

# SFP Bronze and Silver Awards Application Form 2023

This form is for completing an SFP Bronze or Silver Award application. **If you are considering applying for a Gold Award, please contact the SFP team at [sfpawards@soilassociation.org](mailto:sfpawards@soilassociation.org) to discuss the process.**



**Before starting your application, please fully read this form as well as the following documents:**

- SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants: [SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants.docx](#)
- SFP Awards: Activity and Impact: [SFP Awards - Activity and Impact.docx](#)

## SECTION 1: Information about your partnership and your place

Please complete the following (\*= compulsory):

**Name of your partnership\*:**

FoodFutures: North Lancashire's Sustainable Food Partnership



[www.foodfutures.org.uk](http://www.foodfutures.org.uk)

**Name and contact details of person/people leading on this application\*:**

Anna Clayton ([anna@lessuk.org](mailto:anna@lessuk.org)), Rebecca Whittle ([r.whittle@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:r.whittle@lancaster.ac.uk)), and Ilana Thurgood ([funding@lessuk.org](mailto:funding@lessuk.org))

**Geographic region which this award will represent\*:**

The political boundary we cover is Lancaster District (please see map below).

We refer to this area as North Lancashire for inclusivity/ engagement reasons.



**Award you are applying for\*:**

Silver Sustainable Food Places Award

**Please provide us with background information about your place\*:** Advisory word limit: 400 words

This is to help the panel understand the context in which you are working. *You may include (but not limited to): Population and demographic information, location/geography & economic and social challenges.*

**ANSWER:**

Lancaster District covers an area of 576 square kilometres and operates under a two-tier authority; making it difficult to engage with services covering the wider area of Lancashire. The District includes the city of Lancaster, the towns of Morecambe, Heysham and Carnforth, and the surrounding rural villages. The 2021 population estimate for Lancaster District was 142,162 with Lancaster City having an estimated population of around 52,000.

Lancaster's economic profile is primarily made up of micro businesses, with 2022 figures showing 4,680 active enterprises in Lancaster District, 88% of which had less than 10 employees. The District has several economic assets of national economic importance: Lancaster University, Heysham Power Station and Heysham Port. The Port of Heysham operates both commercial and passenger transport and is also a supply base for offshore gas fields and wind farms.

Lancaster has high levels of access to the natural environment - the predominant land use being 'green space'. Urban areas include open and green spaces and the hinterland includes large parts of the AONBs of Arnsdale & Silverdale and the Forest of Bowland. Agricultural land is mainly classified under grades three to five, with dairy and livestock grazing in less favoured areas and lowland livestock grazing being the most common farm types. Carbon dioxide emissions in Lancaster District are below the national average, but emissions from transport are particularly high.

Lancaster District has a high proportion of White British residents: 91.5% compared to 79.8% in England<sup>1</sup>. Lancaster District hosts two universities and includes several popular coastal retirement destinations. The proportions of residents in the 15-24 and 65+ age groups are therefore higher than the national average. Population density is significantly below both the county and national averages.

The District has a relatively high Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), with 2021 figures ranking Lancaster as the 112th most deprived area out of 317 Districts in England, with 15% of Lower Layer Super Output Areas in the Lancaster District falling in the most deprived IMD decile<sup>2</sup>. Morecambe's West End, in particular, is one of the most disadvantaged communities in the UK. As of May 2020, 10,854 households in Lancaster District are in receipt of Universal Credit<sup>3</sup>, while 30% of children in Lancaster & Fleetwood and 31% of children in Morecambe &

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<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/information/getting-to-know-our-communities#:~:text=The%20Lancaster%20district%20has%20a.compared%20to%2079.8%25%20in%20England.&text=The%20largest%20minority%20group%20is,the%20population%20originating%20from%20Poland.>

<sup>2</sup> National Statistics – English Indices of Deprivation 2019

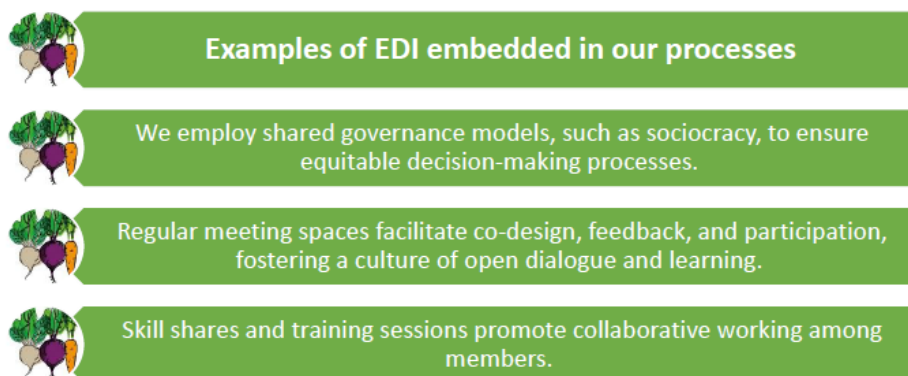
<sup>3</sup> DWP Universal Credit statistics - Stat x-plore

Lunesdale were living in poverty in 2018/19<sup>4</sup>

**How have you considered equity, diversity and inclusion in the structure and work of your partnership \*? Advisory word limit: 300 words**

**ANSWER:**

Approaches to building equity, diversity, and active inclusion (EDI) are embedded in FoodFutures' structure, processes and activities.



FoodFutures is committed to seeking marginalised voices within and beyond the region, continually adapting its processes to meet community needs. An annual reflective process evaluates representation gaps and informs outreach. This strategy has led to increased diversity in working groups and events, which in turn supports the partnership in developing more inclusive processes.

In 2021, we assessed our theory of change for communications and engagement. This identified missing voices (infographic below) and led to the development of the [Our Food Stories](#) comms and engagement strategy (see more detail [here](#)).

Over the coming years we are actively looking to engage the following groups:

- Young people
- Men (core FF members predominantly identify as female so this is something we need to address)
- People with lived experience of food insecurity
- Farmers not yet adopting agroecological practices
- Black and Asian communities
- We also plan to do targeted work with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2019/>

### Examples of EDI in practice

- We work with [Global Link](#) who provide a range of support and integration activities for refugees (R) and asylum seekers (AS).
  - Success includes:
    - A [food growing project](#) specifically for AS&R families.
    - Many of our events are catered for by [Global Village Cafe](#), a CIC that supports refugees and asylum seekers to share their cultures through food whilst using local produce and paying a Living Wage.
- Our [community granting and participatory grant giving process \(Pots of Possibility\)](#) (see section 4A) uses deliberative democracy to distribute funds to initiatives across our District. Projects funded include community gardens at West End Impact in Morecambe (working with homeless and disadvantaged people) and in Skerton Community Centre (working with young people).
- We are building young people's voices into the partnership through our [schools project](#), and events for the local pupil parliament. This has resulted in more younger people coming to our events and publishing articles in [Thrive](#), our quarterly magazine. Both the magazine and its sister [podcast](#) are developing a citizen journalism network that includes migrants, autistic people and people with lived experience of food poverty, resulting in more diverse stories.
- With the [Closing Loops](#) project we have run stalls in areas we have previously had less engagement with, including at village fayres in rural parts of the District and fun days on council housing estates. While there is much still to do, our events are now attended by a wider range of people. E.g. FoodFutures' annual open event had [94 people sign up](#) with 28 participants attending for the first time.

#### Recent Thrive articles that relate to EDI include:

- "Cultivating Diversity in Rural Lancashire" (featuring a farm and animal sanctuary where they have experienced racism and started a process to tackle this whilst welcoming a diversity of people to an area that is predominantly white)
- "Cooking with Social Ease" (cooking for people experiencing mental health challenges and social anxiety)
- "Rooting in Lancaster" (story of a refugee led project joining a food growing site in Lancaster which offered a pathway for rooting in the area).

## SECTION 2: Local food activity and impact

Please read SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants: [SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants.docx](#) before completing this section.

Please describe the activity and impact of local food work delivered in your place within the last three years against the relevant key issues (1-6) and action areas (A and B) below.

We advise that you keep answers to within 600 words for each action area (i.e. for each A and B under the key issues). Whilst you won't be penalised for going over this limit, this will help the panel focus on your main achievements. For sections C, 250 words is the mandatory limit.

For Bronze and Silver awards, there are mandatory actions for some key issues. These are laid out in *SFP Awards - Activity and Impact*: [SFP Awards - Activity and Impact.docx](#). This document also provides a broad benchmark for each award, rationale for SFP's inclusion of each key issue, and example actions for each action area.

**Key Issue 1: Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action**

**Action area A: Establish a broad, representative, and dynamic local food partnership**

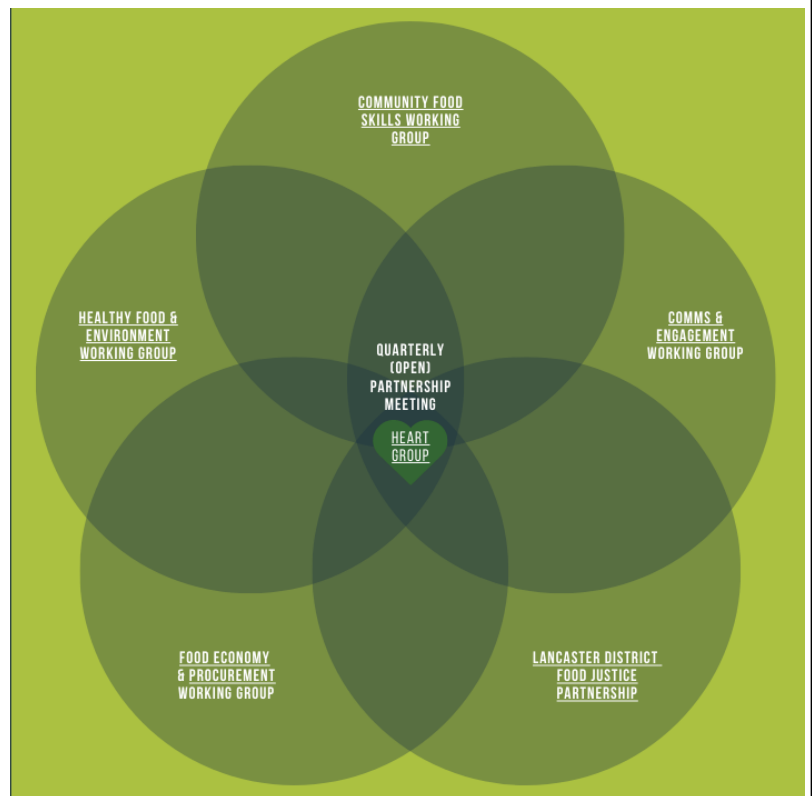
FoodFutures is made up of a partnership and wider support networks. The project coordinator and a number of other roles are held by [LESS UK](#), a not-for-profit Community Interest Company set up in 2007 to help local residents live more sustainably. However, the partnership as a whole includes representatives from the farming community, food businesses, the public and private sector, the third sector, local authorities, keystone institutions, community food groups and educational institutions. We are working together to build an inclusive and collaborative community that works on food matters locally. [Our terms of reference are here.](#)

**FoodFutures structure**

Our approach is inspired by sociocracy. Themed working groups take forward strategic work and practical projects that are aligned with '[Our Food Futures: A community food strategy for North Lancashire](#)' (see section 1B). [Working groups](#) are open to anyone to join. Representatives from working groups attend closed heart group meetings alongside other key stakeholders to ensure work is connected and supported. The heart group steers the health of the overall partnership and supports the development and monitoring of strategy, projects and processes.

