

How can we scale up Bristol urban food production?

Photo report and summary of discussions, 3 Oct 2012, Hamilton House

(Scaling up might actually mean connecting up – findings of the national Making Local Food Work programme to support community food enterprises)

Purpose



HOW DO WE SCALE-UP URBAN AGRICULTURE IN BRISTOL? A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

6–8pm Wednesday 3 October
Co-exist, Hamilton House,
80 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS1 3QY

FACILITATORS
Shannon Smith of Horfield Organic Community Orchard
& **Joy Carey**, author of *Who Feeds Bristol?*

Book your FREE place at:
<http://scalingupurbanagricultureinbristol.eventbrite.com>
Refreshments will be available
Contact us: bristolfoodpolicy@gmail.com

PARTICIPANTS
Misty Tunks of Knowle West Media Centre and the ELM project on using technology to link growers and their markets
Keith Cowling of Ashley Vale Allotment Association on the barriers to setting-up urban agriculture projects
Rebecca Marshall of the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens on their Community Land Advisory Service toolkit for urban agriculture start-ups
Tim Lawrence of Sims Hill Shared Harvest on urban agriculture and climate change
Mike Lloyd-Jones of the Bristol Pound Farm Link Scheme on developing local markets using our local currency

This event is organised by the Bristol Food Policy Council and Bristol Food Network, funded by EU URBACT II – Sustainable Food in Urban Communities

Summary of what we have in Bristol:

‘Bristol offers a very contrasted picture: a strong “disengagement with food” among population groups with low incomes and a community of food activists developing what is certainly one of the most dynamic panorama of initiatives towards sustainable food in an urban context.’

(François Jégou, Lead expert for URBACT Project on sustainable food in urban communities, July 2012)

Bristol City Council is a partner in an EU URBACT city project - **Sustainable Food in Urban Communities** - a project involving five European cities that wish to grow, deliver and enjoy more sustainable food: they are looking for joint, effective and sustainable solutions to develop low-carbon and resource-efficient urban food systems. This project has funded our meeting.

Bristol Food Network – the website and newsletter; the Get Growing Trail and map of growing spaces; the [Bristol Independents campaign](#)

Plenty of experience and enthusiasm – Bristol food links was established in 1997 and has gone through many stages of evolution, now the current Bristol Food Network.

The new **Bristol Pound** to support the local economy – get your account set up!

The new **Bristol Food Policy Council**, which was a recommendation of the **Who Feeds Bristol report**: a multi-stakeholder group including Bristol City Council and NHS, with the ability to influence and to help work toward the recommendations of the Who Feeds Bristol report to make Bristol's food system more sustainable and resilient. It is working towards these aims:



BFN is represented on the [Bristol Food Policy Council](#) and enables the groups on the ground to feed into a city-wide food plan.

[Who Feeds Bristol? Towards a resilient food plan](#) – report published in 2011 making the above recommendations for a Bristol food plan

