



Feed Leeds Minutes: October 22th 2018 - Inkwell

Apologies and Minutes

Present: **Tom Bliss** (Chair and minutes), **Pete Foulston** (Vice Chair), **Sarah Priestley** (LCC 2023 and Chapel Allerton In Bloom), **Sue Ottley-Hughes** (Stank Hall Barn), **Becky Mears** (Incredible Edible Airborough and Season Well), **Cllr John Illingworth**.

Apologies: **Sarah-Jane Mason** (RHS), **Sonja Woodcock** (Leeds Food Partnership), **Mark Warner** (Plate 2 Plate Compost), **Rob Moores** (Growing Better), **Rosie Atkins** (LESSN), **Prof Les Firbank** (Chair Sustainable Agriculture UoL), **Marie Pierre Dupont** (LCC Housing and REAP)

Potting Shed Drinks

A lively and wide ranging discussion attended by **Tom, Sonja, Cllr John Illingworth, Mark Warner** (Plate2Plate Compost and Leeds Beckett), **Paul Magnull** from Rainbow Junction and Leeds Urban Harvest, **Beth Bingley** from Growing Better / Hyde Park Source, and **Jeremy Isles** from [Green Future Associates](#).

Green Future Associates

The upshot of discussions with Jeremy is that he has funding to try to develop a **national urban agriculture support network**, offering a number of useful functions not currently supplied by other national organisations. After discussion, we agreed that we would send a letter of support from Leeds to join those that Jeremy has obtained from other cities, and await developments with interest.

Leeds Rotters

We had a good meeting on the 15th Oct attended by **Michael Knowles** (Growing Better), **Tom, Sarah-Jane, Marie-Pierre** and **Rosie** (with **Sonja, Mark Warner** from Plate 2 Plate Compost and **Emma Goodway** from Space2 sending apologies). A decision was made to call a Compost Champions moot (probably at the West Leeds Activity Centre) in the new year, to decide how to meet our commitment to the Sustainable Food Cities Bronze Award application. See flier.

One future option might be to re-run, and hopefully recapture the energy of, the Back to Front, Space2 and LCC event at Thackray Museum in 2016, where the panel included 'Compost John' from York, and Ian Fletcher from Leeds Beckett. Tom is working with John on some tree planting, so he's now aware that we might invite him to contribute at some point. **Tom to catch up with Ian Fletcher re his project.**

At the general meeting, further suggestions were added: to involve InBloom groups (via Richard Laxton), Cllr Coupar (member for communities) and Cll Rafiq (waste), to consider funding and/or

sponsorship to buy compost caddies (or workshop to make these) to distribute, to set up collection hubs at community growing and allotment sites etc.

It should be possible to establish a funding stream for the project, because taking wet material out of the waste stream will increase the calorific value of incineration at the Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility (RERF). There are also cogent arguments for the creation of compost in its own right.

The group could also assemble and distribute a (compostable) leaflet advising what can and can't go into a caddy/bin.

See attached flier. **Please share this with people who you know to be passionate and/or expert about any form of composting.**



ARE YOU A COMPOST CHAMPION?

Feed Leeds, Leeds Rotters and The Leeds Food Partnership are applying for the Sustainable Food Cities 'Bronze' Award, and we need people with composting experience and skills to come to an event in Spring 2019, and brainstorm ideas on how we can deliver this ambition - as required by the award:

"Home and community composting is being promoted through awareness campaigns and through the provision of composting tools, demonstrations, materials and sites for communities to use."

We know that across Leeds there's a wealth of knowledge, experience and skills in a range of composting techniques, and we would like to tap into this resource to collaboratively decide on the most effective ways to encourage and support residents across Leeds to begin, or improve their composting.

If you or any experts you know would like to support this, please email rotters@urbal.tv so we can send out details nearer the time. And please share this with your network so they can register



Thanks!



Leeds Food Partnership

Mark gave a demonstration of his machines last Sunday at West Leeds Activity Centre to Taste Yorkshire and Eat Your Greens.

Climate Risk and Disaster Planning

Tom represents United Bank of Carbon (UBoC), Feed Leeds and Leeds Food Partnership at the **Leeds Climate Commission** and the **Leeds Climate Resilience Working Group** where he is seeking to raise awareness of the impact of global climate risks (exacerbated by Brexit) to the local food system, which has not been on the local radar much to date because food is managed by the private sector and not classified as a Public Good. He has agreed to introduce key group members to global food systems specialist [Prof Tim Benton](#), who many of them did not know of.

Sue suggested we should try to keep a register of existing and suitable sites in Leeds for food growing, and to be more active in helping to protect these from development.

Becky also suggested we should publish a list of places where people can buy local grown food.

Our map is a start, but functionality is much reduced since Tom's Urban Map died. John advised that the LCC mapping system ArcGIS is inaccessible, and pressure should be brought for a more open system such as QGIS, especially around future housing and other development plans, so local communities can better protect valuable growing sites.