The working groups report on progress to open quarterly partnership meetings and help shape an annual review and celebration event. These events offer an overview and entry point to newcomers and other groups working around food.

Minutes from events and reflection activities are shared with attendees/working groups. The annual review is [published on the FoodFutures website](#), facilitating transparency and allowing others to feedback and track progress.





The table below provides more detail on the purpose of each working group and who regularly attends, **evidencing how well embedded FoodFutures is within our place and various communities.**

#### **Healthy food & environment working group**

Over the past three years this group has been regularly attended by representatives from: Textile Dynamics Lab, Lune Valley Bee Keepers, Friends of Long Marsh Lane, Claver Hill community growing project, Lancaster City Council, Lancaster District Community Voluntary Solutions, Pasture For Life (a local conservation grazer), a tenant farmer, Lancaster University Health Innovation Campus, Growing Resilience (cooking skills on a budget), Compost Academy, Gleaning Network, Eggcup (surplus food distribution hub) and members of the local food club network.

The following key strategic projects report on progress into this working group: Composting Academy, Gleaning Network, Waste Stream Mapping and an emerging 'Waste Collective'; Sewing Cafe Lancaster; a District wider Allotment Review.

#### **Lancaster District Food Justice Partnership**

Over the past three years this group has been regularly attended by representatives from: local Food Clubs and food banks, Citizens Advice, Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council, Morecambe Bay Poverty Truth Commission, Public Health, Eggcup and local community centres.

The following key strategic projects report on progress into this working group: Food Club Buying Coop, Eggcup's surplus food distribution, CAB campaigns, work undertaken by the food justice development officer (including a Library of Stories and progress against Our Food Resilience Plan: from crises to abundance).

#### **Community Food Skills working group**

Over the past three years this group has been regularly attended by representatives from: local schools, community centres, community food projects, food clubs, Lancaster City Council, Community Chef network, Lancaster Seed Library, THRIVE Magazine and Lune Valley beekeepers, Morecambe Bay Curriculum steering group.

The following key strategic projects report on progress into this working group: Where The Wildings Are! Schools project, THRIVE Magazine and the citizen journalism network, Sow and Sew Libraries, Compost Academy, Local Food Champion Network (in process of being renamed).

#### **Food Economy & Procurement working group**

Over the past three years this group has been regularly attended by representatives from: FarmStart and Northern Real Farming Conference, Lancaster City Council, local farms and farmer networks, Feedback Global, REconomy Coordinator from the Closing Loops project, Good Food Manifesto coordinator, Community Chef Network. It has started to be attended by a couple of local food businesses too.

The following key strategic projects report to this working group: The Plot and Lancaster District's FarmStart scheme, Northern Real Farming Conference, Food Hub (in development), Community Farm (in development), REconomy and Pots of Possibility, FoodFriends small society lottery scheme, Dynamic Procurement Work.

#### **Communications & Engagement working group**

This group was only established in late 2022 following an annual review process that identified a need for it. Since then it has been attended by: representatives from all themed working groups plus the Local Food Champion and Good Food Manifesto network coordinator, Closing Loops communications coordinator, FoodFutures communications coordinator and a Lancaster City Council community connector.

The following key strategic projects report to this working group: THRIVE Magazine, THRIVEpod, Our Food Stories (comms & engagement strategy), Closing Loops, Local Food Champion network, Good Food Manifesto and FoodFriends.

#### **Heart Group**

Over the past three years this group has been regularly attended by representatives from: all themed working groups, plus University of Central Lancashire, Lancaster University, Lancaster City Council, Transition City Lancaster, SHED (a funder), Royal Lancaster Infirmary.

The following key strategic projects report to this working group: skill shares and training needs, research strategy, funding strategy, Our Food Futures strategy and review process.

**Strategic priorities of working groups are linked here:**

- [Healthy Food and Environment](#)
- [Lancaster District Food Justice Partnership](#)
- [Community Food Skills](#)
- [Economy](#) and [Procurement](#)
- [Communications & Engagement](#)
- [Heart Group](#)

**Key institutions' support for the partnership:** Our working groups have active members that link to a range of key local institutions including Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council, Lancaster University, University of Central Lancashire, Morecambe Bay Hospital Trusts and a range of education institutions.

Indicators of the strength of these relationships include:

- **Lancaster City Council** has:
  - Allocated £13,000 to FoodFutures in its annual budget for five years.
  - Secured a penny lease of two council-owned polytunnels for [the Plot and the FarmStart](#) programme.
  - Made food part of a councillor's portfolio
  - Arranged quarterly check-ins between key officers and councillors with FoodFutures staff to work jointly on issues.
  - Created a public health post with food poverty/access to healthy food responsibilities.
  - LCC is now collaborating with FoodFutures on a District-wide allotment review, setting up a food hub and buying land for a community farm. (Section 6)
- **Lancaster Royal Infirmary** partnered with FoodFutures to run the [Morecambe Bay Health Festival](#). It now embeds a healthy and sustainable food theme into the event.
- **Lancaster University** and the **University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN)** have funded an emerging research strategy which aims to support how research with FoodFutures is conducted and feeds into policy. We have also collaborated with the universities on research including: [Procuring Food For The Future](#) report; a [Tale of Two Counties](#) report (strengthening local food cultures through mapping supply chains); a community collection point feasibility study and the [Rurban Hope Spots mapping project](#).
- We support a PhD with UCLAN that is looking at approaches to building food citizenship, with a focus on LGBTQ+ communities.
- The [Future Places Centre](#) at Lancaster University currently provides support through part funding project coordination within the [Closing Loops](#) project and access to funded internships.
- FoodFutures were invited to sit on the [Morecambe Bay Curriculum](#) steering group which seeks to embed food and ecological skills and outdoor learning within local curriculums. This led to the development of our schools project, [Where The Wildings Are!](#).
- LESS CIC and FoodFutures has developed [partnerships](#) with a range of funders to support the implementation of its strategy.

**Action area B: Develop, deliver, and monitor a food strategy/action plan**



FoodFutures themed working groups take forward strategic work and practical projects that are aligned with '[Our Food Futures: A community food strategy for North Lancashire](#)'. This food strategy was developed through a co-design process in 2020 -2021 that saw more than 250 people and linked organisations from across North Lancashire feed in and shape it. This included people with lived experience of food poverty, farmers working in the North Lancashire and Cumbria areas, school teachers and youth workers, food bank and food club volunteers, community food growers, hospital staff, academics, public health workers, city councillors, businesses, conservationists and members of the Lancaster District People's Jury on Climate Change. For more information about the strategy development process please [see here](#). In response to the main strategy, a [communications and engagement strategy](#) and [funding strategy](#) were created to develop more detailed plans for unlocking the visions highlighted in the main strategy.

For the past four years an annual strategy review process has been facilitated whereby all working groups reflect on their progress against actions, how they are functioning as a group and who else they need to reach out to and engage. This shapes an annual public event and celebration and the working group priorities for the year ahead. The annual review is summarised and [published on the FoodFutures website](#) so that it is easy for anyone to track progress and offer feedback. The progress reports illustrate our monitoring of activity and outcomes against our strategy and show we are progressing towards our visions whilst building a thriving good food movement.

In addition, for the past two years a 6 monthly progress report has been shared with Lancaster City Council to report on progress and how we are taking forward some of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Sustainable Food Places reporting template has formed the structure for this. The comms and engagement working group also aim to bring regular reports to meetings on progress against key performance indicators (as per the [Our Food Stories](#) strategy), to support them in responding to feedback.

Alongside the Our Food Futures strategy document, FoodFutures published a [Call To Action](#) and a [Good Food Manifesto](#) which highlights what people and organisations respectively can do individually, collectively and politically within our District to promote healthy, local and sustainable food. In order to make the most of these documents and promote them to residents and businesses locally, in Spring 2023 we recruited a [network builder and facilitator](#) whose role is to work with the FoodFutures coordinator and the Communications and Engagement Working Group to develop a [Local Food Champion](#) Network; grow the [FoodFriends](#) scheme to reach 500 members and develop a business and enterprise network aligned with the Good Food Manifesto. You can find out more about the vision of the Local Food Champion Network [here](#).

Over the past few years, our team (and now the Comms and Engagement Working Group), has worked hard to develop a strong and recognisable brand for FoodFutures and its related projects, including The Plot, FoodFriends, and Closing Loops (please see logos below). This has included a new [website](#) for the partnership (launched in 2020). While all projects have their own online presence, they all connect through our main FoodFutures [Facebook](#) page (1.6k followers) and [Instagram](#) page (650 followers), our website and publications (we run a [blog](#) and a [weekly column](#) in the Lancaster and Morecambe Guardian and publish [Thrive magazine](#) and [Thrive Podcast](#) - more detail on all these can be found in section 2).





**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

As our strategy was created through a community co-development process, it was shaped and structured by the needs that arose. On first glance, it may not be clear how it aligns with the Sustainable Food Places core criteria, however it does lay out a strategy for building and embedding sustainable food practices in North Lancashire. To help you see the overlap we have [annotated the strategy document](#) to highlight the alignment and evidence of policies, strategies, and plans to effectively promote healthy and sustainable food.

## Key Issue 2: Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement

### Action area A: Inspire and engage the public about good food

Lancaster District encourages widespread public participation in food-related community activity, underpinned by a connected network of community food initiatives which support a dynamic good food movement, involving people from all walks of life.

#### The channels listed below work to raise public awareness of food, health, and sustainability issues:

- Since its creation in 2020, 12,000 users have visited the [FoodFutures website](#).
- FoodFutures coordinates a weekly food column in the Lancaster and Morecambe Guardian, a local publication with a readership of around 6500, which shapes the [column and blog on our website](#). 156 columns have been published over the last 3 years, written by people from across our region.
- [Press work](#) from FoodFutures and others raises awareness via wider platforms across the District.
- In summer 2021, FoodFutures launched [THRIVE](#), a quarterly magazine which distributes 1,250 paper copies of each issue to 107 community hubs across the District. A digital version is also available [online](#). The print magazine promotes the idea of passing each issue onto a friend so total readership is higher still. A sister podcast, [Thrive Pod](#), is also being piloted. One podcast, on how to grow more local food, is already available, and six more are in production.
- Quarterly seasonal markets are held in the city centre to tie in with the seasons (see 4B for more details).
- To launch the [Closing Loops project](#), FoodFutures hosted [four World Cafe style community conversations](#) across the district. The events saw 124 people join discussions followed by a meal showcasing local and seasonal food. In Morecambe, Caton and Carnforth nearly all attendees were new to the FoodFutures partnership. Ideas shared through these events are now shaping the project workstreams.
- In September 2023, FoodFutures [launched](#) a new [Sustainability Hub](#) in the city centre, in collaboration with [Green Rose](#), a local CIC which delivers the Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP)

in North Lancashire, offering low income and vulnerable households free energy and money saving advice. The hub will be open during weekdays for members of the public to call in and find out about local food and sustainability activities going on in the District.

