

WELCOME TO THE FIRST ANNUAL REVIEW OF HARVEST BRIGHTON AND HOVE

In 2009, the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, Food Matters and other community food groups in the city were awarded Beacon funding of almost £500,000 over four years from the Big Lottery to run an urban growing project. Harvest Brighton & Hove is now celebrating a busy and successful first year. The project is driven by the vision of a sustainable food system where more food is provided from within the city, and which is accessible to all local residents. The primary aim is to get people growing their own food – whether this is in their own back gardens, on allotments, or in unusual

spaces such as public parks, areas of empty land around housing estates or container gardening on balconies. The project offers training to individuals and community groups and supports the development of new projects. Harvest's range of projects are delivered by partners across the city, including the Whitehawk Community Food Project, Moulsecomb Forest Garden, Brighton & Hove FareShare, Fork and Dig It, the Brighton Permaculture Trust, the Brighton & Hove Allotment Federation, and supported by Brighton & Hove City

Sowing seeds at the Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project Allotment



Photo © Edward Bishop

Council and NHS Brighton & Hove. As a Beacon project Harvest will share learning and exchange information with projects across the UK and beyond and is being evaluated by the University of Brighton.



It's hard to believe it's been a year since the Harvest team first walked into an empty office at the Food Partnership. Since then we've made contact with thousands of people across the city who want to grow their own and eat more local food. This interest isn't just a passing trend; it's about improving our quality of life - reconnecting with healthier food, with outdoor spaces and with our neighbours.

Over the past year, we've been inspired by the many existing and new community projects that are helping ensure the benefits of food growing are accessible even in the most disadvantaged communities in our city. These projects depend on committed volunteers, and we are pleased that so many new people are keen to be involved with Harvest and local food growing projects. In otherwise difficult times, these projects help bring people together to develop new skills and gain confidence and a renewed sense of community. In return we are keen to learn from them how to improve our services and meet the needs of people in the city.

As our first Harvest celebrations draw to a close, we're looking forward to more work with communities to find out what they want from food growing and to help them achieve this - sowing the seeds for another bountiful year of activity in 2011!

Jess Crocker, Harvest Manager

HARVEST OUTCOMES

- increase the amount of food produced locally
- improve access to local food
- increase skills and confidence of local people in growing food
- improve awareness of the benefits of growing, buying and eating local produce
- develop strategies and guidance that support land use and infrastructure for urban agriculture

HARVEST SUCCESS STORIES

HARVEST 2009-10 IN NUMBERS:

- 129** new allotments created
- 9** new community allotments created
- 68** existing and new food projects received support
- 18** projects received Good Food Grants
- 150** people attended 20 training courses
- 80** volunteers provided more than 500 hours of voluntary work
- 10** work placements were provided
- Harvest staff attended **80** community events and spoke to more than **4,000** people
- 1,150** people receive Harvest's e-bulletin
- 10,500** people visited the Harvest website
- Harvest has **245** Facebook fans and **400** Twitter followers
- 60** people attended Pick and Cook days
- 7** new jobs created
- 500** people attended Preston Park Picnic during Local Food Week

IMPROVE AWARENESS OF THE BENEFITS OF GROWING, BUYING AND EATING LOCAL FOOD

Preston Park is the city's largest park and is well-used by both residents and visitors. The idea of a demonstration garden is to show how much food can be grown in a small domestic space and inspire people to have a go themselves. The garden is maintained by a team of local volunteers who have gained skills as they tend the garden and who answer questions from members of the public. The garden is one of only a handful of vegetable gardens in



Launch of the demonstration garden

public parks in the UK, and we will share learning from this project at a national level. It is a valuable educational space where we demonstrate gardening techniques and give out tasters of unusual crops to children and adults. Many visitors have told us



Photo: Steve Clarke

that they are growing food for the first time as a result of the garden. People now gather together to chat, relax, reconnect with the cycles of the seasons and share our love of gardening in what was previously just an empty lawn.

INCREASE SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE IN FOOD GROWING

"I'm not a natural gardener. At school I was the only one whose cress failed to sprout. For many years, I watched with admiration as friends produced armfuls of carrots, marvelling at their ability to keep plants alive. How therefore did I manage to cook a curry using my own spinach, chillies and basil yesterday? And how is it that I am proudly awaiting a harvest of potatoes, carrots and tomatoes? The turning point came when a friend booked me onto a two-hour "Container gardening for beginners" course run by Harvest. I had a great time - and am now really enjoying eating the fruits of my gardening labours."

Fabia Bates, training course attendee

IMPROVE ACCESS TO LOCAL FOOD

A week of activities celebrating local produce took place as part of the month-long Brighton & Hove Food and Drink Festival. Coinciding with Harvest Festival time, several schools, including Moulsecoomb Primary and St Luke's, held celebrations which included opportunities for parents and pupils to share recipes and taste local food.

