



CREATING A LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

OVERVIEW

GOOD FOR PEOPLE, PLACE AND PLANET.

This series of case studies have been supported by the Climate Change Fund awarded by T&W Council to investigate the sustainable food economy in the borough. They examine a cross section of local food businesses that have incorporated sustainability practices into their operations. Each business operates within a unique niche, but they share a common commitment to environmentally friendly practices and collaboration with local partners to promote sustainable food consumption.

Emma Cantillion
SGFP Coordinator - Food
Economy



The Wrekin
Housing Group

SUSTAINABLE FOOD BUSINESSES PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN THIS NEED FOR TRANSFORMATION.

The founders and managers that have been part of this project have demonstrated the wish to run businesses where profitability and sustainability can coexist. They understand that innovative technologies, responsible supply chains, and circular business models drive progress but time, resources, the access to funding, grants and local knowledge is limited. In order to make it feasible for businesses to adopt eco-friendly practices there is a need for collaboration among businesses, big and small, with the hope that this will foster a sense of shared responsibility. I was overwhelmed by the willingness of all of the businesses to collaborate, share best practice and educate within their localities and in a broader sense.



SoFood!

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This case study focuses on SoFood a family run catering company based in Telford, formed with a passion for creating and delivering innovative, fresh, and delicious food to the surrounding area. They cater for corporate and private events across T&W, alongside the maintaining and filling of food vending machines

Communication and Marketing

The business primarily relies on word-of-mouth marketing and customer recommendations to communicate its sustainability initiatives. While they do not actively engage in social media or traditional advertising (no longer have a marketing person), they acknowledge the potential for increased business if they had the resources to invest in marketing efforts. Mike is aware of the importance of communicating sustainability initiatives to customers and mentions that acquiring an electric van, for example, would be a significant marketing opportunity. Opportunities to promote their sustainability efforts would be very welcome. Nine years ago, they introduced their compostable plates and cutlery, this was very newsworthy and covered on BBC Radio Shropshire, as they were the first to do so.

OVERVIEW FROM MIKE

Shropshire boasts a wealth of high-quality artisan food suppliers and to support our fellow small business owners, we use our local butchers, bakery, a Shropshire dairy farm and greengrocers and always aim to use locally sourced produce wherever possible. The business has implemented various sustainability measures and aims to minimise its environmental impact.



Mike, the owner, and I discussed their current sustainable practices, challenges faced, and potential areas for improvement.

Current Sustainable Practices

SoFood has already taken significant steps to incorporate climate change and sustainability into its operations. Some of the existing practices include:

- 1. Compostable Packaging:** The business uses compostable buffet trays for packaging, which can be recycled. This reduces the amount of non-biodegradable waste generated.
- 2. Energy Efficiency:** To minimise energy consumption, the business actively switches off power when not in use and looks for opportunities to reduce electricity bills. They express a desire to invest in an electric fan to further reduce energy consumption.
- 3. Waste Management:** The business is exploring composting options to effectively dispose of food waste. They also questioned utilising the waste to generate gas, which would be a significant environmental benefit, should this be an option and funding help be available. However, they think they maybe too small to be able to go down this route.
- 4. Sustainable Utensils:** The business uses wooden boards and compostable utensils made from plant-based materials. These alternatives to disposable plastic products are more durable and have a reduced environmental impact. They also re-use wine boxes for hampers and display purposes. These are collected along with wooden boards.



Challenges and Financial Constraints

While the business strives to be environmentally conscious, financial constraints often hinder the adoption of additional sustainable practices. The cost implications associated with implementing certain measures, such as installing solar panels or purchasing electric vehicles, pose challenges for a small business. Mike expressed interest in funding opportunities that could assist them in overcoming these financial barriers.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT :

Measurement of Environmental Impact: The business expresses interest in measuring its climate change impact and tracking progress in sustainability. However, due to limited resources, they have not been able to prioritise this. They acknowledge that measuring and reporting environmental performance could enhance their credibility and attract environmentally conscious customers. Not aware of Cool Shropshire & Telford initiative. They are also unable to measure where food waste & compostable products end up after they have left site. Any help with this would be greatly appreciated.

Collaboration with Local Suppliers: The business sees potential in sourcing ingredients directly from local growers and suppliers to reduce transportation emissions. They express a desire to strengthen collaborations with local producers and explore opportunities for direct purchasing.

Accessing Grants and Funding: The catering business highlights the need for funding options that specifically support sustainability initiatives for small businesses. They mention grant availability but note that the process is time-consuming and challenging for a small business with few employees, this has put them off applying.

Needs, requirements and wishes

We chatted about the importance of knowledge exchange and collaboration with other businesses, including larger companies, through food forums or focus groups. As far as continuing sustainability initiatives & goals going forward, with support, would be very willing to collaborate with local businesses, food banks/hubs, food business networking and directory to facilitate knowledge sharing. Help with grant funding, electricity, electric vehicle help etc.

Conclusion

SoFood have already implemented various sustainable practices as listed on the previous page. They have embraced compostable packaging, energy efficiency measures, waste management strategies, and sustainable utensils. However, financial constraints limit their ability to implement further sustainable initiatives. They would happily collaborate with other local businesses and look to measure their environmental impact going forward.



Mildtech

Mildtech - A Sustainable Drying Technology Initiative

<https://mildtech.co.uk/>

Georgios Vanezi - Co-Founder

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This case study explores the initiatives and projects undertaken by Mildtech an innovative company, based in T&W, focused on making a positive change in the food industry. The company is developing a groundbreaking drying technology aimed at preserving food while maintaining its nutritional value and reducing waste. This case study examines the scope of the project, its goals, challenges faced, collaborations, environmental sustainability efforts, and potential impact on public health.

OVERVIEW

Georgios has been working on this technology for around 10 years. Mildtech aims to build a large-scale machine capable of drying 250 kilograms of food per hour. The innovative technology uses low temperatures and vacuum processing to retain the organoleptic and constitutional properties of the food. By leveraging solid-state power generators, the system consumes minimal electricity, making it highly efficient. The project aims to process large quantities of food, both for drying and cooking, without the need for preservatives, thereby improving food quality and reducing waste. The biggest machine Mildtech have now can do about 30 to 40 kilos per hour. To give an idea freeze drying takes two to three days and causes about 15 to 20% of nutrients disappear, which is still the best in the market. The Mildtech method will do the same in two to three hours rather than two to three days. It also saves more nutrients than they do because the process doesn't destroy any nutrients.

 <p>Maximum Nutrient retention Low-temperature processing to retain maximum nutrition.</p>	 <p>Rapid Processing Cook and dry in minutes vs hours/days.</p>	 <p>Low-Energy Extremely energy-efficient and environmentally friendly.</p>	 <p>Integrated ML & AI Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence to constantly improve the process.</p>
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Objectives and Goals:

The primary objective of the project is to revolutionise the food drying process by developing a large machine that can efficiently process significant quantities of food. The goals include:

- a. Ensuring food preservation: The technology allows for drying and cooking foods without the use of preservatives, maintaining their nutritional value and quality for extended periods.
- b. Reducing energy consumption: The project aims to save up to 80% of energy compared to traditional cooking and drying methods.
- c. Minimising food waste: By providing a solution to process and preserve food, the project aims could also be extended to reducing food waste and supporting initiatives such as food banks, producer glut etc.
- d. Improving public health: The technology's ability to retain nutrients and enhance the quality of dried and cooked food products has the potential to positively impact public health by providing nutritious dried ingredients.

Environmental Sustainability Efforts:

The project aligns with environmental sustainability objectives by promoting efficient energy consumption and waste reduction. The technology significantly reduces energy requirements, saving up to 80% compared to conventional cooking and drying methods. Additionally, the project has the potential to repurpose biomass waste, such as sludge from paper recycling and plastic waste, by drying them to the right moisture content for various applications. The company is exploring partnerships with waste management companies to further optimise resource utilisation. Mildtech technology uses Radio Frequency heating.



