

Herefordshire Sustainable Food & Tourism Partnership

23rd September 2019

Present: Jenny Beard (Chair), David Curtis, Cathy Meredith, Liz Lloyd, Rachel Jones, Nick Read

Apologies: Clare Greener

In attendance: Kristan Pritchard, Public Health Herefordshire Sustainable Food County project

Sustainable Food County

Kristan gave an overview of the Sustainable Food County project, based on the Sustainable Food City model being promoted by Sustain and the Soil Association. The idea was promoted in the RSA publication "Our Future in the Land" <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/future-land>

There are a number of key health drivers for Herefordshire, including childhood obesity and dental health, which are complex issues and which require cross-sector partnerships involving food in order to address them. The Sustainable Food County is a mechanism for doing this. It has six broad objectives:

- Promoting healthy and sustainable food
- Addressing food poverty
- Building skills related to food
- Promoting a local food economy
- Catering and procurement policy
- Waste and the ecological footprint of food production and use

Kristan has started to do some mapping for each of these key issues.

The Sustainable Food City has bronze, silver and gold awards. Bronze requires three criteria to be addressed for each of the six objectives, whilst silver requires all criteria to be addressed and gold is a further refinement on this. The early work has identified food procurement as a significant issue for the county. There is a meeting at HARC on October 7th to discuss the project further.

In the discussion it was noted that Herefordshire is lacking in key infrastructure to support a local food economy and local procurement. However, there were good examples from elsewhere of what could be achieved, such as Cornwall hospitals, and things were happening locally, such as Golden Valley schools, the Wellbeing Café, the Life & Soul Café and Hinton Community Cafe. It was important also to begin to tie together other local initiatives which impacted on sustainable food, including climate change initiatives, eco diocese and zero carbon farming.

The group recommended talking to the Ledbury Food Group and Leominster Transition. Also work with care and nursing homes (generally part of larger franchises), wholesalers such as Bookers and youth clubs/YFC. Members of HSFTP requested web links and explanations of the project that they could put onto their websites.

Partner updates

Rural Hub

- The Hub was working as part of Farm Herefordshire which had recently been focusing on grassland issues and companion cropping events.
- The Princes Countryside Fund (PCF) was funding a three-year project until March 2020 providing mentors to family farms to help them adapt to change. This was working extremely well and linked to the Farming Resilience Project in Worcestershire.
- The Hub and Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy had been invited to an NFU Farming Charities summit looking at post Brexit agriculture, and PCF was funding Diane Spark to do a review of farming support networks.

Rural and Farming Network

Liz reported that nothing had been happening nationally with RFN and it wasn't clear whether it would continue.

Herefordshire Council

- Rachel indicated that the Defra Growth Programme would probably go live in October and will be coordinated nationally. A list of around 70 Herefordshire businesses who have expressed interest in the funding has been collated and they will be contacted as soon as the call goes live and supported through the application processes if needed. Projects will be supported in tourism, business development and food production.
- The Council was maintaining the Visit Herefordshire website until at least April 2020
- Defra had contacted Rachel (via the LEP) about co-hosting local events in preparation for Brexit but it wasn't clear what was required.
- Rachel had attended a Visit Britain/DCMS event about future support for tourism zones but political uncertainties was having an effect on roll out.
- Hereford had put in a bid to the Future High Streets Fund but had been notified that it was to receive funding from the Future Towns Fund.
- Leominster had put in an EoI to the Heritage Highstreets Fund and had succeeded in getting through to the second round. The value was potentially £4m.
- Voting had begun on the Hereford City BID.

Jenny

- Jenny reported that the launch of the feasibility phase report for the Herefordshire Tourism BID was taking place on 25th September. The feasibility phase recommendation was to proceed to a full referendum but this required funding.
- She also indicated that Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chambers of Commerce was having difficulties and that staff retention was poor. Although Visit Herefordshire was not being promoted, Visit Worcestershire was. Some large Corporates had resigned as members.
- "Virtuous Circle", sustainable tourism for churches, was about to be launched in November. The Herefordshire Churches Tourism Group had been awarded £250k to support sustainable tourism projects.

Duchy

- David indicated that the Duchy's Executive Group had met and was looking to support farmers to work towards zero emissions.
- There was going to be more work on Natural Capital within the Duchy's portfolio and further secondments were possible from Natural England. There would be a focus on building soil organic matter.
- Community Networks had been awarded a grant to extend the broadband network, hopefully doubling the number of businesses involved.

Brightspace Foundation

- Nick reported on the mapping for the Food Poverty Alliance project
- Brightspace had been supporting the roll out of Eco Diocese by Hereford Diocese
- Herefordshire Green Network had initiated “The Great Collaboration”, working with local authorities that had declared a Climate Change Emergency
- There was a new project being developed called Growing Resilient Communities, looking at supporting communities develop health and wellbeing.

Membership

Kristan was invited to be a member of HSFTP.

Date of Next Meeting

The meeting originally scheduled for Monday 18th November was rescheduled for 10am on Monday 9th December at the Duchy offices.