

Summary of achievements through Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan

This Annex details the activities undertaken over the last three years by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) and Soil Association Scotland (SAS) as partners responsible for the delivery of the Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan.

INTRODUCTION

The food and drink sector is of key importance to the Cairngorms National Park and plays a central role in supporting the Park's economy and its communities. The quality and diversity of the Park's natural larder is outstanding. The sector employs the full-time equivalent of around 700 people – 15% of the Park's workforce.

However, despite the sector's strengths and its importance to the Park, recent research indicates that there are major gaps in food and drink production within the Park. The research also shows that there are significant opportunities to increase the production, distribution and consumption of local food and drink.

As a result, CNPA and the Soil Association Scotland working in partnership, in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, produced a Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan, which is a strategic regional food and drink plan for the National Park.

The aim of the Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan was to create a sustainable food economy, which has local food production, distribution and consumption at its heart. The Plan identified seven outcomes, which not only deliver the aspirations and aims of Food for Life, but help deliver strategic priorities for Cairngorms National Park and the Scottish Government.

Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan outcomes:

- **Increase in the amount of quality food and drink produced in the Park** – more producers and processors producing quality food.
- **Increase in the use of local food across the Park** – more local producers supplying more businesses locally.
- **Increase in the consumption of locally produced food in the Park** – more residents and tourists consuming local food.
- **Expansion in the Park's local food economy** – increase in the development of new businesses and increase in the productivity of existing businesses.
- **Decrease in the Park's food carbon footprint** – reduction in food miles, resource consumption and food waste throughout the supply chain.
- **Improvement in the health of the Park's residents** – more people adopting healthy and sustainable diets.
- **Increase in the strength and resilience of the Park's communities** – more people participating in community activities and initiatives.

The development of a Park-wide Food for Life Plan offered distinct benefits by bringing together economic, educational, social and environmental activities in a coordinated way.

THE APPROACH - Delivering Food for Life in Cairngorms National Park

Food for Life is a national campaign to transform food culture in communities throughout Scotland. The Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan seeks to give communities and visitors a better understanding of the importance of eating locally and seasonally and promoting access to local, fresh and organic food which is healthy, sustainable and affordable. It also encourages people to understand about farming and food production and where there is interest to get involved in growing food and encourages people to explore how their food choices impact on their health and that of the environment. Food for Life takes a unique approach, by promoting a holistic delivery model for education, access and sustainability, to deliver a range of health, environmental and socio-economic benefits.

ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN

An Audit of Food and Drink in the Cairngorms National Park

An audit of food and drink in the Cairngorms National Park and immediate environs was produced by SAC Consulting in March 2011. This helped to gain a better understanding of the issues surrounding the distribution of locally produced food and drink and could be used to develop realistic and practical solutions to any barriers identified in order to make it easier and cost effective for businesses to sell their products within the Cairngorms National Park as well as further afield where appropriate.

Cairngorms Producers' Directory for the Catering Industry

A Producers Directory, aimed at the catering industry and those providing food and drink in the National Park, was produced in June 2011.

Cairngorms Food and Drink Trail

The food and drink trail leaflet is used as a tool to encourage visitors, in the main, to source, use and eat local produce and is widely promoted and distributed throughout the Park. The Trail takes the form of a pull out leaflet including a map of the Park and is in line with existing design and style guidelines. An electronic web version of the Food & Drink Trail is also available at www.visitcairngorms.com.

Orchard Project

In order to promote eating healthy local produce, villages and communities within the Cairngorms National Park were asked to send us nominations so they could receive Scottish heritage fruit trees under the auspices of helping celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the Park.

We were overwhelmed by responses from the communities and with some additional funding from the CNPA were able to plant not just 10 but 19 orchard sites within the Cairngorms National Park. And in addition to this, two communities bought additional orchard trees to double the numbers planted.

The successful sites were: Abernethy Primary, Anagach Woods Trust, Ardgeal, Aviemore Primary, Ballater, Blair Atholl, Braemar, Crathie Primary, Cromdale, Dalwhinnie, Deshar

Primary, Glenlivet Drumin Castle, Grantown Primary, Highland Folk Museum, Kingussie, Laggan, Newtonmore Primary, Strathdon Primary and Tomintoul. In addition, primary school children were invited to enter our apple drawing contest. The winning apple pictures are featured on the signs at each orchard site.



Orchard Workshops

For each of the orchard plantings, the Apple Tree Man provided training and advice on how to look after and maintain the orchards. This will help ensure the future sustainability of the orchards by ensuring that the communities have the know how to look after them for years to come.