### **Training, volunteering and opportunities to participate in community food initiatives**

Examples detailed below demonstrate the wide range of free opportunities for people across North Lancashire to learn about, share and enjoy healthy and sustainable food through workshops, events and networking. Together they offer a wide range of opportunities to develop food growing, cooking, processing, and enterprise skills.

- In 2022, FoodFutures received funding from the National Lottery to run a [Climate Resilience](#) training programme which focused on helping local residents set up community food growing projects. 265 places were booked across 11 different training sessions on a range of subjects, from crop planning for a northern climate, through to permaculture design and organisational set up. 86% of participants rated the course content as excellent and it was exciting to see that 10 participants already had links to new or budding community gardens that they were keen to develop, meaning that the training directly translated into new projects in development. Online resources remain available [here](#) and we plan to repeat the programme soon.
- The FoodFutures '[what's on](#)' calendar (and linked social media) provide a platform for sharing information on the many food-related training and volunteering events run by local groups. Examples include forage walks, cooking classes and drop in sessions.
- The **box out** below shows some more examples of food related training events run in the area.

- During the first year of the Closing Loops project, 11 composting training and demonstration sessions involving around 200 people have been delivered across the district, as well as an entire composting curriculum produced for schools.
- Lancaster Seed Library's members attended training run by the Gaia Foundation as part of their UK and Ireland seed sovereignty programme. Each spring LSL run a seed swap followed by online skill share events to share tips and tricks for saving healthy seeds with a local audience. This is followed up by a practical workshop each winter. As a result, the number of seeds being brought to the annual seed swap has increased and seed swap initiatives have also started in Caton, Heysham and Overton.
- In 2022 FoodFutures sent 12 participants to a Plant Futures training event run by Made in Hackney. Participants pledged changes in their organisations after the training and these will be followed up after one year. One direct result was the setting up of a monthly super club to share food from Claver Hill community growing project.
- In December 2022, FoodFutures hosted a screen printing workshop and meal for 15 local food champions. Sewing Cafe Lancaster showed participants how to create bunting for stalls using second hand fabric which was screen printed with FoodFutures logos using natural dyes.

### **Campaigns and Development**

FoodFutures and other project partners have run a number of food related campaigns over the past 3 years.

- In 2021, FoodFutures' Melanie Fryer joined [The Food Foundation's](#) veg advocate initiative, which led to the launch of the Veg Campaign in the District. Melanie's campaign vision and journey is described in more detail [here](#) but campaign highlights included articles in Thrive magazine and stalls at the seasonal markets with veg giveaways from The Plot, a local organic market garden.

- September 2023 saw the launch of The Apple Rescue campaign, which is running as part of the [Share the Harvest Festival](#) with the aim of rescuing unharvested fruit, preventing food waste, and building community involvement. Organised by FoodFutures and the Closing Loops project in North Lancashire, this month-long event encourages residents to participate by hosting fruit-picking events, workshops, and food skill-sharing activities.

More examples of food-related campaigns can be found in sections 3 and 6.

## Action Area B: Foster food citizenship and a local good food movement

### Networks for sharing ideas and resources

- The [Community Food Skills](#) working group connects those working on community food initiatives across the District. Attendees come from schools and education providers, community growers, Lancaster City Council community connectors, community cooks, food writers and bloggers, local beekeepers and seed savers.
- FoodFutures is developing a network of [Local Food Champions](#) (name in review) through regular events and skill shares across the District. The first pilot event took place in January 2023 at Lancaster Potato Day. This informed a second event in August 2023 following the recruitment of a network builder. This was attended by 38 people. Quarterly events are now being planned ([see here](#) for the outcomes of the August event).
- Through the Closing Loops project, FoodFutures is building a **North Lancashire Food and Chef Network**, which aims to recruit enthusiastic local amateur and professional cooks to share their favourite local and healthy recipes with the public. The project has already engaged over 40 cooks and supported 22 public events with local, seasonal and predominantly plant-based catering. Case studies of these events are here:
  - [Harvest Market with cooking demos](#)
  - [Disco Soup at the market](#)
  - [Global Village Cafe autumn fiesta](#)
- To support these networks to develop, FoodFutures has been undertaking research into food citizenship with local universities (see Thrive article [here](#)).

### Supporting food growing with grants and advice

- FoodFutures runs several grant schemes for local food and sustainability initiatives. [Pots of Possibility](#) is described in section 4A and will distribute £300,000 over the next five years. However, for the past two years, FoodFutures has also run a micro-granting process with a total of £18,000 made available to projects that progress work in line with the 2030 Our Food Futures Strategy. Examples of initiatives supported are overleaf.

Two Skerton food clubs

The 'Peas Please' campaign

A sharing shed for schools to share tools and other equipment for food growing, preserving, cooking and ecology surveys

An outdoor food/play space project for early years.

Stanleys community centre to help set up a food growing project

A Morecambe-based community kitchen

- Other support for community food comes from [Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions](#) (CVS) whose website serves over 3,500 unique users each month. CVS helps local projects access funding and provides advice on governance, project planning and working with volunteers, as well as the [Lancaster District Green Spaces Forum](#) - a networking group for local growing and conservation projects.

#### Resource sharing

- The Closing Loops project has a REconomy workstream, which is about developing circular and regenerative initiatives in the community, including resource sharing in relation to food. A REconomy [scoping document](#) and [four year strategy](#) have been developed.
- To facilitate growing and food education in schools, [The Where The Wildings Are!](#) schools project (section 5) installed a Share Shed of equipment that teachers can borrow for sessions with pupils.
- In 2021, a collaboration between [Sewing Cafe Lancaster](#) and [Lancaster Seed Library](#) led to the installation of a network of 'Sew and Sow' boxes (right) across the District where people can swap, donate and take seeds and basic sewing and mending items.
- Seed swapping and the sharing of growing skills is facilitated through Transition City Lancaster's annual Potato Day where organic seed potato are sourced from a wholesaler; the public come and purchase what they want, while a bulk order is also put in for larger growing projects like [Spud Club](#), the [schools project](#) and [the Plot](#). In 2023, 319 kilos were ordered, featuring 26 different varieties and all sold out. The event also features a seed swapping stall, potato themed dishes from Global Village Cafe and free stalls for community growing groups.



#### Supporting community food projects and social enterprises access land and other assets.

Our District has a thriving growing scene supported by the following initiatives:

- Lancaster City Council's (LCC) public realm team have supported community growing and composting projects like [Scotch Quarry Park](#) to start up on LCC land through co-designed management agreements and protected greenspace designations.

- LCC is collaborating with FoodFutures on an [allotments review](#) which aims to understand the demand, visions and scope for allotments and other community growing spaces that are climate resilient, support biodiversity and increase access to sustainable food.
- LCC, FoodFutures, Lancaster University and the Urban Agriculture consortium have collaborated on projects to identify and map potential growing sites across the District (see the Hope Spots project [here](#)).

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

Our District has many wonderful examples of community growing projects which cannot be fully described in the space here, so we have prepared a [case study sheet](#) to provide more details on just a few particularly inspiring examples of these projects. Highlights include:

- The "Growing Veg and People" project, which aims to transform a derelict tarmac space in Morecambe into a productive area where local people, especially those facing vulnerabilities, can grow food, learn new skills, build community connections, and improve their well-being.
- [Global Links' Community Growing Project and Cooking Project](#) which supports asylum seeker and refugee families to grow food and share cooking cultures. Also see this THRIVE [article](#).
- [Fork to Fork](#), a two-acre forest garden which is cared for by volunteers with a range of learning abilities and mental health challenges. Also see this THRIVE [article](#).
- [Grow Caton](#) - a community growing effort in a village without allotment provision. Also see this THRIVE [article](#)..

There are also great groups working on the edges of sustainable food e.g. Green Spaces group; forage walks, WI groups etc. And there are many other online spaces for people to connect around food locally e.g. [friends of food futures](#), [Claver Hill](#), [Incredible Edible Lancaster](#) Facebook Pages.

FoodFutures also started a 20 minute neighbourhood pilot in 2022. This was paused due to concern from residents around the model being used nationally to limit peoples' movement.

**Key Issue 3: Tackling food poverty and diet related ill-health and increasing access to affordable healthy food**

**Action area A: Tackle food poverty**



Work in this area is led by the Lancaster District Food Justice Partnership (LDFJP). Logos of key LDFJP partners are shown below.



**Over the past three years the LDFJP has:**

- Secured funding from the NHS ICB Population Health Fund for a development worker post who embedded the LDFJP within the wider FoodFutures network and helped develop the [food ladders approach](#), which involves building capacity at a community level to help people move from a situation of crisis to abundance.
- Launched a [5 year action plan](#) comprising 8 action areas (see image below) with a whole systems approach to addressing food poverty locally.

<b>ACTION PLAN</b>		<b>AIM:</b> to ensure all residents have access to affordable, nourishing food.	
<b>1.</b> Raise the profile of food poverty as an issue	<b>2.</b> Design a food support pathway and create an information hub for food support services	<b>3.</b> Maximise food available to low income individuals and families	<b>4.</b> Tackle child hunger
<b>5.</b> Increase opportunities for community food	<b>6.</b> Provision for vulnerable and/or isolated groups	<b>7.</b> Maximise education opportunities	<b>8.</b> Monitoring and evaluation

- Channelled £400k over the last 3 years from the central government Household Support Fund to a buying coop of food banks and food clubs led by [Eggcup](#).
- Been pivotal in the response to the Covid 19 pandemic. Thanks to the [Morecambe Bay Poverty Truth Commission](#) and LDFJP’s knowledge of their communities, support services were able to

reach out to over 30,000 of the most vulnerable members of the community within 48 hours<sup>5</sup>, resulting in a commissioner being nominated for a European award for Excellence in Covid response.

- Launched the [Library of Stories](#) campaign, took over the midwinter 2022 Issue of Thrive and released a [public statement](#) highlighting the impact of the cost of living crisis locally and proposing the right to food at a council level.