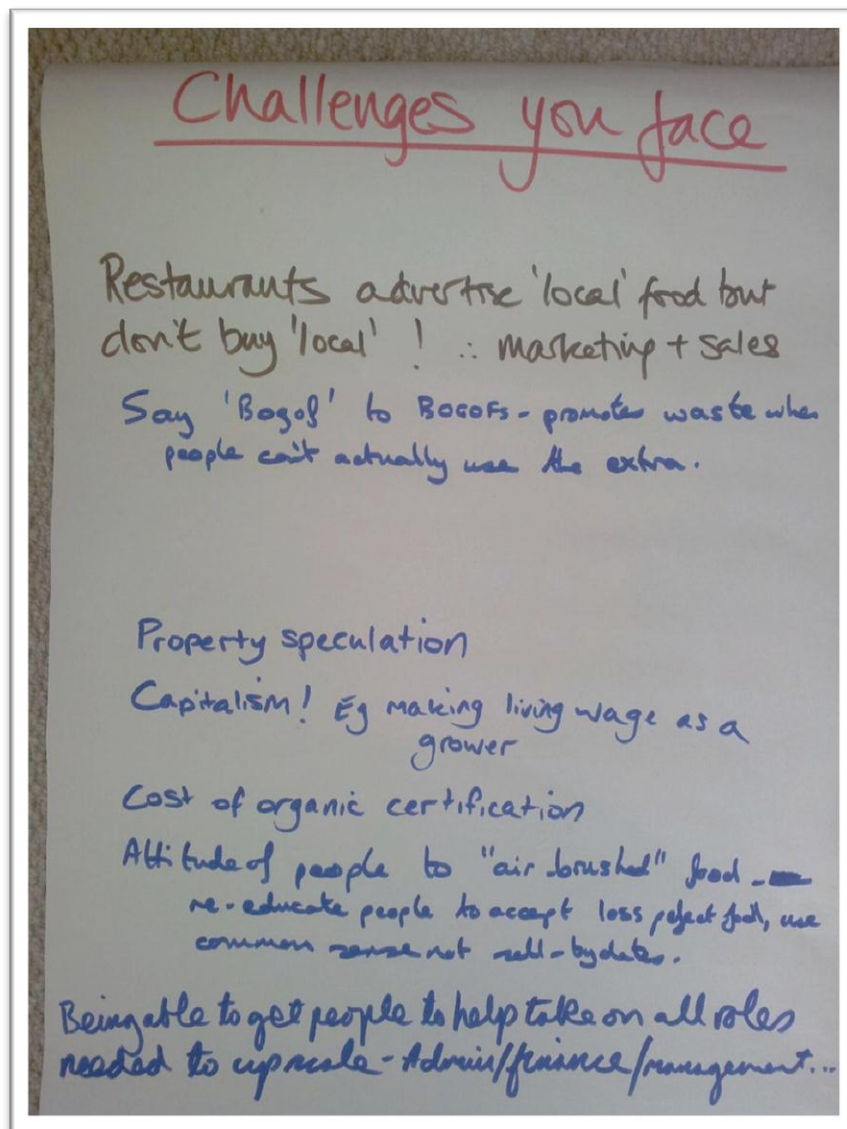
What we don't yet have

A 'scaling up food production' plan; a group to lead it and coordinate action; finance; access to larger areas of land; markets; sources of compost, fertility and seeds in the city; apprenticeship schemes and training programmes

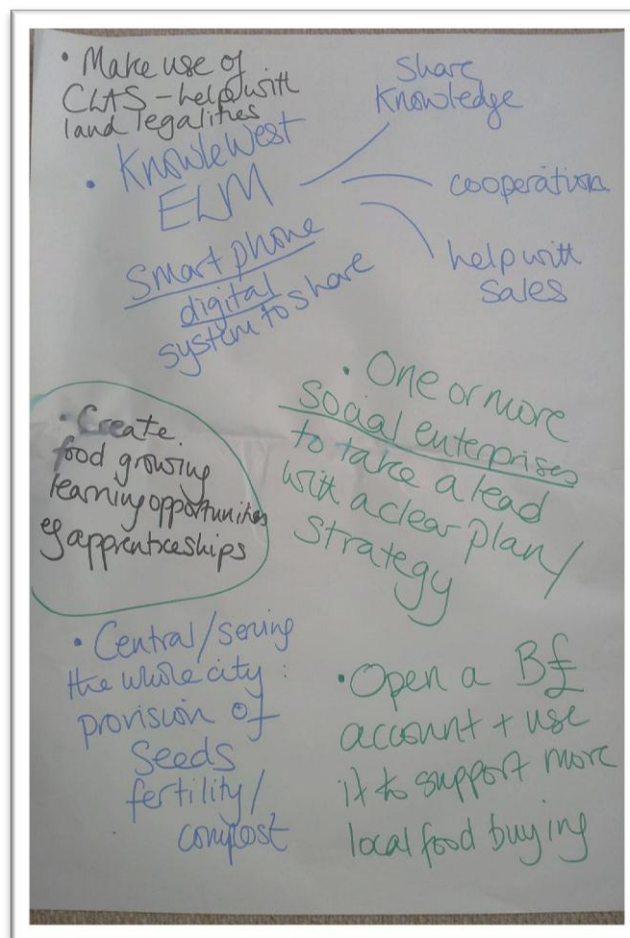
'Scaling up' challenges set out by some of the speakers:

Skills to make a social enterprise business work; effective communication and recruiting support for urban food production; weather issues; costs of resources and inputs; energy and power sources; transport and distribution.