Future Contributions:

The potential contributions that could be made by Mildtech include addressing the issue of nutrient-deficient diets, combating obesity, and supporting good food for all. Tackling food waste and glut.

Collaborations. Food bank partnership.

Communication and Awareness:

The company primarily communicates its goals and successes through [LinkedIn](#) and various professional groups and networks. They are upgrading their website to improve online presence and recently invested in marketing initiatives. Hoping to actively participate in industry groups and collaborations, the company aims to raise awareness about their innovative technology and foster interest from potential customers and partners.



Project Development and Challenges:

The project has undergone a decade-long development process, starting with the FP7 program from Horizon 2014-2012. The company initially created a prototype machine and later received a grant from Horizon 2020 for the second phase of the project. The challenges faced during development include financial constraints and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as supply chain issues. Additionally, integrating off-the-shelf power generators into the machines required significant adaptation, prompting the company to develop their own patented components.

The FP7 programme ran for seven years - from 2007 to 2013 - with a budget totalling over 55 billion Euros. [PRESS RELEASE](#)

Natural Ingredients

Natural ingredients such as fruit, vegetables, herbs and spices have numerous health benefits and medicinal properties.

According to studies, low temperature drying techniques are the only processing methods that can retain the colour, flavour, phytochemicals and nutritional content of natural ingredients.

The Mildtech technology can dry natural ingredients to variable moisture levels at low temperatures, retaining full organoleptic and constitutional properties.



COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS:

The company has collaborated with Harper Adams University to conduct analysis and research on the nutritional benefits of their drying technology. They have also engaged with local businesses, conducting experiments, and providing quotes for their machines to companies specialising in food processing. Requests for quotes have even been received from companies in the United States and India. The company is actively seeking collaborations and partnerships to expand its market presence. Innovate UK, as part of UK Research and Innovation, have offered Mildtech UK Ltd a grant for their recent project as part of the 'Better Food for All: Innovation for improved nutrition' competition.

Needs, requirements and wishes:

Although they have InnovateUK grant, it is limited to what monies can be spent on. Any help with finding smaller grants to allow more collaboration locally, small pieces of equipment e.g., hydroponics unit.

Knowledge exchange, local food business networking, advice on electricity usage.

Mildtech UK Ltd and Harper Adams University are collaborating on this project to design and build a higher capacity dehydration machine, testing key materials commonly used in dehydration for nutraceuticals to rapidly scale to commercialisation and are keen to drive work forward with new technology which will be game-changing for the food and nutraceutical industry.

"The Mildtech process goes further than cooking & drying foods more quickly and at lower temperature which doesn't destroy the vitamin content, texture and taste; AI is also used to facilitate making healthy food. Thus, Mildtech is able to stay at the forefront of the food sector!"



"An impressive benefit of the Mildtech technology is the reduction in energy required, with up to 80% less energy needed! The reduced energy use contributes to green credentials and showcases social responsibility, helping to contribute to a net-zero food system."



"We achieved a significant improvement in overall efficiency of drying compared to our existing method of freeze drying. Results using the Mildtech technology have been outstanding, whereby the finished product is uniformly dried, very quickly and at very low temperatures."




Mildtech UK Ltd has been chosen for Innovate UK's Better Food for All Competition!

We are very excited to announce that Innovate UK, as part of UK Research and Innovation, have offered Mildtech UK Ltd a grant for our project as part of the 'Better Food for All: Innovation for improved...'





Odd Pals
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Odd Pals is a small local catering business based in Wellington Market, Matt, founder and co-owner, embarked on this venture with a passion for providing good food, having worked in various catering kitchens, they wanted to start out on their own. The business is committed to sourcing locally and sustainably, collaborating with other small businesses in the market, and minimising food waste. This case study explores the motivations behind starting the business, the challenges faced in the pursuit of sustainability, and the potential for further collaboration and impact.

OVERVIEW

Matt and Wioleta want to offer high-quality, sustainable food options to the local community as part of the food court within Wellington Market. Odd Pals aims to create a positive change by sourcing as many ingredients as possible locally, reducing waste, providing tasty, healthy food. Matt also strives to support other small local enterprises and foster community collaborations and food education.



CURRENT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Matt highlights the benefit of having access to a nearby market, reducing transportation emissions and ensuring fresher produce. The business prioritises sourcing its ingredients from local markets and farms, reducing food miles and supporting the regional economy. By purchasing fresh produce from nearby vendors, the project aims to minimize its carbon footprint and promote a sustainable food system. However, there are certain ingredients that cannot be purchased locally and he isn't always able to know the origins of the food purchased within the market itself. Matt's background in cooking, combined with his upbringing focused on budgeting and resourcefulness, formed the foundation of the business's sustainable ethos.





CHALLENGES AND FINANCIAL RESTRAINTS

Matt aims to be sustainable and environmentally friendly, but faces challenges in sourcing eco-friendly products and ingredients at affordable prices. Being sustainable requires investment in equipment and sourcing practices, which is difficult with limited resources, especially for catering equipment. The business has collaborated with local entities, such as the Councils Pride in our High Street and other businesses, to set up the venture. However, there is a desire for more collaborations with local producers and suppliers. A lack of formal platforms or directories for grants, sustainability advice and monitoring etc. For a young independent business financial constraints mean implementing sustainability measures can be costly. Balancing the need to invest in sustainable practices with the immediate financial requirements of the business, and paying themselves, can be challenging.

Matt emphasises the importance of educating customers and the community about sustainability, food waste reduction, and proper food storage, he hopes that in the future he will be able to do this as part of his business. Some customers may not fully appreciate the value of sustainable practices, local sourcing, and reducing food waste. Overcoming the perception that sustainable products and ingredients are more expensive or less appealing can be a challenge.

Limited Time and Resources: Matt faces time constraints in sourcing ingredients, managing the business, and implementing sustainable practices. Time and resource management is demanding and giving time to "reaching Net Zero" isn't always a priority, even though Matt does as much as he can. Unaware of Cool Shropshire & Telford.

Need for Community Support: To overcome financial constraints and implement more sustainable practices, small businesses need support from the local community, including customers and potential partners.

COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Collaboration with Pride in our High Street has been essential in setting up the business. Since opening Odd Pals has collaborated with Park Street Kitchen, been involved in Late Night Markets and has plans to work with Wellington Cricket Club, demonstrating a commitment to supporting and promoting local partnerships.

NEEDS, REQUIREMENTS AND WISHES

Matt expressed a desire for more financial resources to implement further sustainability practices. While the business aims to be as sustainable as possible, financial constraints often limit the investment required to make significant changes. This includes purchasing more environmentally friendly equipment, expanding waste reduction efforts, and exploring new ways to source ingredients sustainably.

Matt would like to have access to a community platform that connects local businesses, producers, and caterers. It could facilitate sharing surplus produce, collaboration opportunities, and potential partnerships, making it easier for small businesses to support each other and reduce waste.

Matt & Wioleta would love to grow more produce and incorporate this within the menu.

CONCLUSION

Odd Pals is an inspiring example of a small local catering business dedicated to environmental sustainability and community collaboration. Despite financial challenges, Matt & Wioleta remain committed to learning, collaborating, and making informed choices to promote sustainability. The potential for future partnerships and a shared commitment to a more sustainable food future underscores the positive impact a young businesses can have on local communities and the environment. By nurturing these partnerships and giving owners like Matt & Wioleta a voice it sets an excellent example for other businesses aspiring to create positive impacts on their communities and the environment.



