

TBI Food Group Meeting 31st March 2011 Minutes

Present: Anne, Sheila, Trish, Agric

Apologies: Bob, Freya, Jo, Kirsty, Tommy, Toni, Liz

Main discussion was about existing projects and what to do with them now.

1. Grow North

Plenty of the participants are keen to carry it on in some form, but they need a prod to self organise and make it happen. Possibilities: prompt them to hold a meeting, set up a facebook page or google group, or use the TBI forum. We should facilitate as required.

[Action: Sheila to prod]

It could be some are interested in spending the occasional few hours at the community gardens learning about specific things. We could let them know in advance what we plan to be doing over the next few weeks and ask if they want to join in and have some tuition.

[Action: community gardens]

How about a vegetable (and fruit?) growers' question time, modelled vaguely on Gardeners' Question Time, except, of course, longer, more local and better. We could get this together by late April if we chose, just in time to be of use for this season. We know of ample suspects for the panel.

[Action: TBI main meeting - is this something worth organising fast?]

Grow North Manual: hardcopies should be produced in the next couple of weeks, 200 ordered, cost £15 each. We should ask for donations of £15 per copy. How about those people who have participated in Grow North - full price, reduced price or free? Copies should be distributed to local libraries and schools. Other outlets: Green Shop in Dingwall, any others? An online PDF version can be made available for downloading, would be good if downloaders could make a Paypal donation to TBI. Agric needs to report to main TBI meeting re: Creative Commons licences (copyright).

[Action: TBI main meeting to discuss]

[Action: Agric re: copyright]

Fortrose Garden: looks like owners are happy for it to continue in use; we know of 2 possibly interested groups: pre-school nursery (via Sheila); beavers group (6 to 9 year old cubs / brownies, via Ken). Sounds like these might need some supporting expertise - where might they get that from if wanted? Do we have anyone local and willing? Fortrose Academy? Sheila to contact them and Ian Goode, work out who's going to use it and what support is needed.

[Action: Sheila]

Grow North tools etc. We thought these probably best absorbed into their respective community gardens and some made available for borrowing (see later). Sheila has some Fortrose garden tools. Sheila made a kitbox for each regular Grow North site of: first aid kit, tea, coffee, risk assessment, important phone numbers etc; we thought these should remain at the community gardens, if not needed at Fortrose could go to Rosemarkie allotments.

2. Community Gardens

Participation still a problem at Netherton, need to see what Culbokie School and Culbokie Scout Group are likely to need then work out how best to cultivate the rest.

[Action: Tommy, Agric]

Loch na Mhoid seems to have a core group of committed gardeners.

Books: we ordered 35+ gardening related books, probably best to make these available at the Fortrose library? Alternatively organise our own library?

[Action: how should / do we do this?]

Tools: got some additional tools, some of which may be useful to make available for temporary loaning (2 digging hoes, 2 drawer hoes, 2 onion hoes, 2 good small spades OK for 8-ish year old to use). We need proper inventories of tools at the community gardens.

[Action: Tommy, Agric, Toni]

3. Community Markets

Kirsty has been appointed to replace Freya (retiring, too much to do in life ATM) as North Kessock market manager and has two food events pencilled into contract. Cromarty CM to start on 14th May, John Wood has a merry band who will manage that initially. Both expect to be self-funding but NK needs to increase stall price to probably £7. Hector at Ross-shire Journal will be happy to do a splash for the Cromarty launch and re-publicise the North Kessock and Culbokie ones as part of that.

4. Highland Food Challenge

We think we can continue this on a minimal cost / self-funding basis, continue to recruit, publicise and run events. Freya's been producing a monthly emailed newsletter - Anne to forward some copies to Agric and anyone else who might be interested in helping to do, it's probably 2 or 3 hours work a month so we should be able to do on a volunteer basis.

Food events typically cost about £100, so with a decent attendance should be self-funding. Try to piggy-back on other TBI events to reduce cost, maximise publicity and attendance. Do potato tastings in the July onwards period. How about some foraging sessions? Transition Alness apparently did a successful one last year, contact them for info, Tommy, Agric, Roger Piercy have some foraging skills - anyone else?

Teen has suggested having an HFC facebook page and is willing to administer it, and do an article in the forthcoming TBI newsletter. Mike Small is happy for us to link in in any way that's useful to the resources the Fife Diet has and to copy their approach in whatever way we feel appropriate. Tommy is willing to contribute a monthly wild food recipe.

[Actions: Anne, Teen, Tommy, Agric]

5. What specific problems does absence of CCF funding cause?

Generally few for the above, ongoing, food group projects. Tommy will need some money to properly progress work with schools (Culbokie and possibly Tore), up to £5000 for a year dependent on the scale, and is trying to identify potential funding sources, if anyone has any promising suggestions please say.

[Action: Tommy]

6. Food group convenor / next meeting

Agric can be convenor in short term but would like to jobshare with anyone who's willing to do it at times he's away. Trish willing to do at times over winter months but not in summer. Will proceed on an ad hoc basis for now.

Next meeting to be arranged for late April to decide a provisional set of events for the summer.

[Action: Agric]

6. Miscellaneous

We're not making the best use of synergies between food group projects, and between them and other TBI projects / events / publicity. Try to do better and look to maximise.

[Action: all TBI]

Anne is looking into some potential growing areas round North Kessock.

Apparently some people are finding it difficult to discover how to join TBI from the website.

[Action: ???]

The Highland People's Food Seed Bank seems to be languishing? Agric to contact Chris to see if / how we might support / help, and produce information on seed saving.

[Action: Agric]

Food hub. Agric has previously spoken with Bruce Morrison and Kirsty. Culbokie CM has lost its only vegetable stall and Kirsty is desperate to get another. Perhaps anyone with spare produce could provide it for the TBI stall in April - 16th I think - (should have some kale, PSB and sorrel from Netherton, tatties all gone, not much else winter stuff was grown). Thereafter it would be good if we could get a handful of smallish scale growers to provide produce for Culbokie CM as a way of testing out the mechanics of the vegetable and fruit aspects of a food hub, see how it goes, and hopefully expand to other growers and markets.

[Action: Kirsty, Bruce, Agric, +]

Seed potatoes. We still have a decent selection, Agric to update availability list, put on website and copy to Trish and Ken for possible use at Rosemarkie allotments, and to anyone else who wants some. Will ask for donations to TBI for them.

[Action: Agric]