Other challenges

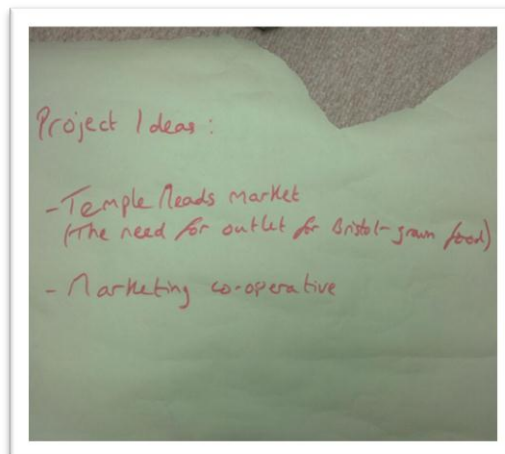
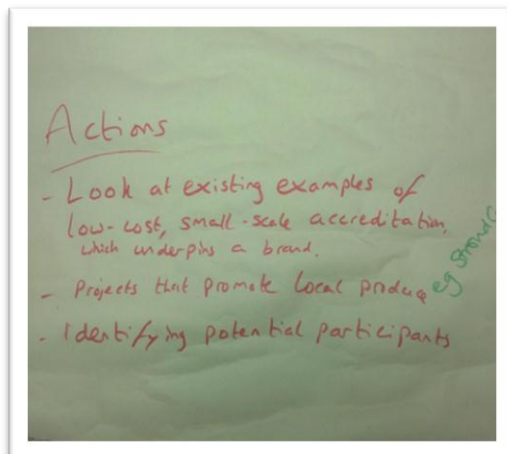
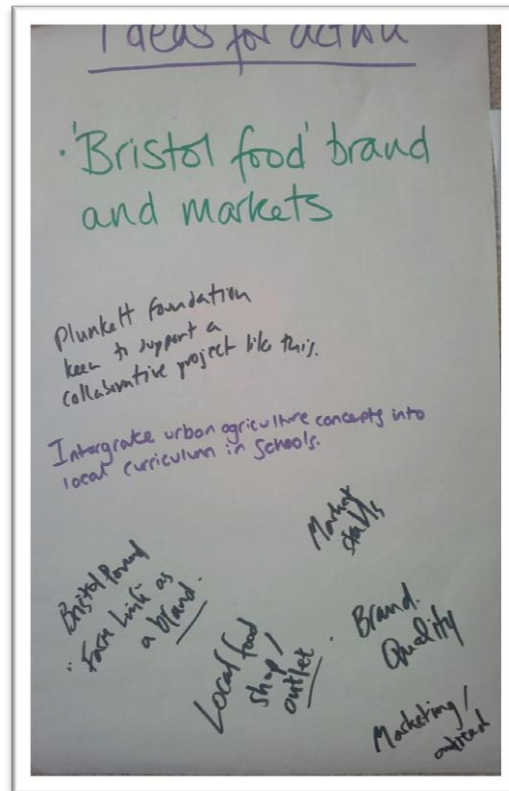


Key points from speakers – ‘calls to action’



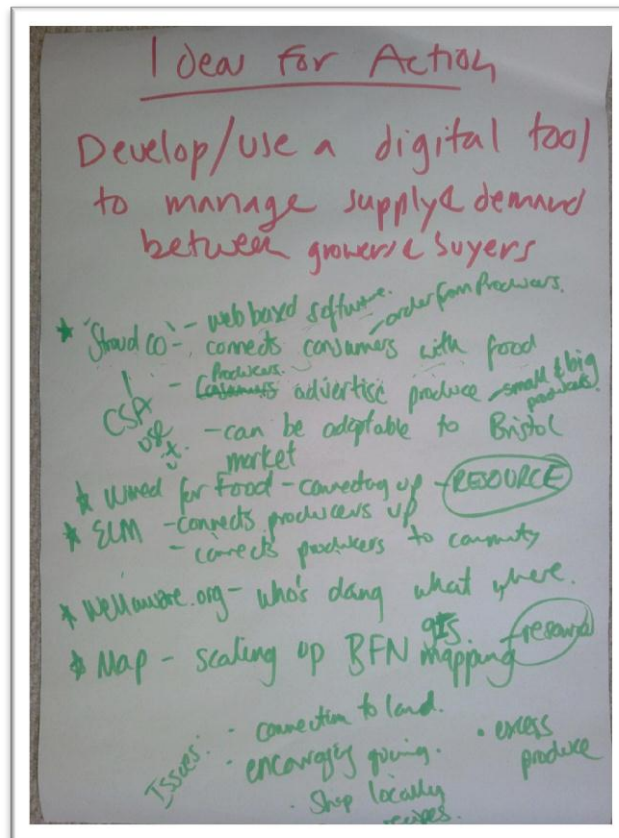
Small group discussions & practical ideas

