smaller farms
- Rural development takes into account human lives
- More people working on the land
- Change of landscape with more horticulture and less pasture to reflect healthier diet. Includes more (discretely positioned) polytunnels.
- Mixed farming
- Diversify farmers – many more different types of farmers

- Land sharing rather than land sparing (i.e. intensive farming and nature reserves)
- Not so tidy as not good for wildlife.
- Respect the land

Markets

- Encourage supermarkets to stock more local products
- Shorter food chains: more food hubs fewer supermarkets.
- More horticulture, less pasture
- Improved infrastructure for producers, e.g. abattoirs

Externalities / bigger picture

- Better health (mental & physical)
- Renewable energy
- Biochar amended soil to increase habitat support for biota
- Human health linked to soil diversity and biota uptake of minerals to plants for humans
- Less meat eating
- Healthy food for all

Policy change

- Land access (new entrants)
- Policy change
- Farmers are not over 65: youth are trained in sustainable farming
- Subsidies 100% dependent on public good (environmental and social), not just 30% as at present.
- Policy change from central, county, district, town and parish: cabinet, councillors, MPs.

1.2. Three key points to share with others:

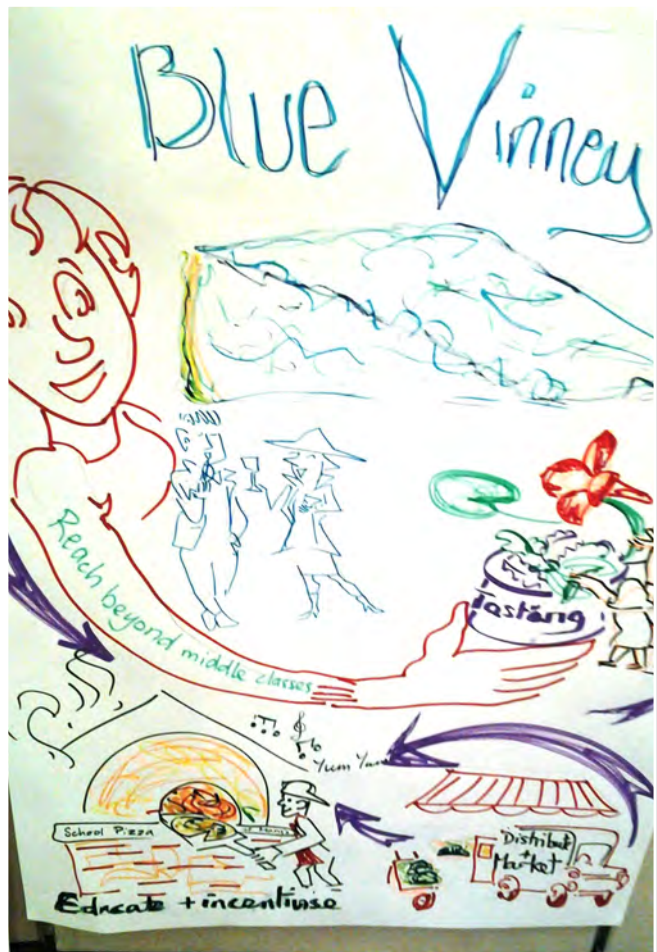
- Policy change and drivers are needed to help expand local food systems.
- Greater focus to communication aimed at consumers (health message) and producers (training and added value).
- Equal value for all forms of producers (veg & meat) creates a working landscape that will change the 'chocolate box' aesthetic.

1.3 One priority for action:

- Take personal responsibility.
- Be part of communicating the personal benefits of the local food systems – incentivise people.

2. Food for All (Blue Vinney)

2.1. Imagine a future where everyone in Dorset has access to affordable and healthy food. How does it look?



Reconnecting farmers into communities / Diversity / Seasonality

- Mixed farming
- Humane and environmentally friendly food production
- Allotments, local farm, dairy, cider press (people sell surplus to requirements i.e. fruit and veg)
- A strong sense of seasonality – consumers are aware of seasonality and shops / restaurants / market which strongly reflect this

New outlet opportunities (existing facilities – pubs, existing retailers, mobile provision)

- Green partners commercial
- Preservation of village shop / stop closures
- Increase farm shops and village shops
- Farm shops selling local produce
- Encourage more community venues so assets and locally grown food can be sold locally
- Bartering / trading places for people and the food they have made / grown
- Local shops selling produce from local plots grown and made in the community
- Local outlets open at convenient times
- Markets – direct access for consumer to producers – shorter supply chains
- Allotments
- Local food takeaways (foodbus) support for growers shared assets
- Reduce big supermarkets
- Transport issues – rural areas without shops – West Dorset has significant transport challenges
- Good food being affordable and available locally

