

Haringey Solidarity Group

Summary of the discussion regarding...

Food campaigning in Haringey - Right to Food for All

Present:

Dave M – HSG and Friends of Lordship Rec,; Jon – HSG; Zaher –HSG; Dave R – HSG and Cooperation Tottenham; Luca – HSG and Cooperation Tottenham; Joan – Lordship Hub and Rec; Pamela – Sustainable Haringey, Growing in Haringey, Wolves Lane Centre; Ruth – Haringey Right to Food and HSG; Anne – Hornsey Foodbank, Haringey Right to Food, Haringey Community Food Network; Carmel – Northumberland Park Community Cookup; Steve J – Haringey Community Action Network

Apols: Skye - HSG, Tony - HSG, Don - HSG, Sandra – Friends of Harmony Gardens, Rose and Emma – Community Umbrella, Alison – Community Cookup

Intro: How do we organise and campaign around food poverty, and try to ensure everyone has access to affordable, quality and ethically-produced food supplies? How much food is, and could be, produced in Haringey, and shared? How do groups involved in these issues link up and work together?

Reports

- **Cooperation Tottenham Food Cooperative.**
 - o The aim is to use free food as a resource and maintain healthy living for people struggling financially.
 - o Part of Cooperation Towns movement, which originated in Kentish Town.
 - o People become members, share ideas, in a non-hierarchical way.
 - o There is also a pay-in scheme which allows members to buy food in bulk to save money.
 - o The aim is to spread food coops as much as possible.
 - o Prefer coops to foodbanks as the feeling is they are more empowering. Based on solidarity not charity.
- **Growing in Haringey**
 - o a network linking community gardens including Tottenham Green gardens, Elizabeth Lane and Edible Landscapes (and others).
 - o Regular plant sales to raise funds so they can provide tools for community gardens.
 - o They keep in touch with as many groups as possible.
 - o Wolves Lane food growing centre: a former council nursery.
 - They grow cut flowers and food, including supplying Ottolenghi restaurant.
 - They received a lottery grant to build a community space including a demo kitchen. Planning is cleared and building is about to start.
 - o There was a suggestion to map all community gardens in the borough as they could provide places for migrants to use.
 - o The network is a member of Sustain and Capital Growth.
 - o Growing in Haringey were involved in developing the borough food strategy, including 7 principles of sustainable food.
 - o Each community garden in the network does their own fundraising.
- **Haringey Right to Food** – contact: haringeyrtf@protonmail.com
 - o Campaign slogan: “Hunger is a Political Choice”
 - o Policies:
 - Universal free school meals for all primary and secondary students.
 - Establishing a network of community kitchens including allowing access to school kitchens.
 - Open access to emergency food centres (food banks) by ending referral system and means testing.

- Strategic use of urban public land to 'farm the city'.
 - National nutritional standards for all emergency food centres and free and affordable food hubs.
 - Nationally agreed working conditions for all food project workers, whether paid or unpaid (voluntary).
 - Standing with trade unions and marginalised groups fighting for real living incomes via wage packets or benefits.
- o Planning a stall outside Morrisons on Saturday 13th May to campaign against the need for foodbanks.
- o Also planning a march and a picnic in the future.
- o Focussing on everyone being able to afford nutritious food.
- o Haringey council declared itself a right to food borough - where is the follow through?
- **Lordship Rec**
 - o Hub includes OK Foundation foodbank and free hot meals on Thursdays.
 - o The Friends run the annual Tottenham Flower and Produce show – September 9th
 - Shared the invitation to other groups to help plan the event this year.
 - o Planning children's cooking classes
 - Friend of Lordship Rec have turned part of the rec into an open orchard
 - There is also an orchard being set up in Alexandra Park
 - o Friends of the Rec initiated a food growing project on unused terraces in Broadwater Farm.
- **Foodbanks** – many grew out of mutual aid groups during covid.
 - o Ethos of mutual aid is important.
 - o No referrals, no proof of why you have come.
 - o Staffed by volunteers
 - o Working with growing groups and Kurdish advice centre
 - o Lack of community spaces is a problem.
- **Community Cookup – Northumberland Park**
 - o The group have been removed from the community centre where they were based for the last 5 years - due to building safety issues. Now running their foodbank outside the community centre. Were originally hassled by the council trying to close them down, but following a residents' petition in support the Council say they are now supportive.
 - o The view was expressed that the council don't like the community organising independently.
- **Selby Food Hub**
 - o Formerly community run, but now more of a top-down management model and seems to be no longer functioning as well.
 - o Lost its major food supplier
 - o Reduced operation from twice to once per week.
 - o Was reaching 5500 people per week and supplies local foodbanks.
 - o A petition is planned to return the project to a community run model.

Discussion

- It was proposed years ago that an estimate could and should be done of **how much food is grown in Haringey**, including private gardens, allotments etc.
 - o How much of this is actually picked and distributed, and how could we increase this?
 - o Urban Harvest – was a free, informal network based in North London for people interested in picking fruit & other local food
- Some history
 - o people traditionally grew much of their own food. Centuries of violent enclosures by landowners and royalty resulted in people being thrown off their land.
 - o Diggers movement - were a group of religious and political dissidents in 17th century England who called for people to seize and communalise the land.

- o Allotments were a concession given to people during the industrial revolution as more and more people moved from rural to urban centres.
 - Then promoted during WWII due to food shortages.
- o Food rationing during and after WWII – ensuring everybody had the same rather than the rich being greedy and the poor going hungry.
- o This kind of policy could be enacted to address not just food poverty but also climate catastrophe and the resulting issues, if there was the will. This is an emergency situation.
- It was suggested vacant shops and buildings could be squatted/occupied for community spaces
- Noted that at the HCAN workshop (11th June) food will be part of the wider poverty workshop.
- St Ann's Hospital Redevelopment Trust – proposed growing spaces for residents and people as part of the redevelopment of the hospital site.
- Energy Gardens are a scheme setting up solar panels and community gardens at stations.
- Foraging in London – berries, rosehips, nettles, linden and more can be found.
- The book Talking Green by Colin Ward was recommended
 - o Discusses who controls the land and notes how land ownership excludes working class people from the land, and that 'free' markets control and distort food distribution. Hence there is a clear need to work towards the abolition of private land ownership and capitalism if people's needs and their empowerment are to be met.