

## **FeedingManchester #9 Minutes**

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012, 4pm – 7.15pm

**Bridge 5 Mill  
22a Beswick Street  
Ancoats  
Manchester  
M4 7HR**

### **Session 1: Introducing the new *FeedingManchester* Workers: Rob and Beth**

Rob Allen and Beth Creedon, *FeedingManchester* Coordinators, introduced themselves and their roles.

Both have been recruited as part of a two-year period of funding provided by the Big Lottery Fund, through the wider Foodlink North West initiative. In addition to supporting the aims of *FeedingManchester*, they have responsibility to make progress against the objectives of Foodlink Manchester, a regional subset of Foodlink North West.

An overview of their set objectives were given as follows:

- To promote, to identify good practice and to help members and connected groups to achieve their goals.
- To set up sustainable partnerships
- To engage both consumers and local food groups
- Undertake mapping of groups, individuals and events to expand the reach and scope of *FeedingManchester* / FoodLink

Specific outputs required as part of their roles were given as follows:

- To arrange and host 3 *FeedingManchester* events a year
- Attend 2 local food events a week (can include site visits, meeting producers etc.)
- Publish 3 blog entries per week (events, interviews, guest blogs)
- Attend monthly Greater Manchester Sustainable Steering Group Meeting
- Maintain both *FeedingManchester* and Foodlink Twitter profiles with at least four messages / retweets per day
- 1 skills video / slideshow per month

### **Session 2: Promoting sustainable food at events**

Attendees split into two groups to answer the questions:

- What existing events can we attend / be part of, and take advantage of more collectively?
- What new events / opportunities could be created by members and how?

Examples were given of: established events, national days/weeks, community celebration

days, other networking events, farmers markets and festivals.

### Group 1

The first group suggested that the following events could hold opportunities for members:

- Manchester Food and Drink Festival – (Possibility to suggest to MFDF to hold a Sustainable Weekend) (Sept-Oct)
- Bolton Food and Drink Festival – (August bank hols weekend)
- Chorlton Big Green food stall holders to be contacted about possibility of sustainable weekend at Manchester Food and Drink Festival
- Association of Manchester Allotment Societies takeover of St. Ann's Square, Manchester-repeating event of a few years ago.
- Allotment Community Days
- Abbey Leys Farmers Market, High Legh, Cheshire (monthly)
- Open Farm Sunday- 17<sup>th</sup> June 2012
- Didsbury Festival -16<sup>th</sup> June 2012
- University Green Weeks
- Hospital Farmers Markets (Wythenshawe Hospital)

The group made the following suggestions and recommendations for encouraging involvement, collaboration and participation:

- Smaller events would be better
- Online meeting places would be good for collaborators to register interest
- Early organisation is required, not last minute so those involved can make the event and themselves more visible
- Tourist offices should know about events, workshops etc.
- Involvement should be geared towards championing the smaller producers
- Opportunities should see participants competing with an international focus
- Advance notice would allow planning for crop growing specifically for a festival

### Group 2

The first group suggested that the following events could hold opportunities for members:

- Climate week in March (limited food focus currently & unsuitable sponsors)
- Chorlton Big Green Festival Sat before Easter weekend
- Open Farm Sunday-17<sup>th</sup> June 2012
- Big Lunch - 3<sup>rd</sup> June
- West Didsbury Farmers Market
- Ramsbottom Farmer's Market (2nd Sunday of Month)
- Local, permanent markets are often willing to offer stalls to groups/ charities
- National Vegetarian Week (21st-27th May)
- Smaller local farmers markets
- Apple Day 21<sup>st</sup> Oct (annually)
- Potato Day January- no fixed date
- Earth Day – Picnics- 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2012
- Environment Day- 5<sup>th</sup> June 2012
- Fairtrade Fortnight Feb-March 2013

- Co-Op Fortnights 23<sup>th</sup> June- 7<sup>th</sup> July
- National Volunteer Week 14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> May 2012
- 'Future Manchester' at Merci- in November
- Olympics 27<sup>th</sup> July- 12<sup>th</sup> Aug 2012
- Jubilee 3, 4,5<sup>th</sup> June 2012
- Manchester Markets
- Love Food – University of Manchester Society
- Manchester Beekeeping Association

The group made the following suggestions and recommendations for encouraging involvement, collaboration and participation:

- Connect potential collaborators via doodle and other online forums
- *FeedingManchester* could look into ways of easily flagging up calendar dates
- Instead of only attending them, try to advise the organisers of farmer's markets about opportunities to promote local, sustainable food

### **Session 3: Case studies of *FeedingManchester* inspired collaborations**

Alan Creedon, Coordinator of Manchester Veg People and former owner of Dig, an organic veg box delivery company, spoke about his experiences of collaboration in the local food sector.