Reconnecting communities / social divide / re-brand to normalise and express the value

- Snack bars and convenience foods that are locally produced and as cheap as multinational brands
- Community based production facilities “Why cook”
- Promote community orchards
- Show the quality and taste of fresh local food
- A place to have excess produce for others to use for themselves
- Showing people which wild berries / nuts can be eaten
- Promote local producers
- Food waste down to zero
- Food / lunch / dinner clubs in the community sharing food
- An easily understood label (e.g. kite mark) for food that is good and local
- Sharing your fruit or garden if you are unable to make use of it
- Local education is integral in everyone’s life

- Finding the incentive – inspire children with creative approaches
- Good nutritional awareness
- Community pulling together
- No food poverty or foodbanks in the future as no longer needed
- Food projects supporting people around cooking
- Access – education to enable people to access healthy food (cooking and nutrition)

2.2. What has to change to make this happen and who needs to be involved? AND What has already been achieved in Dorset to improve access to affordable, nutritious and sustainable food?

- Mixed farming – move away from monoculture (linked to better support for wildlife)
- Getting people more aware of farming – greater understanding to support understanding about local food and also about care for the countryside (i.e. not leaving farm gates open) – e.g. farm tours
- If there is greater interaction this leads to greater understanding and local buy in
- Use stories to raise awareness – e.g. link schools and farms or coffee mornings to sell spare jam
- Have affordable units for local produce – some existing shops do already take local produce but more is needed in other stores
- Potential for local food for sale in post offices and independent stores
- Portland Pride used to have a shop selling local produce but there weren’t enough customers to keep it viable – it’s now a mobile offer
- Potential for a greater use of pubs – some already cook and deliver for schools / lunch clubs but regulations make this difficult
- Need to galvanise the community to get everyone involved and feel part of it
- Need a lot of people to spread the cost
- Support those not in the middle classes to see that local food can be for them as well

- But some in more deprived areas don't know how to cook - potential to offer training courses in cooking (but people are busy – so what is the incentive)
- Involving children may help encourage adults to get involved = pester power
- Find interesting and different methods – e.g. Beaminster Children's Centre is working with the WI and offering 1 to 1 cooking sessions in a family's own home
- Limited cookery in schools isn't helping – can we encourage more? Even where it takes place it's not taken to a higher level
- More diverse farming – potential to get families onto farms to understand where food comes from and then buy local
- Who to get involved – farmers, local councils, schools
- Could we arrange a 'Dorset Bake Off' – use the interest in the TV programme – something creative, inspirational, with incentives
- We need more creative awareness raising (i.e. marketing and rebranding)
- Potential for Rick Stein and/or Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall to help us champion this locally
- How to connect with more deprived areas: link with schools; health visitors; children's centres
- Rebrand local food – normalise it so that local food isn't seen as just something for the middle classes
- Getting kids and families outside – interest in foraging camp cooking, one-pot cooking
- Sustainable, local, healthy – may put some people off
- How to encourage / engage in a busy lifestyle – there is less eating together than there used to be
- Encourage seasonality – it was more exciting when you could only get things at certain times of the year, which made you look forward to it – can we build on this?
- It's difficult to get away from supermarkets – they make it easier so we may need to work closer with them to sell local and seasonal
- Can we improve local labelling in a similar way to supermarkets to make it easier to understand

- Might need to take a progressive approach – encourage eating more fresh food then encourage local and sustainable

2.3. Three key points to share with others:

- ✓ Reach beyond the middle classes – normalise local and healthy food (affordable)
- ✓ Educate and incentivise all along the food chain to raise awareness & encourage people to buy local
- ✓ Support the distribution for local produce and marketing (including local food projects)

2.4. The number one priority for action:

- ✓ Educate and incentivise all along the food chain (by achieving this it will help to reach beyond the middle classes and there will be a greater understanding that local food can be affordable and available to all).

3. Health Workshop (Red Wine)

3.1. Imagine a future where levels of diet related conditions have fallen significantly and everyone in Dorset is eating a healthy diet. How does it look?