### **Social food provision and support for those experiencing food insecurity**

In line with the food ladders approach, support is targeted at a range of levels:

1. Emergency food support. There are three food banks in our District, the largest of which is [Morecambe Bay Foodbank](#).
  - 3,332 referrals were made to Morecambe Bay Foodbank from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, resulting in emergency food being provided to 4,498 adults and 3,193 children. Over 95,000kg of food was donated throughout this period.
  - [West End Impact](#) gave out 1,300 food parcels over a similar period.
  - Morecambe Bay Foodbank collaborates with other organisations to help people access other necessities.
    - i. A partnership with the local RSPCA has helped provide people with pet food, with over 1,500kg of pet food distributed to 6 foodbanks in Lancashire over Christmas 2020<sup>6</sup>.
    - ii. Collaboration with a local [hygiene bank](#) provides further support with cleaning and personal care products.
    - iii. The foodbank has a [Uniform Project](#) which has clothed 700 children this year. (Recent [research](#) by North Lancashire Citizens Advice Bureau shows that 80% of families in the District were worried either 'a bit' or 'a lot' about affording school uniform).
2. Better access to healthy, affordable food.

Our District has a unique network of food clubs. A 2023 [report](#) highlighted their essential role in helping people move out of crisis into greater security. Often run through community centres, food clubs are places where people can come and share a meal and/or pick up a shopping bag of essential food items at very low prices. Many provide social connection and other forms of support too. **The box out** below has

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<https://www.morecambebapoveritytruthcommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/MBPTC-Reflections-and-Learning-1.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.rspca.org.uk/-/news-we-team-up-with-foodbanks-in-lancashire>

more information on the District's food clubs.

- Pre-Covid there were 13 food clubs in operation in the District, 7 in Lancaster and 6 in Morecambe. However, several new clubs have been established in response to Covid and there are now plans to establish a new food club in Carnforth after rural poverty was identified as a significant issue.
- Over 1,000 households use the District's Food Club network every week with a further 800 households accessing Eggcup – a Food Club and food distribution hub based in central Lancaster and the West End of Morecambe.
- Lancaster City Council have allocated money through the Household Support Fund to Eggcup who coordinate a buying cooperative of food clubs to make essentials more affordable.
- There are also a number of organisations in the District offering community meals. One project set up to help support those most vulnerable in the District provided frozen ready meals to people who were finding it difficult to prepare meals for themselves due to physical or mental health issues or lack of cooking facilities. Working alongside Lancaster and Morecambe College, Chefs Catering North West, Age UK Lancashire, and LCC, Eggcup provided substantial support to 93 clients over the first lockdown, providing over 9,000 ready meals in the process. The ready meal project continues to this day.

### 3. Preventative work to address hunger and food insecurity.

- 21% of children in Lancaster District receive Free School Meals. These are provided by the Lancashire Catering Service who have Food For Life Silver and Sugarwise accreditation (section 5).
- Lancashire City Council runs the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) scheme for children on free school meals. In 2022, £450,000 of funding was allocated to deliver this programme within the District. Over 2000 children attended HAF-funded places at 16 providers and 4,800 packed lunches were delivered via the programme.
- The District has a low uptake (42%) of Healthy Start vouchers. The LDFJP and North Lancashire Citizens Advice Bureau have been conducting research with Lancaster University to better understand people's experiences of using the vouchers. This has led to the creation of a [Facebook group](#) with over 14,000 members which is being used to identify problems and campaign for change.
- This year, [Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions](#) focused on supporting children and young people most impacted by the cost of living crisis. Between December and March 2023, they funded 48 organisations with grants of between £500 and £2,000 to provide hot meals, food parcels or food banks and deliver activities for young people with food. 1,954 young people were supported through the program, at an average cost of £26 per head.

### Living Wage

Lancaster City Council (LCC) has been a real living wage employer since 2014. Earlier this year, LCC also approved a [Fair Work Charter](#), the first of its kind in Lancashire, which local businesses are being asked to sign up to.

### Training professionals and supporting dignity for service users

- The LDFJP and CAB have been offering [Cash First training](#) to city councillors, NHS staff and CVS staff and are keen to offer this more widely, including to schools. The 'cash first' approach is based

on research which shows it is preferable to give people a direct cash payment and allow them choice over how they spend it, rather than offer food parcels or vouchers. See this THRIVE [article](#).

- The Lancaster-based [Ethical Small Traders Association](#) (ESTA) have been collaborating with the founders of [Face Donate](#), a new giving platform rooted in dignity which supports those receiving donations to have autonomy in their choices. After focusing on food security in Italy and London in 2021/2, Face Donate approached ESTA to test this in North Lancashire, leading to a collaboration with Lancaster-based tech hub [Fraser House](#) and the [Olive Branch Foodbank](#). ESTA will continue to promote this and to track the impact in North Lancashire and Preston through [The Larder](#).

### Other examples of promoting dignity for service users

- Morecambe Bay Foodbank aims to maximise choice and control for service users by providing specific parcels for a range of needs including people with diabetes, gluten intolerance, vegetarians and halal. It delivers all its parcels to reduce the shame people were feeling at having to queue up for a parcel. They have also stopped dating every item in big, bold writing to make it less obtrusive so that children do not feel embarrassment at having food bank food in the house when friends are visiting.
- Morecambe Bay Foodbank is also taking part in the Trussell Trust pathfinder initiative with one worker who regularly goes into schools and 2 workers at the foodbank providing information and advice. The next aim is to hire someone with lived experience of using the foodbank in order to make its services more accessible. The foodbank is a living wage organisation.
- CAB advisor Jeni Meadows is experimenting with making her work phone number publicly available so that those needing support can WhatsApp her rather than ringing - this approach is helping more people to come forward for support due to the more relaxed format of a text conversation and the ability to call using WiFi.

## Action Area B: Promote healthy eating

### Healthy eating campaigns & support services

- FoodFutures is developing two bespoke campaigns to support healthy and sustainable eating in our area; the public facing 'Tastes of North Lancashire' campaign and the 'North Lancashire Menu' campaign (targeted at catering and procurement). The values shaping the approach (see [here](#)) involved consultation with members of the public and FoodFutures working groups, and is used to shape events across the District.
- Campaigning is occurring at a Lancashire County Council level through the [Recipe 4 Health](#) award - a Lancashire Trading Standards scheme for caterers which promotes businesses that focus on

healthy eating, environmental issues, and social responsibility. Catering outlets can be rewarded for actions such as swapping the type of oil they cook for health and sustainability reasons through to reducing portion sizes.

- The county council also supports young families with healthy eating campaigns/ programs as shown in the **box outs below**.

- Lancashire County Council has gold accreditation under UNICEF's Baby Friendly Initiative
- The FAB (Families and Babies) breastfeeding support team come in to offer support through LCC's Family Hubs (formerly known as Children's Centres)
- Mother and baby nutrition is covered as part of the support services available to new parents through, for example Health Visitor and antenatal classes, as well as baby massage and other postnatal groups
- LCC's Family Hubs also promote Healthy Start vouchers and Change4Life principles and will signpost families to food banks and food clubs if needed
- 'Moove and Groove' groups for 5-8 and 8-11 year-olds also run through the Family Hubs. These provide a safe, sensitive and nurturing space for children to meet and have fun together, promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles and they always feature healthy snacks and cooking activities such as smoothie making.

#### Healthy eating training initiatives

Excellent examples from the District include:

- Lancaster University is launching the [Eco Eats](#) project which aims to teach students cooking skills, food sustainability and help with the cost of living crisis, by focusing on healthy, nutritious meals on a budget. The project will feature pop up demonstrations and cooking sessions on campus using surplus food and downloadable recipe cards so students can recreate meals at home.

Schools in the District participate in the county run Play and Skills at Tea-time Activities (PASTA) programme which runs family cooking sessions during term time in schools with the highest number of children on free school meals. Feedback from participants has been excellent, with parents commenting "I'd never even cooked a meal from scratch before, the closest I got was putting nuggets in the oven. I can cook a meal now and everyone eats it. We feel better too!" "My children will try new foods now and are eating fruit and vegetables that they wouldn't before."



- Lancaster-based charity [Adullam](#), works to provide support for those struggling with issues such as isolation, poor mental health and addiction. They've been running a Cooking on a Budget course - the **box out below** shares reflections on the latest course by Adullam's Sarah and Kath.

We had 8 attendees on the Cooking on a Budget Course which consisted of residents from the supported housing from the Adullam Residential Programme, and participants from the Adullam Community Programme and Walter Lyon House. The course was run by a very talented cook who is an ongoing participant of the Adullam Community Programme and, because of the funding from the Lancaster Community Fund, has been paid for their hard work in organising and running the course. As a result of this funding, they have been able to book a holiday abroad which is their first holiday in years! So it has been a bonus to see one of our own participants empowered to use their talents and then use the money for something they wouldn't otherwise have the chance to do.

The course covered a range of options for participants to learn including: Soups, Pasta dishes, chicken dishes, meat dishes, home baking and then finished with a 'Bake off' where they each made a dish of their choice, which was then judged for a winner and runner up.

The COB participants varied in cooking ability; some not able to cook at all, others cooked using packet mixes and others did not include any fruit or vegetables. The participants were encouraged to identify which meals they would like to learn to cook and then each dish was demonstrated at the beginning of each session before they themselves started to cook. They were also shown how to "hide" vegetables in dishes by liquidising them down to increase the amount of fibre and vitamins in their cooking. Some testimonials from participants say:

"I can tell now when I go a few days without eating any healthy food"

"It has opened my eyes to what can be made with food that is not expensive to buy"

"I now have confidence to make a meal from scratch"

- [Stanley's Community Centre](#) in Morecambe is finding that many young people don't know what to do with the food items they're given by the centre's food club. They are now seeking funding for a food coordinator that can produce food for the centre's busy meal clubs whilst running tasting and training sessions for the young people who attend. Sessions will teach how to cook on a budget, meal plan, batch cook and swap ingredients in recipes to accommodate variations in what might show up in a food club package. The new programme will benefit over 500 individuals.
- In September 2023, FoodFutures is hosting a '[Stop Fussy Eating](#)' workshop for parents with Claire Potter, best-selling author of "[Getting the Little Blighters to Eat](#)". Participants will learn how to enjoy stress-free family mealtimes, expand their child's diet and nutrition and turn their child into a happier, healthier, more open-minded eater.

### **Social prescribing programmes**

[Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions](#) have been developing a [social prescribing directory](#) in collaboration with a range of organisations, including the local authority, the voluntary sector, charities, the NHS, schools and education organisations. A catalyst event was held in partnership with FoodFutures in September 2022 which led to the creation of a draft '[how to' guide to social prescribing](#). By December 2022 there were 100 organisations and activities listed on the directory, including: food clubs, food banks, gardening and growing clubs, projects like [Fork-to-Fork](#) and the [CancerCare](#) and [Headway](#) allotments which specialise in supporting people with physical and mental health challenges. There are now 390 active 'interventions' and work is in progress to develop a volunteer buddy scheme to help people attend.