[BBC Radio Shropshire](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0fr707s)
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0fr707s>

ODDPALS PRESS



Choc Tilly

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Choc Tilly is a small independent chocolate shop located in MAWS, Jackfield. The owner, Natalie, is passionate about producing high-quality chocolates while promoting ethical practices and supporting local businesses. The shops (recently opened another premises including café in Much Wenlock) offer a variety of artisanal chocolates, workshops & local ice-cream. Natalie is Internationally Trained, by world-renowned chocolatiers and patisserie chefs including Melissa Coppel (USA), Julie Sharp (UK), Clare England (UK), Alexander Bordeaux (Belgium), Ramon Morató (Spain) & Olivier Fernandez (Spain).

OVERVIEW

Natalie (Tilly) and I had an in depth conversation covering lots of topics, including supporting local businesses, including a small dairy farm that makes ice cream. About her commitment to using natural ingredients and avoiding products that contribute to child labour, we also spoke about her extensive training enabling her to provide quality vegan options without using synthetic additives. We touched on efforts to reduce waste, recycle packaging, and work with local suppliers. The conversation also touched on the challenges of sustainability for small businesses and the desire for more information and support in this area. The idea of collaborating with other businesses and organising events like a Farmers Markets/Christmas fair, but facing restrictions within MAWS.

GOALS & COLLABORATIONS

Natalie's goals continue to be producing high-quality chocolates using natural ingredients and avoiding artificial additives. Always seeking out more sustainable and ethical ingredients. Supporting local producers, farmers, and businesses by sourcing ingredients locally where possible. Building relationships with other businesses to foster growth and support each other. Choc Tilly's current collaborations include [Moonshine & Fuggles](#), [Little Green Pantry](#), [Laura's Delicious Dairy](#).



CURRENT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

1. Offering a box return program where customers can bring back empty boxes to be refilled, reducing waste.
2. Using recyclable and biodegradable packaging materials to minimize environmental impact.
3. Sourcing ingredients from local producers and farmers to reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation.
4. Avoiding ingredients that are linked to unethical practices, such as chocolate from sources with child labour issues.

CHALLENGES & FINANCIAL RESTRAINTS

Lack of awareness about available resources: Natalie mentioned that as a small business owner, they are not aware of all the resources and grants available to support sustainability and environmental initiatives. She expressed an interest in learning more about initiatives like "Cool Shropshire and Telford" and other grants to improve their business practices.

Limited cooperation among local businesses: There might be some divisions or conflicts among local businesses, which could hinder collaboration and joint efforts for sustainability. There are instances where certain limitations or regulations imposed on them might not be equitable compared to other businesses in the area. This applies specifically to MAWS.

Unique challenges of sustainability for a small business: We discussed the difficulty of maintaining sustainable practices as a small business due to financial constraints. Facing decisions about using more expensive, environmentally friendly materials or cheaper, less sustainable alternatives.

Balancing ethics and business viability: The struggles with making decisions that align with their ethical values, such as supporting local businesses and using ethically sourced ingredients, while also trying to maintain profitability.

Lack of awareness about sustainable practices: Information about sustainable practices for businesses is not readily available, Natalie expressed interest in learning more about ways to reduce their carbon footprint and become more environmentally friendly.

Restrictions on selling certain products: Restrictions on selling certain products like cookies and brownies made with unique ingredients, which impacts their ability to diversify their offerings and increase revenue. MAWS specific.

Desire for local collaboration: Despite the challenges, Natalie would love to collaborate with other local businesses and participate in events like Christmas fairs, potentially showcasing each other's products and supporting the community. Also, being part of a wider food community.



NEEDS, REQUIREMENTS & WISHES

Tilly expresses a desire for more support and information on sustainable practices as a small business owner. She values environmentally friendly options, such as LED lighting and composting areas for food waste, but might need assistance to implement them cost-effectively.

While she's aware of the importance of being environmentally conscious, Tilly acknowledges that some sustainable options can be more expensive. She wishes there were more accessible grants or programs that could help small businesses transition to eco-friendly practices without compromising their financial stability.



CONCLUSION

Choc Tilly demonstrates the dedication of a small business owner to produce high-quality produce while maintaining ethical and sustainable principles. The shop's focus on collaboration, supporting local producers, and reducing environmental impact demonstrates a commitment to the local community and the planet. By exploring opportunities for grants, partnerships, and initiatives like SGFP, Choc Tilly can continue to grow as a sustainable and thriving business.





HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

STUDENT-LED FOOD WASTE NETWORK

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An ongoing project summarised by this Case Study.

Problem: Food waste is a major problem worldwide, and it is estimated that one-third of all food produced for human consumption is wasted. In the United Kingdom, this equates to approximately 15 million tonnes of food per year.

Solution: A student-led food waste network could help to reduce food waste by connecting students with surplus food from local businesses and farms. Students could then use this food to cook meals, host events, or donate it to food banks.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion: A student-led food waste network is a feasible and sustainable way to reduce food waste. By connecting students with surplus food, this network could help to educate students about food waste and sustainability, provide them with new skills, and give them a sense of community and purpose.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps in creating a student-led food waste network would be to:

- Form a steering committee of students, faculty, and staff who are interested in the project.
- Develop a plan for sourcing surplus food, educating students, and providing them with the skills and resources they need to cook and use surplus food.
- Identify a central location where students can cook and use surplus food.
- Develop a system for transporting and storing surplus food.
- Start implementing the plan and tracking the project's progress.

OVERVIEW

A group has been formed with representatives from HAU university, including catering, FLAM, Student Union and Student Services alongside Shropshire Good Food Partnership. The group will tackle the subject of food waste and food gleaning and whether there is a possibility to engage students and also include these topics within the curriculum going forward.

BENEFITS

A student-led food waste network would have a number of benefits, including:

- Reducing food waste
- Educating students about food waste and sustainability
- Providing students with opportunities to learn new skills, such as cooking and food preservation
- Giving students a sense of community and purpose

CHALLENGES

There are a number of challenges that would need to be addressed in order to create a successful student-led food waste network, including:

- Finding a way to source surplus food from local businesses and farms
- Educating students about food waste and sustainability
- Providing students with the skills and resources they need to cook and use surplus food
- Overcoming logistical challenges, such as transportation and storage

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations would help to increase the chances of success for a student-led food waste network:

- Partner with local businesses and farms to source surplus food.
- Develop educational resources about food waste and sustainability for students.
- Provide students with cooking classes and workshops.
- Create a central location where students can cook and use surplus food.
- Develop a system for transporting and storing surplus food.



HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

DAVID NUTTAL
CATERING DIRECTOR

This case study focuses on Harper Adams University's efforts to implement sustainability initiatives in its catering department and catering outlets. The university aims to reduce its environmental impact, support local communities, and promote sustainable food practices. The main initiative is the Returnable Cup Scheme, this is in the process of being reviewed. However, due to financial challenges post-COVID, sustainability has taken a backseat, and the university seeks to strike a balance between financial viability and environmental responsibility.

OBJECTIVES

The university faced financial setbacks during the COVID pandemic, resulting in a need to focus on revenue generation. Despite this, there is a growing drive to incorporate sustainable practices into the university's operations, particularly in the areas of sustainable food sourcing and farming. The new line manager is supportive of sustainability initiatives, but time constraints have limited in-depth discussions about specific projects.

GOALS & COLLABORATIONS

The university, through David Nuttal, actively engages in knowledge exchange and collaboration with other universities and organisations through TUCO which promotes joint purchasing for increased buying power and profitability. Sustainability initiatives, such as reducing plastic use through reusable milk churns and sharing best practices, have been successful outcomes of these collaborations. There is more to be done.

OPPORTUNITIES & FUTURE PROSPECTS

While the university faces challenges in terms of manpower and funding, it acknowledges various opportunities for further sustainability initiatives. For instance, collaborating with local food producers and adopting more sustainable practices like using surplus food and establishing a farm shop on campus. Additionally, student projects and research are proving beneficial in exploring innovative solutions, such as 3D printing reusable 3D printer cartridges from recycled plastic.