He explained about the origins of Manchester Veg People, and its foundation as a cooperative to bring growers and buyers together to create a transparent, fair pricing system and to plan their equal commitments in growing and buying each growing season's produce. Energised by the enthusiasm of attendees at *FeedingManchester* #2, Alan initially volunteered at Glebelands City Growers, establishing a relationship with the farm that developed the ability for Dig to sell more of the produce Glebelands were producing.

The relationship with Glebelands City Growers also allowed for personal freedom. He and his business partner/wife were able to take a holiday for the first time in 3 years as GCG ran Dig whilst they were away. By return, Alan and Beth undertook duties on the farm to cover maternity and paternity leave when members of the Glebelands team required time off with their baby.

The deepening relationship helped the early stages of setting up Manchester Veg People, as Dig & CGC were part of the group of founder members. MVP is a unique cooperative which was borne of the need for collaboration to ensure mutually agreeable outcomes, and can become an 'off the shelf' model for similar cooperatives aspiring to achieve a similar arrangement.

*FeedingManchester* are grateful to Alan for taking the time to speak to the group.

### **Session 4: What do you want from FM meetings?**

Attendees were split into four groups to answer the question: What do you want from future *FeedingManchester* meetings?

Some prompts were given to encourage discussion, including: Networking, Information sharing, Guest speakers, Specialist focus groups, Practical workshops, Locations.

Each group were asked to feedback all of their suggestions, but also asked to nominate the one that they felt was most important to them. The four groups agreed that the following should be considered for future meetings:

- Attendees go away with one practical action to fulfil ahead of the next meeting
- Opportunities to discuss and work on joint bids / procurement
- Take the meeting to different towns in Greater Manchester
- Opportunities for Networking
- More skills sharing

### **Session 5: What does *FeedingManchester* mean to you?**

Attendees took turns to be photographed with a piece of paper that suggested their hopes and aspirations for their own involvement in *FeedingManchester* and the long-term potential for the movement.

The photographs will be considered for use online, in print and in private/public presentations by the coordinators.

### **Session 6: Sustainable Food Steering Group feedback and update**

Lisa Lingard, Green City Project Officer at Manchester City Council, provided an update from the Sustainable Food Steering Group.

Following the most recent meeting regarding an action plan for Manchester, the group are expected to have completed initial planning in the next 6 – 8 months. Lisa reported that discussion is continuing around funding and projects, including ensuring wider involvement in the FareShare project to limit food waste and a low carbon catering campaign in partnership with the Manchester Food and Drink Festival.

The prospect of Manchester gaining status as a 'Sustainable Food City' has stimulated by evidence of good progress being made in cities such as Bristol and Plymouth. At a special expert panel in March, hosted by 'Food Futures,' progress was made on devising a plan for Manchester and the next steps are to develop the actions further. Lisa suggested that it would be beneficial to maintain a presence for *FeedingManchester* at Sustainable Food Steering Group meetings and for that to be reciprocated with a council officer at *FeedingManchester* meetings.

Helen Woodcock from the Kindling Trust explained to members that extensive discussion was had at previous meetings to ensure that members were happy that *FeedingManchester* representatives (i.e. members tasked with administering the movement by Kindling) were the ones to attend the meetings, rather than sharing responsibility amongst the *FeedingManchester* attendees. Members agreed that it would still be appropriate for the coordinators to attend these meetings on their behalf, rather than sharing the opportunity, or working in a sub-group on the work of the steering group and 'Food Futures'.

It was agreed that the agenda/papers for the SFSG should be shared ahead of each meeting, via the *FeedingManchester* forum, to allow members to comment and that coordinators should e-mail/post the minutes on the forum for information.

### **Session 7: Setting next *FeedingManchester* dates**

The following dates and times were agreed as appropriate for the next three *FeedingManchester* meetings:

**#10 Thursday 5th July 3-7pm with BBQ in Hulme**

**#11 Saturday 10th November all day, venue TBC**

**#12 Wednesday 6th March 10am- 3pm, venue TBC**

Members are invited to:

-Suggest venues for the #11 and #12 meetings.

-Make suggestions for future events, including guest speakers, workshops, discussions and specialist networking opportunities.

**To contact the *FeedingManchester* Coordinators:**

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