



Food Group

Problems and Solutions

As the surveys and consultations carried out as part of the Canongate Research Project showed, many Old Town residents find it difficult to buy tasty, healthy and inexpensive food.

A public forum meeting on March 22nd 2010 identified a number of possible solutions to this problem. When these suggestions were analysed, it became clear that they naturally grouped themselves around five distinct themes, each of which it makes sense to manage as a project in its own right.

There has now been a little further exploratory work carried out and the Old Town Development Trust has decided to set up a Food Group to carry the food projects forward.

The Five Projects

- A *Food Market* project to establish a food market within the Old Town.
- A *Food Co-op* project to establish one or more food co-ops within the Old Town.
- A *Food Vans* project to bring vans selling fish, meat etc. to the Old Town.
- A *Working With Traders* project to help and encourage existing food suppliers to expand what they offer.
- A *Grow Our Own* project to explore some of the ways that residents can produce food themselves.

THE FIRST MEETING

The first meeting of the Food Group will be in early May, provisionally Thursday 6th at 7pm. Please contact [Mark Davidson](#) if you would like to attend and say whether this is convenient for you. We will try to find a time that suits everyone.

The venue will be decided when it becomes clear how many people will attend.



Food Market Project

Markets were traditionally a central feature of Edinburgh life and though they all but disappeared from the city in the second half of the 20th century there is resurgence of interest in markets as a way to connect food producers with food consumers, for it potentially has social, economic and environmental benefits. The aim of this project is to re-establish a food market in the Old Town.

Next Steps:

- Draw up a short list of possible locations.
- Visit Balerno Village Trust's market on Saturday 8th May (leaving the Old Town at 9.30am).

Working With Traders Project

There are already many food outlets in the Old Town, including convenience stores, delis and speciality shops. This aim of this project is to work with the traders who run these outlets, helping and encouraging them to expand what they offer so that residents food needs are better met.

Next steps:

1. Contacting Scotmid about taking over the old Nisa property.
2. Carrying out a survey of needs in the Old Town. If the survey identifies food needs with sufficient clarity, it will provide traders with a good business case for expanding the range of foods they stock.

Food Vans Project

The aim of this project is to bring food vans into the old town. This is one possible way to make fresh fish, meat etc. available, and it would be of particular benefit to elderly people and people living in sheltered accommodation. Possibilities include:

- A fish van, once a week.
- A meat van, once a week.
- Regular deliveries of unhomogenised milk.
- Cheese vans.

Next Steps

1. Survey of needs.
2. Contact Kev the fish van man.
3. Draw up a short list of possibilities and priorities.

Food Co-op Project

The aim of this project is to establish a new food co-op within the Old Town supplying a range of fruit, vegetables and dry goods. To do this, we will need to find a suitable venue and have a small pool of volunteers to run the co-op.

Another aspect of this project is food sharing. Once a central distribution point is established it will become possible, for example, to facilitate the sharing of vegetable boxes between people who don't need to buy a whole box every week.

Next steps:

1. Decide on a location, possibly the Braidwood Centre.
2. Liaise with other food co-ops.
3. Work with Edinburgh Community Food Initiative to source volunteers, borrow scales and tills, develop publicity materials, etc.
4. Find a partner to take our unsold stock.

Grow Our Own Project

The aim of this project is to provide opportunities for Old Town residents to meet some of their food needs themselves through growing their own food. Possibilities include:

1. Beekeeping.
2. Allotments within the Old Town.
3. Community gardens within the Old Town.
4. Allotments as part of the Cyrenian Community Gardens Project.
5. Gardens on roofs.

Although this is a food project, it is probably better managed through the Geddes Gardening Club.