The Returnable Cup Scheme

The Returnable Cup Scheme is the primary sustainability initiative the university is pushing forward. The goal was to reduce single-use plastic waste by introducing reusable cups for beverages. However, the scheme faces challenges as the cups are not cashless, making it difficult to motivate people to return the cups. This has led to a decrease in cup returns, with many ending up in bins rather than being returned.

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Useful Links

SUSTAINABILITY FOOD POLICY

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF MANDATORY REUSABLE DRINK CUPS SCHEME AT HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY
(Link to HRP Study)

<https://www.harper-adams.ac.uk/university-life/our-university/sustainability/481/what-were-doing-to-be-sustainable>

<https://www.tuco.ac.uk/procurement/sustainability>

<https://www.harper-adams.ac.uk/news/203479/two-national-shortlistings-for-catering-department>

CONCLUSION

The university's sustainability journey reflects the delicate balance between financial viability and environmental responsibility. While the Returnable Cup Scheme remains a priority, it is essential to consider collaboration with external partners and student-led projects to drive sustainable practices further. David acknowledges and supports the need for greater manpower and financial support to fully implement its sustainability initiatives. Despite challenges, there is an eagerness to explore opportunities and continue building a more sustainable future for the institution. David would be happy to share best practice and sit within a wider "food" community.

DAVID SPOKE ABOUT SOME OF THE POSITIVE STEPS AND WHY SOME POTENTIAL AREAS ARE NOT IMPLEMENTED

"When I first got here, we didn't use any of the produce. Now we are at the stage where we use all the beef, pork lamb, sausages and cured meats." HAU are unable to use produce like vegetables and grain, due to the nature of the university being a teaching hub where trials are carried out. The milk and dairy unit at HAU is big, they generate in one day, enough milk to keep the HAU catering side of the business going for a whole year. They have a contract with Mueller. David says "We would love to make our own cheese etc, but we don't have the pasteurising capabilities or someone to manage the cheesemaking."

WE ALSO SPOKE OF THE CHALLENGES

Having the manpower to to to be able to implement the ideas is probably the biggest challenge. Financial implications of, the price of food, staff costs have also gone up three times this year, which is great for the employees but it really hits the bottom line. In my time we've always returned money back to institution. This year we might not do because of food prices. The university is still coming out of COVID, with quite a bit of homeworking on the academic side. With less bodies on campus, food prices have gone up. Staff prices have gone up. It's almost like a perfect storm and also the cost of living crisis, that's a massive challenge for us."

As with all institutions the process for implementing new ideas is long and detailed, often hampered by the lack of resources. Sustainability within the department needs to be one job, not an aspect of a broader job description.

Sustainability

Reducing the environmental impact of our catering operations is a key concern for the department.

Our initiatives include:

- Marine Stewardship Council Accreditation
- Reuse Cup Scheme
- Using meat sourced from the Harper Adams University Farm
- Refill Scheme member
- Using local suppliers where possible e.g. Wells Farm Dairy, Freshview Foods & Mr Moydens Cheese
- Food waste reduction through measurement & communication



MOONSHINE
and
Fuggles



Moonshine & Fuggles

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AT A GLANCE

Moonshine and Fuggles is a family run business based in Ironbridge. The business is founded on a 'True Love' of Gin, Whisky, Rum and Local Ales.

The business was founded by a local entrepreneur who has always been passionate about sustainability and responsible practices



Examples of social media posts communicating efforts made. They have now engaged a freelance social media manager on a part-time basis.



OVERVIEW

Moonshine & Fuggles is a small artisanal distillery and retail business with a focus on producing high-quality spirits and beverages. The business is committed to sustainable practices while facing financial challenges common to small enterprises. Derek has worked in senior roles for large corporate retailers previously and brings with him a wealth of knowledge.

GOALS & COLLABORATIONS

Collaboration is seen as a pivotal tool for addressing both sustainability and financial challenges for Derek, owner of Moonshine & Fuggles. He collaborates on a regular basis with other local businesses. Including Suris Kitchen for Gin & Thai evening, a local wood turner who makes bottle openers, Broseley Bees, Choc Tilly, Shropshire Lad (Rum) as well as supporting local charities via events and sales of their own branded, locally sourced/produced gins. Moonshine & Fuggles have also worked with Pride in Our Highstreet

CURRENT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

- 1.Packaging:The business emphasises plastic reduction, using cardboard boxes and recycled paper bags for its products. This initiative aims to reduce single-use plastics and promote eco-friendly packaging alternatives. The ink used to print (done in house) is non-toxic. Derek has also communicated with suppliers regarding the use of cellophanes etc.
- 2.Refill Programs: The business is considering introducing a refill program where customers can bring their own bottles to be refilled, reducing the need for new glassware and minimizing waste. (please see next page)
- 3.Local Sourcing; Moonshine & Fuggles strives to source ingredients locally, thereby minimising food miles and supporting local producers/retailers.

CHALLENGES & FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Derek mentions that “rising costs of goods, unpredictable supply chains, and increasing government duties are challenging”. While they have managed to adapt and find solutions, these challenges emphasise the need for businesses to remain agile and resourceful.

The small nature of Moonshine & Fuggles, along with the realities of the drink industry, presents certain financial challenges, including:

- Cost of Goods - The business faces cost pressures from suppliers and increased production costs, impacting margins.
- Fluctuating prices and rising costs, particularly in the face of government regulations and duties, necessitate careful financial planning.
- Limited Margins - The competitive landscape of the spirits industry often means limited profit margins for businesses. This challenge forces the company to find creative ways to balance quality and affordability without compromising sustainability efforts.
- Balancing Values with Profit- Moonshine & Fuggles places value-driven practices at the core of its operations. However, maintaining these values while also ensuring the business remains profitable requires a delicate balance.

Since we sat down for our chat, Derek has launched the refill scheme for one of their own brand gins. Click for the Instagram post.



INSTAGRAM POST - M&F GIN SUPPORTING LOCAL CHARITY.



NEEDS, REQUIREMENTS & WISHES

Moonshine & Fuggles aims to continue refining its sustainability efforts while addressing the financial challenges that come with being a small business. Derek expresses the need for a collaborative platform where local businesses can share knowledge, ideas, and solutions.

A review of the support offered to small businesses in not only reaching sustainability goals/net zero, but running a sustainable businesses, would be welcome. The provision of online webinars by experts is all good but mentoring, centralised information hubs & knowledge sharing would be more beneficial. Often there are only 1-2 people attending the events.

“It’s very difficult to get everybody together because the word trust isn’t there. I think the challenge that local authority has, along with big government is that the general community don’t trust the local leader don’t trust locals and don’t trust leadership. I mean, I have to trust them because it’s so much better.”

Derek is very pro-active within the community but has found some difficulties with positive communication

CONCLUSION

Moonshine & Fuggles' case exemplifies the complex interplay between sustainability and financial challenges in the food and drink industry. While the business has made strides in adopting eco-friendly practices, it also faces the realities of a competitive marketplace. Collaboration, education, and ongoing innovation are key to addressing these challenges and building a stronger, more sustainable local food economy. Derek would happily take a role in bringing together local enterprises within a forum and sharing knowledge gained from years of business experience.



Park Street Kitchen

9 MARKET STREET. WELLINGTON.
TELFORD.
SHROPSHIRE
TF1 1DT

AT A GLANCE

This case study looks into the inspiring journey of Park Street Kitchen, a local food business that has successfully integrated sustainability practices into its operations within a vibrant market setting. By embracing eco-friendly packaging, supporting local producers, and engaging in community collaborations, Park Street Kitchen sets a fantastic example of how businesses can balance a sustainable business with environmental and social responsibility.



OVERVIEW

PSK is a modern Caribbean street food stop that specialises in bringing you delicious, healthy eat-in and take-away meals using a variety of fresh, quality ingredients. Based on Market Street, Wellington (having moved from inside the market itself) offering a pre-order, collection and delivery service. You can also pop by and eat-in the little cafe. Emma launched her business from home.