### **Healthy food culture transformation**



- Lancashire County Council signed up to the [Healthy weight Declaration in 2017](#) and re-signed it in early 2020. The county council recently published a briefing which provides the evidence base for the proposed development of a District Council Healthy Weight Declaration.
- The county council recently commissioned the Soil Association to help schools progress towards Food For Life awards. The programme is focused in East Lancs but is open to 100 additional schools across the county, including in our District. This initiative links well with the work being done by FoodFutures [schools project](#) and the Lancashire Catering Service (section 5).
- The [Bay Health Festival](#) is an annual event organised by Lancaster Royal Infirmary in partnership with FoodFutures. It aims to promote healthy and sustainable living by creating spaces for meaningful conversations; encouraging positive lifestyle changes. To support the festival's growth, funding was provided for a festival coordinator through LESS. The festival has grown significantly over the years, engaging thousands of people and incorporating a healthy food theme. The 2022 edition was the biggest yet, attracting over 40,000 participants. See this [article](#) for more information.

### Mapping access to healthy food

Lancaster University research identified 28 areas as 'food deserts' within the Lancaster District. These are areas where residents are more likely to face economic and/or physical constraints to accessing healthy food. This work has helped the LDFJP and County Council identify areas at greater risk of food insecurity and prioritise them for further support.

- Lancashire County Council is creating a vulnerability dashboard, which is a health equity tool for looking at how to identify vulnerable groups. It draws in data from a number of sources including food insecurity risk indices and wider determinants e.g. housing and infant mortality data. Detailed analyses can be done within the District and used to support work the [public health and spatial planning team](#) are doing around active design and spatial planning and the healthy high street.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

### At a county level, Lancashire County Council:

- Coordinates the Lancashire Food Network, where organisations with an interest in food and food insecurity can share information and identify ways to collaborate more effectively. Meetings often feature guest speakers from a range of organisations including third sector groups such as community cafes and growing clubs as well as Citizens Advice and other council employees who specialise in talking about issues such as Healthy Start Vouchers and Universal Credit.
- Holds monthly meetings for local authority food officers. These events enable Districts to share ideas and activities but are also proving important in identifying common themes across the

county in order to develop more collaborative working. The LDFJP feeds into this group on behalf of Lancaster District.

- Runs the [Lancashire Community Food Grant Scheme](#), where groups can apply for up to £2,000 to support projects that provide emergency food and/or tackle food insecurity. In total, 24 community food projects in our District have been funded through this scheme over the past three years.
- The Lancashire Healthier Places Programme is taking a systems wide approach to transforming food environments. It has developed a range of resources including a 'planning for healthy food environments' toolkit in partnership with Sustain and a Lancashire-based podcast on the relationship between the environment and health. This work is part of Lancashire's Healthy Hearts Strategy and supports the ambitions of '[Lancashire 2050](#)'.
- In partnership with Food Active, LCC is delivering the #GetsHangry campaign in Burnley and Hyndburn with a focus on engaging children, young people and families. Consultation outputs from the campaigns will inform the development of Lancashire's Food Strategy, which will be championed by youth ambassadors in each District. As part of the campaign, young people have an opportunity to learn about submitting complaints to The Advertising Standards Authority about less food and drink advertising in breach of the rules in their local community.

#### Key Issue 4: Creating a vibrant, prosperous, and diverse sustainable food economy

##### Action area A: Put good food enterprise at the heart of local economic development

##### Strategies, policies and services to support healthy and sustainable food business and a circular food economy.

- FoodFutures' Economy and Procurement working group seeks to build a thriving local food economy. See the group's strategic priorities [here](#).
- Lancaster City Council's [2030](#) strategy seeks to build an inclusive and prosperous economy within the District, with community wealth building being a major part of this agenda. Sustainable business/innovation support has played a key role here.

LCC's business support team won the top prize in the 'Northwest Best FutureReady' category at this year's FSB (Federation of Small Businesses) awards in recognition of the efforts taken to address areas such as skills gaps, helping high streets adapt to shifting consumer habits, helping local firms on their way to net zero and nurturing future entrepreneurs. Good results from these policies are evident in the many new sustainable food and drinks businesses launching in recent years (see case studies later in this section).
- The [Closing Loops](#) REconomy work stream was launched alongside the March 2023 THRIVE Magazine; aiming to grow the number of organisations and enterprises that are actively working to improve the resilience and wellbeing of the local community. A [REconomy scoping document](#) and [REconomy four year strategy](#) for North Lancashire were shared in Spring 2023 and a steering group is forming around this. This was done with consultancy support from [Ethical Consumer](#) - drawing on their experience of running the [LUSH Spring Prize](#) and their networks of practitioners

working on ethical enterprise globally. An SME food waste scoping study (section 6B) is also exploring how best to support local businesses with food waste.

- Closing Loops runs the '[Pots of Possibility](#)' fund, a participatory budgeting programme run in partnership with [Shared Future CIC](#). It will distribute £300,000 over the next 4 years to support regenerative enterprises to develop locally, and is keen to prioritise enterprises which focus on growing, cooking, and eating local, seasonal food and composting, surplus food and reducing food waste. For more information, see [this case study](#).
- Our District is home to the [Ethical Small Traders Association](#) (ESTA) which aims to provide a mutually cooperative framework for local social entrepreneurs to work together to enhance the prosperity and common good of the wider community. Thanks to FoodFutures operating as an effective collaborative hub for action on food, ESTA has been able to focus on related innovations and broader reach for the SME sector as highlighted in the **box out** below and in [this case study](#).

The first round of 'Pots of Possibility' community grants launched in March 2023. The first round received 21 applications, out of which 13 were selected for funding, including a cooking and food growing project for homeless people and a food growing project for young people in a community centre.

- ESTA member Thinking Philanthropy, founded by Felicity Jones, launched the [Eat Out to Really Help Out](#) campaign in 2020 in response to the disconnect between food insecurity and poverty and the government's Eat Out to Help Out campaign. The campaign - which remains on [Facebook](#) - asked people to donate their discounts to food aid organisations. It was developed in partnership with IFAN and was recognised by Big Issue as a Changemaker of the year in 2021.
- ESTA developed the Plastic Bottle Top Project to focus on the specific waste from Food and drink in collaboration with local innovator [Relic Plastic](#). This is now a standalone project with regular sorting parties and an active Facebook community and ESTA is regularly approached by other communities wanting to set up similar programmes.
- ESTA participated as a key convenor in the Netmakers project supported by Research England through the University of Cumbria and Lancaster City Council. In several sessions from autumn 2022 to spring 2023 civil society organisations with a particular focus on food security were supported in organisational and peer learning using Q methodology. These included Food Futures.
- Sadly, ESTA's founder, Michael Hallam, passed away suddenly on March 1st 2023. The ESTA leadership team, working with Michael's family, is focused on ensuring that his innovative vision and legacy is realised.

### Developing local sustainable food infrastructure

- In April 2023 [LESS](#) was awarded £269,000 from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to purchase a community farm, develop a local food hub and conduct an allotment review in collaboration with Lancaster City Council and FoodFutures. The successful bid was a direct result of a collaboration with Sustain on its '[A Tale of Two Counties](#)'<sup>1</sup> [report](#), which mapped the local food supply chain infrastructure across Lancashire and East Sussex. The

report showed that investing in food hubs was essential to enabling local food to feed more people. A [catalyst event](#) with local farmers was hosted at Myerscough College following this report's publication, and this was used to shape the food hub idea further.

- The UK SPF bid also builds on the success of [The Plot](#), a new local organic market garden set up by LESS with support from the wider FoodFutures partnership.

The Plot provides local, seasonal organic veg in North Lancashire. Beginning with 1 acre in 2020, the site now occupies 2 acres as well as 2 LCC owned polytunnels which were formerly used for growing bedding plants for displays. The polytunnels were not organic when the project started but the first one is now certified organic and the second one is in conversion. The Plot has also seen huge growth in sales, from £7,000 in 2021 to £16,000 in 2022 and is now on course for £30,000 in 2023. In addition to selling direct to the public, The Plot also wholesales to Organic North and a number of local cafes, including The Herbarium, Quarterhouse, Tuck and Brew. They have provided produce for big community events organised by FoodFutures over the past year, including the Closing Loops project world cafe events and the veg campaign.

### Support for sustainable farmers and retailers

In 2018, FoodFutures conducted a [farmstart feasibility study](#) which led to the launch of the [FarmStart training scheme](#) in 2021.

FarmStart is a year-long programme which aims to enable future growers to learn both the business and horticulture skills needed to run a small-scale growing enterprise, and to help overcome some of the barriers to accessing land and markets. Training is delivered through specialist classroom sessions, on-the-job training (2 days a week), mentoring and farm visits to other local projects. In total FarmStart has supported 14 trainees since the 2021 growing season, with 2 trainees being hired back as assistant growers in subsequent years, two finding roles as professional growers and a further graduate starting a community growing project in his community.

More information on the FarmStarters' journeys can be found [here](#).

From 2024 the FarmStart training programme will be accredited at C&G level 2 Horticulture by Organic Lea as part of a Land Workers' Alliance project. In addition to learning growing skills, a [FarmStart Business Game](#) has also been developed with support from the Joy Welch Trust at Lancaster University; helping trainee growers learn and simulate the business decisions they will need to make in developing a viable enterprise.

Today, FarmStart's influence is felt beyond North Lancashire. FoodFutures is an active member of the Urban Agricultural Consortium and formed part of a northern cluster; supporting the FarmStart element of their programme and now participating in a national farmstart working group linked to the Land

Workers' Alliance. As a result of this, the [feasibility study](#) is now being used as a template to inform a county-wide study in Nottinghamshire.

Support for female food entrepreneurs was boosted in January 2020, when Lancaster University and Marketing Lancashire hosted the [first Northern event](#) for the [Women in the Food Industry](#) network, an initiative founded in 2019 with the aim of facilitating a culture of collaboration and supporting women who are under-represented in the food industry. Alongside providing support for female food entrepreneurs, the network highlights issues around food poverty, cooking skills, food waste, child nutrition, and a diversity of food cultures and heritage recipes. The event (hosted at Lancaster University), featured a food fair of Lancashire producers, a masterclass on how to become a successful food entrepreneur and a panel discussion.

### **Thriving local food businesses**

Our District has a thriving local food scene. Here are just a few examples that have recently been featured in FoodFutures publications.

- [Filberts and Filberts Too](#)

One of the earliest businesses funded by the Pots of Possibility project is Filberts, an established local bakery which is now developing a community interest company, Filberts Too, that will redirect profits to help them provide free or subsidised food to food clubs and banks, as well as setting up a solar powered bakery, running baking classes with schools and community groups and working with local farmers to grow regenerative wheat.

- [Supper by Sanah](#)

Supper by Sanah, an Indian street food business, recently connected directly with Eggcup over the cost of living crisis to offer a 'pay it forward' scheme where people can pay towards a meal voucher which can be redeemed by others in the community.



- [The Morecambe Bay Chowder Company](#)

This small family business started in 2021 with a chowder recipe that was co-designed with 6 local suppliers. The chowder is sold from an old-fashioned ice-cream bike which has been converted into a solar-powered hot food catering bike. Solar energy is used to keep the chowder hot. The chowder will also now be available in local supermarket chain Booths, thanks to support and coaching from Lancaster City Council.



