

BFM's Mission is

To help create food security and a sustainable, affordable local food system; building community, health, economic and environmental resilience.

Core Values – we believe:

- food is at the heart of community cohesion and resilience
- food should be healthy both for people and planet
- activities should be inclusive and accessible
- in working collaboratively, co-creating, consulting local communities, building partnerships

We aim to achieve this in 3 main ways

- i. Awareness-raising, information-sharing, and networking
- ii. some policy / strategic working
- iii. being involved in some **projects** on the ground on cycle of supply-grow-cook-eat and
 - in particular on **increasing food supply and growing our own**
 - and **building communities around food**

1. Information-sharing and linking with others –

We see this as vital in order to help us all make the most impact with limited resources.

We aim to provide visibility to the many food initiatives, and help join the dots, making connections and building momentum.

- Maintaining the **website** with info. about local organisations as well as links to others
- **Newsletters**: every couple of months; subscribers up by about 1/3 this year to 360. These contain information and news about many of the huge number of community food projects and organisations within Bridport's food system
- **Facebook Group** is open to everyone to post information. Group members have increased this year by over 1/3 to over 300 members.
- We **participated in town events** – Christmas Cheer, Big Green Week ...etc.
- Recently produced a **visual of local community food scene** to help show what there is, and where there's already collaboration. There is a lot more connectivity than people realise.

- BFM Steering Group members are also **involved in other groups** – Local Food Group/ Food festival, food glut stall, young people, Edible Gardens, retail & restaurants etc.

Current core partnerships are:

- a) with **BLFG** – we're represented **on their steering Group**, and had a major presence at **Food Festival** in past 2 years
 - We've developed a range of ways of engaging people - inviting guest chefs, cooking competitions, interactive things like pesto-making, offering edible plants – any ways to hook people into a dialogue.
- b) This year, we have deepened our **partnership with HOME in Bridport** and **Sustainable Bridport**, which have been running the Edible Gardens projects in schools for years.

- We have begun a project with HOME for an awareness-raising campaign, and gatherings for local residents on the allotment in Skilling, which will inform an event to plan next steps. This project was designed to feed in to the Food Security Plan work, which we are in principle working with Town Council on, and which is being drawn up principally by Ele Saltmarsh of Landworkers Alliance.

2. 2nd area work - the more strategic level

Presented to BTC meeting on food, commented on Bridport's Investment Plan and Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Contributed to county-wide food security initiatives. Between us made presentations to:

- I. Two **Food resilience events** for Dorset Climate Action Network
- II. Recent **Feeding Dorset** event organised by Help & Kindness. We've been invited to do a keynote presentation at Feeding Dorset 2 about our networking and partnership work.
- III. We're participating in discussions about the possibility of Dorset becoming part of the **Sustainable Food Places network**, which may help leverage funds from national organisations and connect us more effectively to health & environmental policy.

We're often approached to share information about what's happening in Bridport.

3. Our 3rd area of activity is with 3 practical 'projects':

- I. **Growing your own** – not only increases resilience and food security, but also encourages sharing economy, and brings so many health benefits
 - a) **Plant Swap** with Community Shed, Watercleaves & Edible Gardens - well attended
 - b) Building on our '**Allotment Ambassadors**' (who share experience of adapting to climate change), Rachel Millson and Julie Penfold started **We Dig No Dig project**, along with Sheri Ahmet earlier this year.

This is about facilitating **creation of veg beds in unused areas** across the town & making use of the Town Council's **grass & hedge cuttings** for composting

- Activities so far: hosted visit by Nicky Scott AKA **Dr Compost**; constructed **raised bed kits** with help from the Community Shed.
- Set up a first **community veg bed** by the medical centre, in partnership with The Cowshed social prescribing allotment
- We're finding that having a growing space by a footpath is a brilliant way of engaging people. We've met several people who would like to set up growing spaces on unproductive areas; and shared the potential sites with the Council.

ii. **Increasing supply of food direct from farmer to the local market:**

to reduce food miles, help our economy, increase food security, and providing opportunities for New Entrant farmers to access land.

Candida has been meeting with a **group of ½ dozen landowners** and some market gardeners to develop a pilot project of long-term leases on small acreages around Bridport.

- Devised **matchmaking forms** for both landowners and would-be growers, to then access a group of people with some relevant training
- talked to NFU and Washingpool Farm about this;
- Going forward -could find more landowners; possibility of accessing County Farms
- Need to tie this in with others who could help **increase the demand** for the produce
- Can **build on a LWA** pilot 'matching' scheme in the SW, ending in December.

iii. Exploring development of the Community Food Hub

Initiated & driven by **Rose** Allwork and **Sarah** Carney, working group with **Luana Wilson**

Great concept to combine various facilities, a shop, café, prep kitchen, meeting and workshop space, each mutually enhancing the other.

Consultation has included about 100 Questionnaire responses, and a stakeholder engagement event in the spring, with 45 participants from all sectors of local food system. Much interest and offers of support were shown, along with notes of caution. We decided to take it step by step, do pop-up events.

Research included visited other community & cafes e.g.

- Turning Point Social Supermarket in Torbay;
- Waffle House w. reps of Chapel in the Garden, Glut stall, Food Bank.

Biggest challenge has been finding a venue. We realised we were over-ambitious and a few months ago decided to focus on Community Shop component.

Unfortunately, both Sarah and now Rose have had to step back for various reasons.

Now we are likely to work with a branch of Dorset Council, to dovetail in to their plans, along with HOME in Bridport which is embedded in primary schools and in Skilling area.

4. Governance:

BFM began in 2019 as project, in mid 2022 became an **Unincorporated Association** with a small Steering Group.

- We had thought to become a CIO, focussed on the Community Hub idea, but were advised to develop our Business/Project plans before deciding on our ultimate organisational form. We will be working with Dorset Mentors on this in the forthcoming period.
- We've reviewed and updated our Constitution accordingly, formalised some Policies and honed our Mission, Values and Aims.
- We have seen some changes in Steering Group membership over the year. Candida and Sarah Wilberforce have been Chair and Secretary respectively for 6 months. Now we divide up roles with working groups leading on different projects.
- We've formalised the idea of 'Partners' – organisations which share our Mission and Values; will feature on website; can vote at the AGM on Officers.
- ⊖ We are busy fundraising so that we can pay someone to do some core tasks.