Everything is prepared with great taste in mind. As well as a focus on including fresh ingredients with nutritional value, we also provide an extensive vegan menu and cater well to a gluten free diet.

GOALS & COLLABORATIONS

Park Street Kitchen has ambitious goals:

Sustainability Tracking: The business seeks tools to accurately calculate and track its carbon footprint. This data is pivotal for setting meaningful sustainability objectives and gauging progress.

Marketwide Sustainable Practices: The business envisions a marketwide initiative for sustainable practices, driving waste reduction, composting, and innovative packaging strategies through collaborative efforts.

Educational Outreach: Expanding on its current efforts, the business intends to offer workshops and educational sessions, empowering consumers with knowledge to make informed sustainable choices.

Collaboration with fellow market traders has sparked discussions about collective bulk purchasing of sustainable packaging materials. This collective approach significantly reduces costs while propagating sustainable practices throughout the market. Emma knows that more can be done but some sort of coordination needs to be instigated.



CHALLENGES & FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Cost Considerations:

The adoption of eco-friendly practices came with higher upfront costs. Over time, the growing demand for sustainable options has helped bridge the cost gap, reflecting evolving consumer preferences.

Supply Chain Limitations:

While local sourcing is a priority, certain ingredients that are not regionally available must be sourced from farther afield, resulting in transportation-related emissions and challenges in achieving a completely local supply chain.

Carbon Footprint Calculation:

A key challenge lies in accurately measuring the business's carbon footprint. Despite robust sustainability efforts, the lack of accurate data hinders progress tracking and goal setting.

CONCLUSION

Emma's journey with Park Street Kitchen exemplifies the power of individual commitment to sustainability within the food industry. Through her choices in packaging, sourcing, collaboration, and education, she has demonstrated that even small businesses can make a significant positive impact on the environment. Despite financial challenges, and business growth her dedication to sustainable practices has not only attracted conscious consumers but also fostered partnerships within her community. By identifying her needs and wants for support, Emma is poised to further enhance her business's sustainability efforts and contribute to a greener future. Emma supports further collaboration within Wellington Market and would welcome a more joined up approach to reaching food sustainability as part of the wider T&W community

NEEDS, REQUIREMENTS & WISHES

Support for Calculating Carbon Footprint:

Emma expressed the need for assistance in calculating her business's carbon footprint. She recognised the importance of understanding the environmental impact of her operations and sought tools or resources that could help her quantify her carbon emissions.

Access to Sustainability Resources:

Emma acknowledged the importance of staying informed about sustainability initiatives and opportunities. She expressed interest in having access to resources that could assist her in implementing additional sustainable practices.

Waste Management Solutions:

Emma recognised the potential for better waste management practices within her market. She identified the need for composting initiatives and hoped for support in establishing systems for efficient waste disposal and repurposing.

PARK STREET KITCHEN OFFERS REFILLS. RETURN YOUR EMPTY JAR ON DELIVERY OF YOUR NEW JAR YOU WILL RECEIVE A £1 DISCOUNT.



Fiery Caribbean Pickle

A combination of pickled bell peppers, onions, carrots and scotch bonnet pepper. The perfect side to many dishes. Also great with cheese. Sizes: REGULAR (500ml) (ALLERGENS: Barley, Mustard Seeds)



The Granola Pot

Start your morning right with a home made, roasted Granola. 400g Bag. A healthy mix of natural ingredients: Oats, Buckwheat, Sunflower Seeds, Pumpkin Seeds, Coconut, Cocoa Nibs, Goji Berries. (ALLERGENS: Goji Berries: Sulphur Dioxide)



Large Caribbean Fiery Pickle

A combination of pickled bell peppers, onions, carrots and scotch bonnet pepper. The perfect side to many dishes. Also great with cheese. Sizes: LARGE (1l): £10 (ALLERGENS: Barley, Mustard Seeds)



CHATHAMS

BROCKTON GRANGE
SHIFNAL, SHROPSHIRE
TF11 9LZ

AT A GLANCE

This case study centers around Chatham's Organic Dairy, near Shifnal. This award-winning organic farm has prioritised sustainable and ethical practices in the production of organic milk. Chatham's Organic Dairy is particularly noteworthy for pioneering the use of a milk vending machine, providing the local community with direct access to fresh, at source organic milk, all while minimising environmental impact.

Chatham's Organic Dairy is a family-run farm in Shropshire that has made a significant transition to organic farming methods. This case study explores the farm's journey toward sustainability, their collaborations with local businesses, their environmental efforts, challenges faced, financial constraints, and their aspirations for a more sustainable future.

CURRENT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Organic Farming: The farm adhere to stringent organic farming practices, eschewing synthetic chemicals and genetically modified organisms. This commitment ensures soil health, biodiversity, and animal welfare, setting a foundation for sustainable milk production.

Local Supply Chain: By installing a milk vending machine on-site, Chatham's Organic Dairy eliminates the need for transportation and the associated food miles. This not only reduces carbon emissions but also supports the local economy. Excess milk is collected by [OMSCO](#)

Reusable Glass Bottles: Customers at the farm can fill up on fresh milk using reusable glass bottles, minimising single-use plastic waste and contributing to a circular economy.

Transparency: Chatham's Organic Dairy prioritises transparency. Customers have the opportunity to witness the production process and understand precisely where and how their milk is sourced and processed.

OVERVIEW FROM WEBSITE

"Our skills and love of sustainable farming have been passed down over three generations and we continue to strive to ensure that everything works together in harmony on the farm today and for generations to come. When it comes to our ladies only the best will do. We don't use GM feeds here on the farm and the herd have the freedom to 'moooch' and graze on lush pastures free from artificial fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides for up to 10 months of the year. In bad weather they relax in comfortable, spacious housing with lots of fresh straw. Our ladies are generally healthier due to our high standards of care and gentle farming techniques. This means we don't use antibiotics routinely – in fact we use them very rarely. Looking after our land organically also helps conserve biodiversity, which is great news for all the other wildlife and mini-beasts that make their homes on the farm. Our philosophy is that the chain of healthy soil produces healthier cows and healthier products. The grass-based, diet of our happy herd means our milk has lots of good stuff in it including omega 3 fatty acids. It's also a great source of calcium and lots of natural minerals and vitamins. Good news all round!"

The decision to shift to organic farming was primarily motivated by concerns about the negative impacts of conventional farming practices, such as pesticide use. . Chatham's Organic Dairy initiated the conversion process to organic farming in 1998, becoming one of the pioneers in the region.



The farm has implemented several sustainability measures, including the installation of solar panels and heat recovery systems. These efforts aim to reduce energy consumption and lower the farm's carbon footprint. Additionally, the farm has embraced grass-based farming practices, which are inherently more sustainable and environmentally friendly than intensive feed-based systems. They have also actively planted hedges to promote biodiversity and support local ecosystems.

GOALS & COLLABORATIONS

The farm collaborates with local businesses as a means of creating a more connected and sustainable food ecosystem. They supply their organic milk to local food hampers and ice cream producers. They also stock varied local produce in a vending machine that sits in the dairy. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of community and strengthens the local economy. James also welcomes school children and students from HAU.

CHALLENGES & FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Chatham's Organic Dairy acknowledges that financial constraints and limited resources are common challenges faced by many businesses when attempting to adopt sustainable practices. The farm mentioned that grants and financial assistance are available, but the process of obtaining them can be time-consuming and demanding, often requiring more manpower than small businesses can spare.

Chatham's Organic Dairy is interested in measuring the impact of their sustainability efforts, particularly those related to energy-saving initiatives like solar panels. However, they acknowledge that tracking impact can be challenging due to the diverse range of variables involved, including energy usage for different processes.