- Local fresh organic vegetables, vegan diet or occasional fish, eggs and chicken only. No red meat or processed meat as it's carcinogenic, reduced alcohol and sugar consumption due to sugar tax, therefore nice healthy and slim population. Councils obliged to provide land and training in growing fruit and vegetables, schools teach vegetarian and vegan cooking and provide better vegetarian and vegan school meals.
- Fresh is best: No processed food especially in schools, hospitals, work place canteens and a cultural sea change that to cook at home doesn't need to be time consuming or complicated.
- More vegetarian, minimal sugar, plant based mainly vegan diets with vegetables making up at least 50% of the plate.
- Slimmer population, levels of overweight and obesity have fallen, less strain on adult social care and the NHS, increased participation in physical activity, more people in work, local food producers are thriving and resilient, increase in cooking from scratch, cooking and growing projects are integral parts of curriculum, produce sourced locally is easily identifiable and in demand.
- Supermarkets are controlled about nutritional and buying power to undercut small producers, everyone can cook from scratch, children involved with growing food in schools, fast food is healthy, local producers with clear provenance.
- Local shops shorter working days, food boxes, sharing, fair wages, more home growing and allotments.
- Lower levels of obesity, lower health cost, less demand for fast food outlets, lower supply of produce, increased business opportunities for local suppliers. Depends what other unhealthy lifestyles people are continuing to follow.
- Good balance of healthy protein, carbs, fruit, veg which is organically locally grown and freshly picked. Shift away from processed sugar, eat healthy fats and understand which to cook with, people understand how to be healthy through food, exercise and lifestyle choices.
- Parks filled with fruit and nut trees, grafted onto existing trees, food grown on open spaces, forest gardens on any spare land
- All children eating a healthy and nutritious school lunch, care homes serving freshly prepared meals, communities have access to growing space, fried chicken shops not near schools.
- Food shops in town centres, independent food shops, short working day, food boxes to save time, grow your own, allotments, surplus food free, a living wage.

- Far more sports facilities properly run and open not like Wey Valley Tennis Club, local hospitals waiting lists reduced for key operations allowing reduced budgets, increased percentage of disposable income spent on food, major retailers and supermarkets unused and turned into allotments, habits change, you will make it happen.
- Cost per calorie of fresh food closer to junk food.
- Seeing less obese people/families walking around, reduction in number of people with diabetes, more people working on allotment, particularly young families.

3.2. What has to change to make this happen and who needs to be involved?

- Farmers are most important
- Policy makers: need a 20 year policy with budgeted targets
- Young people and heads of schools
- Local Authorities and all the services they provide, not just the obvious ones.
- We need more community engagement asking what people want, not telling them.
- Central Government need to make local and national policy line up
- Education: change needs to be bottom up
- Families should be the starting point
- Consumers: find out what they need rather than dictating
- Town planners need to be put under control of public health and respond to their policy.
- Planning and procurement teams in local authorities should work more with public health

3.3. What has been achieved in Dorset?

- Bridport has a food festival, independent shops, Home in Bridport and a supportive Town Council which is key for bottom up change
- Bridport Town Council is key to making things happen in Bridport and the town attracts people supportive of these issues
- In other places the Town Council is less supportive
- Bournemouth and Poole have a sustainable food partnership
- In Poole growing spaces have been put in place but ongoing engagement is needed to get people to use them which isn't happening
- Grow it yourself Dorset is teaching vegetable growing in Blandford
- Kingston Maurward with Thomas Hardy School has opened the only land based studio school in the country