- [Global Village Cafe](#)



Global Village Café is a CIC which supports refugees and asylum seekers in finding meaningful employment. Their chefs represent many different countries and cultures and the dishes they serve are inspired by their varied heritage. Global Village Café caters for many different events, from working lunches, weddings and supper clubs, to large corporate events.

- [The Rewilding](#)

“At The Rewilding, we run a series of immersive dining experiences, where we come together to celebrate food, farming, foraged and British ingredients. The menus are all about connecting you back to your food and incorporate elements of game preparation, foraging, bushcraft and cooking with the elements.

We use only fresh, seasonal, wild food that has been foraged or locally sourced from farmers and suppliers who are local, or we know personally.

We invite local chefs to bring their culinary imagination to life to highlight the food story behind the produce, and create a welcome space to gather, share and feast with others.” **Michelle Parry, The Rewilding**

### [Farm on the Fell](#)

Michael and Lisa, third-generation farmers in Bleasdale, transitioned from high-input dairy farming to regenerative agriculture. After completing a regenerative agriculture course in 2021, they adopted a natural approach. They shifted to a cow-with-calf dairy model, feeding cows a 100% pasture diet for better nutrition. They sold their previous herd and now raise Jersey cows that rear their own calves. Milk is processed on-site into products like yogurt for direct sale and they now have a gelato business at the farm. The farm also keeps free-range hens, rare-breed pigs, and Norfolk Black turkeys, all raised naturally. Their goal is to enhance soil health, biodiversity, and produce nutrient-rich food for the community.



## Action Area B: Promote healthy, sustainable, and independent food businesses to consumers

Lancaster District has a number of mechanisms for promoting healthy local food to buyers locally and is creating different avenues by which producers can connect directly with the public.

- FoodFutures runs an [online local food directory](#) with an interactive map, which for the past year has had an average of 72 views each month, and the ability to search by category (**see box out to the right**) and is currently developing a business and enterprise network aligned with the [Good Food Manifesto](#).
  - In summer 2020 the local food directory was migrated to the FoodFutures website. It filters businesses using a range of ethical criteria including organic, fairly traded, free range, not for profit etc. Listed businesses are sent a local food directory window sticker to display in their businesses' windows and invited to attend seasonal farmers markets, food festivals and to partner or shape various FoodFutures projects e.g. FoodFriends and the Good Food Manifesto.
  - The directory currently attracts an average of 72 views each month and there are plans to develop it further. Work on the directory has currently paused so that further development of The Good Food Manifesto and REconomy workstreams can inform its future format.
- In addition to the directory and Manifesto, THRIVE Magazine has featured multiple articles on local sustainable food businesses since the first issue in summer 2021, including many of the businesses profiled in section 4A.
- The [Ethical Small Traders Association](#) (section 4A) offers its members access to a range of benefits including promotion on ESTA's website and social media platforms, peer-to-peer mentoring and support, face to face networking and collaboration to create joint products and services.
- In 2020, FoodFutures developed the [FoodFriends scheme](#) as a small scale society lottery programme to support the development of regenerative local food projects and the training of new small-scale farmers through the FarmStart scheme (Section 4A). There are now just under 150 members and it produces £6.5k every year. An added benefit of FoodFriends is the ability to promote its food partners: currently 12 local food businesses that provide £30 Local Food Vouchers as prizes.

## Our current food partners are:



- In addition to retailing through two local outlets (Single Step Co-op and Barton Grange Farm Shop), [The Plot](#) (an organic market garden) has been developing alternative ways of selling. It has launched a crop share scheme which is generating a guaranteed income with 35 members this (2023) growing season. The Plot is also piloting different distribution mechanisms: they have trialled community drop off points and have set up an [Open Food Network shop](#) which two other local food producers joined ([Farm on the Fell](#) and [Backsbottom Farm](#)) as a pilot in 2022. For the past two years, The Plot has also collaborated with [Sands Milk](#) on a local delivery round for the boxes. Experiences gained here will inform the development of a local food hub over the next year (funding secured via UKSPF - see section 4A).
- Closing Loops has commissioned a scoping study on collection points with the aim of further supporting local food businesses to access their customers locally. This work will tie into plans for the food hub described under 4A.
- To complement Lancaster's weekly charter market, FoodFutures hosts [quarterly seasonal markets in Lancaster](#). Each brings between 15-30 local food businesses and community food initiatives into Lancaster's market square, with demonstrations including sauerkraut making, cooking by local chefs and local food tasting. Around 600-700 people attend each event. More recently, FoodFutures has run a market development focus group which is being used to shape the market offer and range of stalls invited. They also invited a local makerspace community to run a demo and repair stall at the Spring 2023 market. This was a great success and they hope to develop a regular 'repair cafe' stall. [Good Things Collective](#) and [Creative West End](#) also run regular local markets in Morecambe, and Lancaster University has a weekly market during term time in its main square, which is well attended by local producers. Produce from the University's [EcoHub](#) is sold at the market, including fruit, vegetables and campus produced honey from sustainable local beekeepers.
- In addition to supporting local producers to retail direct to the public, local producers are increasingly being supported to cater for large events run by FoodFutures and Lancaster City Council - please see section 5 for more details.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance)  
(Mandatory word limit: 250).

Alongside events (seasonal markets, catalyst events and conferences) FoodFutures and linked projects support wider press work and storytelling around local, sustainable and healthy independent food businesses. Their stories are featured in weekly local food columns, blogs, THRIVE magazines feature a business spotlight, THRIVEpod has several episodes which feature local food producers, press work around the Northern Real farming conference regularly promotes local food businesses. For more data around our comms work [see here](#).

We invited sustainable local food producers and land workers, and other food workers to attend a careers fair as part of our [schools project](#). This seeks to be a core part of the school's work going forwards.

Although not completed in the last 3 years, The Faces Behind Our Food (FBOF) exhibition was effective at supporting more diverse audiences in understanding the place of food in their lives/exploring sustainability issues. FBOF features photographs and stories of 12 local food producers; exploring a range of issues linked with Lancaster's food system. FBOF toured Lancaster for 210 days in 2016/17 and [is still available online](#). 40% of people that engaged with the exhibition AND completed an evaluation form learnt something new about the provenance of their food.

### **Key Issue 5: Transforming catering and procurement and revitalising local and sustainable food supply chains**

#### **Action area A: Change policy and practice to put good food on people's plates**

- FoodFutures' [Food Economy and Procurement working group](#) looks to embed sustainable procurement practices within local businesses and institutions, including the council, hospitals, schools and universities. It developed its own principles ([Resilient Food Checklist](#)) to guide purchasing choices (to encourage self evaluation and guide strategy work; examining food across 15 categories and assessing them against economic, environmental and social resilience.
- In 2020 The [Procuring Food for the Future report](#) was published in collaboration with the University of Leeds, Lancaster University, Feedback and FoodWise Leeds. The report explores the role anchor institutions can play in creating a better food system and uses insights from interviews with procurement professionals at anchor institutions in Leeds and Lancaster to highlight examples of good practice whilst also exploring the challenges to better food procurement. Its recommendations are outlined below.

# Key recommendations

## For policy makers:

- Instead of guidelines, we need procurement regulation that embeds sustainability to deliver a better food system.
- Increased transparency and accessibility of data around food supply chains and food businesses is needed to support more sustainable procurement practice.
- Provide long-term investment to support public sector food procurement.

## For institutions:

- Embed sustainability at the core of operations to empower and support procurement staff.
- Build links with other organisations to share expertise and knowledge around sustainable food procurement.
- Use holistic frameworks to guide food procurement principles and embed social, environmental and economic values into your policies.
- Share stories about what is being done to build wider institutional support and resources for responsible procurement.

## For communities:

- Convene a food procurement working group to facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing between food procurement staff and local businesses.
- Look for opportunities to engage local sustainable food producers with local and national initiatives.
- Grow the local food economy so that a wide range of local, sustainably produced food is available for procurement.
- Take your values to work. Ask to see local and responsibly sourced food throughout your workplace.

## Highlights from local anchor institutions:

### 1. Work within schools

- [Lancashire Catering Services](#) (LCS) is a local authority catering organisation which services over 530 individual contracts with schools and care homes across Lancashire and neighbouring authorities. It has the following accreditations (includes Food For Life (FFL) Silver and Marine Stewardship Council).



- In total, the LCS serves approximately 9 million meals per year to current FFL silver standards across the county, guaranteeing this level of catering to all the junior schools, one high school, a number of SEN schools as well as care homes and day centres. Highlights of the LCS's standards are shown in the **box out** below.

- Over 80% of food is freshly prepared and cooked on site\* and all menus are compliant with the Government's 'Food Standards for Schools'
- 100% of suppliers are classed as local.
- 75% of the food purchased is produced in the UK.
- The LCS is fully committed to animal welfare and only uses meat that is classified under a farm assurance scheme. They only use free-range eggs in their cooking and baking.
- All fresh milk, pasta, rice and flour is organically produced.
- All fish is MSC certified - meaning it is sourced responsibly and comes from a certified sustainable fishery. This protects and safeguards seafood supplies. All tuna is dolphin-friendly.
- \*A small number of schools have kitchen facilities which, due to their size and limited equipment, are unable to produce the full Fresher+ menu and are excluded from these standards

- LCS has reduced food miles through the introduction of a centralised distribution hub; keeping money circulating within the local economy. Its policy of employing kitchen staff to cook fresh food on site wherever possible also benefits the local economy since Lancashire County Council is a living wage employer.

## 2. Lancaster University

- The university formerly enjoyed high levels of accreditation under the Food For Life scheme but a decision was made to move away from this as it gave them more flexibility and enabled them to go further on menu make-up, as explained below.

" We are sticking with the standards that 'Food for Life' set out, but we also felt we wanted to go further, particularly on the nutritional side of things. So, with the call for reducing meat, there is a campaign for 20% less meat – but we feel we can do much more than that and offer lots of plant-based foods. We have a lot more vegetarian food available, 60% of menus. Particularly with our conferences. We're going maybe 80% vegetarian and vegan with our lunch offers. And giving the customer the option to add meat. So, we'd have a base that was vegetarian/vegan and just have an add-on option for each individual customer."

- LU is currently producing a new sustainable, good food policy which will be based on the foundations set out by the Food for Life certifications. The strategy is still in development, though headlines of what will be included and what has already been done can be found [here](#). In addition to focusing on sustainability, the strategy will cover inclusion issues e.g. dietary and cultural needs in relation to food. It will also include how to encourage tenant food outlets on campus to improve their sustainability and align with what the university is doing. Earlier this year, the [university received ECOsmart platinum accreditation](#) for its conferences and events, in recognition of action across a number of areas, including food.
- The University is part of 'NETpositive', a national scheme from the HE sector which works with suppliers to map out their social and environmental impacts and develop action plans to reduce these. By making

a 'NETpositive commitment' the university recognises that, as well as reducing negative environmental impacts, they are also looking to enhance the positive impacts of their activity – environmentally, socially and economically. Procurement staff explained NETpositive as follows:

"So, with 'NETpositive', the HE sector is asking suppliers to fill out essentially a questionnaire and develop their own action plan for sustainability. It gives us the ability to actually have something tangible to look at and discuss. All universities that are signed up to NETpositive can log on and see that same action plan. This means the suppliers are not having to do the same thing over and over again. It is this action plan which we would then discuss offline. We have review meetings with our key suppliers, once a term, once a quarter, depending on who the supplier is and what's happening, and this is always an agenda point to be discussed. It is also included in tenders when these go out. We're not at a point where we are having contract review meetings with all our suppliers, but I think of the suppliers where we spend over £10,000 a year, about 60% are signed up to 'NETpositive'. Our aim is to get everybody signed up eventually, it's just resources are needed to be able to do this."