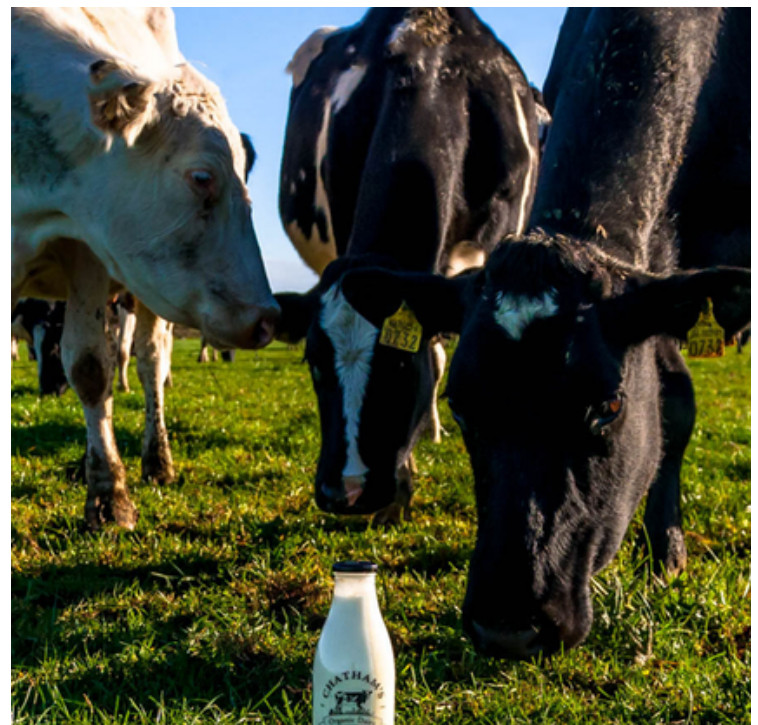
CONCLUSION

Conclusion: Chatham's Organic Dairy's journey toward sustainability highlights the challenges and opportunities faced by businesses aiming to adopt more environmentally friendly practices. Their collaborations with local businesses, adoption of renewable energy sources, and commitment to organic farming serve as an inspiration for others striving to create a more sustainable food system. As they continue to overcome challenges and work toward their goals, they underscore the importance of collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and supportive local ecosystems in building a more sustainable future.



NEEDS, REQUIREMENTS & WISHES

James expressed a wish for greater collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the local food community, alongside a more localised support system for farmers and growers. He agreed, that the creation of a food forum where businesses of all sizes, from small farms to larger enterprises, could come together to share insights, resources, and support. James expressed the need for a directory that provides information on available grants and resources for sustainable initiatives.





LITTLE GREEN PANTRY

THE LITTLE GREEN PANTRY

2 CROWN STREET

WELLINGTON

TELFORD

TF1 1LP

AT A GLANCE

This case study centers around The Little Green Pantry, originally set up in 2019 as a pop up market stall and partially funded by over 100 crowdfunding supporters, The Little Green Pantry has now gained a strong following of eco-minded customers and in 2021 expanded onto the High Street in Wellington, with the help of Telford & Wrekin Councils Pride in Our High Street Fund. The Little Green Pantry aims to make sustainable plastic free shopping as simple as possible, whilst supporting other local Wellington businesses and suppliers.

OVERVIEW

Keli and I met couple of times for various events but decided that due to the timing of the case study it would be better to take the time to mull over the questions rather than have an interview. Speaking with Keri, it has been a useful exercise in bringing together, in one place, all of her amazing work. Keri is a great spokesperson for what can be done.

CURRENT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES - IN KELI'S WORDS

- **Plastic-Free Shopping:** At my zero waste refill shop, we offer customers a plastic-free shopping experience. We encourage them to bring their containers and sell products in bulk, significantly reducing plastic packaging waste and minimizing our carbon footprint.
- **Sustainable Product Sourcing:** I prioritise sourcing products that align with sustainability principles. This means seeking out local, organic, and ethically sourced goods, ensuring that everything we offer in the shop reflects our commitment to reducing environmental impact.
- **Community Engagement:** My shop is deeply rooted in our local community. I actively promote and support local businesses, contributing to a sustainable local economy. I also aim to inspire my customers to embrace eco-friendly lifestyles, creating a community of environmentally conscious individuals.
- **Educational Outreach:** Through my presence on social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Threads, and Twitter, I use my platform to educate and inform my target audience about sustainable living, waste reduction, and the importance of addressing climate change. These educational efforts are aimed at encouraging behavioural changes among my followers.
- **Long-Term Expansion:** My long-term goal is to expand into larger premises and offer plastic-free shopping options in other towns. This expansion not only allows us to serve a broader audience but also promotes sustainable shopping practices in multiple communities.
- **Sustainability as a Priority:** Above all, my shop prioritizes caring for the planet. Profit comes second to our commitment to the environment. This approach sets a strong example for other businesses and emphasizes the importance of putting sustainability at the forefront of our operations.



CHALLENGES

Changing Consumer Shopping Habits:

Resistance to Change: Many consumers are accustomed to traditional shopping habits, which often involve convenience and familiarity. Transitioning to a zero waste refill shop requires a shift in mindset and shopping behaviour, which can be met with resistance or hesitation. We overcome this hurdle by making refill shopping as easy as possible, offering friendly and helpful staff to guide the consumer through their shopping journey and also by offering services such as click and collect and free local deliveries.

Awareness and Education:

Achieving sustainable shopping habits often requires awareness and education. Some potential customers may not fully understand the environmental impact of single-use plastics or the benefits of shopping sustainably, making it challenging to motivate them to make the switch. Our social media presence attempts to address this and break down those barriers.

Cost of Living Crisis:

Financial Constraints: The cost of living crisis can put financial strain on consumers, making them more price-sensitive when it comes to their purchases. Sustainable products, although environmentally friendly, may be perceived as more expensive, potentially deterring some customers. We have used social media and signage in store to do price comparisons against large supermarket chains, in order to educate the consumer on the saving that can be made by refill shopping.

Busy Lifestyles:

Time Constraints: Many individuals lead busy lives with work, family commitments, and other responsibilities. Sustainable shopping at a zero waste refill shop may require extra time for planning, shopping, and cleaning reusable containers, which can be a barrier for those with packed schedules.

Convenience Factor: Traditional grocery shopping can be more convenient, with pre-packaged items readily available. Zero waste shopping, while environmentally friendly, may be perceived as less convenient due to the need to bring containers and weigh products. We have tried to address this barrier with offering online ordering, free local collection of containers and delivery as well as a click and collect service.



GOALS & COLLABORATIONS

These areas were chosen based on a combination of personal values and market research. As someone deeply concerned about plastic pollution and climate change, I wanted my business to align with these values.

Market research indicated a demand for plastic-free and sustainable shopping options in my community, reinforcing the decision to focus on reducing plastic waste and promoting sustainable living.

The emphasis on community engagement and support for local businesses arose from recognising that supporting local businesses can boost the local economy and reduce the carbon footprint associated with long-distance product sourcing.

The choice to use social media for educational outreach likely reflects an understanding of its reach and influence in shaping consumer behaviour and attitudes. It's an effective way to spread the message of sustainability and engage with a broader audience.



FINANCIAL

CONSTRAINTS

Financial and resource constraints hindering my ability to make positive change

Running a zero waste refill shop is indeed a constant juggling act that requires careful management and adaptation. The challenges arise from several factors, including tight profit margins, rising costs of stock, utilities, and staffing, all of which make it difficult to achieve financial growth.

Tight Profit Margins:

Low Markup: Zero waste refill shops often operate with lower markup margins compared to traditional retailers. This is because the emphasis is on affordability and sustainability, which can limit the ability to generate substantial profits from each sale.

Competitive Pricing: To attract and retain customers, it's important to offer competitive prices for sustainable products. While this benefits consumers, it can compress profit margins for the business.

Increasing Costs:

Stock Costs: Sourcing sustainable, organic, or locally produced products can sometimes be more expensive than conventional options.

Maintaining a diverse and eco-conscious inventory can increase the overall cost of goods sold.