Orchard Day Event

An Orchard Day event was held at the Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore, and the first of the orchard plantings took place at the Lochanhully House site. The Orchard Day was a vehicle to engage with the communities of the National Park and enthuse them about all things apple as well as local produce in general. There was apple themed activities, two chefs demonstrating apple recipes, a hog roast and an apple press to allow visitors to sample the freshly squeezes juice of Heritage apples.



Growing

As part of developing confidence amongst teachers on what could be grown in the NP training was delivered on growing veg in the Cairngorms. 15 teachers from local schools took part in the training in April 2012, with a view to each of them using these new skills and confidence to grow more produce in school gardens.



Chefs Adopt a School

The Cairngorms National Park Authority teamed up with the Academy of Culinary Arts to deliver their highly successful Chefs Adopt a School programme. The programme aims to develop childrens understanding and enjoyment of 'taste', and provenance of ingredients. Training was held in November 2011 & January 2012 with 16 chefs taking part. All chefs were allocated a school and were tasked with undertaking sessions with children that were practical and very hands-on, making for fun and informative learning.



Cookery Clubs

3 Primary Schools involving 50 pupils have benefitted from the purchase of cooking equipment to enable them to establish afterschool cookery clubs and encourage more cooking in class as part of the Curriculum for Excellence.

Healthier Scotland Cooking Bus

The Food for Life Development officer made a successful application to the above initiative and as a result the Cooking Bus was in Aviemore in May 2012. All 140 P7 pupils in Badenoch and Strathspey visited the bus to learn new cooking skills and focusing on local food.



Countryside Food & Farming Day

The Food for Life project worked with RHET to hold an Estate day at Alvie Estate for 85 pupils from the primary schools in the Kingussie High catchment area.



The objective was to provide a 'hands on' experience for pupils by exposing them to elements of the countryside such as farming, forestry, wildlife and game keeping. A range of activities associated with these land-uses and the roles of the people who work on the estate let pupils encounter life on an estate.

Culfoich Farm Visit

This event provided a 'hands on' experience for pupils by exposing them to elements of the countryside and food production including farming, forestry, wildlife and the wider environment. A range of activities associated with these land-uses and the roles of the people who work on the farm and local area let pupils encounter life on a farm and food production and biodiversity in the National Park. These were supplemented by discussions covering responsible outdoor and countryside access and sustainable food production



Schools Farmers Market

School Farmers' Markets introduce pupils to the concept of local food produce and to give them information that will help them to make informed choices when buying food. It also introduces pupils to some of the farming methods in their local area and to learn how food is produced and processed.

In the lead up to the market pupils organise and manage a small enterprise activity within school and develop the skills required to do this. They work as part of a team and to allocate the various tasks/roles to different team members. On the day pupils are introduced to members of the local community and forge relationships with local organisations and businesses.

Grantown Primary School held the first School Farmers' Market and was hugely successful. As well as being an exciting and relevant way to interpret the curriculum for teachers it was also great fun. Braemar Primary School are planning on holding a market and Grantown Primary has since held their second one.



Schools' Farm

In December 2013 the CNPA commissioned a feasibility study to look at the demand for, practicalities of and economics of setting up a Schools' Farm within the Cairngorms National Park.

As well as the opportunity to engage school children with hands on experience of producing food and farming there is great potential to deliver much more, particularly in relation to Rural Skills and Apprenticeships.

There is currently an opportunity to take this forward with Highlife Highland and the Highland Folk Museum very keen to develop the initiative at their site at Newtonmore.

Kingussie Garden

In Kingussie a community led project to improve the vegetable garden in the local primary school had assistance from the project by paying for wood to make raised beds and also by working in partnership with apprentices has ensured labour to install the beds was given free of charge.

Hens in Schools

Following a successful CPD course, 4 schools wanted to take up the offer from the project to provide them with a hen house and run. The schools were Grantown Grammar, Abernethy Primary, Carrbridge Primary and Kincaig Primary. Having hens in school is a fantastic opportunity to connect young people with where their food comes from. The eggs will be used in school cookery clubs and can be 'sold' to parents and staff. Hens are a creative and distinctive aid to teaching the National Curriculum, in areas such as Maths, English and Creative Writing, Art and Science. We expect the Hens to be incredibly popular and another great legacy for the project.