i) 'Bristol grown' brand and markets



Next steps: group left email addresses and will continue discussion

ii) Digital tools for supporting community level cooperation



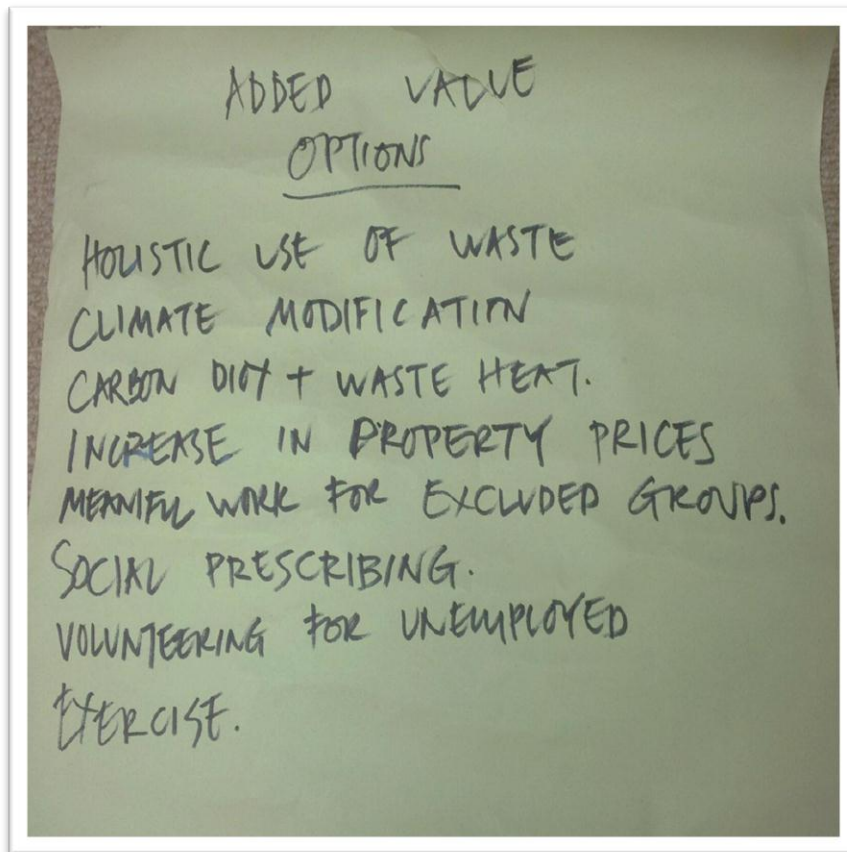
iii) Learning and skills

Learning and Skills

- lots of possible projects
- formalising skills learned into transferable/recognised qualifications.
- potentially partnering with universities
- fund apprenticeships.
- ~~the~~ potential funding from government for skills training esp. for NEETs marginalised groups
- issues with legitimising labour in conventional food growing
- link with vocational food courses in schools to school

- skills not only in growing so much more.
- cooking, marketing, enterprise,
- ⇒ Skills exchange?
Like timebank?
↳ intergenerational, already happening on allotments.

iv) A plan & central coordinating strategy



v) Bristol grower cooperation

Your ideas for action

Coop of specialist knowledge to be able to dip into / use at peak times.

Machine-coop

Tractor
Relaxator
Seed drill etc

Turn unused land with keen growers - gardens, council land, areas of parks etc.

Fruit trees - collect fruit that owner cannot use & distribute via charities → Sheffield Abundance.