3.4. Three key points to share with others:

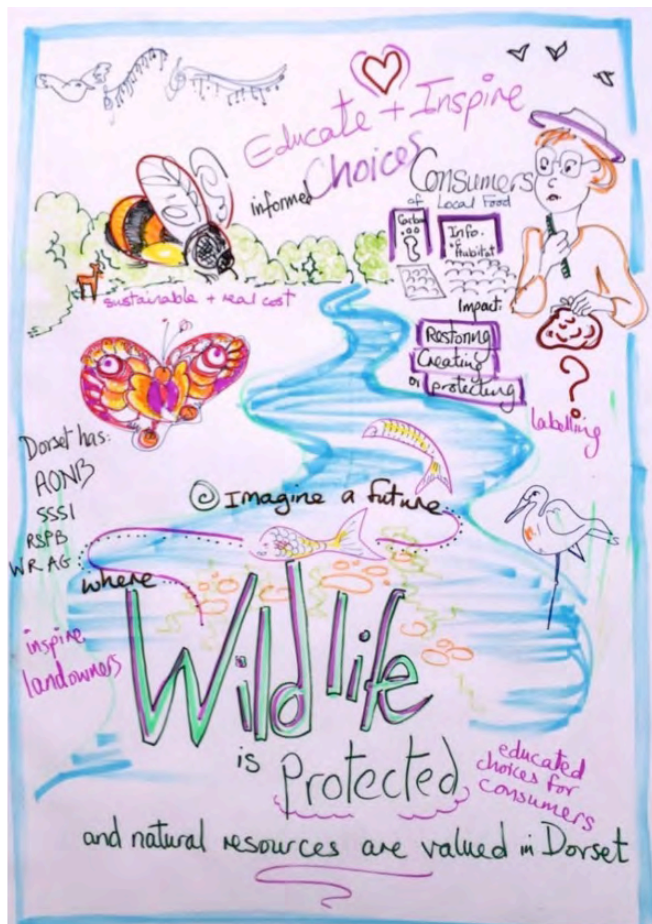
- ✓ Local councillors including changing/ making planning policy that restricts where supermarkets are built and using business rates as a tool to promote healthy eating businesses/shops.
- ✓ Education: bottom up change of diet for everyone. Subsidies for organic vegetable growing
- ✓ Growing in Council owned public spaces
- ✓ Local Enterprise Partnership priorities don't reflect what we are talking about today and they have a largely urban focus. £60 million of funding is being channelled to Dorset through the LEP of which little is going to this area.
- ✓ Dorchester hospital tries to source local and fresh food. This leading by example should be adopted by government and procurement teams of other local service providers.

3.5. The number one priority for action

- ✓ Lead and educate by example in all aspects of life and the community.

4. Wildlife Workshop (Yellow Hammer)

4.1. Imagine a future where wildlife in Dorset is thriving and the value of our soil and other resources is recognised and protected. How does it look?



- More organic vegetable farming, less livestock
- Flower and insect rich grasslands widespread
- More biodiversity on farmland (birds, animals, insects)
- A diversity in the landscape
- Lots of colour, noise and a variety of structure (tall, short, bushy, meandering)
- Soil and habitat protected from pollution and destruction
- Bird song with background bee humming
- Rivers unpolluted (fish jumps), wild flowers fields in early summer of insects
- Young people engaging with the landscape
- Conflict with use of land for intensive farming
- Seeing badgers, hedgehogs, lynx on walk to work or to the village to buy milk.

- Lots of birdsong, not just magpies and rooks
- Hearing the birds sing, seeing the colours, appreciated that I'm alive and well

4.2. What has to change to make this happen and who needs to be involved?

- Need to live in balance with nature, living within means
- Use wildlife rather than replacing it
- Organic retail food outlets: shops, restaurants, cafes, market stalls, workplace canteens
- To make it happen we need to change priorities, recognise protected corridors and wildlife habitats
- Understanding and acknowledging the value wildlife provides
- Pay the real price for food
- Stop supporting non economic farming with tax
- Reduce waste
- Wild land re-released from farming
- More appropriate standards from consumers (e.g less, higher quality meat. More acceptance of quality rather than looks)
- More sustainable upstream (taxes on non-sustainable food)
- Move support to sustainable systems
- Realistic evaluation of actual cost of intensive/ non-sustainable systems
- Wild flowers: More green verges, more seeded roundabouts, means more insects and more birds.
- Lack of birds: variety, Wildlife Trust, farmers, Garden Society
- River problems: Nitrogen run-off, crayfish invasion. Environment Agency
- The sea: pollution, lack of variety of habitat, Wildlife Trust, Marine Conservation
- Retailers respond to customers, and so asking for organic products in shops/restaurants would help.
- Prioritise wildlife habitats and creating connected habitats
- Acknowledge/value wildlife processes. Stop incentivising non-local food. Less waste means more land for wildlife.
- Nitrogen run-off issues and lack of bird biodiversity – fewer chemicals should be used.

- Lower the expectation of consumers in the appearance of food
- More support for local sustainable food. Real cost of 'non-local' food identified.
- Understanding that we have to live within our means, rather than accruing debt. We are mimicking the economy in ecology by creating debt.
- Young people must be included in the square meal agenda. The rural model is not fully understood, we need to address this in young people.

