

DorsetCAN Case Study 2: ‘Seeding our Future’ – Starting a Community Food Security Project

Though Covid and the climate crisis can make you feel disempowered, food security is one issue where we all have scope for positive action now!

Britain’s food self-sufficiency has declined from 80% to 60% in three decades. We import 45% of our vegetables and 93% of fruit and many experts expect worsening food shortages due to climate change.



In early 2020, ‘Seeding our Future’, a non-profit project initiated by Alan Heeks, was started to explore how Bridport can improve its food security and adapt to climate change. We hope other towns and cities will be able to learn from our project.

Who and how

It always helps to have a team: so Alan recruited three colleagues, working a few hours per week, funded from a charitable trust. The team has varied experience and good connections.

We’ve held open meetings, initially in person, then online when Covid-19 struck. These have brought in ideas and offers of help, such as access to grant funding. We’ve also held many smaller meetings.

Bridport has a vibrant local food ‘scene’ and a crucial part of our strategy has been to work with established local organisations. Most communities are wary of ‘meteorite projects’, which appear out of nowhere with a bright flash, but disappear within a few months. Our main local partners are Bridport Local Food Group (BLFG) and Transition Town Bridport (TTB), both active in the area for many years and with excellent credibility and networks.

BLFG’s main focus has been on the annual Bridport Food Festival, and they engage regularly with local food and drink producers/retailers. TTB has links with organisations and individuals concerned about the

climate & ecological emergency. We have also secured the support of Bridport Town Council.

Through these collaborations and our efforts to engage with the community, we have tried to integrate many concerns: local economy, access and affordability, health, ecology and climate.

We’ve had to listen attentively and keep reshaping the project. We have a few times met with prejudice, vested interests or grumpy people. A good tactic is to go sideways (getting help from opinion-leading organisations or influential individuals) or upwards (seeking a shared value or principle, or an authority figure to help us through).

Local research has helped. Alan commissioned a report which shows how producers and consumers in the South West can adapt to climate change by adapting cultivation methods, crops, and diet. This is available as a free download from our website. The biggest challenge is a systemic one: most people have difficulty changing habits or preparing for a problem before it hits them.

Some of the progress from 2020:

- Several well-attended events and 5 issues of an E-newsletter to over 100 subscribers.
- Wider awareness of climate change threats among local organisations and individuals.
- Ideas for a local ‘food hub’ with information resources and education as entertainment, including cookery classes.
- Ambassador Allotments set up: people using and trialling climate-adaptive methods and crops, and willing to share their experience.
- A regular surplus food stall, which began with an allotment ‘glut’ stall last summer.
- Our website, with info, contacts and resources, helped by a grant from the Town Council.

Our hopes/plans for 2021 include:

- Encourage home growing with open allotment/ veg garden events.
- Implement the ‘Food Hub’ concept.
- Increase local fruit and veg production.
- Launch the Dorset Diet, to encourage people to buy 80% of their food and drink locally.

To find out more and get involved visit

<https://bridportfoodmatters.net> and [subscribe to our e-newsletters](#) or contact Candida Blaker on bridportfoodmatters@gmail.com