[NB Since the meeting, Tom has been contacted by the Leeds Climate Commission who advise that Arup are seeking a meeting in Leeds re the Food System, and asking for names of people to attend. He suggested Sonja, Les, Emma Strachan, Andrew Critchett and Andy Goldring from LFP, plus Tim Benton and Louise Dye from UoL to add to those already attending such as Prof Andy Gouldson (Stern Reports - an advocate of food as a climate transition tool) and head of LCC Sustainability Dr Tom Knowland, etc.]

Item for future discussion; how can we improve our visibility and offer more support to local groups protesting developments by sending letters on their behalf?

Sue to compose *pro forma* letter re allotments.

Tom to contact (or utilise the above meeting with Arup - inquiries made) Leeds City Council (Sarah to provide contact for local disaster planning), Leeds Climate Commission, Leeds Climate Resilience Working Group, and Leeds Food Partnership to suggest a workshop on the risks to Leeds' food system, and to discuss potential actions such as the employment by LCC of a dedicated food security officer. John to advise best approach.

List of local food buyers to be assembled by Leeds Food Partnership - Sonja?

Growing Better

Rob reports that the CIC has taken a decision to go back to being a purely volunteer-based organisation.

The organization is strengthening its ties with the nearby **Café Leap** and has recently enrolled two volunteers from there with learning disabilities.

In partnership with West Leeds Activity Centre and The Real Junk Food Project, Growing Better has successfully delivered a four week summer and half-term **Healthy Holidays programme** involving breakfast, lunch and lots of outdoor activities in between. The programme targeted disadvantaged children who are at risk of not eating well during school holidays and reached 120 children.

At Potting Shed Drinks, Beth made a range of suggestions on how the **West Leeds Community Garden** project at West Leeds Activity Centre could proceed, and we agreed that as this might be able to accommodate elements which are proving difficult over the river in Kirkstall, we should continue to support this in every way we can. One point of discussion was whether a snappier title would help.

A volunteer **Activity Day is planned for Saturday 10th November** – times to follow. Activities will include clearing the site of as much grass and bramble as possible; surveying the site as a precursor to a site design; and starting to build a composting facility using old freezers and fridges.

Back to Front

Workshops are still going well. The Shine garden is going strong, and through the workshops and visiting the fruit trees planted in Feb they're meeting more and more local growers.

They won a Community Foundation micro grant to fund activities at the end of summer and this autumn, including Herbal Faces at the Compton Centre, microgreens at the Harehills Festival, and pollinators planting and maintenance session at the Ashton Road pollinator planter.

They're hoping to go on a 'field trip' out of Harehills soon, possibly to **Bedford Fields**.

Harehills in Bloom

This group now has a constitution, a bank account and two sacks of daff bulbs to plant locally! And they're liaising with Parks to get a tree planted at the Fforde Grene junction.

Incredible Edible Aireborough

Becky reported that they now have 7 regular volunteers, and have linked with Friends of Nunroyd Park. They are helping them create a community orchard with help from Parks.

Season Well

Has linked with **Lemon Balm** and **Hyde Park Source** to deliver Healthy Holidays sessions at the Cross Green Community Garden.

Leeds 2023

Leeds 2023 are currently recruiting a chair for the Leeds Culture Trust, an arms-length organisation that will deliver the five-year festival leading up to 2023, starting in spring 2019. The 'Bid Book' to which we contributed when the project was first mooted is being taken forward by the Trust, so our ideas and suggestions are still in the frame. Sarah will not be part of the new structure, but will advise on how best we can engage with them when the time arrives.

Chapel Allerton In Bloom

The group plan to plant 20 fruit trees at the junction of Montreal Avenue and Gledhow Park Drive, funded by **The Orchard Project**, (where Ben is now in post). This will add to the patchwork orchard already planted in Regent Street, the park and Town Street Mews. **Tom to invite Ben to next meeting.**

Leeds Food Partnership and N8 Agrifood

Sonja has started an additional role as Knowledge Exchange Fellow with the N8 Agrifood Theme at the University of Leeds (1 day per week). Her role will be to link research with local projects and initiatives, here in Leeds and across the N8 universities, which will help to develop areas in the food action plan.

The Leeds Food Partnership and LeedsACTS will be hosting an event "Building Momentum #Bronze Ambition" on Thursday 22 November 5-8pm @ Northern Monk. The event will bring together third sector organizations, academics, indie businesses, statutory organizations and interested individuals to learn more about Leeds' journey to becoming a Sustainable Food City and what happens next. (Eventbrite link to follow asap).

The Real Junk Food Project

Adam Smith has resigned as a director of the Leeds CIC. He still heads up the national charity and has set up a Freegan box scheme in Wakefield. There are plans to expand Fuel for Schools into a national project too - Nathan Atkinson is still involved. It has a separate branding and directors to TRJFP

Grow to School

Ama has just released a mail-out focused on building staff confidence.

<https://mailchi.mp/0f5ab46dde6c/outdoor-learning-building-staff-confidence>

Friends of Stank Hall Barn

In spite of the Friends being offered £1m by Historic England, LCC has decided to pursue other plans for the building. To Historic England's frustration, the council intend to spend £500k public money to tidy up the building and make it attractive to prospective wedding venue businesses. The Friends hope to have access for up to five years, during which time they will continue to provide vital free food to impoverished local communities in spite of on-going arson and other vandalism (which some suspect may be organised to encourage them to leave the site sooner).