4.3. What has been achieved in Dorset?

- The college at Kingston Maurward helps to educate young people, along with visitor centres, and are successful in increasing understanding
- Environmental designations in rural Dorset – there is an issue within urban areas with not having protected areas
- Environmental designations help to protect but there is a risk that without financial support, important non-designated wildlife sites will be lost
- The school syllabus is not applicable to the real world. Kingston Maurward is successful and this practice needs to be spread further
- Planting of wild flowers on green verges
- Farmers markets – it's difficult to attract customers however
- Field strips
- Explorers for children – groups on a voluntary capacity
- Schools – allotments, forest schools
- Starting to be more honest about problems
- Places now to show people environmental best practice
- Some changes in culture (Bridport, Food For Life)
- School canteens selling local food
- Previously hard power (regulations, incentives), but now developing a vision/ psychology which is more successful
- Partnerships in Dorset are powerful, more than the sum of its parts
- Air quality is an issue

- Improvements in water quality in chalk streams
- Education – Poole Grammar has an award winning food tech centre with allotments, and Avonbourne School also

4.4 Three key points to share with others:

- ✓ Education in all sectors of society is needed to ensure that consumers are fully aware of the wildlife impacts of less sustainable agricultural practices;
- ✓ Products which are more wildlife friendly should be recognised and the consumer made aware; and
- ✓ The real cost of food to wildlife must be identified so that consumers remain informed.

4.5 Priority for Action:

- ✓ "Education is needed to drive the cultural change needed to reduce the impacts of farming upon wildlife".

C. Presenters, facilitators, organising group and delegates

Organising Group

Candida Blaker	CLS Programme Manager, DCA
Maria Clarke	Local Nature Partnership
Linda Hull	CLS local food coordinator, da21
Rupert Lloyd	CLS Climate Change Adaptation Officer, DCC
Ian Rees	Countryside Officer, Dorset AONB
Oliver Rendle	West Dorset Partnership

Workshop facilitators and scribes

	Facilitator		Scribe
WILDLIFE	Emily Newton	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Oliver Rendle
HEALTH	Tiggy Parry	HALFF	Rupert Lloyd
FARMING	Ian Rees	Dorset AONB	Dave Dixon
FOOD FOR ALL	Sarah Watson	Bournemouth and Poole Sustainable Food Cities Partnership	Maria Clarke

Panellists and Chair

Cllr Rebecca Knox	Cabinet Member for Communities, Health and Wellbeing, and Community Safety and County Councillor Beaminster Ward
Robert Lasseter	Farmer, and National Farmers Union (NFU) member
Rebecca Laughton	Landworkers Alliance (LWA)
Paul McNamee	Parliamentary & Advocacy Officer, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Rob Percival	Policy Officer Food and Health, Soil Association
Sarah Watson	Bournemouth and Poole Sustainable Food Cities Partnership

Delegates registered for workshops and/or evening panel and Q&A

First Name	Surname	Company
Vince	Adams	Respect Organics
Ian	Alexander	Natural England
ML	Anderson	Island Community Action
Andrew	Barker	Dorset Agenda 21
Georgia	Bettli	
Neil	Biles	Portland Parish
Pat	Bowcock	Ourganics
Fiona	Bowles	Poole Harbour Catchment Initiative
Russell	Brown	Creative about Cuisine Ltd

First Name	Surname	Company
Sandra	Brown	Dorset CPRE
Emily	Bullock	CLS in Dorset Greener Choices Coordinator, da21
Louise	Bulmer	Somerset County Council
Mitchell	Burt	Bridport Community Orchard
Mitchell	Burt	Bridport Community Orchard Group
Kim	Cavanagh	
Paul	Cottington	SW Environment and Land Use Adviser, NFU
Dave	Dixon	National AONB
Anne	Donelan	Nutritional Therapist (retired)
Robert	Duke	
Cleo	Evans	The Arts Development Company
Paul	Everall	West Dorset Partnership
Louise	Finnis	Somerset County Council
Lucy	Fleetwood	peaceful belly
Rosie	Gilchrist	
Madeline	Goodey	
Jonny	Gordon-Farleigh	Stir To Action
Nick	Gray	
Richard	Gueterbock	BNSS
Gertraud	Gurini-Leitner	
Melanie	Gwinnett	Ubergoodness
Diana	Hall	
Sue	Hassel	Trading Post
Nicola	Hawkins	Dorset Wildlife Trust
Renny	Henderson	RSPB
Alice	Higgins	Down to Earth
Nicola	Hopkins	Wessex Water
Ken	Huggins	Grow-It-Yourself Dorset
Jane	Hutchings	Dorset County Council
Mark	Hymas	KMC veterinary tutor
Raja	Jarrah	CLS in Dorset
Gwyn	Jones	Association of Sustainability Practitioners
Leigh	Jones	Association of Sustainability Practitioners
Cllr. Rebecca	Knox	Cabinet Member for Communities, Health and Wellbeing, and Community Safety and County Councillor Beaminster Ward
Noel	Lakin	Beekeeper
Robert	Lasseter	Farmer, National Farmers Union
Rebecca	Laughton	Landworkers Alliance
Margaret	Lawrence	West Dorset District Council
Chris	Lee	Kingston Maurward College
Chris	Legg	S.A. Legg & Sons
Anna	Lovell	Dorset Community Action
Sheila	Magee	homegrown
Karen	Malin	Artsview
Steve	Marsh	Dorset Police : wildlife crime lead
Rob	McGibbon	
Paul	McIntosh	North Dorset DC

