

What are the challenges of establishing a community supported bakery?

Outcomes from Group Discussions at FeedingManchester #11

Challenges

- A lack of time for volunteers
- Having the right people and skills
- Acquiring premises

Solutions

- Potential Premises – industrial units, find a pizza oven, local restaurants, Bury College
- People/Skills/Time – Need to start working on bringing more people in to the group with more focused skill sets.
- Need volunteers for baking. Just invite people down to come and learn and go from there but do need one person to oversee everything. This will teach people but also help bring in some volunteers.
- Plunkett Foundation for mentoring a possibility
- Stronger links with Handmade and other bakeries, even if informally
- Research into “Unlimited” in Leeds as a funding source. Hard to find on Google but keep searching.
- Wellbeck “School of Artisan Food” for graduates and volunteers

What are the challenges of networking and working in partnership within Greater Manchester’s sustainable food sector?

Challenges

- No time!
- Seen as outsiders (when working with councils, etc.)
- Geographical distance
- Lack of digital media know-how
- Difficulties identifying who has what skills
- Unknown where resources are locally
- The importance and value of networking needs to be emphasised.
- Lack of confidence to approach organizations.
- Not enough coordinators/paid employees to develop links
- Restricted by paid work

Solutions

- Easing up communication and matching up organizations
- Using Feeding Manchester/Foodlink coordinators
- Membership-based organizations such as Prestwich Life
- Using Feeding Manchester website for events, etc.
- Training for local groups
- Support workshops for skill-sharing
- Use forums
- Develop online resources for networking
- Bulletin boards/forums on Feeding Manchester where members can share skills
- Develop partnerships during the less busy food months of Jan/Feb
- Agencies could provide advice on communications and networking.

What are the challenges to setting up and running community cafes?

Challenges

- Initial reliance on (probably very busy) volunteers
- Finding a venue that's accessible and affordable
- Broader challenges of working with volunteers.
- Labour-intensive
- Gathering skills together (design, construction, materials)
- Finding money/known when local fund funds are available
- Keeping things going after the initial set-up
- Getting all your systems in place
- It's a lot of work!
- Finding people willing to take responsibility!

Solutions

- Division of labour, skills, and governance
- Keep everyone informed
- Develop good communication skills
- Schedules and task lists help (but should be reviewed periodically)
- Weekly de-brief to see if anyone needs help and to share information
- Well-facilitated meetings
- Develop coordination role with someone to oversee the while and keep information flowing
- Stay connected to local friendly partners and networks and work together for advice, guidance and to conduct research
- Couple meetings with tasks
- Have a communication book/board
- Annually or bi-annually have a day set aside to revisit long-term goals, make strategy, etc.
- Develop policies and procedures (it's easier to refer to rules than people)
- Solutions are dependent on goals
- Create opportunities to transfer knowledge
- Make to visit other projects, share ideas, help and materials

What are the challenges to urban food growing?

Challenges

- Do you buy in or get backing from council?
- Planning the use of non-temporary structures
- Labour – volunteers, recruiting people with true skills
- Distribution gluts
- Identifying and accessing markets
- Education and awareness
- Finding, identifying and acquiring space
- Access
- Price and cost of land
- Security and safety of site
- Quality of land
- Acquisition of tools and development of infrastructure

Solutions

- Recruit cross-generational mentors
- Buy-in labour for high-skill jobs
- Make it pay with bonds
- Think creatively and work with private sector
- Develop partnerships
- Be realistic and use case studies as inspiration
- Linking cooking and eating with demos
- Provide tools for growing and cooking
- Recruit volunteers in public and private sector
- Make it attractive by focusing on issues like health and the environment
- Good understanding of community as result of access points