Utilities: Utilities, such as electricity and water, are essential for running a shop. As energy costs rise, it can put additional strain on the budget.

Staffing Costs: Staffing is crucial for providing excellent customer service and maintaining operations. Increased labour costs, including wages and benefits, can impact the bottom line.

Financial Growth Challenges:

Reinvestment vs. Profit: Balancing the need for reinvestment in the business, such as expanding to larger premises or adding new products and services, with generating immediate profits can be challenging. Limited profit margins may hinder the ability to allocate funds for growth initiatives.

Financial Sustainability: Maintaining the financial sustainability of the business while staying true to the mission of sustainability and affordability requires careful planning and resource allocation.

Risk Management: With tight margins and rising costs, there is limited room for financial setbacks or unexpected expenses, making risk management crucial.

LESSONS LEARNED

Planning is key. I've learned to anticipate trends, seasonal fluctuations, and customer preferences. This proactive approach ensures that we are well-prepared to meet our customers' needs and remain relevant in the market.

Sustainability often involves fine-tuning processes to minimize waste and maximize efficiency. Paying attention to the smallest details, such as packaging choices, product placement, and energy consumption, can have a significant impact on our environmental footprint and overall success.

While managing day-to-day operations is crucial, it's equally important to step back and take a holistic view of the business. Periodically reassessing our goals, mission, and long-term vision allows us to make strategic adjustments and ensure we stay true to our values.

Building and nurturing a supportive community of customers, partners, and employees has been one of the most rewarding aspects of this journey. Their input and feedback have been instrumental in our growth and improvement.

It has taught me that sustainability, careful planning, and a strong sense of purpose can not only drive business success but also contribute to a better future for our planet and community. As we move forward, I remain committed to continually evolving and making a positive impact in the world.

EXAMPLES OF MEASURABLE OUTCOMES OR IMPACTS ACHIEVED THROUGH INITIATIVES

Plastic Landfill Diversion:

Since its opening in 2021, The Little Green Pantry has made a remarkable impact on reducing plastic waste. We're proud to say that we have saved over 56,000 pieces of plastic from ending up in landfills. This achievement is a testament to our commitment to sustainability and our efforts to provide eco-conscious alternatives to traditional packaging.

Our customers, who are passionate about reducing their plastic footprint, have been instrumental in achieving this milestone. They have embraced our sustainable shopping approach, spreading the word and inspiring others to join the movement.

Sales Growth:

Over the past two and a half years, despite the challenging economic environment, we have experienced consistent growth in sales, averaging around 30%. This achievement not only bucks the national trend but is surprising, especially considering the current cost of living crisis.





The Wrekin Housing Group

EMMA ROGERS
SOCIAL VALUE CO-ORDINATOR

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WREKIN.COM
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AT A GLANCE

I met with Emma Rogers having discovered that they had just undertaken Carbon Literacy Training within Wrekin Housing Trust. Emma has been championing the need to improve sustainability, in her role as Social Value Co-ordinator. This case study briefly touches on some of the issues being tackled, a new strategy is being developed and there will be further information to follow.

[Environmental Sustainability Strategy.](#)

CURRENT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

The trust has taken several steps towards sustainability.

They have developed an action plan with high-level sustainability objectives, one of which is to increase the use of local produce by 25%. The Trust would happily explore partnerships with local food networks and producers should the opportunity present itself.

Carbon literacy awareness training for board members, senior managers, and relevant personnel.

Re-purposing old staff mobile phones for customers in need within the Trust.

Education within menus and meals with regards to changes that can be made.

OVERVIEW

The Wrekin Housing Group is a socially minded organisation that prides itself on making a difference to people's lives, we do this by:

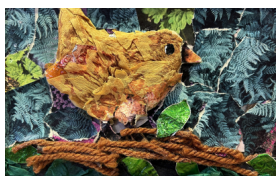
- Providing over 13,000 homes for affordable rent and low cost home ownership across Shropshire, Staffordshire and Telford & Wrekin.
- Delivering innovative care solutions ranging from domiciliary care for the elderly to supported housing and care for adults with learning difficulties, as well as dementia nursing care.
- Channelling social investment to create jobs and promote economic growth, generating opportunities for people to gain employability skills, maximising the social value of our services and delivering wider community benefits

GOALS & COLLABORATIONS

Emma and I discussed involving the community in sustainability efforts and have created a small community garden at one of their residential premises, they also engage in seed planting/growing with youngsters, various eco- friendly competitions. The Trust would happily look to increasing their green space activities to improve their broader sustainability goals.

The Trust collaborate with local food share hubs for their customers.

The team that Emma works within have developed a comprehensive action plan, soon to be approved, outlining high-level sustainability objectives, including a focus on sourcing more local products.



CHALLENGES & FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Throughout the conversation, we reflected on the challenges of engaging various stakeholders in sustainability initiatives while emphasising the importance of taking small, impactful steps.

The catering department faces financial challenges related to staffing shortages, especially with the catering manager frequently needing to step in due to the lack of available staff. Additionally, the cost of sustainable practices and local sourcing can be higher in the short term, potentially impacting the department's budget.

We talked about customer opinions on varying topics with the "sustainability" heading and how there is a need for implementation, rather than requirement such as reframing veganism and vegetarianism as balanced, budget-friendly choices rather than extreme dietary changes.

Our chat highlights the difficulty in setting specific sustainability targets. In this case, the team aims to increase the use of local produce by 25% but how to then go about gaining clarity on what this percentage represents.

The team's initial efforts have involved experimenting with various sustainability initiatives, and are making progress, but facing challenges in charting a clear path forward

CONCLUSION

This case study highlights the journey of this department towards incorporating sustainability into its operations. While they have made initial strides in awareness and goal setting, there are still challenges to overcome. Financial constraints, staffing shortages, and the need for broader engagement pose hurdles. However, by collaborating with local organisations and taking gradual steps towards sustainability, they aim to achieve their objectives. This case study underscores the importance of addressing sustainability issues in a practical, collaborative, and education-driven manner, and it serves as an example of how organisations can navigate the path towards more sustainable practices in their operations. Being able to follow the journey of the team as they navigate the complex landscape of sustainability, highlighting their successes, challenges, and strategies for engaging stakeholders and promoting sustainability initiatives would be a positive step in understanding how outcomes can be implemented and measured. Ultimately, it underscores the importance of gradual, community-focused approaches to drive change in a setting as complex as Wrekin Housing Trust.



NEEDS, REQUIREMENTS & WISHES

- 1. Understand Local Sourcing:**
Gain a deeper understanding of how local produce is sourced, ordered, and integrated into their catering operations.
- 2. Collaboration:**
Collaborate with local producers and organisations like the Shropshire Good Food Partnership and Open Food Network. But where to start.
- 3. Resource Allocation:**
Allocate resources to improve sustainability, potentially by joining the Shropshire Good Food Partnership as a business.
- 4. Education and Engagement:**
Educate staff and customers about sustainable practices, offering guidance on small changes they can make in their daily routines.
- 5. Waste Reduction:**
Address waste reduction, both in terms of food waste and single-use plastics.





CREATING A LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

PEOPLE

At the heart of a sustainable food economy are the people—producers, consumers, and communities. By promoting sustainable practices, fostering food security, and prioritising inclusivity, we empower individuals to make conscious choices about what they eat. Access to nutritious, locally sourced food becomes a right, not a privilege. Education and awareness ensure that people are informed about the impact of their food choices on their health and the well-being of others. Collaboration, information exchange, sharing and support ensures that the education and awareness comes from the heart and voice of the local food economy.

ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS:

Bring together local growers, producers, consumers, community groups, and other stakeholders to collaborate on sustainable food initiatives. Include diverse perspective. A Food Forum, where best practice and knowledge can be shared on a quarterly basis with representation from SGFP and T&W council.

SUPPORT LOCAL FARMERS AND PRODUCERS:

Provide financial incentives, grants and signpost information. A more localised approach rather than relying on Defra will improve the relationships between grower and consumer. Creating a more fluid relationship can have nothing but a positive outcome.