First Name	Surname	Company
Paul	McNamee	Parliamentary & Advocacy Officer, RSPB
Michael	Michaud	Sea Spring Seeds
Bryony	Middleton	Trill Farm
Caroline	Morgan	Local Food Links
Emily	Newton	Dorset Wildlife Trust
Chris	Onions	local takeaway bus project, Trill Farm
Peter	Osmond	
Tiggy	Parry	HALFF
Rebecca	Pearce	Public Health Dorset
Rob	Percival	Policy Officer Food and Health, Soil Association
Alex	Picot	Dorset Community Action
Christine	Preston	
Ben	Rayner	Environment Agency
Anne	Rickard	Transition Town Bridport
Dave	Rickard	Transition Town Bridport
Pamela	Rosling	Resurgence Dorset
Myra	Sealy	Dorset Wildlife Trust volunteer
Charles	Sealy	
Jenny	Shackleford	Transition Town Dorchester
Alison	Smith	Food For Us / Dorset Eye / West Dorset Foodie
Michelle	Smith	Public Health Dorset
Kevin	Spicer	Down to Earth
Sue	Spilling	Langton Matravers Allotment Association
Chris	Spilling	Langton Matravers Allotment Association
Harriet	Stewart-Jones	Transition BH Hub
Louise	Stratton	NFU
Amanda	Streatfield	Bridport Local Food Group
George	Streatfield	Denhay Farms Ltd.
Mary	Thornton	BNSS
Margaret	Toft	
Richard	Toft	
Erin	Torgerson	Trill Farm
Tasha	Tucker Vallecillo	Little Brimpton Farm
Tasha	Turner	
Andy	Tyrell	River Cottage
Anne	Waldron	Bridport Climate group
Laurie	Walters	The Charmouth Dragon Real Food Shop
Susan	Ward-Rice	West Dorset District Council
Nick	Warren	DCA Board member
Sarah	Watson	Bournemouth and Poole Sustainable Food Cities Partnership
Ashley	Wheeler	Trill Farm
Jim	White	Dorset AONB Board
Sarah	Wilberforce	Transition Town Bridport
Kim	Wilcocks	Island Community Action
John	Winterbottom	
Juliet	Wiseman	Bournemouth University

D. Delegates Feedback

The following is a summary of points from 41 completed questionnaires at the event. One respondent attended only the workshops, 27 attended both workshops and evening presentations with Q&A, and nine only the latter.

Respondents had several motivations for participating in the event, with the first predominating:

- To learn more about the issues related to Square Meal (33)
- To network and make connections (29)
- To find out what is happening locally (28)
- To find out ways to take positive action (24)

The event met the expectations extremely well (5/5) for 32% of respondents, very well (4/5) for 53%, and reasonably well (3/5) for 15%.

1. What key message(s) will you take away from the event?

There is much knowledge and activity going on in Dorset, for example:

- Hope! There is a wide and varied interest in food production, health of people and the countryside
- There are many people working towards similar aims.
- There is more awareness than I thought regarding the issues but it seems we may only act when forced by events.
- That a growing number of people (including younger people) are concerned about sustainability and actively seeking to be part of the solution.
- That there are lots of organisations working around sustainable food that we need to link to!

Education and incentivisation is a prime objective, as long as it is not patronising

- Important to educate people in a creative 'organic' way.
- Young people need to be an important part of the solution.
- Ensure sustainability appropriately covered in the curriculum areas at KMC

Communicating in appropriate ways (i.e. not education as can be patronising)

- Consumers have power to make changes
- Consumers together can make a difference (how do we make local consumer groups?)
- Consumers have a lot of power over supermarkets
- Consumer power – nb Tesco sighted Dorchester as the healthiest town in England – there is no greengrocers (only market trader) slight on bakers, butchers. Why?