They have been working with Springwell Primary to construct a growing scheme and three playgrounds, they have been doing some guerrilla planting at other sites, and are engaging with South Leeds hubs re the predicted drop in living standards and increase in food poverty caused by Brexit (Sue is preparing a 5 page report).

Kirkstall Island Farm

For many years, Feed Leeds has been spearheading plans for an ambitious community farm at Burley Mills in keeping with wider plans and aspirations for the area, such as KVDT's [Sustain](#) and [Kirkstall Valley Park](#) (KVP) of which Tom was a committee member. Extensive work with local activists, Feed Leeds, Arup, Leeds Beckett and others had produced a widely-praised concept known as [Kirkstall Island Farm](#) (KIF) which aimed to turn challenges into opportunities and so create a landmark asset for Leeds while also delivering many local social, environmental and economic benefits. It covered the whole tenancy / island, and ideally other land nearby, and included a wide range of functions - all responses to the aspirations of Leeds groups and local people.

Since March 2018, the project had been a 'co-managed' under the FL constitution. This typically requires three members of the FL committee to sit on a Steering Group with another party, in this case - after various other attempts - Kirkstall Valley Development Trust (KVDT), who are aiming to convert two derelict mills nearby.

KVDT had offered to host the project temporarily as Feed Leeds had the wrong structure to do so, nominally taking on the tenancy and opening a dedicated bank account on behalf of KIF. Once the tenancy was secure and the other hurdles cleared, KIF would become a stand-alone Bencom, CIC or similar, with reserved places for FL, KVDT and other key partners such as Yorkshire Wildlife Trust on the board.

Tom proposed a structure of two interconnected divisions (no alternative structure was suggested). A CSA ([Community Supported Agriculture](#)) scheme would form one commercially-independent division (not grant-funded lest the loss of this should lead to a collapse, as advised by our CSA consultant), and the rest of the activity (other types of community growing, allotments, school / educational facilities, research growing, nature reserves, cash crops, renewables, community park and more) would form the another. The latter would be funded by rents from sublets and the grants which it was being designed to attract. The strength of the two-division structure was that each should be able to support the other if it hit difficulty, such a flood for the CSA or loss of funding from the other division, and the Steering Group would keep the two in balance.

However, we had not yet secured access to the land, and progress was inhibited by some existential threats, most of which have yet to be cleared. Chief among these is winning the tenancy from LCC (who feel they must advertise for bids, when ours remains far from ready), saving the land from flood works (official status unknown, but possibly prohibitive), bottoming out a serious contamination risk (ditto), and, until very recently, the potential presence on site of offenders, raising major safeguarding issues.

Without full understanding of these and other 'red lines,' it would not be good practice to initiate the planned Local Community Engagement and Participatory Design process, because without facts as foundations this could increase confusions and concerns rather than resolving them. Employed correctly, the process should balance the many diverse assets and aspirations using established methods which Tom teaches at Leeds Beckett and other Feed Leeds members champion, change the concept into a strategy, and so deliver a robust proposal to put before LCC (including Planning if necessary), the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS2), other key stakeholders, major funders, the general public, etc.

Initially the Steering Group was quorate, but over recent months only Tom had been involved - a technical reason for withdrawal. Possibly as a result, the project was no longer proceeding to Feed Leeds standards of inclusiveness and consensus, wherein all parties are broadly content with all decisions.

Tom shared his concerns, chiefly that the CSA was being launched ahead of sequence, in a report to the full Feed Leeds committee, and online discussion followed, with contributions from two members now involved with the CSA but not the Steering Group. The report was also discussed at the general meeting with contributions from a KVDT board member. In both forums, there was agreement that the relationship was not working as it needed to. Tom suggested that Feed Leeds should retire, pointing out that KVDT can (hopefully) deliver a great farm project without Feed Leeds, but the opposite is not true. It was therefore agreed to withdraw.

Chris Hill from KVDT has since responded, *"We'll continue to try and pursue the process set out in the CSA business plan*. There is obviously tremendous potential for projects around and related to the CSA. If you or any Feed Leeds partners want to push anything forward at any point, please do so."*

[*NB The CSA business plan only covers the CSA operation - percentage of total project yet to be decided].

The Feed Leeds Committee would like to thank everyone who has contributed over the years, especially Tom for his efforts to create a vision for the farm and for bringing together and aligning a number of disparate parties to the point where a credible project does at least seem possible.

Naturally, individual and organisational members of Feed Leeds remain free to contribute as they see fit (as some intend to - with the committee's full support). Feed Leeds wishes the farm every success, hopes it will become a member of the Feed Leeds network in the fullness of time, and remains keen to provide what support it can, subject to evidence that the project is being progressed to the satisfaction of the committee.

Tom to advise the farm steering group of this decision, and change the project's status on the FL website (Done).

Next Meeting

We agreed to hold the next general meeting again at Potting Shed Drinks, which is 15th Nov. Rob to book room at Further North from 7.30 pm.