FOOD EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

Invest in educational programs and workshops to teach residents about the benefits of sustainable food and how to grow their own food. These efforts can also include training programs and volunteering opportunities for aspiring growers by working with partners such as HAU, market gardeners, SGFP etc. Utilising the employee engagement days of The Wrekin Housing Trust for the benefit of improving education and the “Grow Local” initiative would be an example. All of those interviewed were willing to provide their services for “pop ups” and demos. Ensure a presence at local events,

AWARENESS AND MARKETING:

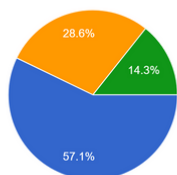
Launch marketing campaigns to raise awareness about the benefits of local, sustainable food. Highlight success stories from local farmers, growers and producers to build community support. Telford and Wrekin does not have the benefit of a centralised shopping zone that supports all businesses. We are a satellite borough with no real heart.



RESULTS OF A SURVEY SENT TO THE CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPIONS

Where do you do the majority of your food shopping?

7 responses



- Supermarket
- Local markets e.g. Wellington/Newport
- Online Supermarket
- Small Independent shops
- Online Veg Boxes
- Local Farm Shops
- Farmers Market
- Local Town Markets e.g. Madeley/Dawley

Do you feel that buying local produce aligns with your personal values or lifestyle choices?

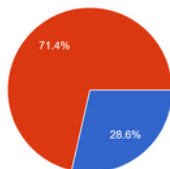
7 responses



- Yes
- No

Have you ever used local Food Hubs?

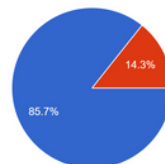
7 responses



- Yes
- No

Would you be interested in "Food Gleaning"? the act of collecting excess fresh foods from farms, gardens, farmers markets, grocers, restaurants, or any other sources,

7 responses



- Yes
- No

Are there any changes or improvements you would like to see in terms of accessing or purchasing local produce? Please let us know what they might look like.

7 responses

Local food hubs take precedence over supermarkets.

Link up local community orchards with volunteer pickers and supply food banks and food hubs

Community Sustainability

A directory of places to go in T&W and Shropshire

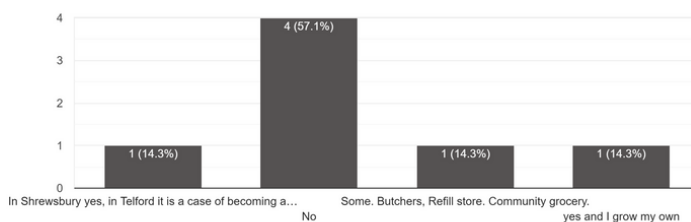
More advertising.

Better awareness, food on streets/residents

Perhaps a centralised point of information e.g on the council website

Do you find it easy to access local produce in your area?

7 responses





CREATING A LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

PLACE

Sustainable food economies celebrate and protect the unique places where food is grown and consumed. This includes not only safeguarding natural landscapes but also preserving cultural and culinary traditions. Local food systems thrive when we invest in regenerative agriculture, support small-scale farmers, and minimize food miles. In doing so, we create vibrant communities where food is a source of pride, identity, and connection.

CREATE A WIDER SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICY:

Develop a clear and comprehensive sustainable food policy that outlines the town council's commitment to supporting local food systems. This policy should include specific goals, objectives, and timelines. Involving local stakeholders through a forum is essential and will ensure a "buy in" from all areas.

ESTABLISH FARMERS' MARKETS AND FOOD HUBS:

Create and promote farmers' markets and food hubs where local producers can sell their products directly to consumers. The council can offer logistical support, marketing, and space for such initiatives. Please see links to example initiatives. Costs to be kept realistic, reflecting the size of those attending. There is a request that local events are supported by local businesses offering good, local food.

LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT POLICIES:

Focus on improving procurement policies that prioritise purchasing locally produced and sustainable food for council-owned facilities, schools, and other public institutions.

CELEBRATE:

In celebrating our valuable local food economy, their wins, collaborations and events, by bringing everything together in one directory we offer up those choices to the consumer, the residents. With more opportunity to support, learn about and consume good local food, they are able to reduce the boroughs carbon footprint, increase the circularity of the food economy, reduce waste and improve health and wellbeing.



CREATING A LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

PLANET

The health of our planet is intricately linked to our food choices. A sustainable food economy recognises the finite resources of the Earth and strives to minimize waste, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and conserve biodiversity. By embracing practices such as organic farming, agroforestry, and renewable energy, we mitigate the environmental impacts of food production. We also tackle the pressing issue of food waste by adopting a circular approach, where every part of the food system is optimised, from farm to fork.

FOOD WASTE REDUCTION:

Develop strategies for small businesses to minimise food waste at all stages of the food supply chain, from production to consumption. Encourage composting and support initiatives that redirect surplus food to those in need. Food waste collections for small businesses would be very welcome.

ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES:

Making sustainable practice a key element for grants and funding. For example within a food setting receiving a grant, at least 25% of food should be sourced from local growers.

MEASURE PROGRESS AND ADJUST:

Encourage the use of Cool Shropshire & Telford, none of the businesses were aware of this tool.

Continuously monitor the progress of sustainable food initiatives and be willing to adapt policies and strategies based on outcomes and feedback from stakeholders.



CREATING A LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

CONCLUSION

Improving the sustainable food economy for local growers, producers, food enterprises and consumers is a task that requires a coordinated effort from T & W Council, community stakeholders, and various organisations.

In the first instance there is an overwhelming wish/need for some sort of food forum where all stakeholders within T&W can come together. Most of the enterprises that I have spoken with are not certain of what they need to be working towards and what the requirements are to reach sustainability targets locally or globally, with no real framework in place to start the journey, gain knowledge or seek information. In general those I have spoken with have naturally sought to start on this path through their own personal values rather than “jumping on the band wagon”. Considering the challenges faced, a more cohesive approach needs to be developed so that we might encourage all businesses within the food sector to follow suit and do so willingly through discussion, participation and education.

Measurement is an important factor in driving the success of businesses in achieving sustainability and reducing/eliminating their contribution to climate change. The wishes, goals and needs expressed should become an easy, objective and measurable plan. These should include but not be limited to

- Energy consumption values for the businesses.
- Nature and diversity of waste streams.
- Quantities of different wastes and how they're managed - their destinations.
- Climate change mitigation measures already taken.
- Climate change measures identified to be implemented.
- Sustainability objectives/targets and measures already taken.

Creating a model forum, involving the participating businesses alongside a qualitative assessment of their needs would ensure a future plan would be fit for purpose.

TO END... OF THE VERY SMALL SECTION OF FOOD ENTERPRISES I
HAVE SPOKEN WITH, THERE WAS NOT ONE THAT WASN'T WILLING TO
IMPROVE, GIVE MORE TIME AND ENERGY, SUPPORT OR HELP
EDUCATE. THERE ARE MULTIPLE COLLABORATIONS TO BE MADE AND
FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS TO BE FOUNDED, AND NOT JUST THE
OBVIOUS ONES. BUT, WE CANNOT ALWAYS RELY ON FORWARD
THINKING INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESS OWNERS & VOLUNTEERS TO MAKE
THE SHIFT THAT IS NEEDED WITHOUT SUPPORT

EMMA CANTILLION
SGFP COORDINATOR - FOOD ECONOMY

GOOGLE MAP OF OUR CASE STUDY PARTNERS
SUSTAINABLE FOOD ECONOMY & GROW LOCAL

Useful Links

[Open Food Network](#)

[Slow Food Birmingham](#)

[Local to Ludlow](#)

[Os Nosh](#)

[Long Table](#)

COLLABORATE,
SHARE, EXCHANGE
KNOWLEDGE,
SUPPORT &
MEASURE.