Other suggested ways of going forward, such as:

- Encourage local small scale fruit and vegetable producers by providing their produce in schools, hospitals and institutions.
- Find a joined up approach. Ongoing changes and education, and giving people incentives to eat healthier and local food.
- Need to work together.

Encouragement to DO something, individually or collectively:

- Get started
- Walk my talk.
- I have to shop better
- ...keep pressing ahead with our efforts – encouraged to hear of success elsewhere.
- The importance of leading by example by insisting on local, organic fresh food.
- Small changes can make a difference as can community based collective action / demand.

Some challenges

- Need long term funding as it's a long term solution – I work in a project doing a lot of things feeding into square meal but funding is short term but solutions are long term.
- ...there is not enough awareness of the political context impacting our right to food.
- Policy pressure is absolute.
- In the present economic climate, ordinary people struggle to pay all bills – without more time, local shops cannot compete with consumerising supermarkets
- How do we create a more sustainable, progressive, environmentally and humane production process in the UK that engages and supports all to access healthier, locally produced food?
- Just a bit too cosy and 'middle class' to seem realistic.
- We are already actively delivering a project to support new and existing producers; provide training to communities; and promote healthier more local food that is accessible to all BUT it is really difficult to inspire change in behaviour – so we'll be continuing to drive that activity and fund the right incentives for people.

2. What key messages from the event should we pass on to influence key decision makers (e.g. Government and/or Local Authorities)

Better processes and good food for all can cut costs – especially health and social care costs.

- Good food for all will save the NHS a fortune
- Don't ignore food – health – NHS overload! Local government should enforce food for life standards in purchasing.
- Put diet at the core of health policy.
- Support local food producers and give vulnerable people (children, elderly and disabled) proper local food.
- Need to push it from the inequalities agenda perspective.

Local authorities can and should buy local.

- Make local government buy local, source local – use local skills and food especially provide good organic food to recovering patients.
- Join policy up to procurement officer's work at the coalface.
- Not to sign up to International Trade Deals which will take away local control of local food.
- Promote local food and support local producers.

Re-introduce cookery lessons for all children in schools

- As a child of the eighties that had school dinners and home economic as a core subject for girls withdrawn. A generation therefore have no concept of food. Many of these are now parents of the children being taken on farm trips

Policy should respond to the population's rather than to corporations' needs

- That vested corporate interests must not be allowed to set the agenda when it comes to sustainable agriculture, but that well-established organic agriculture has to be used if we are to be genuinely sustainable as a species and to enjoy healthy living.
-Policy needs to be based on improving people's and wildlife welfare – not economic need to get local politicians on board.
- Green economics must determine policy and decision making.
- That government needs to take the lead in ensuring policies to support farmers.
- To support local growers re-introduce farmers' markets (none near us in North Dorset) and reduce waste at supermarkets and on farms by having charities collect food.
- LEP needs to recognise and response to needs of food producers in Dorset.
- Government to put a tax on pesticides and artificial fertilisers and give tax breaks for organic production. Appoint an environment secretary who understands the importance of bees. Get local planning authorities to treat local food production more favourably.

- Pay skilled people at a fair wage to save the planet.
- What can be done locally – but high level leadership is needed – Defra doesn't do it!
- Probably not worth the effort. Just concentrate on bringing folk together to do positive stuff without 'asking' people in authority for permission. We'll know we've won when they come to us.

3. Are there any actions that you / your organisation will take following the event?

People want to continue actions, capitalising on contacts made:

- Following up on network connections made.
- Keep doing what we are currently doing as part of our project as it covers lots of the key issues raised by Square Meal – educating people about healthy eating and growing and supporting local producers.
- Carry on passing on message.

Taking the message back to organisations to discuss follow up

- Discuss the findings with Transition Town Bridport
- Share the information gathered today with others, including Grow it Yourself Dorset and teachers/pupils at the local primary school where I help with the after-school gardening club.
- Feedback thoughts and key messages re shared outcomes to senior team.
- The Arts Development Company will seek to help support the work

Redouble efforts to sell, source and purchase food locally

- Improve my attempt to provide effectively priced locally sourced food.
- Make more determined effort to buy local
- Promote healthy eating, sustainability and the production of local food.