A range of local juices, chutneys and pies were also served up at the Brighton Permaculture Trust's annual Apple Day festival. This fruit would have gone to waste without the efforts of our Scrumping Project which has been harvesting from trees throughout the city.

We have also given out Good Food Grants to support projects that improve access to fresh seasonal food. For example, Moulsecoomb Food Co-op provides affordable fresh produce to the local community and Honeycroft older people's lunch club supports isolated older people in the Conway Court area.

The Harvest website also provides a list of local food resources such as box schemes, shops, farmers markets and caterers which has been viewed over 1,000 times.



Grow It winner Little Earthworms Nursery

'The Grow It Competition has really made us think about how we can bring edible plants into our business space. Our staff and customers have enjoyed and seeing the plants growing and we have had some marvellous ingredients to add to our dishes.'

Peter Allinson, Temptation Café, Grow It winner

INCREASE LAND AVAILABLE TO GROW FOOD

Land is precious in urban settings, yet within the city there is a surprising amount of potential space available for growing. The 'Grow Your Neighbours Own' scheme matches unused gardens and allotments with willing growers who share the produce with the garden owner. With 110 people registered, this year 32 gardeners have been successfully matched with 15 gardens.

Like many places, the city's allotment waiting list is bulging, but this year the City Council has successfully created 129 new allotments, 49 of which had fallen into disuse and 80 of which are new. In addition the size of allotments has been halved, so when plots become available double the number of people can now access them. Nine new community allotments have also been created. To help community groups be more



New allotments at Whitehawk Hill

CASE STUDY

The Harvest mentoring scheme was piloted with a match between a grower from Whitehawk Community Food Project and the Brighton Unemployed Families Centre Project (BUFCP). The Centre have three allotments that had fallen into considerable disrepair, suffered vandalism and arson and they were threatened with losing their plots. After John's help, the feedback was: "John has been incredibly helpful and enlightening and is knowledgeable in exactly the ways we need." The allotment now provides local unemployed adults and their children with somewhere to grow their own vegetables and work together outside.

In addition to the extensive training programme offered, Harvest runs a work placement scheme for people who have been unemployed for six months or more. This year ten people took up the programme which involved a four-week placement at Whitehawk Community Food Project. Three of the participants have continued to volunteer at the project after their placement finished.

Of the 80 volunteers involved with Harvest, at least five have gone on to find paid employment and others have moved on to college or re-training.



THANK YOU..

to all the fantastic volunteers who have given their time to help Harvest at the office, and the demonstration garden. Thank you to the Harvest Advisory Group and partners for their input, and in particular staff from the City Parks team for their support for allotments and the demonstration garden. Thank you to all our funders, especially the Big Lottery Fund, for making Harvest possible, and to Brighton & Hove City Council and NHS Brighton & Hove for supporting with either funding or in-kind support from staff. And last but certainly not least, thanks to the excellent staff team at the Food Partnership for their commitment, and for having achieved so much in just one year.

DEVELOP GUIDANCE TO SUPPORT FOOD GROWING WITHIN THE CITY

A key aim of Harvest is to ensure that food growing and local food become an integral part of life in the city well after the project is finished. We want local and national policy to recognise the benefits that food growing brings to the social and economic development of the city, providing opportunities for developing skills, volunteering, improving health, reducing carbon emissions and our environmental impact. We have been successful in ensuring that the Core Strategy, which will provide a framework for future development in the city, makes several references to food growing. Work has now started on developing planning guidance for new developments to include food growing, a pioneering piece of work which will be of use elsewhere in the

country. The team has presented papers at conferences – including the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors conference in Paris, and the British Sociological Society in London. We want to show people outside the city what great work is happening here, share the lessons we are learning and the examples of best practice being developed.



Local food picnic in Preston Park

This residents group had been struggling to find new members, and all of a sudden this exciting project hit a really positive note and nine residents have come forward to join the tenants association and take forward the project.

Graham Allen, Community Development worker working with South Hawk Tenants Association to create a community garden

THE COMING YEAR

What we are looking forward to

- 'Breaking new ground' and developing community projects on land other than allotments
- More networking and support for local food projects
- Awarding grants to support more community and school-based cooking and growing projects
- More targeted work with different communities in Brighton & Hove
- More events and activities to build on the success of Local Food Week's business competition, film screening, picnic and food swap events
- New food markets, shops and community projects to increase food access
- An expansion to the demonstration garden to show what can be grown on balconies, patios and in herb beds
- More work with secondary schools to give young people a chance to learn to grow



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