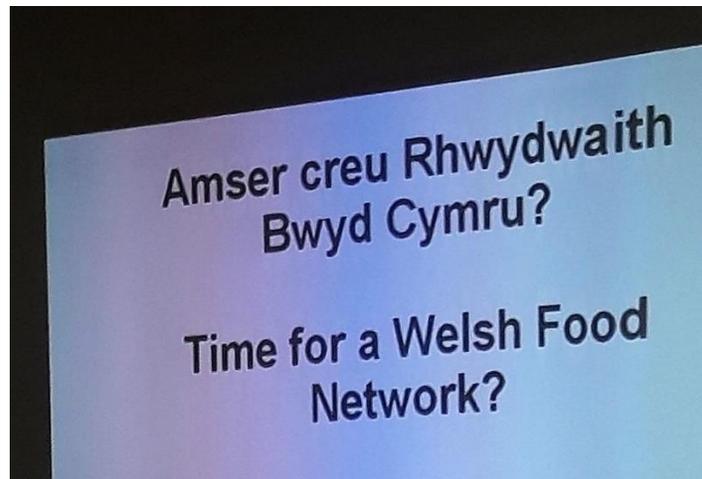


Food Network Wales (National Botanic Gardens, Carmarthen, February 9, 2018, 10-1pm)



Chair's Welcome

Jane Powell chaired the half-day meeting, which was supported by Sustain, London, and which some 40 people attended. Participants included those with senior positions in organisations, self-employed people, small holders, volunteers, students.

- The aim was to identify interest and engagement with a potential food network for Wales
- Food is a complex issue which touches many areas – public health, farming the environment, social justice, friendship and so on – but is hard for any of us to see the whole picture.
- Statistics from the Welsh food system
 - In 2015-2016 56% of farm businesses made a loss or would have done without subsidies¹
 - Welsh food and drink industry turnover stands at £6.9 billion/year² and continues to grow but suffers a skills shortage; food is not seen as an exciting career
 - Biodiversity is under threat. 41 Welsh species are critically endangered in the UK.³

¹ <https://www.wcpp.org.uk/single-post/2018/01/16/The-Implications-of-Brexit-for-Agriculture-Rural-Areas-and-Land-Use-in-Wales>

² <http://gov.wales/newsroom/environmentandcountryside/2018/180123-something-to-toast-to-welsh-food-and-drinks-sector-edges-nearer-to-meeting-2020-target-early/?lang=en>

³ <https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/stateofnature2016/>

- Public health: 59% of people in Wales are overweight or obese and 7% of Welsh adults are being treated for diabetes⁴
- By 2016 there were 157 food banks in Wales⁵
- In 2015, 300,000 tonnes of food waste in Wales.⁶
- Brexit, the Well-Being of Future Generations Act, the Assembly's Rethinking Food in Wales consultation, the emergence of the Welsh Food Poverty Network, the RSA Food, Farming and Countryside Commission and many other developments present an opportunity for a new start.
- Food Manifesto for Wales was mooted by Jane Davidson and developed over past 3-4 years by Jane Powell and colleagues <https://foodmanifesto.wales/tag/food-system/>
- Food naturally brings us together, so why not focus on that? Food reveals the differences we have in society but sharing a meal creates a common humanity
- Our moment to step forward in collaboration and engage locally and nationally for the food system we want

Speakers

Natasha Yorke-Edgell (political campaigns officer, RPSB)

- Largest nature conservation charity in the UK
- Unsustainable farming is a key threat to wildlife
- Brexit is an opportunity for new progressive legislation
- Need to talk about food as it is a way to engage people; want to bring nature into the food debate; RSPB involved in the Square Meal project⁷ and the Food Citizenship report.⁸

John Davies (farmer and NFU)

- Vital that we all work together
- Environmental damage has occurred but food security is important
- Need to do produce food with a smaller footprint
- Brexit is all consuming and must look for opportunities
- We have a great food story to tell in Wales
- Important to teach every child in Wales to cook, grow food and know where their food comes from

Katie Palmer (Food Cardiff)

- Food Cardiff is a cross-sector partnership; part of Sustainable Food Cities partnership

⁴ <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/national-survey/?lang=en>

⁵ <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/doctors-school/news/welsh-food-banks-on-the-increase-26546>