### **3. Lancaster and Morecambe College (LMC)**

LMC offers training in hospitality and catering. The following initiatives seek to support its students in having a grounding in sustainability and local food systems.

- The hospitality and catering team has developed the [Educate to Plate](#) initiative, which involves the creation of a college community garden that will grow a variety of fruit and vegetables and honey to be used in the college kitchens by catering students; giving them a full spectrum of knowledge from growing produce to serving it in the college restaurant.
- All Catering learners undertake work placement at [Eggcup](#) in Lancaster and students regularly get involved in gleaning days. Catering students also work with Eggcup to produce meals from leftover food donated by local providers - over 20,000 meals have been produced so far.
- All learners take a level 1 in Sustainability through their tutorial across college.
- LMC is submitting a proposal to the Department for Education with 3 other colleges for a Farm-to-Fork project which aims to educate learners and businesses about sustainable food production and practices. As part of this they will be developing a low carbon kitchen which can be used to service the Bay restaurant at college and provide a setting for practical classes.
- The college is working with Lancaster City Council and local primary schools through the PASTA project on healthy affordable eating (see section 3B)
- All food waste from the college kitchens is composted at the college in a Ridan composter.

### **4. The University of Cumbria**

Lancaster is home to one of UoC's campuses. The university has a fairtrade policy which is summarised in the box out below.



UoC's Fairtrade Steering Group has created a policy incorporating the following goals:

- Fairtrade foods are made available for sale in all campus shops.
- Fairtrade foods are used in all cafés/restaurants/bars on campus.
- Fairtrade foods are served at all meetings hosted by the university and the student's union.
- There is a commitment to campaign for increased Fairtrade consumption on campus.
- UoC promotes Fairtrade throughout the year, including supporting Fairtrade Fortnight each year with competitions and prizes.

#### **Action Area B: Improving connections and collaboration across the local supply chain**

- FoodFutures' [Food Economy and Procurement \(FEP\) Working Group](#) carried out a focus group with representatives from local procurement teams to inform the development of the [Our Food Futures strategy](#). There was interest in a local cross-sector procurement group to improve knowledge sharing and collaboration locally and to develop a food hub to streamline supply from local producers. These became a strategic priority for the FEP Working Group and led to the successful UKSPF funding bid in April 2023 to take the food hub work forward (section 4A).
- Following the [Procuring Food for the Future report](#) (section 5A), FoodFutures, Lancaster University and the N8 FoodSystems policy hub hosted a [conversation with members of the National Advisory Board for Dynamic Food Procurement](#) as part of the Northern Real Farming Conference (NRFC). FoodFutures also worked with the [Urban Agriculture Consortium](#) (UAC) and public sector institutions to explore the potential of [Dynamic Food Procurement](#) principles in our District.

FoodFutures interviewed the team developing Dynamic Food Procurement at a national level ([see video](#)) and participated in a UAC procurement group that linked up food partnerships in Northern Pathfinder cities with the dynamic procurement team. Some of these pathfinder cities accessed funding to scope out dynamic purchasing systems in their area but Lancaster District does not yet have the supply and cross-sector procurement collaboration for this to be a viable option.

FoodFutures developed the [Good Food Manifesto](#) (GFM) to highlight ways businesses could bring about the Our Food Futures visions and strategy in their day-to-day operations. The GFM strategy (process for supporting a business network to form around the GFM) is currently in development (See GFM [case study](#)) and seeks to complement FoodFutures [local food directory](#) (section 4B) and the Closing Loops and REconomy [strategic](#) priorities, with the following 5 year targets:

- At least 20% increase in locally sourced, seasonal, and sustainably produced food being eaten by households.
- At least 20% increase in locally sourced, seasonal, and sustainably produced food being offered by local food retailers, restaurants, and other food businesses.

The North Lancashire Chef Network (section 2B) also links to this work/targets; improving local knowledge of seasonal, local and sustainable ingredients and recipes and connecting local chefs with growers and farmers.

### Work by other local groups

- A number of local anchor institutions have been working to improve their procurement (See section 5A). However, it was recognised that actions could be more effective if institutions shared knowledge. This led to the formation of the Morecambe Bay Anchor Collaboration in 2021. The collaboration is currently led by the NHS Population Health Team for the South Cumbria Place Based Partnership. Alongside public sector organisations e.g. Lancaster City Council, the collaborative also includes large businesses such as Morecambe Football Club and the power station.
- The Collaborative recently published a [charter](#) which includes a section on shifting spend more locally and incorporating social value into purchasing decisions. Work on food is at an early stage but, as of September 2023, FoodFutures is working with them to take forward these issues.
- Meanwhile, a subgroup of SMEs and related organisations from the District, including the Ethical Small Traders Association, the local Chamber of Commerce, Lancaster and Morecambe College and the small business association, have been exploring similar issues for the SME sector. Led by Lancaster University's Professor Steve Kempster and supported by a funded internship with ESTA, The [Good Dividends](#) project centres on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and is based on the idea that a regenerative economy depends on regenerative businesses that are restoring, renewing and revitalising the planet and the communities that they operate within. Through Good Dividends, all businesses are encouraged to develop six areas of value including a 'planet-community' dividend, which includes a focus on eating less meat and more plant based foods and supporting local businesses that are committing to sustainability. Filberts and Tuck, who are profiled in this application, were among the participating businesses.
- A local example of an SME with a proactive approach to local and ethical sourcing is Tuck. In a [THRIVE article](#), Richard from Tuck lists some of their local suppliers and explains how the business is based on the idea of interdependence between SMEs in the local supply chain.

"For Tuck – our small, independent business – it was imperative from the outset to be a part of the local food-growing community. Without such a culture of co-dependent existence, as business-owners who cook or bake for our community, we only saw an uncertain future.

With this in mind, we aspire to give our patrons an opportunity to access and experience the bounty from the farmers and producers that we have partnered with after sincere consideration, thus showcasing an alternative to the pre-existent models for food businesses. Local suppliers we work with include: The Plot, Cliftons, Bowland Pork, beef and lamb, Growing well, Wyreside Mushrooms, Carron Lodge, Carringtons Coffee Co, and Red Bank Coffee Roasters." **Richard Langley, Tuck Cafe in Lancaster**

- A similar approach is adopted by the [Morecambe Bay Chowder](#) company (section 4A) who co-designed their chowder recipe with six other local suppliers so that these businesses could support each other. The chowder company is now supplying Booths.
- Building supportive relationships between local suppliers is integral to the food hub development and is and FoodFutures and linked events e.g the Northern Real Farming Conference, FoodFutures' annual strategy day and Closing Loops' World Cafe events were all exclusively catered for by local producers and suppliers.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

- FoodFutures is collaborating with Lancaster University on a dissertation around embedding sustainability into school food policies. While the Lancashire Catering Service has done excellent work in this regard (Section 5A), there is potential for schools to go further by producing more of their own food and offering more plant-based options on menus. For example, one local school ([Ripley St Thomas](#)) used to run a farm to fork scheme, while other schools in Lancashire have instituted Meat Free Mondays. Dr Jan Maskell, of [Scientists for Global Responsibility](#), a project partner on the Closing Loops project, also worked on a European project which developed the [Cool Food Pro](#) tool. Cool Food Pro supports caterers to reduce their impact on the environment, including many successful case studies from schools. Our intention is to use these projects to explore what might be possible locally.
- In 2022 FoodFutures launched [Where the Wildings Are!](#) (WTWA) a school growing, cooking and rewilding project (see WTWA case study [here](#) and [Ryelands Primary School](#)'s case study). It arose from a collaboration between FoodFutures, two headteachers and a local [permaculture design company](#) after teachers identified a need for support with food education, food insecurity and outdoor learning. The project gained strategic support from the [Morecambe Bay Curriculum](#), a place-based sustainability curriculum inspired by the Eden Project Morecambe and launched in 2020 by Lancaster and Morecambe College and Lancaster University. Twelve local schools are currently taking part in WTWA which delivers a range of benefits to schools as shown below.

- A tailor-made design for their school grounds, co-designed with staff and pupils and built on permaculture principles, incorporating both edible landscaping and significant food-growing areas – please see the project's website for downloadable designs.
- Involvement of every year group, teachers, parents, and the wider community, in developing their school as a local community hub for outdoor horticulture activity, to improve community cohesion and wellbeing
- Greater access to their own food supply, allowing for healthy food to be provided in emergencies or to families in financial distress
- A programme of environmental education activities designed to develop children's understanding of wildlife and ecosystems, to improve the habitats and encourage greater biodiversity within schools' grounds and encourage outdoor learning (example activities include willow weaving, bird watching and mini beast surveys)
- An increase in young people moving through the school system who understand and are passionate about the local food system, and who might wish to move into local food-growing as a career or supplemental income stream in coming years. In 2023 FoodFutures partnered with local conservation organisations and Lancaster University Geography students to offer a green careers fair to schools taking part in the project, with the aim of motivating pupils to think of careers in the environment and food growing sectors.

## **Key Issue 6: Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food & farming and an end to food waste**

### **Action area A: Promote sustainable food production and consumption and resource efficiency**

#### **Working with the public sector, businesses and citizens to drastically reduce the climate and nature impact of the local food system**

- Lancaster City Council (LCC) declared a climate emergency in 2019. They then commissioned [A Lancaster District People's Jury on Climate Change](#) in 2020. The People's Jury recommendations were embedded within the [Our Food Futures 2030 strategy](#) and continue to inform LCC's work, including continued financial support for FoodFutures to take forward recommendations around food and farming.