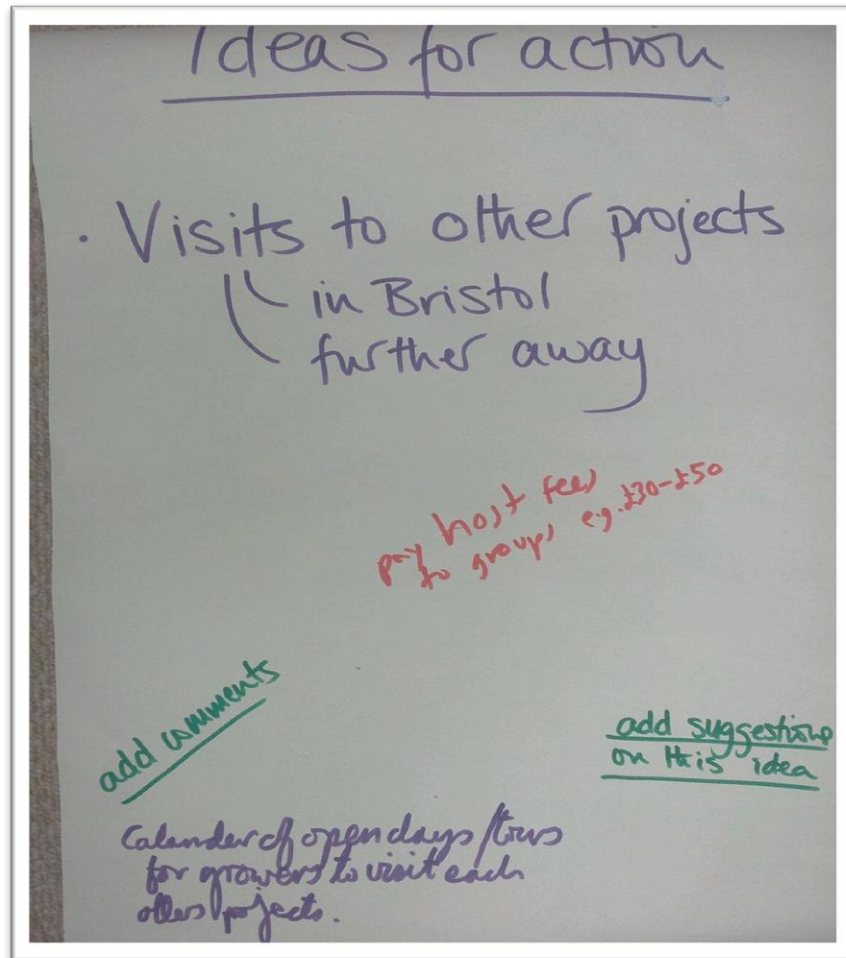
Growers co-op

Local food

wholesale system - feeding into retail & catering

Focus on labour- & land-intensive foods for growing in Bristol & develop direct supply links with farms/local farmers / processors for other commodities.

Digital tool to manage supply + demand to retail + wholesale.



Next steps: A grower group is suggested - to look at how they might cooperate more, e.g. with seeds & machinery; maybe also with buyers. The group will get together again to plan a 'meet the grower event'. They also suggest regular grower get-togethers. Steve Glover of Severn Project offered to host the first one in a couple of weeks time. date & time tbc.

Additional important issues - Land access & campaign to protect agricultural land on Rapid Transport Route through Frenchay



Final comments

This was a great start to our discussions and we covered a lot of ground in a short amount of time. We know what the challenges are and we know what resources are in place. There are some ideas beginning to emerge, which hopefully will take us in a new direction as a network. There are two specific ideas to build up – the growers cooperation meeting to be hosted by Severn Project & a group to think more about a possible Bristol Grown brand and markets idea.

Thanks to all for participating. Please watch the BFN website and newsletter for updates. If you have an idea that you'd like to put forward please contact BFN and make use of the newsletter or website.

Reminder: Bristol Food Network provides all the food-related work at a community level around Bristol with an umbrella structure, but at present has very little resources. It needs to set up a larger steering group and is seeking volunteers. It is currently coordinated by three volunteers: Jane Stevenson, Kristin Sponsler and Joy Carey.