Continue to raise awareness and increase understanding

- To continue research in soils and make more people aware of their link to healthy soil
- Keep talking to the community and keep learning.
- Too much emphasis on education in schools. Look to families as educators to build communities. Well done Sarah Watson – Good job! Make language more accessible – too many big words and acronyms. Discover farming.
- Hold more awareness raising sessions.
- More lobbying.

4. What could we have done better?

- Not much I reckon. Really interesting spread panel-wise.
- Excellent event, well run with some very insightful and passionate people
- Brilliantly organised event in lovely surroundings.

Allowed more time for workshops

- ... would have liked to have known more about what was discussed elsewhere.
- More time to discuss points as this topic is too huge – hope that the outcomes can be productive
- First part rather rushed – too much to get to grips with.
- Longer event that included working with Otto Scharmer 'U' process that continued beyond the event (levels of listening).

Panel and agenda to debate

- More direction and chairing of panel discussion – questions pre-submitted?
- Have a clearer agenda to the debate. There was a conflict in the hall as people are coming from very different places.
- Chosen a more balanced panel for the debate
- More realism with farmers input rather than mostly 'converted'. Not your fault – it was who applied to come. Questions too constrained by trying to relate to the workshops.

- Better use of best practice examples from the areas. More time given to the 1 farmer on the panel to hear really good earthy exposition of changes in disposable income expenditure on food, what farmers are doing to help themselves etc.
- The message, expectation, objectives etc. should have been clearer. I'm still not clear what the Square Meal Debate wants to achieve because there are so many different voices. Simplicity will help us understand the role we can play.
- I would have liked more acknowledgement of the impact of central government on local food.
- More chance for debate.
- For those that were there from the beginning at 4pm the first evening slot got slightly repetitive. Might have been better to have 3 events one afternoon, one evening rather than merging through. Long for those that stayed through.
- Prepared everyone so that anyone could speak about their project.

Logistics, such as a more efficient sound system, water more readily available

5. Do you have any other comments about today's event?

Participants commented favourably on the content and welcomed the opportunity to network with a range of delegates

- Very inspiring and engaging
- Keep telling the stories.
- Well attended by a range of organisations / groups.
- It was a very informal, friendly forum – made networking easier.
- Very good to see lots of new faces. Maybe it would be good to do a similar event aimed at young people i.e. schools or KMC students.

However, some commented on the focus of the approach/ discussion:

- Education, education. Very much directed at schools. Children do not determine the purse strings in a household, they have the interest but not the wherewithal to carry forward.
- Too great an emphasis on paying more and demanding quality. Some of our local, national community cannot afford to make the choice for locally produced, more expensive food.
- Please no more 'starting the conversation'. Once or twice is ok but it becomes a barrier when it is a cliché.

Many people said the food was excellent, for example:

- Great food. Great location. Great networking.
- Excellent vegan food

Several applauded the venue and how well the event was organised, for example:

- Excellent organisation of event. Wide range of opinions from the speakers. ... Thank you
- Perfect venue, well run, excellent food and stimulating debate.
- Great event
- Extremely valuable... well done for organising this event!
- Workshops really well run for yellow hammer group. Stuck to sustainability – good listening, good feedback, good chair.

However, one delegate said

Too much paperwork!! Doesn't link well with sustainability message.

6. How did you hear about this event?

45% had been reached by email invitation, and **26%** by word of mouth.

7. Have you been to a sustainability event before?

Judging by the 33 respondents to this question, we succeeded in reaching 'beyond the converted' with this event. 24% (8) said they had never been to a sustainability event before; 33% only occasionally, with 24% to several and only 18% often.

We are pleased with the level of engagement going forward. Significant numbers of people said they would like to be involved in further work or discussions related to Square Meal (22); to be contacted about similar events (22); join the mailing list to receive CLS e-news (23) or CLS Food Future e-newsletters (21).



To keep in touch find out more, visit:

**www.clsdorset.org.uk and
www.foodfuturebridport.org.uk**

If you would like to be actively involved in taking the issues forward, please contact us on **info@clsdorset.org.uk** or ring **07917 476196**.

This event was organised by CLS in Dorset partners, with Dorset Local Nature Partnership and hosted by Kingston Maurward College.



Square Meal Debate Event Report



Kingston Maurward College, Dorchester
28 November 2015

This report is prepared for event participants, agencies who have a role to play, and those who we seek to influence and involve.