- LCC committed to reviewing and amending the local plan to reflect the need to reach net zero by 2030. This included the need for sustainable local food production, composting of food waste and provision of green and blue (water) spaces for people and nature. [FoodFutures fed into this review with a number of recommendations for supporting and safeguarding local sustainable food production](#) and provided feedback on the council's planning advisory note on 'Encouraging the Growing of Food Within New Development Planning Advice Note (PAN02). This led to LCC's climate change policy officer joining FoodFutures' [Healthy Food and Environment](#) working group to help link community and council activity around food growing, biodiversity, water management and climate action. LCC shares the working group vision of a biodiverse District with community food growing integrated into the urban landscape.
- In 2022, [£45k of funding was won by LCC for a Community Engagement project that will follow up on the work done by the People's Assembly](#). The UK's Local Climate Engagement Programme, run by [Involve](#), will train community members in community engagement around climate change.
- LCC was recently [recognised by Friends of the Earth](#) for developing a range of policies that responded to the climate emergency and included more protections for local food and nature. This [article](#) has full details but highlights include:
  - The development of a [Green and Blue Infrastructure \(GBI\) strategy](#) which includes food growing spaces. This is the first time LCC has produced a strategy of this kind. A key objective of the strategy is to: 'Create spaces for communities to be able to grow their own food, to raise awareness and education around such practices, promote community cohesion and support people's health and wellbeing'.
  - LCC has developed a new [pollinator friendly grassland management strategy](#) in collaboration with local conservation groups. The council also

DM29 is a local policy which sets out design principles which new development proposals should consider. It states that any developments should: "Deliver net gains in green and blue infrastructure, and retain and enhance appropriate amounts of garden /outdoor space for occupiers of both proposed and neighbouring uses, as well as providing opportunities for food growing space and the incorporation of space for onsite composting".

Lune Valley Beekeepers launched the Lune Valley Pollinator Corridor, a chain of pollinator patches stretching from Heysham to Kirkby Lonsdale, and have supported the creation of over 40 pollinator patches as part of this project. They also joined forces with the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, who have been creating a larger pollinator corridor to run from Lancaster to Leeds. Lune Valley Beekeepers have also pioneered the development of a new style of hive - the [Lune Valley Long Hive](#), which is designed to support and over-winter bee colonies in our cold and wet Northern climate. The hive is also able to be managed by wheelchair users, making beekeeping more accessible.

no longer uses glyphosate. [Lune Valley Beekeepers](#) have also participated in projects supporting improved habitat for pollinators (see left).

- FoodFutures is also collaborating with the City Council on an allotment review ([see scope here](#)).

### Maximising land for food growing and nature

- Lancaster is participating in The [Urban Agriculture Consortium](#) (UAC), a collaboration promoting the up-scaling of urban & peri-urban agroecology across the UK. UAC supported a land audit in Lancaster District to map out potential land for new growing projects and biodiversity corridors. The [Hope Spots](#) project, (a collaboration between UAC, Lancaster City Council, FoodFutures and Lancaster University), combined different freely available data sets to identify and reimagine sites within the city as food growing space and created a trail for the public to spark engagement around the topic. This research method can now be replicated throughout the UK.

- A soils and construction task force emerged from the Hope Spots work. Based on LU research showing the damage done to soils during construction projects, LCC is implementing a policy (the first of its kind in the UK) that will force developers to fence off land which is earmarked for greenspace during development to avoid damage during the construction phase.

### Supporting agroecological transitions for farmers

- The Northern Real Farming Conference (NRFC) (see box out below) is currently in the process of shaping a theory of change for building a resilient food system in the north, and how the conference can play a role in facilitating this. This [Miro board](#) captures some of the ideas from the emerging theory of change work.
- NRFC is working to develop the network and reach out to more farmers. In 2022, with support from the World Wildlife Fund, NRFC made video content from online sessions more accessible and useful. Videos from the 2020 and 2021 events have had over 5,200 views on [FoodFutures Youtube channel](#) and over 5,000 views on a dedicated [NRFC YouTube channel](#). NRFC have also piloted reaching farmers via auction marts and articles in over 19 parish magazines - enabling us to reach a new audience of farmers who are not as active online. The team also attended Carbon Calling where they interacted with over 150 participants.
- A new farm cluster is developing in the lower Lune Valley in collaboration with the [Lune Rivers Trust](#), enabling farmers to access advice, support and form free funding of up to £10k.
- Rod Everett, a permaculture designer and farmer based in Wray, has been collaborating with the Lune Rivers Trust on a series of projects designed to support healthy soils and waterways in the local catchment area. See this [Thrive article](#) for more information. Other initiatives led by Rod are shown in the **box out** below.

The first NRFC took place online in 2020 with 500 people participating across 65 sessions. A second event was held in 2021 with an in person and online component. The in-person event was supported by Lancaster City Council who gave us the town hall for free. Over 100 people participated in the in-person event which featured catering by local producers and a series of local inspirational farm visits.

The NRFC advisory group is made up of representatives from key food networks across the North of England (including North Lancashire): the Community Supported Agriculture network, the Permaculture Association, Organic Growers Alliance, Pasture for Life, Land Workers Alliance, Sustainable Food Places, farmer networks, the innovative farmers network, and the Soil Association.



- Experimenting with making on farm biofertilizers which hopefully will lead to running a course for local farmers to reduce their use of artificial fertilizers (Supported by Forest of Bowland Farming in Protected Landscapes fund).
- Created 2 new ponds for crested Newts funded through the Lancashire Wildlife Trust
- Built a new water retention area high up on the farm to provide water for livestock and irrigation during times of drought. This also helps with flood attenuation.
- Experimenting with biofertilizers and Johnson Su composting.
- Rod is currently working with farmers in Roeburndale to develop and implement Farm Flood Plans. This is supported by the Water Environment Grant through the Lune Rivers Trust.
- Rod now has a guided Natural Flood Management walk on the farm which you can visit any time. This exciting work complements the previous work on the historical flood events on the River Roeburn funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

- Agroecology training is also offered through The Plot and FarmStart scheme (section 4A) and via the Climate Resilience Training (section 2A).

#### **Community engagement around sustainability and local food**

- This shapes and is embedded by all of FoodFutures comms and engagement work. The [Healthy Food and Environment](#) and [Community Food Skills](#) Working Groups have developed connections with a wide array of community groups and supported many awareness raising events over the years. Recent examples include the Big Green Week and Earth Day. Over 100 people attended 2023 Big Green Week quizzes and engagement activities at the Seasonal Market. See [here](#) for more information about the market as a whole.

#### **Action Area B: Reduce, redirect, and recycle food, packaging, and related waste**

##### **Strategies to minimise food waste**

- In 2022, FoodFutures launched [Closing Loops](#) (CL), a 5 year project funded by the National Lottery Climate Action Fund. It brings together six key local organisations ([LESS](#), [Lancaster District CVS](#), [Eggcup](#), [Global Link](#), [Shared Future](#) and [Scientists For Global Responsibility](#)) to take forward strategic priorities around reducing waste, redistributing, composting and creating closed loops.
- Through the [\(CL\) project](#), FoodFutures is collaborating with the city and county council to better understand challenges and solutions for food waste locally. Specific examples of progress include:
  - In preparation for the Environment Act, Lancaster City Council launched a food waste collection trial with over 800 households in Heysham. Results were mixed - those who participated liked the scheme and wanted to continue but, in line with national findings, participation rates were low (36%) and residents mostly put fruit and veg in the bins, rather than adding bread, plate scrapings or meat. The City Council also participated in #FoodWasteActionWeek by running the Love Food Hate Waste campaign.
  - The CL project has a workstream around developing community composting in the District. The project has already created a [‘compost curriculum’](#) for schools and engaged with over 200 people at taster, skillshare and demo sessions across the District. The project’s goals are shown below.



Over the next 5 years, the project aims to achieve the following goals through the creation of a composting academy and a 'train the trainer' model:

- 60+ training events run, with at least 600 attendees.
- 20+ demonstration sites established which are visited by 2000+ people.
- 8+ new community composting initiatives.

- The composting project has since obtained funding to [conduct a feasibility study](#) into collection and composting of food waste from SMEs. The idea behind the project is to take inspiration from successful schemes elsewhere and propose a model that could be successful in our District.
- CL is facilitating a greater understanding of waste issues locally. A [baseline map of repair, reuse and waste reduction initiatives](#) in the District has already been completed, alongside a map of [current waste disposal arrangements](#).
- In January 2023 CL and Sewing Cafe Lancaster launched a monthly book club which explores waste-related issues e.g waste colonialism and discard studies with the aim of better understanding the underlying processes that lead to waste and inspiring us to think about regenerative solutions locally.

### **Food waste prevention and redistribution**

- [Eggcup](#) (Section 3A) plays a crucial role in surplus food redistribution locally, with 299 tonnes of food being saved from waste this year - equivalent to 711,905 meals.
- Following a successful pilot by FoodFutures, a Gleaning Coordinator was recruited to map surplus food, then redistribute it via the food club network. Since they started, more than 100 local businesses have been contacted about surplus food and 8 gleans have been run with 44 volunteers, resulting in 31 tonnes of food being successfully diverted. Gleaning work has also contributed to increased collaboration across the [Xcess Network](#) - an independent network of edible surplus food redistributors. Case studies of cauliflower gleans in the District can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
- The Gleaning Network is also running a [Share the Harvest Festival](#) - a month-long festival of gleans featuring activities like apple picking, harvest markets and juice making. Mini-grants of up to £50 are available to support community groups and charities as part of the festival.
- [Abundance Morecambe](#) is a volunteer-led project, set up in May 2021. It has 3 elements: Mapping fruit trees in the area, picking in groups at harvest time, followed by an Abundance Week of community workshops and celebrations. It hopes to connect up with the Lancaster gleaning network and support projects looking to set up their own gleaning networks in more rural areas.
- [The Silverdale Garden Surplus Stall](#) aims to share surplus produce, highlight environmental issues, and promote the ethos of sustainable living. It has grown in popularity, the annual fundraised amounts increasing from £300 in 2020 to £1500 in 2022. A call to action has now gone out across the District providing instruction on how to set up your own Garden Surplus Stall.
- The [Warm Welcome Wow](#) project in Galgate is a collaboration between FareshareGo, Ellel St John's Church, the Parish Council and a few local retailers, via the Foodiverse App. Initiated as a government Warm Space at the village community recreation rooms in January 2023, the project has expanded to provide hot meals every Friday and distribute rescued food after the meal. It has rescued more than £2,000 worth of food since April.

- Lancaster University is involved in a number of food waste redistribution efforts. The EcoEats project (section 3B) is redistributing surplus food as part of student cooking classes, while, in March 2023, the [university signed up to bring the Too Good To Go app onto campus](#), to tackle food waste from unsold food from 5 outlets on campus. The introduction of the app was a follow-on from the two campus [community fridges](#), which ran successfully for a number of years and are estimated to have saved 1.5 tonnes of food waste from landfill.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

Under the two tier authority system, Lancaster City Council is responsible for collecting waste while Lancashire County Council is responsible for processing and managing the collected waste. The county council had a [Waste Management Strategy](#) which ran until 2020 which was based on the waste hierarchy. However, a new strategy is yet to be published as the council are waiting for more guidance on the introduction of the Environment Act 2021. LCC are also considering how to deal with the end of the current landfill contract in 2025. A major challenge they are facing here is lack of clarity from Defra on exactly what the Environment Act will require. It is estimated that Lancashire will produce 30-40,000 tonnes of food waste per year. The council currently has two Anaerobic Digester plants and is considering investing in these to increase their capacity. However, Feedback Global and the Closing Loops team are keen to discuss whether localised community composting schemes could form at least part of this picture.

**FOR PANEL USE ONLY**

**Comments from the panel on your application:**

**Outcome of application:**

**Recommendations for onward progress:**