Food for Life Catering Mark

Highland Council

Highland Council has held the Food for Life Catering Mark since 2009 and a key focus of work has been to continue to support the catering team within the Council to retain the award. In February 2014 a silver Food for Life Catering Mark pilot was launched involving 5 primary schools in Nairn who are now receiving organic milk for drinking:

Aberdeenshire Council

Aberdeenshire Council is currently working towards achieving the Bronze CM for all primary schools and awaiting their first inspection which is expected to take place by summer 2014.

Angus Council and Perth & Kinross Council

Work has been ongoing with Tayside Contracts – the catering operation which supplies school meals for Dundee, Angus and Perth & Kinross – since August 2011. The catering team attended Linking Learning & Lunch event Sept 2011 and since then work has been underway to trial the Food for Life Catering Mark in three primary schools across a nine week period.

Cultural Exchange of Culinary Skills and Local Food Production

French delegates visited the National Park in October 2013 as part one of exchanges planned for 2013 and 2014 to further develop mutual understanding of Scottish and French cultures as expressed through local produce and cooking. The overall objective was to allow our French visitors to engage with regional food producers and for local residents to experience and exchange information and practicalities of French and Scots cooking. The series of events over 5 days engaged with residents and visitors through the French theme and promoted local food and drink with the objective of increasing demand for local produce.

Best of the Wurst

A celebration of the local sausage! This was a one day food event centred around celebrating local produce from the Cairngorms National Park. The event encouraged residents and visitors to Eat Well Eat Local through the celebration of the local sausage and aims to become a regular fixture in the diary of the Cairngorms National Park.

Production of Cairngorms Larder

This guide to food and drink of the Cairngorms National Park was developed with The List and was launched at the Royal Highland Show in Jun 13.

Royal Highland Show 2013 CNPA Sponsorship

This was to support delivery of the Highlands Presidential Initiative at the Royal Highland Show 2013 including delivery of the Countryside Area and Food Hall.

Parliamentary Reception

The Cairngorms National Park Authority held a celebratory event at Holyrood in June 2013 to celebrate both Year of Natural Scotland and the 10th anniversary of the Cairngorms National Park. One of the three themes of the evening was local produce from the CNP. This was attended by Cambus O'May Cheese, Grants of Speyside and Cairngorms Brewery who offered samples of their fantastic produce to the MSPs and other attendees.



Highland and Islands Food and Drink Awards

The CNPA sponsored the Young Shining Star Award at the 2013 Highlands and Islands Food and Drink Awards and negotiated that the Awards be open to all businesses in CNP. The CNPA are again a sponsor of the Awards for 2014 extending the award area to cover the whole of the Cairngorms National Park.

The 2013 Young Shining Star Award was won by Seb Jones, Speyside Craft Brewery, Forres and Carlyn Keaney, Frankie's fish & Chip Shop, Shetland (below). And in 2014 two of the category winners were from the Cairngorms National Park – the Cairngorm Brewery Company (Best Drink Award) and the Dalwhinnie Distillery (Best Marketing Initiative Award).



Marketing Campaign Plan for the Food & Drink Sector in the Cairngorms National Park

The plan helped us to engage in a meaningful and productive way with our visitors and residents to encourage them to eat more local produce and to increase awareness of the area as a place with high quality locally produced food and drink. Various suggestions were detailed in the plan and it was felt that a great way to engage local visitors and residents was through local food and drink events. Investing a small amount of funding in these local events allowing them to blossom and grow in future years has been shown to make the events more sustainable and more likely to grow year on year.

Venison Demonstration

A masterclass on the use of local venison, which included a butchery demonstration, was delivered, working with MacDonald Highland Resorts (MHR) and involving local chefs. Over 20 chefs took part in the well received event. A further economic benefit is that as a result of the connection made at the masterclass between the butcher and MHR, an order of for 56kg of local venison was placed, which is a change in the current supply chain.



Food and Fiddle Festival



Following discussions with Royal Deeside and the Cairngorms DMO (now Visit Royal Deeside) and the Deeside Tourism Forum, Deeside and the Cairngorms DMO took forward the concept of a 'Food and Fiddle Fortnight' that took place 12th-26th October 2013. The festival encompassed all things food, culture and music and was centred around Upper Deeside including Ballater, Braemar and Donside extend outwith the Cairngorms National Park to Banchory. This was a pilot event with the potential to be replicated across the National Park.

Red Meat & Venison Collaboration

Initial collaboration focusing on red meat and venison in partnership with Scottish Enterprise, SOAS and Co-operative Development Scotland took place June 2012. This was followed by a facilitated session with red meat and venison producers in February 13.

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