⁶ <http://www.itv.com/news/wales/2017-01-10/wales-household-food-waste-levels-lowest-in-the-uk/>

⁷ <http://foodresearch.org.uk/square-meal/>

⁸ <https://www.foodcitizenship.info/>

- Opportunities for sustainable food cities to influence local and national policy (eg in Wales, the Obesity Strategy and Public Health Wales Bill)
- Taking holistic approach to food; worked on School Holiday Enrichment Programme⁹ (SHEP) and Peas Please¹⁰ (tackling vegetable consumption), Food Poverty Alliance Wales¹¹; member of Food and Drink Industry Board¹²
- We need to pin down what needs to be done and by who and how to mobilise these individuals and networks

Corinne Castle (Transition Bro Gwaun, Fishguard)

- Food waste/surplus food is now part of the conversation (which it was not to the same extent 10 years ago)
- Described community led Community Café in Fishguard, using surplus food (see also: <https://foodmanifesto.wales/2016/03/11/surplus-food-community-growth/>) . Sadly this closed in November 2017
- Now opened a community fridge; people see how much food is wasted

Simon Wright (Wright's Food Emporium <http://www.wrightsfood.co.uk> - café and delicatessen))

- Much great (food) work going on but Welsh Government not taken opportunities for food and farming; not part of the DNA of WG or the civil service
- Need radical responses for Wales; education is crucial
- Teach everyone to cook; evidence shows this could change diets and have a massive impact
- Need to be strong in lobbying for change in policy
- Missing Brexit means an opportunity lost

Jeremy Gass (Just Food Abergavenny)

- Just Food inception in 2013 due to the sense that the Abergavenny Food Festival had lost its political edge on food; debate had fallen away
- Just Food organizes fringe events at the Food Festival to re-energise debate (Rosie Boycott in 2016, event on fish sustainability in 2017)
- Working well with new Food Festival CEO (Aine Morris)
- Good partnership bringing serious food debate back to the festival

⁹ <http://wlga.wales/food-and-fun-school-holiday-enrichment-programme>

¹⁰ <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/event/peas-please-wales/>

¹¹ <https://www.publichealthnetwork.cymru/en/social-determinants/poverty/food/welsh-food-poverty-network/>

¹² <https://businesswales.gov.wales/foodanddrink/food-and-drink-industry-board>



Different structures/options for a food/farming network for Wales (Ben Reynolds, Sustain)

- What works for Wales?
- Importance of bringing a breadth of people together
- What is the vehicle for change?
- Start off with an alliance?
- Sustain is an alliance of 100 NGOs. Brings members together to work on specific issues; not all organisations work on all issues
- Issues for Sustain have included healthy diets, accessible/affordable

food, sugar tax, improving food culture, real Bread Campaign, junk free checkout campaign, hospital food, sustainable fish, Sustainable Food Cities

- Best to join forces on things we can agree on
- Partnerships work with a mix of policy and practice
- Problems: does evidence lead to policy?
- Sustain is not public facing
- What do we think could happen in Wales?
- What model? What activities? What issues? How funded?
- Who would be the members?

Discussion groups

Four breakout groups worked on a set of questions.

<p>What's needed:</p> <p>A voice for smallholders, growers, small businesses -</p> <p>One coherent voice that will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be the place for advice on food• Be a repository of info• Keep people in touch with each other• Focus the energy• Demand/decrece <p>Structure and how it works</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pay someone to coordinate• Recognize geography of Wales – rural/urban, north/south• Timescales – short, medium and long term• Local and national government	<p>What it might do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education• Evidence and solutions for government• Link to WFG Act via Jenny Rathbone• Lobby and campaign• Support small producers in tendering for public procurement• Map resources <p>Issues it could deal with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Labour/immigration• Fruit and veg locally• Education and skills• Labelling and packaging• Access to land• True cost of food• Localized food production• Poverty• Biodiversity• Activism, citizenship• Behaviour change for citizens• Soil health
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Next steps

- Aims of the network/alliance?
- Shape of the network
- Initiate working groups to identify issues
- Name of the network?
- A network to make demands?
- Sense of direction? Where might we get to
- Need for strong systemic change
- Piggy back on another organization? (eg Growing the Future, <http://www.growingthefuture.co.uk/>; Citizens Cymru <http://www.citizensuk.org/cymru>)
- A network that people can join? (inclusive and wide reaching)